



WASHTENAW AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

WAS International field trip: Jamaica!

Once again, Washtenaw Audubon is organizing a field trip to the Caribbean. This time, to the beautiful island of Jamaica, home to Reggae, tasty coffee, picturesque beaches and some pretty amazing birds! The national bird, the Red-billed Streamertail (pictured at right) should give you an idea of what you have in store if you decide to join us on this adventure. There are 28 birds endemic to the island of Jamaica and our goal is to see all of them, plus many, many more in 5 full days of birding. These endemics include 3 hummingbirds, an owl, 2 parrots, 2 cuckoos (including the monstrously-sized Chestnut-billed Cuckoo), a Tody (Todies are a family of cute birds only found in the Caribbean--the Jamaican Tody is pictured on pg. 3), 5 Flycatchers, 2 Thrushes, a Warbler, and the Jamaican Blackbird (a relative of our Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds that acts more like a Nuthatch, picking around the tree-branch foliage for the endemic bromeliad crabs). In addition to the birds only found in Jamaica, there are also more than 20 other birds we should see that are only found on the islands of the Caribbean. This makes Jamaica the Caribbean island with the most unique birds. (We won't be searching for only endemics--one of the highlights will be the Northern Potoo, a secretive, nocturnal creature that can also be found in Central America--although the Jamaican subspecies is unique). In all, we should see about 110 species.

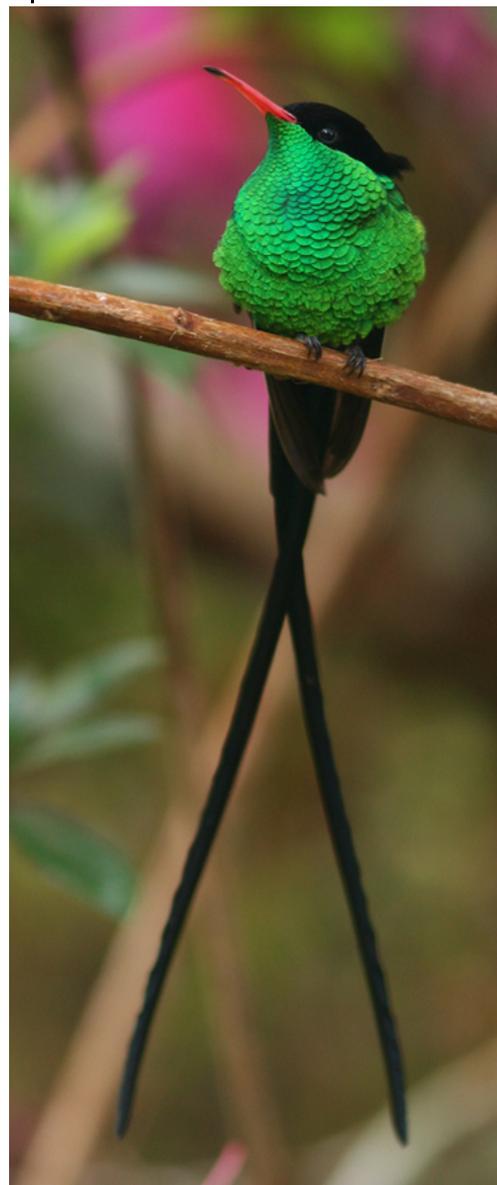
This tour will be from April 5-11, 2015 and will coincide with the height of the breeding season for the endemics (making them vocal and easier to find) as well as having most of the winter migrants still there (including many of "our" warblers). The weather will also be relatively cool and dry during this time of year. We will be focusing our energy on the eastern third of the island, the richest area for the unique birds. We bird the first day in the Hellshire Hills outside Kingston, which is a dry cactus-studded landscape and home to the Bahama Mockingbird and the Stolid Flycatcher. From here, it is up into the Blue Mountains, a misty, montane rainforest filled with bromeliads, mosses, ferns and unique orchids. The beautiful Starlight Chalet will be our base for a couple of nights. Finally, we move up to the northeastern coast, where we will stay at Goblin Hill Villas and bird the famous Ecclesdown Road in the Jim Crow Mountains, where we hopefully will catch up with the final endemics.

