



NEWSLETTER

July/August 2015

2015 May Count Results and Highlights

by Juliet Berger

2015 marked my second year as Compiler for the North American Migratory Count (NAMC), known in Washtenaw County as the May Count. I assumed this task from Roger Wykes, who managed it with style for over a dozen years. He assisted me again this year (thank you, Roger!!) by helping me compile statistics before submitting my report to the state compiler, and by giving me a grand tour of Lodi Township, which I inherited this spring as an Area Leader. This survey is traditionally conducted across North America on the second Saturday in May, this year May 9th.

This year we counted 24,488 individual birds of 171 species, 35 species of which were unusual enough to not be included on the main list we use to tally birds, that is, they were "off list." 75 volunteers in 44 parties logged over 325 hours counting birds day and night on count day, covering over 1000 miles by car and on foot. Amazingly, Jeff Schultz and Greg Jacks, volunteers in York and Augusta Township with Area Leader, John Farmer, saw a first ever for Washtenaw County Blue Grosbeak, migrating through York Township. We are still waiting for the Michigan Rare Bird Records Committee to review and approve the sighting, but I am confident it will be counted. There were decent numbers of shorebirds with 11 species tallied. We had 3 species of owls, Great Horned, Eastern Screech-Owl and Barred. Other notable species found included 3 Osprey, 2 Bald Eagle, 3 Ruffed Grouse, 4 Eastern Whip-poor-will, and a whopping 18 Pileated Woodpeckers, clearly making a comeback throughout the county. Uncommon warblers counted included Louisiana Waterthrush, Golden-winged Warbler, a Brewster's Warbler (hybrid of Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers), *(continued on page 6)*

President's Letter

Summer 2015

Reflections on a year as President of your Washtenaw Audubon Society

This year as your president presented many positive challenges for me. I not only learned the names of dozens of new and old members, but I learned more about birds, about keeping our organization on track and vibrant, and about what our community of birders is and stands for than I ever thought possible. It has been a delight to work on your behalf, to welcome new members into our midst, and to help the organization navigate through all of our daily activities.

Thanks for welcoming me as a newcomer into your midst, for having faith in me, and supporting me in the work we have done this year. I could not have performed my duties without support and encouragement from the Washtenaw Audubon Society board. Thanks to the veterans (Ray, Mike, Dea, Sue, Dana, Rachelle, Ellie, and Sherri) for helping this year with our work connecting and supporting the birding community and the environment, and thanks to Bryn, Nancy, Rob, and Cathy for stepping in to take new positions on the board. Many thanks to all the members, whose enthusiasm is contagious!!

Fall migration will soon be upon us. We have a slate of interesting programs coming up, so don't miss them! On September 16th, Cathy Theisen presents our September program on her recent trip to Antarctica and the amazing birds and other fauna there. Our Fall Migration Walks in the Arb begin Thursday, August 27th, and run each Thursday morning through the end of October. The first couple of walks are a great way for kids to join in the birding, before school starts. Check this newsletter and our website at www.washtenawaudubon.org, often, to see what we have in store for late summer and fall. I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming field trips and programs.



As always,

I am for the birds,

Juliet Berger

Photo Credit: Scarlet Tanager (Matty Hack)

Stinchfield Woods Report, June 20, 2015

Holding Steady and Strong

by Karen Markey

The annual Stinchfield Woods Breeding Bird Census took place on a perfectly pleasantly cool, calm, and mostly cloudy Sunday, June 20, 2015, from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Special thanks go to our big crew of 17 volunteer counters: Barbara, Brandon, Dan, David A, David L, Elle, Fred, George, John, Juliet, Karen, Linda, Maggie, Marcella, Roger, Toni, and Vedran. More thanks to the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) staff who gave us access to the Woods.

Count headlines are the number of **798 individuals**, moderately above the 17-year average of 745.5, and the number of 52 species, a little below the 17-year average of 56.3 species. We had no first-ever sightings this year. For the second year in a row, a record 4 Pileated Woodpeckers was reported. While regrouping for the tally, we heard Pileated Woodpeckers calling in the distance southwest of the caretaker's cottage, exactly where several groups had seen and heard them.

