



WASHTENAW AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

November/December 2014

68th Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 20, 2014

by Jacco Gelderloos

Well, wouldn't you know it? The time has come for me to write up the announcement for the 2014 Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count, and mornings have taken on a definite fall-like touch—the 40s are upon us and as is the case every year, worse is on its way! But that is why birding is such a great hobby—as we are saying goodbye to many of our breeding birds we are also looking forward to the arrival of many a visitor from up north. Never a dull moment for a birder, I'd say. And with the arrival of the ducks, gulls, and longspurs, we gear up for our annual celebration of these birds, the Christmas Bird Count.

As was the case last year, this year's count will take place awkwardly close to Christmas break, on December 20, 2014. Once more, I hope that this late date will not interfere too much with your Christmas plans and that our count will manage to continue to be one of the best attended in Michigan. Last winter was definitely dominated by the large Snowy Owl invasion (two of them on our count!), and we can only wonder if another irruptive movement will take place this year, be it from owls, nuthatches, or winter finches. Weather-wise, no doubt all of you still remember the bitterly cold and snowy winter we had last year; the forecast calls for something similar this year, but will that type of weather already have arrived in our area at the time of our CBC by then? Only time will tell, but I hope you will join us on December 20th to survey our circle's bird life, which in turn will provide one of many data points in the long-term trends that the CBC has been fleshing out.

(continued on page 4)

President's Letter

Dear Washtenaw Audubon Members,

It has been a momentous fall in the birding world. The National Audubon Society (NAS) released its "Birds and Climate Change" report in September, outlining the future of our birds in a warming climate. After rigorous study of current and archival trends in bird populations and habitats, NAS concluded that 314 species of North American birds will lose more than 50% of their range by 2080, effectively leading to mass extinction if nothing is done to protect them. As a way to help birds, many of us can donate to NAS Climate Initiative, as our national organization will be using donations to purchase and protect Important Bird Areas (IBA). These IBAs are areas that are crucial for the breeding, migration, or winter survival of birds. Important bird areas in Michigan (Haehnle Sanctuary is one) are listed here: netapp.audubon.org/iba/IBAList/US-MI. The National Audubon Society will continue to monitor and study how birds are or are not adapting to global climate change, and to lobby on birds' behalf. The EPA recently put forth some new rules for cleaning up coal-fired power plant emissions nationwide, in line with the Climate Initiative. Let's keep thinking of more each of us can do locally to protect birds, wildlife, and their habitats.

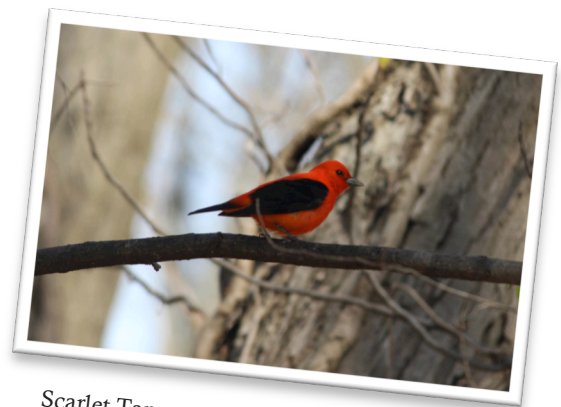
Here in Michigan, most of our migratory songbirds have flown, and Washtenaw Audubon's Fall Migration Walks at the Arb have ended for the season. Waterfowl are still migrating, as well as raptors and our beloved Sandhill Cranes. I recently was thrilled to see several life birds, a handsome, migrating pair of Greater White-fronted Geese, and a gaggle of Cackling Geese, at Saline's Mill Pond Park. I encourage you to make some time to attend one of our upcoming field trips. Information about winter and spring birding trips is available on our website, www.washtenawaudubon.org, with more trips being added frequently. Also, please plan to volunteer for our Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which takes place December 20th. More information on this continent-wide annual event and our festive potluck afterwards is available in this newsletter, as well as on our website. Thanks to Jacco Gelderloos, for coordinating the CBC again this year. And, please bear with us as our Webmaster, Rob French, rebuilds our website.

I hope to see many of you in the woods, by a lake, or even at the Landfill.

