



NEWSLETTER

September/October 2017

Washtenaw Audubon in Spain by Bryn Martin

We were happy to finally be in the Pyrenees Mountains for several reasons. First, we now had a respite from the unusually high temperatures in the lower-elevated portions of Spain. Second, the views became increasingly more stunning. (The countryside prior to this was beautiful in its own way, but flat fields of grassland can't compete with alpine views in my opinion.) Third, we were on the trail of a unique, gorgeous bird called the Wallcreeper. Imagine a large nuthatch with a long beak. Instead of trees, it creeps along the sides of sheer cliffs. It is not a bird easily encountered. We had to drive as high up as we could. Then, we had to hoof it another hour or so up the mountain on a twisty, rock-strewn trail to get in the prime location. Even after this, the bird wasn't guaranteed. It became a wait and hope. But the birding gods were with us. After not too long, the bird finally made an appearance. And I didn't tell you the best part yet: when it takes flight, the drab-grey Wallcreeper reveals gorgeous, flashy red wings fringed in black and speckled with white dots. It almost looks like the bird has been graced with the wings of a butterfly. What a beauty! The bird returned multiple times, even coming down relatively close, giving us spectacular views.

Eight Washtenaw Audubon Society members and friends traveled to Spain at the end of June 2017. It was WAS's sixth international trip and its first to Europe. While Europe is not known to be as birdy as the tropical regions of the world, we still saw a respectable 200+ species on this ten-day birding tour. Wallcreeper was definitely a high target for most people on the trip, but there were also a number of other goodies we got to see. We did extremely well with raptors: 4 species of vultures (including

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President's Letter

Dear Washtenaw Audubon members and friends,

Fall migration is upon us, and more of us are out on the trails, looking for flocks of warblers and other migrants. By the time this newsletter is published, sparrows of all sorts should be showing up in backyards and parks. I'm waiting for my first White-throated Sparrow of the fall and know it won't be long before they'll be everywhere.

This summer and fall I've tried to bird in a few new locations I've never been to before, and I have had fun and seen some good birds. Jessica Adamczyk, our Membership Chair, and I birded Leslie Woods, off Upland Drive this summer, and discovered a treasure trove of beautiful breeding birds—Orioles, Buntings, Grosbeaks, and a calling Great Crested Flycatcher. I don't know how this park measures up in fall migration, but it has the largest and tallest trees of any park in the Ann Arbor city limits, a virtual guarantee of "Warbler Neck!" On the west side of town, Fritz Park was full of warblers this spring, and has made it to full eBird Hotspot status, thanks to new WAS members Emily and Andrew Tillinghast's efforts to bird there while their children enjoyed the playground. It's a small gem of a park, adjacent to Eberwhite Woods. Eberwhite also hosted several unusual species for a park within the city limits. Of course, the Eberwhite Great Horned Owls are now famous, fledging two young this year, and bringing the community together because of them. But did you know that Acadian Flycatchers bred in Eberwhite this year? Emily observed them feeding a pair of juveniles in early September. Natural Area Preservation's Breeding Bird Survey Volunteer at Eberwhite, Karen Coupland, also documented the pair's presence during the breeding season. Young birder Benjamin Hack makes it his business to bird Eberwhite many times a week, keeping track of migrants at his patch. Marshall Park on Ann Arbor's northeast side is another hidden gem. Try to get out there in the spring for Ovenbirds and Wood Thrush! Tonight, I spent the evening counting Chimney Swifts at West Park entering the chimney on Miller Manor at dusk. We tallied 207 Swifts. This park is not an eBird Hotspot, but I've found it to be rather birdy all year round.

Join other WAS members at one of our many upcoming field trips and programs. We continue to meet for fall migration walks at Nichols Arboretum, the Arb, every Thursday through the end of October. We'll have more trips posting as fall progresses. And our fall lineup of programs has something of interest for every birder. Check our website, www.washtenawaudubon.org, this newsletter, or our Facebook page for more details.

