



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

May/June 2013

WAS field trip to Magee Marsh, Sunday, May 19

By Karen Markey

What a wonderfully warm, lightly breezy, and sunny day to visit Magee Marsh! Dawn started our walk on Magee's boardwalk by finding a PHILADELPHIA VIREO on the tower above our heads, and Andrew found a second one later on. All day, our group of about two dozen WAS birders had up close and personal looks at Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, Redstart, Prothonotary, Canada, and Wilson's Warblers. A Sora walked along the southern-most boardwalk inches from our feet. Don, Ben, and Bruce shot great photos of several warblers especially Ben who explored on his own from time to time, finding and photographing a MOURNING WARBLER close up. Numerous and conspicuous were House Wrens, Redstarts, and Yellow Warblers (three on or building nests). We had great looks at several Northern Waterthrushes.

Additional birds: Canada Goose, Wood Duck (Metzger), American Coot (Metzger), Common Gallinule (Metzger), Great Blue Heron, Great Egret (Metzger), Ruddy Turnstone, Killdeer, American Woodcock, Red-tailed hawk (near the Kaufman billboard on OH-2), Bald Eagle (Metzger), Mourning Dove, Common Nighthawk, Common Flicker (h), Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker (h), Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Least Flycatcher (h), Alder Flycatcher (h), Empidonax sp. (2 non-singing birds), Barn Swallow (Metzger), Tree Swallow, Blue Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Grey Catbird, American Robin, Swainson's Thrush, Veery, Cedar Waxwing, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler (all females), Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Palm Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, European Starling



Photo by Ray Stocking during the "Biggest Week in American Birding" at Magee Marsh of many birding legends. 1

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Dear Friends,

It is at this time of year in particular, that the wonders of birds and birding are so beautifully evident to me. The peak of spring migration has passed and I have time to reflect on what I've learned this season- and make unrealistic resolutions for the year ahead.

As in years past, I have spent many short snippets of time at Dolph Park on my way to and from work during the first few weeks of May. This year was surprisingly quiet at Dolph. As we've come to learn, it seems many of our lovely warbler friends decided to travel a touch further east. That being said, of course it was not a total loss as my desire to improve my understanding of birdsong took a few steps forward. For anyone else (over thirty) trying to master birdsong, I can say that progress from year to year *is* possible. As March comes into view the weight of all I've forgotten comes to mind, but in reality, it comes back quickly with a bit of memory space left to add a few more songs to my internal play list.

Next year: I'll start listening to my tapes in February.

On Mother's Day I took a solo trip to Magee Marsh, as my kind husband encouraged me out the door despite the forecast for wind and rain. Of course one is never alone at Magee in early May, and it was a glorious day. The windy conditions kept the birds low to the ground and I could have left my binoculars at home: 21 species of warbler, with most species showing themselves 5, 10, even 20 times. It was a treat from start to finish. But the following weekend I ventured with friends to Point Pelee and I re-learned why Pelee is such a compelling destination. While the birds weren't dripping off the trees, the pure joy of being in the woods- listening and looking- actually having to "work" to find the bird, was exhilarating. And ending the day with dinner at Paula's Fish Place makes it all worthwhile.

Next year: I'll set aside two consecutive days for a Pelee trip.

Just yesterday, my son Andy arrived back in Churchill, Manitoba. He reported sighting 5 or 6 of "his" Whimbrels with their geo-locators attached. They have completed their approximately 12,000 mile round trip journey and made it back to their nesting grounds. Those tiny devices will reveal a precise map of each bird's travels- undoubtedly answering some questions, but most certainly posing more. Andy reported that some of the birds he has seen in these first days were within 50 meters of their last year's nest. .. few landmarks, no GPS, just bird wisdom!

Next year: I'll plan a 12,000 mile journey without GPS.

Happy Birding,

Sue

Washtenaw Audubon MASTER BIRDER Certification

Washtenaw Audubon will offer those who wish to pursue a rigorous bird education program an opportunity to obtain a Washtenaw Audubon Master Birder certification. Like the similar Master Gardner program, applicants are asked to participate in an approved ornithological course (similar to the Leslie Science Center Course or Cornell's at home study program) and complete 40 hours of service in a bird-related activity such as leading birding field trips for a local Audubon Society, working with breeding bird surveys, doing bird related volunteer work at Leslie Science and Nature Center or the Bird Center of Washtenaw County or other similar activities. Interested individuals should contact Dea Armstrong, at ddarm@umich.edu.