As always,

I am for the birds,

Juliet Berger



Scarlet Tanager (Matty Hack)

Klee Tract Dedicated at Haehnle Sanctuary

by Mike Sefton

Forty-six acres have been added to Jackson Audubon's/Michigan Audubon's Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary thanks in part to a donation from Washtenaw Audubon and several of its members. On October 18, 2014, the Klee Tract was dedicated at Haehnle with a ceremony attended by 23 members of the Klee family, sanctuary chairman and former Washtenaw Audubon president Lathe Claflin, Michigan Audubon executive director Jonathan Lutz, and Washtenaw Audubon president Juliet Berger, as well as representatives from Jackson Audubon and other Audubon chapters and donors.

The Haehnle Sanctuary is a favorite location for Sandhill Cranes in the fall, with up to 2000 of these impressive birds flying into the refuge nightly to roost, before continuing their migration to Central Florida for the winter. The addition of the Klee tract will provide more marshland, woods, and upland habitat to the 900-acre Haehnle Sanctuary. The Klee tract ensures that 100% of Mud Lake Marsh—where cranes roost—will be protected, and will be free from hunting if an open season for cranes is allowed in Michigan, as has happened in other states. It also protects a spring that provides water to Mud Lake Marsh, and a prairie fen, a threatened biotic community.

The Haehnle Sanctuary is 33 miles from Ann Arbor via I-94. The refuge is open to the public year round from dawn to dusk, and has hiking trails and an observation hill with benches and interpretive displays about the cranes and other wildlife in the refuge. Cranes are present in greatest numbers from October through November, with most having migrated by mid-December. You can learn more about the Haehnle Sanctuary at www.haehnlesanctuary.org.



Members of Klee family at dedication of the Klee Tract at Haehnle Sanctuary, with Mud Lake Marsh in background. (Mike Sefton)

Christmas Bird Count *(continued from page 1)*

In short, your contribution to increasing our collective knowledge about wintertime bird distribution, population trends, etc., is vital, so do join us for the 68th annual Ann Arbor CBC, as always sponsored by the Washtenaw Audubon Society. As I mentioned, **Saturday, December 20th** is the date to remember. Although it is helpful to have some experience in identifying our local resident and wintering birds, you can always be grouped with more experienced birders if you're a novice birder. As a former newbie, I can attest to the warm and knowledgeable welcome WAS birders will give!

Recently, the National Audubon Society switched from a printed CBC report to an online format—this allowed NAS to discontinue the \$5.00 participation fee. This past August, last season's data was put out by NAS; if you're interested, check out the data (and more!) at <http://birds.audubon.org/summary-114th-christmas-bird-count-2013-2014>. The online format has the benefit that data can be displayed (and manipulated by you) in a more versatile manner—certainly worth some of your time! Also, do peruse NAS's general CBC information at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

For those of you unfamiliar with the CBC format, some general information is in order. All CBCs are conducted during a three-week period from December 14 to January 5, all over the Western (and even a small part of the Eastern) Hemisphere. Each count circle covers an 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 Drive—http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/Resources/AA-CBC-Map_full.pdf shows the count circle in detail. The object is to identify all bird species present in this circle and count the number in which they are present. In addition to the daylight bird census, several observers will conduct a pre-dawn search for owls.

As always, there are several ways to participate in this count, the main one of which is field observer. The Ann Arbor CBC circle is comprised of eight areas, each of which is assigned to an area leader who coordinates the census in that region. If you wish to be a field observer, select one of the eight regions (for more information on the specific count areas, please check out the detailed maps on the WAS website) and sign up with the area leader of that region. If you are not sure where to help census, call me (CBC Compiler Jacco Gelderloos) at (734) 973-9422 and I will assign you 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.

