



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

November / December 2022

The Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count is Saturday, December 17, 2022

Please join our dedicated cadre of volunteers for this year's Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count (CBC), 77th edition! After what feels like an oddly prolonged warm spell, winter appears to have arrived, with a rather nasty snow squall moving through during yesterday's Michigan game. Although some will bemoan the arrival of wintry weather, I tend to look at it as the necessary kick-off for my bout of CBC-*unruhe* (the excitement associated with the upcoming CBC) during November and December. I found myself scanning the parks and ponds in my territory for any unusual birds and take mental notes to keep checking on them, just in case they stick around until December 17th... I have a feeling I may not be alone in this!

Based on the experiences of the past two years, I think it is safe to say that the Covid-pandemic has greatly affected the way the Ann Arbor CBC is run. This (likely) new normal means that the number of participants, both in the field and watching feeders, has greatly increased, and many small groups cover many more natural (or not so natural) areas in our circle, thus greatly increasing coverage and bird and species tallies. *<Continued on Page 3>*



Wintry Scenes at Barton Dam during the 2017 CBC
(Mike Sefton)

President's Letter

Dear Washtenaw Audubon,

November gales signal that winter is coming, I can feel it. We are lucky that waterfowl migrate through our region, with some staying to winter over. Not only do we get to see colorful duck species visit our region, but we get to watch them as they pair up in preparation for breeding season in the spring. One of the questions I get asked frequently this time of year is, where do you go birding in the winter in Washtenaw County? I like to go out and visit local lakes and ponds before they freeze over, and then areas of open water on the Huron River, after the local lakes freeze. Walking the Border to Border (B2B) trail between Mitchell Field and Gallup Park can be very productive, especially if seeing ducks up close is my goal, which of course it always is. Once lakes freeze, North Hydro Park in Ypsilanti, and North Bay Park/Ford Lake Boardwalk are great places for duck viewing. Washtenaw Audubon Field Trip Chair Matthew Spoor led a field trip at the end of October to Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve. What a great place to see so many ducks!! Don't miss a chance to explore this new State Park, and waterfowl hotspot.

Also, what winter would be complete without driving around Superior Township, on Vreeland Road, looking for Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Harriers? Perhaps the State Endangered Short-eared Owls will linger there again this winter. Maybe a Northern Shrike will again choose this area for a winter territory. Birding is a treasure hunt, and we never know what we will find.

When I think about winter in our region, I think of the Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count (CBC), as do so many other dedicated birders. See CBC Compiler, Jacco Gelderloos' article in this newsletter about our CBC and how you can participate, and visit our website at www.washtenawaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count/ to sign up to help. There's nothing more fun than setting out on a brisk wintery day, with the goal of trying to find all the birds you can find. This year marks the 77th Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count.

I hope to see you all on a snowy trail, by a half-frozen lake, trying to find that White-winged Scoter that keeps eluding me!

As always, I am for the birds,

Juliet Berger, President
Washtenaw Audubon Society

A gorgeous Praying Mantis on the 9/29 Thursday morning Arb walk: a non-birding highlight, for sure! (*Bill Nolting*)



<Continued from Page 1>

Luckily, after a bit of a rough start accommodating this influx in 2020, I think I and the area leaders have become more adept at incorporating all these volunteers into our circle, and the 2021 CBC went significantly more smoothly.

Over the past year, vaccination levels have continued to increase and many of us have been boosted once, if not twice or more. Life seems to slowly be returning to some semblance of normalcy, and, unlike years past, so far, the National Audubon Society has not announced any major restrictions on how CBCs are run. Of course, that is not to say that they won't come out with any such announcements in the weeks to come. In any case, please keep an eye on the Washtenaw Audubon CBC page for the latest updates: <https://washtenawaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count/>.