One of the things I love most about being a birder is running into my friends in the most out of the way places, like at the end point of a dead end trail looking at a Stilt Sandpiper at Four Mile Lake. I hope to run into you at the next good bird. Until then,

As always,

I am for the birds,

Juliet Berger

Hudson Mills Trip Report: Lots of Onesies!

by Karen Markey

On Saturday, September 9, our large group of almost three dozen WAS birders sorted through wind-blown trees and falling leaves in search of fall migrants, finding mostly onesies, that is, single individuals, particularly warblers. Despite walking over three miles, we never did encounter a large pack of fall migrants. Mostly, we came across a couple of migrants here and there in the company of a handful of chickadees, then had to identify the migrants through a patchwork of swaying vines, branches, and leaves. We had an auspicious start with a big-headed flycatcher perched atop a high tree, but he didn't cooperate, flying away instead of perching closer to us.

We circled the southwest side of the park exclusively, inspecting the lightly wooded and open areas on the disk golf course and nature trails. The few warblers we saw in multiples were Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, and Redstarts. We would have eagerly traded good looks at several conspicuous Red-eyed Vireos for better looks at Scarlet Tanager and most warblers.

What a difference a day makes! On Friday, I struggled to find Redstarts but had multiples of eight warbler species with Bay-breasted Warblers being the most numerous. Additionally, Swainson's and Wood Thrushes were scarce on Friday and more common on Saturday. I bet that Friday's birds took advantage of brisk north winds to leave town while new birds moved in overnight.

Thanks to many in our group who heard and spotted birds and helped each other find them; Juliet was especially proactive in this regard. Special thanks to Norka who compiled the list, freeing me up to devote my attention to the birds. Let's do this again for spring warblers in mid-May!

Robin Hills Farm Ecology Series

As part of their Ecology Series of educational nature hikes, Robin Hills Farm in Chelsea will host monthly birding walks for all ages and experience levels, with avid birder and Washtenaw Audubon Society board member Jessica Adamczyk. These two-hour walks will follow a leisurely pace around the many rich habitat zones of the farm, with a focus on learning both visual and auditory identification skills. The next walks will be on October 14, November 11, and December 9. Learn more at <https://www.robinhillsfarm.com/ecology-series-birding-101/>.

Swift Nights Out, by Juliet Berger

While I am still waiting for a few reports from observers in the Ann Arbor area from our September 15-17 counts, I want to let you all know where the Swifts are roosting right now, so you can come out for the show. Our largest congregation of Chimney Swifts is at the University of Michigan's Yost Ice Arena, in Ann Arbor, where Johannes Postma counted over 1400 swifts on Sunday night of the Swift Count, as they poured into the chimney at dusk and after dark. The huge chimney Swift roost in use is near the IM Building, but is actually the massive chimney on the Northwest corner of the Yost Ice Arena Building, viewed from south of the IM Building in the parking area off State Street. Monday, September 18, we counted 1250 Swifts there, an awesome sight. Other large roosts included 415 W. Washington, which is the Old County Road Commission Building across from the YMCA. We counted 610 there Saturday night. Miller Manor, which we traditionally count from West Park band shell, is currently hosting around 240 Swifts. Downtown Chelsea has an active roost near Jackson and Main, and for those in the Saline area, the Saline First Presbyterian Church is hosting over 200 Swifts. Burns Park School, in Ann Arbor, a traditional hotspot for Swifts, is not so this year, with fewer than 10 Swifts.

Chimney Swifts are an abundant species in steep decline around the country due to loss of habitat. So keeping track of them in our area is important work. Thanks to the 14 volunteers who came out to help us count. Knowing where the Swifts roost will go a long way to helping us preserve historic chimneys/roosting areas for Chimney Swifts.

Washtenaw Audubon in Spain

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Lammergeier, Egyptian Vulture, and Cinereous Vulture), 5 eagles (including the endemic Spanish Imperial that we came close to missing), 2 harriers, 3 additional hawks, 2 kestrels, and 2 species of falcons (including a migrating Eleanor's Falcon). We saw 8 waders, 17 shorebirds, 12 gulls/terns, 5 woodpeckers (including White-backed and the Northern Wryneck), 8 larks, 16 Old World Warblers, 7 Tits (AKA chickadees), 9 Corvids, as well as European Rollers, Hoopoes, European Bee-eaters, and the Eurasian Thick-knees.