Rare Bird Alerts

Michigan Bird Report

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

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

Stinchfield headlines: Record low number of total individuals but a Hooded warbler tenement!

By Karen Markey

For the 21st consecutive year, Washtenaw County birders have censused Stinchfield Woods. The 2013 count took place on a pleasant, breezy, and sunny Sunday, June 2, from 7 to 11 am. Special thanks go to our big crew of 17 volunteer counters: Anjali, Stephen Bergman, Monty Brown, Don Chalfant, Jeff Ernst, Warren Faust, Steve Hollobaugh, Raburn Howland, Maggie Jewett, George Kulesza, Bob MacMillan, Karen Markey, Andrew Pawluk, Dan Sparks-Jackson, Toni Spears, Roger Wykes, and T.J. Youngs.

Count headlines are the record low number of 575 individuals, well below the 15-year average of 755.4. Raburn said it poured rain at 3 am in the Stinchfield area -- was that the reason for such a low count? The previous low count was 616 individuals in 1997. Here are examples of last year's high species counts followed by this year's low counts: American Crow (66 / 29), Black-capped Chickadee (58 / 27), Red-eyed Vireo (53 / 40), Chipping Sparrow (50 / 23), Eastern Wood-pewee (47 / 34), Pine Warbler (44 / 20), Northern Cardinal (44 / 36), and American Goldfinch (44 / 19).

Today's high species counts were Red-eyed Vireo (40), Ovenbird (36), Northern Cardinal (36), Eastern Wood-pewee (34), and Blue Jay (31).

The good news is that the count resulted in a 55 species, almost matching the 15-year average of 56.4 species.

More good news is the record number of Hooded Warblers (24), surpassing the previous high of 18 in 2010. There were at least three locations where two to three Hoodeds could be heard singing simultaneously. Has Stinchfield become a Hooded Warbler tenement?

Despite so many fewer individuals overall, some species counts were higher than last year: Ovenbird (36 this year versus 30 last year), Pileated Woodpecker (4 this year versus 3 last year plus so much more evidence of Pileateds, that is, trees pocked with oval holes), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (9 this year versus none last), Acadian Flycatcher (19 this year versus 12 last), Indigo bunting (16 this year versus 12 last).

This year's count was somewhat earlier than usual, occurring on the first rather than second weekend in June. Maybe that is the reason why several warblers were counted -- American Redstart, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, and Black-throated Blue Warblers.

Thanks again to the seventeen birders who took part in this year's count. You made it possible for us to partition the woods into sixths so that we could take our time birding and enjoy the day. See you next year!

Additional species seen: Turkey Vulture, Sandhill Crane, Mourning Dove, Black-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Purple Martin, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Blue-winged Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Black-throated Green Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Song Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole

National Butterfly Association Official Counts 2013

The National Butterfly Association is requesting volunteers for this year. All interested parties should contact the compilers listed below. Last year's 4th July SW Washtenaw count tallied 59 species, a county record and quite possibly a state record, as well. The Milan count is new and partly designed to take advantage of the Draper-Houston Preserve.

Time Date Name Compiler/Contact person

4th July June 30 SW Washtenaw John Swales (jmswales@umich.edu)

4th July July 2 Chelsea Roger Wykes (769-6482)

4th July July 6 Ann Arbor John Swales (jmswales@umich.edu)

4th July July 13 Milan Mary Mathias (mathiamr@gmail.com)

Fall August 24 SW Washtenaw John Swales (jmswales@umich.edu)

Gallup Geese, Barton Bluebirds, & Eagle Crest Eagles

By Monty Brown

A dozen and a half birders ventured out on the morning of March 23, mainly in search of waterfowl but on the lookout for birds of any kind. Led by Mary Matthias and Monty Brown, the group was aided with numerous finds by Ben Lucking as well.

The outing started at the eastern end of Gallup Park, and in a little over an hour of birding, the group spotted almost three dozen species of all kinds, about half of them waterfowl. Interestingly, two of the three most abundant species were two ringers—Ring-billed Gull and Ring-necked Duck—and the third was Red-winged Blackbird. I would have wagered that Mallard or Canada Goose would almost certainly have been in the top three, but those two species were no more in evidence than Bufflehead and Common Grackle. All of the birders got good looks at Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, and American Wigeon, and some of these were first-ever viewings for members of the group.

Perhaps we had not seen more Canada Geese at Gallup because they were congregating at Barton Pond, our next stop. There we saw roughly 150. Ring-necked Ducks were present again in force, with about four dozen, constituting by far the second most common species we saw there. At this location we got Canvasback and Redhead, and a part of the group got Gadwall as well. Walking back to our cars, we got great looks at two Eastern Bluebirds.