The number of Hooded Warblers (19) is impressive; however, this is less than last year's record of 27. Let us hope that double-digits is the "new normal" for Hoodeds at Stinchfield; however, observing dog walkers with multiple unleashed dogs in tow is not a positive sign for sustaining this close-to-the-ground nester and several others.

This year's high species counts were Black-capped Chickadees (82), American Crow (68), Blue Jay (56), Red-eyed Vireo (53), Eastern Wood-Pewee (52), and Ovenbird (49).

On the plus side are numbers of:

- Acadian Flycatchers: holding strong in double-digits at 25
- Red-breasted Nuthatches: back into double-digits at 12
- Eastern Wood-Pewees: back up into the low 50s at 51
- Blue Jays: holding strong in the mid-50s (56)
- Wood Thrush: back up into the teens (16) for two years after five single-digit years
- Pine Warblers and Ovenbirds are holding strong
- Scarlet Tanagers: back up to the low 20s for two years in a row at 23
- Cowbirds: in the single digits for two years in a row (6 and 9)

On the minus side are numbers of:

- Chipping Sparrows: another humdrum year at 23 as Stinchfield's open areas shrink
- No Golden-crowned Kinglets for the second year in a row

Next year's Stinchfield count will take place on Saturday, June 4, or Sunday, June 12. This year's results now make 23 years of Stinchfield data available online at eBird and 18 years at the Stinchfield web page. Thanks again to the seventeen birders who took part in this year's rescheduled count. Many thanks to Rachelle who put all the pieces in place for the count that got rained out the previous week. See you next year! Here's the final tally:

Mallard 1
 Turkey Vulture 2
 Cooper's Hawk 1
 Broad-winged Hawk 1
 hawk sp. 1
 Mourning Dove 6
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird 1
 Red-bellied Woodpecker 19
 Downy Woodpecker 12
 Hairy Woodpecker 6

Northern Flicker 1
 Pileated Woodpecker 4
 Eastern Wood-Pewee 52
 Acadian Flycatcher 25
 Great Crested Flycatcher 3
 Yellow-throated Vireo 6
 Blue-headed Vireo 2
 Red-eyed Vireo 53
 Blue Jay 56
 American Crow 68

Northern Rough-winged Swallow 1
 Purple Martin 1
 Tree Swallow 3
 Black-capped Chickadee 82
 Tufted Titmouse 28
 Red-breasted Nuthatch 12
 White-breasted Nuthatch 20
 Brown Creeper 6
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 9
 Wood Thrush 16

American Robin 24
 Gray Catbird 3
 Cedar Waxwing 12
 Ovenbird 49
 Blue-winged Warbler 1
 Common Yellowthroat 1
 Hooded Warbler 19
 American Redstart 1
 Chestnut-sided Warbler 1
 Pine Warbler 32

Black-throated Green Warbler 22
 Eastern Towhee 5
 Chipping Sparrow 23
 Song Sparrow 1
 Scarlet Tanager 23
 Northern Cardinal 41
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak 1
 Indigo Bunting 13
 Red-winged Blackbird 5
 Common Grackle 2

Brown-headed Cowbird 6
 Baltimore Oriole 5
 American Goldfinch 9

View this checklist online at
<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S23989254>

Meet the Flock: Bruce Bowman



Although you may not have met him, most of you will recognize Bruce Bowman as the guy who tirelessly manages our birding listserv. He lost his beloved wife of 33 years, Mickey, this past January after a prolonged illness. He has three stepsons, two of whom live in the Ann Arbor area, and his extended family is scattered over the Midwest.

Bruce went to Indiana University for both a B.S./M.S. in Physics and to Michigan for a Ph.D. in Engineering Mechanics (1971). He is a big fan of IU and U of M basketball and football and is proud of the academic standards at both schools.

He did his dissertation work at the U of M Highway Safety Research Institute (HSRI), later renamed the Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI). He was offered a position on staff and accepted, little knowing that he would retire from there! He was in the Biosciences Division at UMTRI. Much of his work was in analytical modeling and computer simulation model development. He also did applications work with the models in relation to crash testing and design of vehicle occupant compartments and safety restraint systems. After going on a

half-time appointment, he did a lot of consulting work for the automotive industry in product liability litigation, ultimately retiring from UMTRI as a Research Scientist.