If you'd rather not be out and about in the winter weather, 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 for our count). Like field observers, you may sign up to participate for any length of time—from one hour to all day. Call feeder watch coordinator Kurt Hagemeister 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. As before, the potluck supper will be held at the meeting room at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens (MBG)—all participants are invited! If you plan to attend, please contact potluck coordinator Nicole Sefton to let us know you're coming and to coordinate dishes—*please note that alcohol is not permitted on the premises*. The MBG are located at 1800 N. Dixboro Rd., about ¼ to ½ mile south of Plymouth Rd. in Ann Arbor. Please note that the University of Michigan has recently instituted a \$1.20/hour fee at MBG. 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: it is exceedingly helpful to arrive early at the potluck site, lend a hand setting 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! *(continued on page 5)*

Board Members

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Juliet Berger
president@washtenawaudubon.org

Vice President & Programs

Mike Sefton
programs@washtenawaudubon.org

Treasurer

Ellie Shappirio
treasurer@washtenawaudubon.org

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Dana Novak
secretary@washtenawaudubon.org

Membership

Rachelle Roake
membership@washtenawaudubon.org

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Bryn Martin
fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org

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Dea Armstrong
ddarm@umich.edu

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sjohnson@emerson-school.org

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Sherri Smith
grackle@umich.edu

Board Member/Rep to Mich Audubon

Ray Stocking
masrep@washtenawaudubon.org

Newsletter

Nancy Davis
newsletter@washtenawaudubon.org

The Washtenaw Audubon Society is an active chapter of Michigan Audubon formed in the early 1950s. Monthly programs feature guest speakers on a wide variety of natural history and birding topics. We conduct field trips to places in Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, and beyond.

Christmas Bird Count *(continued from page 4)*

Area	Leaders	Phone	E-mail
1	Sarah Toner	(734) 973-9422	strix09@gmail.com
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	Kurt Hagemeister	(734) 663-9746	khagemeister@sbcglobal.net
8	Mike Sefton		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 seftonn1344@yahoo.com

Ann Arbor CBC Web Site:

<http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/annarborebc.php>

National Audubon Society: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>



Trumpeter Swan (Benjamin Hack)

2014 Fall Migration Walks at the Arb

by Juliet Berger

Thanks to everyone who came out for our leaderless bird walks in Nichols Arboretum this fall. These popular migration walks have had a long run with Washtenaw Audubon and community members alike. I was pleased to be able to attend almost all of them, and in addition to seeing a heck of a lot of birds, I met a whole lot of interesting people and dozens of great birders. Our group of regulars—Ellie, Roger, Mike, Maryse, Jerry, Jim, Norka, Bruce, Hsia-lien, Theresa, Meghin, Merrily, Dawn, Dea, Len, Dave, and myself—were joined by some great birders from Jackson Audubon, Doug and Sandy, as well as Craig and Heidi. Some folks could only attend our weekend walks, some stopped by only once or twice, and many visitors to



Ann Arbor heard about our bird walks from the website or the *Observer* and dropped in for the birding.

We saw nearly 100 species of birds, with the early highlights being the great mixed flocks of warblers we saw several weeks in a row in the boardwalk area.

Also, several Olive-sided Flycatchers, reported on eBird, attracted additional keen observers. Late bird species included Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Fox Sparrow and both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. We've been entertained (and occasionally grossed out) by the antics and hunting predilections of a few juvenile Red-tailed Hawks, and serenaded by many songbirds, especially White-throated Sparrows, whose haunting refrains we heard all autumn.

I am going to miss birding with all of you, so let's make a point to get to upcoming field trips, program meetings, and the Christmas Bird Count and post-CBC potluck. I can't wait until the spring to see you all in the Arb again, for another miraculous migration season. Good birding!

(Photo credit: Juliet Berger)

The Big Sit, October 11, 2014

by Don Chalfant and Benjamin Hack

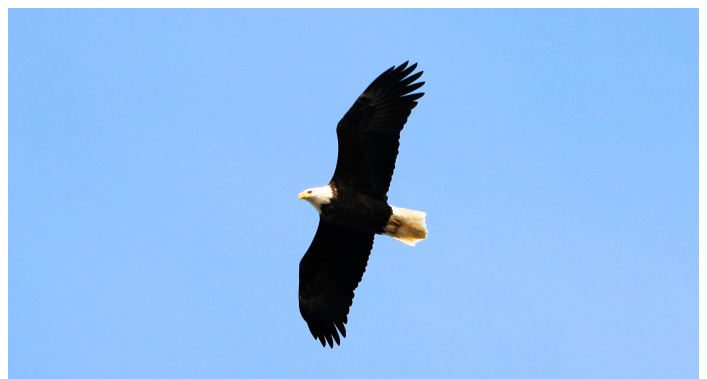
The Big Sit is a citizen science event, conducted internationally, with the goal being to find as many species of birds as possible, by sight and by sound, while remaining in a circle 17 feet in diameter. Each year the Washtenaw County event begins with Don "The Man" Chalfant arriving at 3:30 a.m. at Independence Lake County Park—and this year, the 17th annual Washtenaw Big Sit, was no different!