Our last stop was Ford Lake, which we viewed from the western shore along the edge of the Eagle Crest Golf Course, which was not open for play yet this year. This location required some hilly walking, but the dozen or so birders who remained when we arrived at this stop late in the morning were all troopers about it regardless of age. Fortunately, the effort was worthwhile. Those who had missed Gadwall at Barton were in luck, with dozens in the pond at North Bay Park, just west of the north end of Ford Lake. We also picked up Horned Grebe, and through Ben's persistence, got Red-breasted Merganser, albeit distant looks. Easier to see and identify, even at considerable distance, were a mature Bald Eagle as well as what appeared to be a second-year specimen.

For the day as a whole, we had about fifty species, 22 of which were waterfowl. Our biggest disappointment for the day? Missing out on Tundra Swan.

Hudson Mills Field Trip Report *By Karen Markey*

Our intrepid band of a dozen birders braved the Sunday, May 12th early spring-like conditions and toured Hudson Mills Metropark. Sticking to the woods where there was some shelter from brisk northwest winds and the cold, we missed typical species such as Meadowlarks, Kingbirds, Bluebirds, and Tree Swallows. We saw two stunning male Scarlet Tanagers, low and sometimes both birds in one binocular view. Mom and Pop Sandhill Cranes had their two tiny, fluffy, adorable youngsters in tow. We lingered where Toni and I saw the Pileated Woodpecker but only saw past evidence of its presence.

Many thanks to a great group of birders who did a great job spotting birds and helping others find them. Special thanks to Monty who carried his scope and spotted it on several birds for all to see including the tanagers. Few birds were singing today so it was great that everyone chipped in to find birds. Thanks again to all for a super morning.

Below are some additional species:

Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker (h), Northern Flicker (h), Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren (h), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Veery, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Eastern Towhee (h), Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch

Additional photos from Magee Marsh by Bryn Martin. We were there the day of WAS's field trip, but I went at the pace of my two 5-year olds. Fantastic is all I have to say about the day and the place!



There was a Woodcock on its nest near the parking lot and the area was cordoned off with tape. See if you can see the bird in the photo--I can't! One of my girls had seen one at the WAS field Woodcock field trip and the other one was excited that she got to see one, now, too. In addition to this one, we had two others hunting along the boardwalk that my girls found for me as I was looking at warblers.



(Above) The girls enjoyed scoping the Purple Martins at their nests, especially as one of my daughters was a “purple Martin” for the day. All in all, I was able to point out to them and they were able to see 50-60 species! Not bad for 5-year olds and a testament to how great Magee is at this time of year.



(Left) There's no wrong place or time to study your field guide, especially if you're a 5-year old. Some people worry about bringing their youngsters here because of how it might “interfere” with the serious birders. I got nothing but smiles and words of encouragement from others. (Maybe people grumbled under their breath out of my earshot, but let them!) One lady asked them if they wanted to be birders like their dad when they grew up. My response to her: They already *are* birders!

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (July--August, 2013)

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

Washtenaw Audubon field trips are free of charge and open to the public unless otherwise indicated. For trips with constraints on the number of participants, WAS members are sometimes given priority in registering (again, as indicated). *For trips that require carpooling, minors attending without a parent must bring a written permission statement signed by a parent.* To receive a standard form for this, contact me at the e-mail address above. Also, if you have a suggestion for a field trip, please send it to me at that e-mail address.

Sat., July 20 **Butterfly Bonanza:** Leaders: John Swales, Roger Wykes, and (perhaps) Roger Kuhlman

Our leaders have a terrific knack for finding a variety of butterflies, so you will be in for a treat if you are able to participate in this outing, whether you are a novice or experienced with butterflies. It will be held at the Leonard Preserve, on the northwest edge of Manchester. The Leonard is the largest preserve in the county system, with 259 acres and nearly one mile of River Raisin shoreline. Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking area. The length of the outing will depend on conditions, but it will likely last until about noon. Directions: From I-94, turn off at M-52 (exit 159) and head south for approximately 10.5 miles. Turn right onto Main Street, then right again on Union Street. The preserve entrance is at the end of Union Street. When the street bears left and turns to gravel you will see the preserve entrance sign. Keep going, and the parking area is on the right.