On that page, you can find all of our CBC info: maps of each of the eight count areas, a list of each area and its area leader's contact information (also see below), and feeder watch information and forms. Given the above-referenced large numbers of participants, I would like to I urge you all to sign up for the area of your preference by registering on the WAS CBC page. Doing so makes it that much easier for the area leaders and me to keep track of how many observers there are in any given area, which, in turn, helps me with deciding whether or not an observer may need to be reassigned. If you don't have a preferred area, you can indicate that on the form as well – that will then allow me to assign you where you are most needed to ensure good coverage of our circle. Of course, you can also still contact the area leader or me directly to sign up - check out the detailed maps on the [WAS website](#) to see which of the eight count areas suits you best.

Feeder watches are a great way to contribute for those among you, who would rather not brave potentially inclement weather (like last year's!), or who have only a limited amount of time available on count day. As with field observers, I would ask that you please use the sign-up form on the WAS website to participate. Navigate to the web page or contact feeder watch coordinator Kurt Hagemester for more information, to sign up, or to get feeder watch forms. Note that your feeder MUST be within the count circle, otherwise the data is invalid for our count. To find out, type your address into Google Maps or check with me. In case you're not sure what geographical portion of our circle is covered by each of the eight count areas, check out the maps on our CBC page.



This dapper Red-shouldered Hawk was found at the Whitmore Lake Preserve during the 2021 CBC (Mike Kelly)

I am very happy to announce that with the easing of Covid restrictions, we can once again have our CBC potluck and tally event at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens meeting room! Plan to show up with your dish (see the sign-in form) around 5:00-5:30 p.m., enjoy a lovely meal and banter, and around 6:30 p.m., sit back and find out what birds were found by our counters - personally, I thoroughly enjoy the "oohs" and "aahs" associated with a rare bird or with an impressive tally for a given species! Often, some historical context can be provided about the significance of the data we collected. So join us!

Historically, the Ann Arbor count always takes place on the 3rd Saturday in December, which means this year's CBC will be on the 17th. That prevents scheduling conflicts with other nearby counts. Each count circle covers an area 15 miles in diameter; the Ann Arbor circle is centered on the Foster Road bridge, near the intersection of Maple Road and Huron River Drive. It extends roughly from Dexter in the west to Dixboro in the east, and from Whitmore Lake in the north to the Ann Arbor Airport in the south – the maps on the WAS CBC page show the circle's outline in lovely detail. Our objective is to identify all bird species present in this circle and count how many individuals of each species are present. In addition to the daylight bird census, several hardy observers will conduct a pre-dawn search for owls. If you're interested in getting up really early and encounter some nocturnal birds, make sure to indicate so on the sign-up form!

As always, information regarding the count will be updated immediately if any of the above changes – keep an eye on <http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/> where any new information will be posted as count day approaches.

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4	Tim McKay	(734) 657-6401	tamckay@umich.edu
5	Jessica Adamczyk	(847) 308-4975	jessica.adamczyk13@gmail.com
6	Jacco Gelderloos	(734) 973-9422	jigelderloos@yahoo.com
7	Kurt Hagemester	(734) 663-9746	kurt.liz.h@gmail.com
8	Matt Spoor	(701) 610-1203	matthew.spoor@gmail.com

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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.

CBC Compiler:

Jacco Gelderloos (734) 973-9422 jigelderloos@yahoo.com

Feeder Watch Coordinator:

Kurt Hagemester (734) 663-9746 kurt.liz.h@gmail.com

Potluck Coordinator:

Nancy French nfrench@umich.edu

Ann Arbor CBC Web Site:

<https://washtenawaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count/>

National Audubon Society:

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

See you all on the 17th!

Jacco G., Ann Arbor CBC compiler

Update from the Education Chair

On a chilly, damp day in October, I had the opportunity to meet with a group of fourth-grade students at Rudolph Steiner School. We talked about birding and what types of birds might be migrating through this time of the year. Afterwards, we took a walk outside and looked for whatever species we could find. We saw a few woodpeckers and local songbirds in the trees as well as large groups of robins and cedar waxwings flying overhead. If you have groups of people, young or old, that you would like to introduce to birding, please let me know at education@washtenawaudubon.org.