(Continued on pg. 3)

Summer 2014

Dear members,

We have decided to combine our May-June and our July-August newsletters into one summer edition due to the limited number of summer articles ready for publication. Our website is always a great place to check out the latest information on programs, field trips and a variety of helpful links for birders.



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Publication

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President's Letter

Dear Friends,

In November of 2010, I joined Washtenaw Audubon Society as your president and it has been a wonderful ride. After two terms I have decided to pass the baton to another able leader, Juliet Berger. The WAS Board voted to accept Juliet as president at our June 11 Board meeting, and Juliet's election was ratified with a vote of members at our WAS program on Wednesday, June 18th.

In my time at the helm, I know that I have learned far more from you than I offered in return, but such is the benefit of volunteering! In my first experience with an all-volunteer run organization, I can only conclude that where there is a shared passion a lot of good happens. Just this month Sherri Smith and Lathe Claflin were involved in the successful transfer of a Sandhill Crane from Virginia to Howell Nature Center. Thanks to eBird and a few well-directed emails, it took less than two hours to connect a crane with its new home. Earlier in June, while birding with Cathy Theisen, she faithfully put her veterinary skills to good use, rescuing a an emaciated, stray dog on Embury Road. The care and dedication of so many is heartwarming.

Juliet embodies what I have come to love about our membership. She is kind and thoughtful, bright and articulate, and just can't quite contain her enthusiasm for the wonderful passion of birding we all embrace. And for you list-ers out there, you will now have a president with whom you can compete, or at least one to buddy up with for a good bird chase!

Juliet joined Washtenaw Audubon in 2013, but has already jumped in with both feet by coordinating the 2014 May Count, taking over from Roger Wyke's many years of leadership. She has been an active participant at both programs and field trips. Juliet remembers fondly being introduced to birding by her father, with annual treks as a child to Point Pelee. His mnemonics for bird songs, still ring in her ears, which, by the way, I have high hopes she will share with me over the coming years! She confesses to having kept her obsession in check simply due to the realities of career and family. Formerly a clinical social worker, Juliet took time off to raise her children, Sam (16) and Audrey (12). She has already taken on a leadership role within her community, teaching the Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad class, *Feathered Friends*, for three years to 2nd-5th graders at Bach Elementary. As Juliet shared with me, "I have been inspired by my students to pursue my life's passion of birding and to share that love of birds and nature with others." What better qualifications to lead our wonderful organization for the next few laps!

Please join me by welcoming Juliet as Washtenaw Audubon's next president.

Happy Birding,

Sue Johnson

Rare Bird Alerts

Michigan Bird Report

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

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

(*Jamaica* continued from pg. 1)

We will be guided throughout by the highly recommended Ricardo Miller of Arrowhead Birding Tours. Ricardo not only knows his birds extremely well, but he will also be able to give us a taste of Jamaica's unique culture and share his knowledge about the rest of Jamaica's unique natural world. For such a small island, Jamaica is 5th in all of the world's islands as far as biodiversity. In addition to all of the birds, we should see many of the island's 900 endemic plants, 27 endemic reptiles, and 200 endemic invertebrates. Ricardo is especially knowledgeable about reptiles and butterflies. Although rare, we do have the chance to see the endemic Jamaican Giant Swallowtail Butterfly. At 15 cm across, it is the largest butterfly in the Americas and one of the largest in the world!

To reserve a spot or to request a detailed itinerary, trip list or to ask any question about the trip please email Bryn Martin at brynmartin@sbcglobal.net. Hope you can join us!



Jamaican Stripe-headed Tanager (*left*)

Jamaican Tody
(*below*)

Jamaica Trip Details

When: April 5--April 11, 2015

Cost: 12 participants \$1375
11 participants \$1435
10 participants \$1500
9 participants \$1575
8 participants \$1630
7 participants \$1600
6 participants \$1650
5 participants \$1800
Single supplement: \$250



What's included: All accommodation on a twin/double sharing basis, all meals, daily supply of bottled water, all transportation during the tour, tips at restaurants, full-time guiding service by Ricardo Miller of Arrowhead Birding Tours

What's *not* included: Any international flights, alcoholic drinks

International flights: Once we get our group together, we will work out a group-flight for those interested. If you so desire, you are free to organize your own, as well. If you would like to arrive early or stay longer in Jamaica, I would be happy to help you organize the rest of your stay.