Bruce got involved with birding in Washtenaw County in 1993 (except for a few CBCs in the mid 1980s). The number of birders in Washtenaw County began increasing after 1991–1992, when Rick Neubig created the birders@umich.edu email list. Rick and Charles Swift ran the list until 1996–1997. Bruce took over as list administrator in 1997, and has been serving in that capacity ever since!

He credits his fascination with birds as a result of spending time with his grandfather, R. Paul Bowman, who was a lifelong amateur naturalist. He was mentored by his younger brother Gary, who started birding 11 years before he did. He also feels grateful for mentoring by Karen Markey, Dea Armstrong, Don Chalfant, and Lathe Claflin, as well as Rick and Charles. In his words, “It’s not a stretch to say that Washtenaw/Jackson County birding would in all likelihood be much less alive than it is today without the dedicated involvement of those people. Most are still contributing mightily to birding in Washtenaw County. It is important to mention here, though, the significance of the book *The Birds of Washtenaw County, Michigan* (1992), coauthored by Mike Kielb, John Swales, and Dick Wolinski.”

His best birding memories involve: (1) a whirlwind five-day birding tour of Whitefish Point Bird Observatory and area, Nichols Arboretum, and Point Pelee National Park with his brother and friends, where he collected 78 lifers; (2) birding Grand Cayman Island on a motor scooter two or three days each February from 1988 to 1994; (3) a one-week trip with Bill Sverdlik to the Lower Rio Grand Valley in March 1998; and (4) an 11-day family trip to Trinidad and Tobago. He has many fond memories of birds seen, but what makes a birding experience most memorable for him is the birding itself and time spent with birding friends and family. His favorite place to bird in Washtenaw County is Dolph Park. He feels the most pressing conservation issue for birds—and much more—may be the continuing destruction of the Amazon rain forest.

Here’s his advice for new birders: When you are older marry a good person—one who rates 99 out of 100 if you can find one and if he/she will have you. If your spouse is also a birder, give him/her another 50 points. If not, but he/she at least “gets” birding, then be generous. That’s still worth 50. In the meantime while you are waiting for time to pass and for many birds and birders to cross your path, try to make yourself worth 149 points on a scale of 0 to 100. And, while you’re still young, put a premium on learning bird songs. Birding by ear is probably a more useful skill than being able to spot birds quickly. Learn bird songs and other vocalizations while your ears are still good and your brain allows easy filing away of new data. If when you are older you can no longer hear high-pitched songs, you will get hearing aids or a frequency-lowering device such as SongFinder and you won’t miss a beat. I didn’t even know

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Board Members

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Juliet Berger
president@washtenawaudubon.org

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Mike Sefton
vp-programs@washtenawaudubon.org

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Ellie Shappirio
treasurer@washtenawaudubon.org

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secretary@washtenawaudubon.org

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Rachelle Roake
membership@washtenawaudubon.org

Field Trips

Bryn Martin
fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org

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Cathy Theisen
cathythevet@comcast.net

Webmaster/Technology and Social Media

Rob French
rwfrenchjr@comcast.net

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sjohnson@emerson-school.org

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grackle@umich.edu

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.

Meet the Flock: Matty Hack

Matty Hack is a senior at Community High School in Ann Arbor. He lives with his parents, brother (and birding buddy) Benjamin, and two beloved tabby cats—Callisto and Piper. He first became interested in birds at age nine and describes seeing “spark birds” that inspired him to want to know more, which led to looking for birds and learning about them.

Matty joined the Washtenaw Audubon Society in 2011 after being encouraged by his ornithologist uncle to seek out the local Audubon Society, and it opened a new world of mentors to him. While he feels the entire WAS membership has supported and encouraged him, he gives special thanks to Dea Armstrong, Mike Sefton, Don Chalfant, Ellie Shappirio, Sherri Smith, Roger Wykes, Sue Johnson, and Juliet Berger.