The 2014 Big Sit had a record high count of participants, with 20 birders participating for all or part of the day, including several Washtenaw County young birders. These 20 intrepid birders also set a new record for our count circle with 61 species.

While the goal is to get as many species as possible, the event is just a great experience. In addition, the event records patterns of migrating birds and now has excellent data on the species seen migrating through the area in mid-October.

You'll enjoy checking out the national Big Sit web site for the results of all count circles. You may reach it by searching for "Big Sit." If that doesn't work, try going to *Bird Watcher's Digest*, the sponsor for the Sit, and visit their web page.

Highlights of the day include four Big Sit count firsts: Northern Pintail, Nashville Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, and Swamp Sparrow. Other highlights include a flock of 102 Double-crested Cormorants (a high count for Washtenaw County on eBird), Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, Barred Owl, Wilson's Snipe, American Woodcock, Green-winged Teal, and Bald Eagle.



Bald Eagle (Benjamin Hack)

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (Dec 2014 to Jan 2015)

by Bryn Martin, 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 email address above. Also, if you have a suggestion for a field trip, please send it to me at the email address above.

Saturday, December 20

68th Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count

See page 1 and the Ann Arbor CBC Web page for all the details.

<http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/index.php/2014-11-23-17-45-42/christmas-bird-count>

Sunday, January 18, 2015 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Winged Winter Wonders of Western Washtenaw

Dan Sparks-Jackson will lead this exciting winter field trip. Meet at the Chelsea park-n-ride (I-94 at M-52, Exit 159) for carpool coordination and 8:30 a.m. departure, returning around noon, depending on results. While most of this trip is intended to be done from the comfort of vehicles, participants should come prepared for the possibility of a wintry hike.

Save the Date

Midwest Birding Symposium

September 10-13, 2015

Bay City, Michigan

Described as “The World’s Friendliest Birding Event,” the Midwest Birding Symposium offers awesome birding locations and fellowship with hundreds of other bird watchers. You can pre-register for the MBS now.



Fall Arb Walk (Matty Hack)

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, P.O. Box 130923, Ann Arbor, MI 48113.**

Renewal New Member

Membership Dues

Additional Donation \$ _____

Individual Household \$25
(online only \$20)

Name: _____

Student (emailed newsletter only) \$20

Address: _____

Senior \$15 (online 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 7:30 p.m. at the U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Free and open to the public. **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.*

January 21 First Great Conservation Showdown: Man vs. Ivory-billed Woodpecker

Join Ray Stocking for a program on one of the first great conservation showdowns: the need to fulfill man's demand for fashion, land, and timber, versus efforts to save the "Lord God Bird," the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. With the ten-year anniversary of the "rediscovery" of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and the immediate backlash from many experts following the announcement, we'll review developments since then, and what lies ahead. Ray is a former president of WAS and a passionate bird watcher. He lives and birds in Ann Arbor.

February 18 Birding the Great Migration in Kenya

Jerry Jourdan will lead us on a photographic tour through the Masai Mara National Park following the Zebra and Wildebeest migration from Tanzania into Kenya. Jerry Jourdan is an avid birder and photographer, who has presented his programs to many Audubon groups and at a number of birding festivals.

March 18 Birding, Bonding, and Big Days: Notes from Camp Colorado 2014

In July 2014, Washtenaw Audubon young birders Matty and Benjamin Hack attended the ABA's Camp Colorado. Join them as they recount some of their memories, birding moments, and learning experiences from their week in the West. Matty is a junior at Community High, and Benjamin is an eighth grader at Slauson Middle School. They are both co-founders of the Michigan Young Birders Club.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

P.O. Box 130923
Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923

[Recipient]