Our tour started in Madrid. After an overnight flight, we all met in this city to do a little non-birding sightseeing, visiting the museums, eating at delis, etc. (Still, we couldn't help ourselves from stopping to look at the city birds, such as European Magpies and Monk Parakeets.) From Madrid, we drove west into the grassland country in and around Monfrague National Park. I was struck by the sheer number of White Storks: nesting on buildings and telephone poles, stalking prey in the high grasses, and soaring about. We also were privy to the "world's most accessible Black Stork nest" which we were able to observe down in a gully. We found a group of Great Bustards, two species of Sandgrouse (Black-bellied and Pin-tailed), Iberian Magpies, a Bluethroat singing away, and vocally dueling European and Red-necked nightjars (some even flew about us, landing on poles and smack dab in the middle of the road).



We then traveled east of Madrid and up into the mountains. Now it was time for higher-elevation birds: Goldcrests and Firecrests (cousins to our kinglets), Ring Ouzels (essentially mountainous thrushes), White-throated Dippers, Alpine Accentors, Choughs (in the Corvid family), and Treecreepers. One day here we even drove up and over the mountains, crossing over into France, where we enjoyed a café snack. Up at the high elevations, sheep and cows were everywhere, crossing the road and stopping traffic. I was excited to find a Great Pyrenees dog leading a flock of sheep (in the Pyrenees!) as they were bred and trained to do. A border collie nipped at the sheep's heels to spur them on for good measure. I loved seeing these dogs "in their natural habitat."

We headed down to the Mediterranean coast where we spent our last few days exploring the delta of the Ebro River. This was a great finale as it was the birdiest place by far. (Access to water seems to do that.) The area produces a lot of rice, so we drove the dikes around the rice fields viewing the scores of waterfowl, waders, terns, gulls, shorebirds, avocets, and oystercatchers. The Ebro Delta is also famously full of flamingos! Our lodging here had an extremely cooperative nesting Eurasian Scops-Owl (he thought his cryptic coloration camouflaged him, but not from the watchful eyes of keen birders!)

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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.

and we lucked upon a Great Spotted Cuckoo that had supposedly already migrated back to Africa for the year.

Birding done, we finished up in the city of Barcelona. We wandered the city for half the day, viewing the unique Gaudi architecture, touring the historic downtown, and enjoying a meal along the touristy Ramblas. This trip had given us amazing scenery, cute and unique lodgings, delicious food, spectacular birds, and a few mammals, as well. (We saw many baby foxes, Spanish Ibex with a baby, and a couple of wild boars—I nearly hit a baby one zooming across the road in front of me as we were driving back in the dark one evening.) It was a really great group of birders to travel with, as well. Please consider joining us on the next international trip!

Photo credits: Page 4, left, Bluethroat, Mike Sefton; Page 4, right, European Bee-eater, Mike Sefton; Page 5, below, top, Group in Spain, Cathy Theisen; Page 5, below, bottom, Pied Avocet, Mike Sefton.