A future Roger Tory Peterson in the making? (Victor Chen)

Big Sit Results

On a gorgeously starry, but also quite cold October morning, birders started trickling into Independence Lake County Park for the 2022 edition of the Big Sit. While trying to stay warm, we started off the day's list with some pre-dawn Canada Geese, followed by both Great Horned Owl and Eastern Screech-Owl, and a surprise American Woodcock. As several more birders arrived, so did the birds and we added quite a few species during the hours after dawn. However, as the day progressed, the wind picked up significantly, which really reduced bird activity and around 1:00 p.m. we called it a day, but not before uncorking a bottle of sparkling wine to celebrate the 25th edition of our Big Sit in style!

Species seen/heard (54 total):

Canada Goose	Herring Gull	Pileated Woodpecker	House Finch
Mute Swan	Great Blue Heron	Northern Flicker	Purple Finch
Wood Duck	Turkey Vulture	Blue Jay	American Goldfinch
Blue-winged Teal	Osprey	American Crow	White-throated Sparrow
Gadwall	Northern Harrier	Black-capped Chickadee	Song Sparrow
Mallard	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Tufted Titmouse	Red-winged Blackbird
American Black Duck	Cooper's Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Rusty Blackbird
Ring-necked Duck	Bald Eagle	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Common Grackle
Wild Turkey	Red-tailed Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Screech-Owl	Carolina Wren	
Mourning Dove	Great Horned Owl	European Starling	
American Coot	Belted Kingfisher	Gray Catbird	
Sandhill Crane	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird	
American Woodcock	Downy Woodpecker	American Robin	
Ring-billed Gull	Hairy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	

Hits and Misses:

We had several species I'll refer to as hits, as each had been recorded on only five or fewer of the previous 24 Sits: Black Duck (5), N. Harrier (4), Wild Turkey (1), Pileated Woodpecker (4), Purple Finch (5), and Blue-winged Teal (4).

We had a couple significant misses (species which had been recorded on 18 or more of the previous 24 Sits: Killdeer (19) and Rock Pigeon (20).

Biggest surprise: Not only had Purple Finch been recorded on only five previous Sits, we saw an estimated 10-15 individuals, perhaps more. (They were seen so consistently we were unsure if we were counting the same or different birds.)

FYI: finding 54 species this year increased our average for the 25 Sits from 52.3 to 52.4!!!!!!

Don Chalfant



Scenes from this year's Big Sit (*Jacco Gelderloos*)

Field Trip Calendar

Weekend Waterfowl Walk at Gallup Park

Saturday, November 19th, 9:00 am - 11:30 am

Winter waterfowl are in full breeding plumage this time of year and a joy to look at. Join us as we walk the B2B trail along the pond in search of these and other winter birds. Here is an [eBird bar chart](#) for the park and a list of [November species here](#).
Directions: Meet at the Gallup Park Playground parking lot ([map](#)) at the eastern terminus of Gallup Park Rd. Leader: Matthew Spoor

Belle Isle State Park with Oakland Audubon

Saturday, December 3rd, 8:00 am - 11:00 am

Join WAS friends and Oakland Audubon Society for a tour of this State Park, a gem in the Detroit River. We'll search for waterfowl, gulls, waders, raptors and other goodies on the river and in the woods. We'll tour mostly by car but will stop and get out with scopes and binoculars. A mile long walk in the interior is planned for migrating songbirds and other feathered friends.
Directions: Meet at the Nature Center parking lot ([map](#)) at 8 am sharp. For those interested in carpooling, we will meet at the Plymouth Road Park and Ride ([map](#)) for a 7:00 am departure. A State Park Recreation Passport is required to drive on the island. Leaders: Don Burlett & Jeff Stacy