How to reserve a spot: Send an email to Bryn Martin at brynmartin@sbcglobal.net. This will hold your spot until I receive your deposit of \$400. This trip is limited on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Stinchfield Woods: Everything average except for another Hooded Warbler record (27)!

The annual Stinchfield Woods Breeding Bird Census took place on a perfectly pleasant, breezy, and sunny Sunday, June 15, 2014, from 7 to 11 am. Special thanks go to our big crew of 21 volunteer counters: Andrew, Akshay, Ben, Dan, Don, George, Heidi, Karen, Larry, Laurie, Matty, Monty, Neal, Rachelle, Richa, Robert, Roger, Ruud, Sarah, Stephen, and Toni. Count headlines are the average number of 767 individuals, a little above the 16-year average of 744.1, and the average number of 56 species, right at the 16-year average of 56.3 species. We had our first-ever sighting of Osprey, a bird that took flight as the group approached it. For the second year in a row, a record 4 Pileated Woodpeckers was reported. Excellent news is the record number of Hooded Warblers (27), surpassing last year's high of 24. Let us hope that this is the "new normal" for Hoodeds at Stinchfield. Unfortunately, we passed several dog walkers with multiple unleashed dogs in tow, not a positive sign for sustaining record numbers of this close-to-the-ground nesting species. This year's high species counts were Northern Cardinal (56), Blue Jay (55), Eastern Wood-pewee (51), and Ovenbird (44).

On the plus side are numbers of:

- * Acadian Flycatchers ~ holding strong in double-digits at 22
- * Eastern-Wood pewees ~ back up into the low 50s at 51
- * Blue Jays ~ also back up into the mid-50s (55)
- * Wood Thrush ~ back up into the teens (13) after five single-digit years
- * Pine Warblers and Ovenbirds are back at above average numbers
- * Scarlet Tanagers ~ back up to the low 20s at 22
- * Cowbirds ~ this year's total of 9 is welcome news, the first single-digit year since 2005

On the minus side are numbers of:

- * Red-breasted Nuthatches ~ another slim year at 7 compared to several double-digit years in the past
- * Tufted Titmice dropped to the high teens compared to twice as many in past years

This year's results now make 22 years of Stinchfield data available online at eBird and 17 years at the Stinchfield web page at <http://ylime.people.si.umich.edu/stinchfield.html>. After 16 years at the helm, I am stepping down as the Stinchfield coordinator and Rachelle Roake is taking over. Thanks Rachelle! And thanks again to record-tying twenty-one 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!

WAS Hudson Mills Trip Report: May 11, 2014

Enjoying perfect weather conditions, our group of about 20 WAS birders had great luck at Hudson Mills. We toured the far southeast side of the park, getting near-perfect scope views of Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Kingbird, Baltimore Oriole, and Eastern Towhee. Surprising was a female ORCHARD ORIOLE along with the several Baltimores.

We hurried to disc golf course and nature trail areas in search of spring migrants especially warblers. Another surprise was a PHILADELPHIA VIREO that was singing softly on disc hole #14. There were many male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks pursuing lucky females. Warblers were high in the canopy but most birders did catch sight of Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Redstart, Palm, Black-and-white, and Cape May Warblers. Everyone enjoyed a Scarlet Tanager including views in the scope. While a second tanager perched/sang nearby, Rachelle helped us find a Wood Thrush well camouflaged on the ground. Hardly five minutes after most folks left, Larry spotted a PILEATED WOODPECKER, and a handful of us enjoyed this bird calling and in flight.

Thanks to many in our group of who heard and spotted birds and helped each other find them. Let's do this again for fall warblers in early September.

Of the 59 species totaled, here are some additional highlights: Wild Turkey, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Thrasher, Ovenbird, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler

Oh my! On this picture-perfect Mother's Day I almost forgot to mention our first Hudson Mills birds of the day, Mom and Dad Sandhill Cranes with two very young babies in tow. Also two Green Herons perched briefly high in a tree and then left in pursuit of one another.

May Count 2014 Species Total Smashes Previous Record!!