It’s difficult for Matty to choose a favorite birding memory because there are so many to recall, but a certain Spruce Grouse encounter in 2012 at Whitefish Point still enchants him. He was with a small group of birders, observing this lifer in a spruce tree, when it flew to the ground and graciously paraded within feet of the group for nearly an hour, allowing lots of amazing looks for photography, sketching, and general adoration! Matty thinks this might be one of the best ways to see a lifer!



Matty loves to bird throughout Washtenaw County, but his favorite birding spots include Crooked Lake, Waterloo SRA, Sharon Short Hills Preserve, Dolph, the Arb, and Eberwhite Woods. He hopes someday to bird the tropical rainforests and cloud forests of Costa Rica and Ecuador, and he wouldn’t turn down a trip to bird the fynbos of South Africa, either!

Matty stays very active in the birding community. With his brother he is a township leader for the May Count covering Sylvan and Lyndon townships. He and Benjamin have also worked with Dea Armstrong in the City of Ann Arbor Breeding Bird Survey, and they participate in the Christmas Bird Count. Matty is a writer and blog editor for the ABA Young Birder Blog, the Eyrie, and earlier in 2015 he had his first article published in *Birding*, the magazine of the American Birding Association. With Benjamin and Sarah Toner, he is co-founder of the Michigan Young Birders Club and he edits their newsletter.

Matty believes climate change is the most serious conservation concern for birds today. He worries that changing climates will accelerate habitat loss, and resultant ecological shifts will be detrimental to worldwide bird populations. He encourages new birders to join an Audubon group and start attending programs and field trips. While mentors are very important in developing birding skills, he reminds us that birding alone is also a great way to practice skills and deepen appreciation for this craft. He feels new birders should begin learning to bird by ear as soon as possible, and should realize that it may take years to build up a reliable repertoire of bird language. He likes eBird and listing, but not if it takes attention away from the true appreciation and immersion in the natural world that he so enjoys. If you would like to contact Matty, and learn more about his thoughts on the craft of birding, you can reach him at mdh98@me.com. [profile by Cathy Theisen] [photo credit: Daniel Hack]

2015 May Count Results and Highlights

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5 Prothonotary Warblers, 12 Cerulean Warblers, and a Yellow-throated Warbler near the Saline River. The Prairie Warbler continued to sing for at least the third year and was counted off of Hankerd Road, and 2 Yellow-breasted Chats were heard on count day. There were 86 individuals of my favorite bird, the Scarlet Tanager! For those interested, we will post the complete listing of birds by Township on our website at www.washtenawaudubon.org.

I recently reviewed the results of the 2014 NAMC, which was published in the latest issue of the journal, *Michigan Birds and Natural History*. Our count of 183 species last year ranked second in the state and first in the southern Lower Peninsula. We were only one species behind the top county in Michigan—Iosco—which was the highest species count ever recorded. For the 21st straight year we ranked #1 in the state in Party Hours, (286). Our number of Volunteers (70) and of individual birds counted (22,669) was top in the state last year as well. I know it is because of all of the fabulous volunteers we have here in Washtenaw County that we are able to find so many species and birds, both this year and in previous years. Thanks to everyone who helped out, including our Area Leaders, Dave Borneman, Matty and Benjamin Hack, Ellie Shappirio, Dan Thiry, John Farmer, John Swales, Martin Bialecki, Roger Wykes, Sarah Toner and Mike Sefton. Special thanks to Diana Kern, who took over as a new Area Leader in Scio Township, and who, with her sister, Deb, has promised a much needed revision of all of our tallying forms for next year. I look forward to next year's count, and I hope I can rely upon all of your help again—I will need it!!!!

Bruce Bowman *(continued from page 4)*

that birders used their ears to identify birds until I had been birding for about a year. That was because I couldn't hear the birds very well. I was 52 when I began birding, but even when young I didn't hear well. If you are young and can't hear the birds your young friends are hearing, make sure your parents know that you have a hearing problem. It might be important for you to get hearing aids. Most importantly, new birders—like everyone else—should work hard at being a 99-point person themselves or as close to that as possible. I hope this doesn't sound too moralistic. A common bit of advice that birders hear—and give—is “Marry another birder.” There are more important things in life than birding. (Not many, though ☺.)