Duck Walk at Ford Lake with Ypsilanti Township Library

Saturday December 3, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Did you know that there are over 25 species of waterfowl that regularly visit Washtenaw County? Join us for a family-friendly event as we partner with the Ypsilanti Library to look for ducks, geese and swans at Ford Lake. All ages and skill levels are invited. Bring a scope if you have one.
Directions: Meet at the Grove Street parking lot at 526 S. Grove Street in Ypsilanti. Leader: Victor Chen

BIPOC Bird Walk at Barton Nature Area

Saturday, December 10, 9:30 am - 11:30 am

We invite all people from the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community and our white allies to join us on this walk to look for waterfowl and winter birds. All ages and skill levels are invited. We will have extra binoculars if you do not have any. Bring scopes if you have one as we will also check out the pond for waterfowl.
Directions: Meet at the parking lot off of E Huron River Drive north of Bird Road. Leader: Victor Chen

The 77th Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 17, 12 am - 11:59 pm

See the article above or visit <https://washtenawaudubon.org/christmas-bird-count/>
Compiler: Jacco Gelderloos

New Year's Walk at Gallup Park

Sunday, January 1, 9:00 am

What will be the first bird you see in 2022? Get a boost to next year's list by joining the crazy birders of Washtenaw County for a refreshing New Year's morning bird walk. Directions: Meet at the Gallup Park playground parking lot at the east end of Gallup Park Rd. Leaders: Juliet Berger & Matthew Spoor

BIPOC Bird Walk, Arb-Gallup Pathway

Saturday, January 14, 9:30 am - 11:30 am

We invite all people from the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community and our white allies to join us on this walk to look for waterfowl and winter birds. All ages and skill levels are invited. We will have extra binoculars if you do not have any. Meet at the small playground just past the one-lane bridge as you enter Gallup Park. Leader: Victor Chen

NE Argentina with Washtenaw Audubon Society

Sunday, August 6 - Saturday, August 19

Please consider joining Washtenaw Audubon Society this upcoming August for a birding adventure to the amazing country of Argentina! We will spend two weeks exploring the northeastern corner of the country, its various habitats and its huge array of birds and other wildlife.

We start in the cosmopolitan city of Buenos Aires and end at the magnificent Iguazu Falls. There are many habitats we will explore: the Atlantic coast, tropical rainforest, pampas grasslands and the Ibera wetlands (one of the largest in the world; here we will also be birding by boat). Highlights: the flightless Rhea, almost 20 species of waterfowl not found in North America, the large Jabiru stork, 10 types of herons and 4 species of ibis, over 35 species of raptors, many beautiful and colorful parrots, the Great Dusky Swift (that braves the power of Iguazu Falls to roost behind them), trogons, motmots, more than 12 species of hummingbird, 5 species of toucan (including the Toco Toucan, the world's largest and arguably most famous), over 70 species of flycatchers (!), antbirds, manakins, colorful jays and tanagers, the giant cowbird and many, many more. In addition to the birds, good numbers of mammals will be seen, from herds of capybaras to troops of monkeys. There will be numerous caimans and, if we are lucky, we could also see an anaconda.

The trip is limited to 7 people, so if you would like to join the tour, please let me know ASAP. (If curious for more details: pricing, detailed itinerary, complete checklist of birds or any general questions, please email Bryn Martin at brynmartin446@gmail.com).

September-October 2022: Early Fall Highlights

The Highlights

Although the vast majority of Washtenaw County's **Cattle Egret** records fall in May, there is some precedent of the species showing up in our neck of the woods during October, and even November. However, even though it has happened a few times before, there was absolutely NO precedent for the flock of 18 birds that appeared in one birder's binoculars on 10/26 – this flock almost single-handedly doubled the previous total for Cattle Egrets in Washtenaw County (19 birds)! Over the course of the 26th, the birds moved around a bit, roosting on the marina's docks, as well as the lake's shore, but providing numerous local birders with a spectacle that is unlikely to happen many more times!



Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Whitmore Lake, Lake (left: Isaac Polanski (10/26); right: Nui Moreland (10/26))

Shorebird migration is often best during fall and tends to be much more drawn-out than that of the spring. Spectacular fall-time finds have been made, among them the 2018 Spotted Redshank and the 2013 Red Phalarope. Perhaps not quite of that caliber, a **Wilson's Phalarope** that briefly graced Four Mile Lake on 9/1 still made for only the 13th local record and was the first seen locally since 2017. Unfortunately, it stayed only very briefly and was seen by only a very select group of lucky birders.

Perhaps not quite as rare per se, but most certainly notable for the date it was seen, a **Forster's Tern** over Silver Lake on 10/13 beat the local late date by a month! There are precious few local records of any tern species and for a brief moment the bird suggested it might be the county's first record for Arctic Tern. Although that hope was dashed when the bird came closer, it made for an amazing find nonetheless.



Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*, Four Mile Lake, September 1 2022 (Linda Ar)



Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*, Silver Lake, October 13 2022 (Brendan Klick)

Waterfowl through Rails

Early **Snow Geese** arrived at the Platt & Bemis prison pond on 10/9 and flew over LeFurge Woods on 10/21; each observation involved single, white-morph birds. After a sprinkling of **Northern Shovelers** here and there during September, there were only two birds left in October, at North Bay Park on the 24th. **Northern Pintails** were not easy to locate, but the two sites that hosted them did so for several days: up to 6 birds from 10/10 – 10/14 at Four Mile Lake and a quartet from 10/13 – 10/31 at North Bay Park. The latter group made for an excellent study of the species's molt pattern.

A **Canvasback** on Whitmore Lake on 10/30 was a bit ahead of the main southbound push for that species, as were the four **Redheads** it was associating with. A **Greater Scaup** was picked out from among the other ducks on Portage Lake on 10/27. Although it has become nearly annual during the 2000s, a **Surf Scoter** on Four Mile Lake on 10/9 still made for a very pleasant surprise. Much like the aforementioned *Aythya* diving ducks, a female **Common Goldeneye** at Portage Lake on 10/21 was certainly on the early end of southbound migration. Single **Common Mergansers** hung out at Silver Lake (9/27 – 10/21) and Portage Lake (10/13 – 10/30). Four **Red-breasted Mergansers** replaced their congener at Silver Lake on 10/27.



Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*, North Bay Park, October 16 2022 (Bob Maddox)



Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*, Portage Lake, October 21 2022 (Ben Lucking)

Only one **Ring-necked Pheasant** in the entire county, at the Chelsea SGA on 10/10, was most definitely a very paltry showing. Starting 10/12, **Horned Grebes** appeared on four of the larger lakes, topping out at a pretty impressive total of 18 birds on Portage Lake on October 18. That lake also hosted a **Red-necked Grebe**, but unfortunately that was a one-day wonder on 10/21; this species is not quite annual in Washtenaw County.

The last **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** vacated our area by 9/25; the last of the fall's **Common Nighthawks** was seen on that day as well – the largest number of southbound birds was a steady stream of 39 over Barton Pond on 9/16. Other than that, only singletons or duos were noted. **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** proved to be hardier than either of the preceding species, with the last of our hummers reported on 10/6.



Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus*, Ford Lake, October 27 2002 (Bill Nolting)



Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*, Hudson Mills Metropark, September 10 2022 (Jocelyn Anderson)

In years with clement weather, rails have been known to dally around, and this 2022's fall period was a good example of that. Virginia Rails were found in six locations, up until 10/25, whereas **Soras** were noted in four spots through 10/5. **Common**

Gallinules were last seen at Trinkle Marsh on 9/3 (three birds); the gallinules at the M-52 & Lehman fluddle proved tougher, sticking around until at least 10/14.