Juliet Berger, WAS 2014 May Count Compiler/Coordinator

Thanks to all who helped make the 2014 Washtenaw Audubon May Count a huge success. Volunteers fanned out across the County on May 10, 2014, to count every species, every bird that they could see or hear. We were aided by an expert cadre of Area Leaders-- Matty and Benjamin Hack, Dave Borneman, Martin Bialecki, Ellie Shappirio, John Swales, Roger Wykes, Dea Armstrong, Sarah Toner, Dan Thiry, Mike Sefton, and John Farmer, who organized 70 volunteers in 40 parties of birders. Kudos to Matty and Benjamin Hack and Sarah Toner who stepped in on short notice to ably lead volunteers in Lyndon/Sylvan Township and Ann Arbor/AA Twp respectively. Thanks to Dea Armstrong for her encouragement and expertise. Many thanks to Roger Wykes who organized and compiled this count for the past 14 years, and who helped me all along the way to learn the coordinator/compiler job. He is the best mentor a person could ask for, in addition to having a fine appreciation of my humble picnic food! He gave me birding tours of every corner of the County leading up to the May Count, so I would have an idea of what was going on out there, and stunned me with his amazing ear and birding skills. Due to a combination of favorable factors--fabulous mostly sunny weather, moderate temperatures of 50-75 degrees, excellent, skilled volunteer birders and area leaders, the presence of a few remaining early Spring migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, and the early arrival of some late Spring migrants, we tallied a record smashing **183 species**, and over 22,500 individual birds. Roger tells me the previous record was 175 species.

Highlights of the 2014 May Count include 32 Warbler species: notably, Worm-eating Warbler and Prothonotary Warbler at Independence Lake, a county total of 13 Cerulean Warblers, a Golden-winged Warbler at Godfredson Rd., and a Yellow-breasted Chat heard in York Township. Notable waterfowl and shorebirds: a whopping 49 Sora, 5 Virginia Rails, many Semi-palmated Sandpipers and Semi-palmated Plovers, Gadwall, Red-breasted Merganser, and American Wigeon, as well as Northern Shoveler, both Scaup species, Ring-necked Ducks and some Redhead. An American Bittern was spotted in Scio Township. There were Common Terns, a Black Tern and a Bonaparte's Gull at Whitmore Lake on Count Day. Caspian Tern was seen in Manchester Twp. A Forster's Tern was spotted at North Bay Park. The Peregrine Falcon made an appearance, as advertised, on the Bell Tower on University of Michigan's Central Campus, in time for Sarah Toner and me to see it. Marsh and Sedge Wren were present, as well as 9 Northern Mockingbirds. Grasshopper, Henslow's, Vesper, and Lincoln's Sparrow were counted, as well as 3 times more White-crowned Sparrows than White-throated. We tallied an impressive number of raptors, including Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, Broad-winged Hawks, Osprey and Bald Eagles, and Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks. The Steinbach Rd. Western Meadowlark was present and accounted for. And, there were 91 of my favorite bird, the Scarlet Tanager.

Thanks for all the help from all the volunteers, who made my job a pleasure. I am reminded daily what intelligent, skilled, and genuinely nice group of people birders are. You deserve a round of applause. Good birding!

Tuesday Evening Birders: May 27

Dan Sparks-Jackson led 20 plus eager Washtenaw Audubon birders on a sparrow quest in western Washtenaw count and no one was disappointed. It was a spectacular evening with multiple stops, "annual birds" for many, lifers for a few and just a few ticks for some..... :=) Please note that none of these birds were observed by bringing the birds close with playbacks. There was only one bird that most folks didn't see through a scope. Everyone did hear all of the target birds and given the condition of some of our ears, that was impressive!

Highlights: DICKCISSELS-multiple singing and well seen on Jacob Road north of Kendall, CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS on PRIVATE property, VESPER SPARROW seen on Kendall Road, south side, near Jacob, GRASSHOPPER SPARROW seen (not well by most of us) and heard by all in a few spots but the group at least got bins on a bird at the west end of Kendall, south side, HENSLOW'S SPARROW - great scope views of this bird (who seemed to me to have turned up the volume on his regular call just for our group) Sharon Valley State Game Area, Spotted Sandpiper (Jerun spotted these from the lead car. Well done!), C. Nighthawk, Brown Thrasher (another find by Dan's en route), Northern Mockingbird (another lead car spot at Sharon Hollow and Easudes Road), WESTERN MEADOWLARK (same bird found in April on Steinbach, south of Pleasant Lake). Peacock (heard only).