He feels the best way for new birders to get to know others is to go on bird walks with other birders—ones you don't know and ones you do. You'll soon know them all, and you'll be a part of one, big, happy birding family. If there is no leader, that's okay. The leaderless bird walks have been doing smashingly well, but whenever you are able to go out on a bird walk or excursion into the countryside led by one of those consummate leaders at Washtenaw Audubon, do it! Contact Bruce at bbowman99@comcast.net and thank him for his service to Washtenaw County birding! [profile by Cathy Theisen]

Birds of the River District

Sunday, August 30, 9:00–10:30 a.m.

Come join Mary Mathias and others for a morning bird hike along the Huron River starting at the end of the Cascades, which is near the Broadway Bridge in Ann Arbor. Park at #3 on the map found at <http://www.a2gov.org/departments/Parks-Recreation/parks-places/argo/Documents/Argo%20Parking%20Shuttle%20Map.pdf>. *Meet at the metal gate at the entrance to the Cascades on Swift St.* (by the intersection with Pontiac Trail, across from Sic Transit bicycles).

This event is being sponsored by River Hop 2015. To see the complete list of events, go to www.riverhop.org. Note that the Leslie Science and Nature Center will have a raptor feeding from 6:00–7:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 29, as part of the River Hop events.

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (Aug/Sept/Oct 2015)

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.

Thursday mornings August 27 through October 8:00 a.m to 11:00 a.m.
(August 27; September 3, 10, 17, 24; October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29)

Weekly Fall Migration Walks at Nichols Arboretum (Leaderless)

Every Thursday morning from August 27 through the end of October, participants will gather at 8:00 a.m. at the end of the Riverview Drive cul-de-sac (off Geddes Road) near the eastern edge of the Arboretum for these leaderless walks to observe fall migration. The birders available that day will choose a route and head out in search of migrants. The walks go until roughly 11:00 a.m., but anyone can join or leave the group as his or her schedule requires.

Saturday morning, September 5 8:00 a.m to 11:00 a.m.

Fall Migration at Hudson Mills Metropark

Please join Karen Markey for a WAS-sponsored tour of fall migrants at Hudson Mills Metropark on Saturday, September. 5. We will meet at 8:00 a.m. sharp at the flagpole in the front of the Activity Center. If the entry booth is unmanned, you can purchase a \$7 daily parking permit from Metropark staff at the Activity Center. We will be searching for fall migrants especially warblers, vireos, cuckoos, and flycatchers. The resident woodpeckers are fun, too.

The dew on the lawn may be heavy so please wear appropriate footwear. Bring insect repellent—it has been very buggy. No pets are allowed on the nature trails. Please, no strollers either.

The park's website is at <http://www.metroparks.com/Hudson-Mills-Metropark>.

We will bird until bird activity slows down, usually about 10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. You can leave the group at any time. Just ask us how to hike back to the Activity Center's carpark.

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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	Membership Dues	
Additional Donation \$_____		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Household	\$25 (online only \$20)
Name: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$15 (online only \$10)
Address: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Senior	\$15 (online only \$10)
Phone: _____	Email: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 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.*

September 16 Antarctica: Penguins and Prions

Join Cathy Theisen for a program on one of the world's most beautiful and remote birding destinations, the frozen continent of Antarctica. In addition to its fabulous avifauna, including albatrosses, skuas, and penguins, Antarctica also is home to whales and seals. Dr. Cathy Theisen is a veterinarian, world traveler, the Education Chair for Washtenaw Audubon, and a keen birder.

October 21 Birding Jamaica

Join Bryn Martin for a program on Washtenaw Audubon's most recent overseas field trip, to the lovely island of Jamaica, where there are a number of birds found nowhere else in the world. Bryn Martin is an avid world birder, a high school teacher, and Washtenaw Audubon's field trip coordinator.

November 18 How You Can Help Birds to Survive

Join Barbara Lucas for an informative program on ways we can help birds to survive in an increasingly urbanized environment. From making our yards more hospitable to birds, to preventing fatal window strikes, there are many things we can do to help our feathered friends. Barbara Lucas is an environmental media consultant for Washtenaw County, and is the host of WEMU-FM's The Green Room, a radio program exploring local environmental issues.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

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