Shorebirds through Falcons

Occurring in eight out of the last twelve years, finding **American Golden-Plovers** is clearly a treat. This fall started off with two birds at Willow & Maple (9/17 – 9/22), followed by an incredibly cooperative bird on the mud of Trinkle Marsh (10/11 – 10/25), which allowed many local birders great views. Over the first two weeks of September a few more **Semipalmated Plovers** moved through, but they were not easy to come by. Not usually part of the rarity report, a flock of 520 **Killdeer** at the Torrey Rd Hawkwatch established a new record high tally for Washtenaw County.



American Golden-Plover *Pluvialis dominica*, Trinkle Marsh, October 12 2022 (Maggie Jewett)



Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*, Four Mile Lake, September 6 2022 (Ben Lucking)

Stilt Sandpipers continued their banner year, with as many as six of them during their stay at Four Mile Lake (9/3 – 9/20) and two more birds at Mary Beth Doyle Park (9/4 – 9/6). A group of 16 **Dunlin** at Trinkle Marsh on 10/21 were, unfortunately, a single-person observation – no others were seen during the period. Two **Baird's Sandpipers** at Four Mile Lake (9/5 – 9/6) were a bit easier to pick out and identify than the birds that passed through in August. **Pectoral Sandpipers** were certainly not common this fall period, but they were the more widespread of the uncommon *calidris* sandpipers, with up to 7 birds at seven locations throughout September-October. To see **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, one had to be out and about during the first ten days of September, when small numbers were present at five or so sites. Somewhat surprisingly, single **American Woodcocks** were seen at three rather widely spaced spots through at least early 10/8.



Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, North Bay Park, September 19 2022 (John Shamgochian)



American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*, Barton Pond, September 30 2022 (Ben Lucking)

Caspian Tern numbers never built up to the heights of 2021 at North Bay Park; this fall the “flock” peaked at 5 birds on 9/14. Previously considered very rare in Washtenaw County with only four observations prior to 2005, **Common Terns** have since become nearly annual. This fall, one was at Four Mile Lake on 9/6 and a trio hung out with the gulls and Caspian Terns at North Bay Park on 9/19.

The first of four **Common Loons** was seen on 10/15; no doubt, numbers will continue to build during November. An indication of the expanding breeding population nearby, a flock of 11 **American White Pelicans** over Barton Pond on 9/30 extended that species's run of double-digit sized flock sightings to three years. It seems hard to imagine that this species had only one or two local records prior to 2015. Since then, pelicans have been observed nearly every year, and multiple times per year at that!

A surprise **American Bittern** appeared in a yard's pond off Farrell Rd on 10/29. The young **Snowy Egret** that spent much of August at Four Mile Lake stayed there until nearly October, last being seen in 9/28 – this is by far the longest-staying Snowy ever in Washtenaw County. **Black-crowned Night-Herons** appeared at Zeeb & Merkel and at the Whitmore Lake Preserve on 9/1; the latter bird was noted again on 10/3. However, for late summer – early fall **Black-crowned Night-Herons**, Mary Beth Doyle Park remained the place to look. As many as five birds of varying ages were observed and photographed – the source of this (likely) multi-generational family group remains unclear, unfortunately.



American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*, Farrell Rd, October 29 2022 (Mary Clark)



Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*, Fox Ridge Ct, September 17 2022 (Kimberly Ellis)

The first **Golden Eagle** of the season was over the Torrey Rd Hawkwatch on 10/28 – since its “discovery” back in 2013, this site has produced multiple eagles every fall. It was a bad day to be a songbird at Nichols Arboretum on 9/22, when a record high 12 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were observed there. **Broad-winged Hawks** continued to trickle through during the first two weeks of September, but then, on 9/17, the floodgates opened: a number of locations witnessed hundreds of birds, but one, near Pleasant Lake & Ann Arbor Saline, had a staggering 2,000 birds pass overhead! Unsurprisingly, this set a new high count for Washtenaw County and must constitute one of the highest concentrations statewide, away from the shores of the Great Lakes. As a sign that winter really is on its way, migrating **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen over Salt Springs Park (10/17) and in Lodi Township (10/23).