Sat., August 3 **Spider Search:** Leader: Cara Shillington, associate professor of Biology at Eastern Michigan University. Professor Shillington will lead this trip to find and observe spiders. We will meet in front of the Matthaei Botanical Gardens gift shop at 9AM. During the summer many spider species can be found here. Several can easily be identified from their webs. These include Bowl-and-doily spiders, Hammock spiders, Nursery web spiders, Orb weavers, Long-jawed spiders, Dictinids, and Funnel weavers. In addition to looking for those, participants will also be sweep-netting in some of the more open areas for spiders that do not have obvious, large web retreats. These include Jumping spiders, Crab spiders, Grassland spiders, and Lynx spiders. The more eyes we have, the more we are likely to find. Brief spider field guides will be available for the trip if you do not have one. If you prefer to get your own field guide prior to this exciting walk, Dr. Shillington recommends *Spiders of the North Wood* by Larry Weber for its fine photos and reasonable price. Lastly, if you have any local spiders that you would like identified, please bring them in a container or bring a photo, Dr. Shillington will be happy to help you identify them.

Sun., August 25 **Migrating Shorebirds and Waders at Pointe Mouillee SGA:** Leader: Jim Fowler

Pointe Mouillee, on Lake Erie near the mouth of the Huron River, is one of the best destinations in the Midwest for viewing shorebirds and waders, but vehicular access is limited. Jim Fowler knows this territory through and through and leads several field trips each year at this location. PLEASE NOTE: This trip has limited space, and registration is mandatory. To register, send your name(s) and a contact phone number to fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org. Registered participants will meet at the Pointe Mouillee SGA parking lot on Sigler Road at 8:00 a.m., and from there will consolidate into four vehicles. Because of the restricted access, it is necessary to attend the entire outing. Participants should bring insect repellent, wear a hat, and dress for warm weather--there is no shade or shelter at Pointe Mouillee. Bring all the food and fluids you think you will need to sustain you for approximately five hours of birding.

Arb Field Trip Report *By Karen Markey*

Our group of a baker's dozen birders braved bitter, raw weather birding the Arb on Saturday, April 13. After a slow start, we had great looks at Hermit Thrushes, several Sapsuckers, and Brown Creepers. After hearing several Winter Wrens and catching fleeting glimpses of flying tiny brown dots, we finally got definitive and long looks at two Winter Wrens in the second inlet along the south edge of Dow Field. Fox Sparrows were singing but very difficult to find.

Thanks to all members of the group who spotted birds and shared their sightings. Special thanks to Monty Brown who listed during the trip and shared his list here.

Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren (in five different locations), Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch

We are always looking for more photos for the newsletter. If you take photos during WAS field trips, of birds or participants, and you would like them included in the newsletter, please send them to brynmartin@sbcglobal.net with a tag-line that lets me know. Also, be sure to include the name of the photographer, if you want credit, as well as when and where the photo was taken.

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 \$25
(on-line only \$20)

____ Student \$10
(emailed newsletters only)

____ Senior \$15
(on-line only \$10)

____ 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 994-3569 if you have questions about the program.

Please note: *The Matthaei Botanical Gardens charges for parking at the rate of \$1.20 an hour, enforced 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm. Members of the Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum park for free. This fee brings the Garden's policies into alignment with other University of Michigan venues, and provides revenue to maintain the Gardens. If you arrive at 7:15pm for a 7:30pm Washtenaw Audubon program, you will only have to pay 90 cents to park for the 45 minutes before enforcement ends at 8pm. The parking kiosks accept coins, bills and credit cards.*

September 18

Birding in the 'Cloud': Surprisingly little has changed in the way that data is recorded in the field since the time of Lewis and Clark. A local startup company, Ornicept, is changing this by developing tools to allow biologists to digitally capture their data in the field using tablets and the online 'cloud.' Founder and chief technology officer, Russell Conard, will share ways that new technology has the potential to change natural resource management. A passionate birder, Conard will provide an insider's look at how his company's tools are improving the data necessary for conservation. Conard will also share an overview of modern birding technologies.

October 16

Some of My Favorite Birds: Join Doug Leffler for a program on some of the most beautiful birds you'll ever see. Doug is an avid bird photographer and a world birder.

November 20

Delaware: Red Knots and Horseshoe Crabs: Join Gary Siegrist and Lathe Claflin for a program on one of North America's most important migratory spots. Every spring, the dwindling population of Red Knots stops at the same spot in Delaware Bay to refuel on horseshoe crab eggs before continuing to their Arctic breeding grounds. Gary and Lathe are members of the Haehnle Audubon Sanctuary Stewardship Committee.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

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