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (August, 2014)

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.

Saturday, Aug 2 **Butterfly Bonanza at Leonard Preserve** Leaders: John Swales, Roger Wykes, and (perhaps) Roger Kuhlman. 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. Our leaders will be in prime form, having participated in a half dozen butterfly counts in SE Michigan in the preceding weeks. For the fourth straight year, they have decided to lead this outing 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.

Saturday, Aug. 16 **Migrating Shorebirds and Waders at Pointe Mouillee SGA. 8AM--1PM**

North American Butterfly Association Official Counts Washtenaw County+, 2014

All are welcome to join in for all or part of the day. (There is a \$3 dollar fee for each adult participant.) We usually start at about 9.30 and finish around 5. These NABA counts are not only fun, but also provide valuable information about a critical environmental indicator. This year, for example, it will be interesting to see what effect the long, hard winter may have had on local butterfly populations.

Count	Count Name	Dates	Compiler
Fall	Dundee	Sat. 9 Aug.	Mary Mathias mathiasm@washtenaw.org
Fall	SW Washtenaw	Sat. 23 Aug.	John Swales jmswales@umich.edu

jms (734-995-1139)

Washtenaw Audubon Library

If you are thinking about a birding trip to either a distant land, or some specific place in the USA, remember that we have a library that may have just the book you want to see or borrow for the trip. This offer is normally for members only. A list of our books should always be up on our website. Call or email Sherri Smith, 734 994-6287 or grackle@umich.edu.

WAS Field Trip to Magee Marsh: May 18

Our group of a dozen birders enjoyed increasingly warmer temperatures touring Magee Marsh on this day. Warblers especially were numerous and conspicuous. We had up close and personal looks at several Chestnut-sided, Cape May, Redstart, Magnolia, Blackpoll (thanks to Juliet who heard several), and Tennessee Warblers. We could reach out and touch both male and female Prothonotary Warblers. Everyone enjoyed great views of the female GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER (I think this is the same bird I saw earlier last week). We ended up totaling 23 warbler species and 3 vireos. In mid-afternoon, Jim caught a PHILADELPHIA VIREO. Flycatchers were silent but we did catch sight of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Everyone enjoyed a long look at an American Woodcock probing for food just a few feet away from us. While eating lunch, we compared Grey-cheeked and Swainson's Thrush (which were surprisingly numerous this year) on the grass hardly a few feet away. Thanks to Juliet for spotting brilliant male Scarlet Tanagers; the lone female tanager we saw was mostly likely a SUMMER TANAGER due to her medium-olive wings and large beak. Thanks to everyone for finding birds and pointing them out to others. Let's do this again next May!

Below are some more of the 75 birds seen or heard (h). Thanks to all who helped others find these wonderfully colorful gems!

Pied-billed Grebe (Metzger), Double-crested Cormorant (Metzger), Wood Ducks (Metzger), American Coot (Metzger), Great Egret, Bald Eagles (adults and one juvenile in nest, one adult and two juveniles soaring), Common Nighthawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Hairy Woodpecker (h), Eastern Wood-pewee, Empid species, Barn Swallow (Metzger), Tree swallow, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler (females and males), Yellow-rumped Warbler, Canada Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Mourning Warbler (h), Common Yellowthroat, Northern Waterthrush, Ovenbird, Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Lincoln Sparrow, Song Sparrow

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

Name: _____

___ Student \$10
(emailed newsletters only)

Address: _____

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

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 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 17 **Birding for Conservation:** Join Tom Funke for a program on how you can contribute to bird conservation while birding. Tom Funke is the conservation director for Michigan Audubon, and the resident manager of the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary near Hastings, MI.

October 15 **Impacts of Ecosystem Imbalance on Birds**
Further details to be announced.

November 19 **Meteorology and Birding:** Join Sarah Toner for a program on how to use weather data to know where and when to go birding for maximum success. Sarah is familiar to Washtenaw Audubon members as one of the sharp-eyed and sharp-eared young birders who are often the first to alert us to a good bird on our field trips. She will be a senior at Community High this fall, is a two-time winner of the American Birding Association's Young Birder of the Year award in the writing contest, and founded the Michigan Young Birders Club.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

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