Quite a few **Barred Owls** were noted this period, at six sites during September (involving one or two birds), and at three during October (single birds only). With a well-established nesting site, seeing a **Peregrine Falcon** around UM campus or downtown Ann Arbor is not an unusual occurrence. Away from there, though, these speedsters are much harder to come by – this fall, they were seen in a half dozen spots scattered all over the county. Much like the sharpies at the Arb on 9/22, 15 migrating **American Kestrels** over Willow & Maple established a new county high count.

Passerines: Flycatchers through Chat

Olive-sided Flycatchers continued to move through during the first three weeks of September. Although they were most reliably found at Nichols Arboretum, these vested tyrannids were observed in eight more locations, making for a very productive fall migration window. Not surprisingly given their more obscured lifestyle, **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were much harder to come by. Apart from a long-stayin bird (or birds?) at Nichols Arboretum (9/1 – 9/22), the only others were at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens (9/6) and Four Mile Lake (9/8). A few **Acadian Flycatchers** lingered into September: at the Green Lake wetlands (9/3) and at Tubbs & Huron River Dr (9/16). Generally impossible to identify when silent, a calling **Willow Flycatcher** in Lodi Township from 9/8 – 9/12 allowed for a rare fall identification. The last **Great Crested Flycatcher** was reported on 10/1, which is quite late for that species. By contrast, our **Eastern Kingbirds** were long gone by then – the last one was seen on 9/7.

Philadelphia Vireos experienced a banner fall migration window – not only where they seen at nearly 20 sites through 10/3, but in quite a few cases more than one individual was involved. The only **Northern Shrike** of the period was at the Whitmore Lake Preserve on 10/21. Starting in mid-September, impressive numbers of **Winter Wrens** moved through. They were both widespread (two dozen locations) and present in multiples quite regularly. A surprise **Sedge Wren** was photographed at the DeVine Preserve, a known nesting site – the date, 10/1 was certainly notable. **Marsh Wrens** are more expected later in the fall, which was borne out by birds at Four Mile Lake (9/6 – 9/8), the Oakwoods Nature Area (10/2), and LeFurge Woods (10/22). One may well hang on

into November, so keep an eye out! A large flock of some 100 **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** over Nichols Arboretum established a new all-time high locally.



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris*, Nichols Arboretum, September 19 2022 (Bill Nolting)



Sedge Wren *Cistothorus stellaris*, DeVine Preserve, October 1 2022 (Russell Ryan)

Northern Mockingbirds away from the Manchester area were at the Whitmore Lake Preserve (10/9 – 10/14) and at M-14 & Warren (10/30). Small numbers of southbound **Veeries** trickled through until 9/17, the last of its congener, the **Gray-checked Thrush**, was identified on 10/6. That date was also when the last of the fall's Wood Thrushes was reported. Rolling Hills County Park was bluebird central on 10/27, when a whopping 80 **Eastern Bluebirds** were seen over the park's prairie habitat. Good, but not great, numbers of **American Pipits** moved through from mid-September on, indicated by the maximum of 14 individuals. Dropping a tantalizing hint of a possible upcoming echo of last fall's irruption, **Evening Grosbeaks** appeared, however fleetingly, in seven locations starting on 10/28 – these handsome finches are always a thrill to encounter, and their ephemeral occurrence pattern only adds to their allure. Along the same lines, **Purple Finches** moved through in some impressive numbers – in both September and October several double-digit flocks/concentrations were noted, with a maximum of 36 at the Clark & Avis Spike Preserve on 10/21. By contrast, only a handful of **Pine Siskins** had reached our neck of the woods by the end of October.



American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*, Willow & Maple, September 19 2022 (Maggie Jewett)



Evening Grosbeak *Coccothraustes vespertinus*, Chelsea, October 30 2022 (Jerry FlyBird)

A large flock of **Lapland Longspurs** was at Vreeland & Gotfredson on 10/13, but no other longspurs were encountered anywhere else. A very cooperative **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Oakwoods Nature Area on 9/19 thrilled its lone observer – it posed for numerous photos. **Vesper Sparrows** were found at three locations: at Rolling Hills County Park (9/23), at the Whitmore Lake Preserve (9/30), and at Joy & Jennings (10/15).