Washtenaw Audubon Society		
2016-17 Financial Report		
submitted by Elvera Shappirio		
Description	Checking	Money Market
Balances as of July 1, 2016	3,941.06	32,715.52
Checking Receipts	6,224.58	
Checking Expenditures	5,484.88	
Rita Burke bequest= 20,000.00 in money market error	-3.00	
Savings Interest		19.22
Transfers: CD interest to savings		33.58
Balances as of June 30, 2017	4,677.76	32,768.32
Checking Account Receipts		
Member Dues (by check or cash)	680.00	
Member dues by paypal	1,965.08	
Donations	300.00	
memorial donations: John Fyfe family	3,000.00	
memorial donations: Ruth Segura	190.00	
Library window donation	89.50	
Total Receipts	6,224.58	
Checking Account Expenditures		
Newsletter Printing and Postage,	894.72	
Speakers, Program Expense	0.00	
Grant: Whitefish Point	500.00	
Grant: Rouge River Bird Observatory	500.00	
Grant: Matty Hack	500.00	
Grant: Benjamin Hack	500.00	
HRWC Eagle Scout: Osprey viewing platform	350.00	
Hats and T-shirts	1131.60	to be sold 2017-18
Liability Insurance	525.00	
Banking costs (checkbooks) and fees	15.99	
Corporate Filing Fee	20.00	
Web site costs	23.98	
Property costs: Searles drain fee	108.32	
Gull trip van rentals -125.00 fees, total=369.38	299.27	
Postal box fee	86.00	
Safe Deposit box	30.00	
Total Expenses	5,484.88	
Savings Account Receipts		
Interest on Regular Savings Account	19.22	
Interest on \$10,000.00 CD	33.58	
Total Savings Account Interest	52.80	
Investment Account		
The investment account includes one CD	9996.98	
The interest is transferred to the regular savings account on a monthly basis.		
The \$9996.98 CD matures Sept. 2017		

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (Oct 2017 – Dec 2017)

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 Bryn at the email address above.

Fall migration walks in Nichols Arboretum

Please join one of these popular, leaderless walks to observe fall migration at the Arb. Every Thursday morning from now through the end of October, participants will gather at 8:00 a.m. at the end of the Riverview Dr. cul-de-sac (off Geddes Rd.) near the eastern edge of the Arboretum. The assembled birders will choose a route or routes and head out in search of migrants, many of which will be in their first-year plumage. The walks go until roughly 11:00 a.m., but everyone can join or leave the group as his or her schedule requires. These walks are a great, low-key way to get started in bird watching. All are welcome; it is not necessary to be a member of WAS. **NOTE:** There will be a Sunday morning Arb walk, Sunday, October 15 at 8:00 a.m. See above for more details.

Saturday, October 7

The Big Sit (Independence Lake County Park)

This is a low-key international competition that Don Chalfant has organized and participated in for the past 16 years. The task is to try to identify by sight or sound as many bird species as possible while remaining in a circle of 17 feet in diameter. The timing can be completely flexible. You can arrive before dawn to join in the owling or you can come after breakfast, in the afternoon—whatever works for you. It is also a great outing for those with restricted mobility since everything takes place in a fixed spot. For those staying for any significant amount of time, we recommend bringing food and a chair, in addition to your binoculars. (Rain date is Sunday, October 8th. If bad weather is projected, be sure to check the birders listserve. This decision will be made by 4:00 a.m.)

Saturday, November 18, 2017

Belle Isle State Park (with Oakland Audubon Society), Leader: Jim Koppin

We will join forces with Oakland Audubon on this trip to Belle Isle. Located in the Detroit River just upstream from downtown Detroit and covering nearly a thousand acres, Belle Isle is an excellent spot for locating migrating or wintering waterfowl, gulls, sparrows, and raptors. Meet at the Nature Center at 8 a.m. For more information about timing and carpooling, please check the Washtenaw Audubon Society Web site.

December 2017, date to be determined

Gull Trip to the Salem Landfill

For more information, please check the Washtenaw Audubon Society Web site.

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.*

October 18 Spain with Washtenaw Audubon

Join Washtenaw Audubon's field trip organizer Bryn Martin for a report on our most recent international field trip: Spain. From desert to high Pyrenees, we visited various habitats and saw over 200 species of birds, including the elusive Wallcreeper. Bryn teaches high school in Livonia and is an avid international birder.

November 15 Birding Panama

Join Lathe Claflin for a program on a recent trip to eastern Panama organized by former Washtenaw Audubon member Matt Hysell. With over 250 species seen, rarities included Crested Eagle, Harpy Eagle, and Streaked Xenops. Lathe is a retired U-M professor who has led many field trips for Jackson Audubon, Washtenaw Audubon, Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, and the Haehnle Audubon Sanctuary in Jackson County.

December No formal Wednesday program in December

Join us on Saturday, December 16, for the Christmas Bird Count! Beginning birders are welcome to participate in the count. Visit the Washtenaw Audubon Society web site for more information.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

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