The only **Bobolink** of the period was at Four Mile Lake on 9/4. Impressive numbers of **Eastern Meadowlarks** stayed around, and well into October at that – there were eight of them at Sharon Mills County Park on 10/10! A bird that clearly did not get the message that it was time to move south, a male **Baltimore Oriole** was photographed at the DeVine Preserve on 10/8; this is most likely a new late date by some margin!



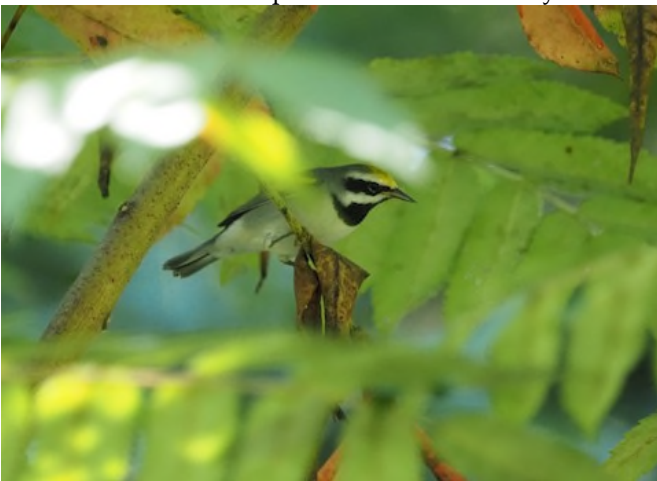
Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida*, Oakwoods Nature Area, September 19 2022 (Yvonne Burch-Hartley)



Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*, Rolling Hills County Park, September 23 2022 (Bill Vandermolen)

Passerines: Wood-Warblers through Cardinalids

During the first week of September, single **Northern Waterthrushes** were seen at Furstenberg Park (9/1 – 9/4) and the Mattheai Botanical Gardens (9/6). After their so-so showing in August, good numbers of **Golden-winged Warbler** moved through during September: a male was at Mary Beth Doyle Park (9/5), a female was noted at the Mattheai Botanical Gardens (9/13), a male and a female delighted many observers at Nichols Arboretum (9/14 - 9/24), and another male spent two days at Oakwoods Nature Area (9/20 – 9/21). By the end of the first week of September, the last of its close relatives, the **Blue-winged Warbler**, had departed for their wintering grounds. A **Lawrence's Warbler**, the recessive back-cross of the previous two species, spent quite a bit of time on private property in Lodi Township, from 9/9 – 9/12 – there are precious few local records of this beautiful bird. The only **Connecticut Warbler** of the fall period was at Nichols Arboretum on 9/6, but several lucky birders got to enjoy this rarity. After their poor showing in August, **Mourning Warblers** were almost plentiful, with eight individuals spread over seven different sites through 9/19. Particularly notable was an individual that spent nearly three weeks at Nichols Arboretum (9/1 – 9/19) - given that none of the other birds spent more than three days where they were found, the Arb bird may, in fact, have been multiple birds.



Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera*, Nichols Arboretum, September 19 2022 (Karen Markey)



Connecticut Warbler *Oporornis agilis*, Nichols Arboretum, September 6 2022 (Matt Bennink)

The last of the southbound **Hooded Warblers** were seen at Loch Highland (9/18) and Nichols Arboretum (9/29). A **Northern Parula** at Manchester's Chi-Bro Park on 10/28 was exceedingly late, even with a recent December record. **Canada Warblers** built on their already good showing from August and appeared in nine different locations during the first three weeks of September; one site had as many as three of them! But that paled in comparison to the excellent September migration window for **Wilson's Warblers** – not only were multiple birds present in several locations, but they were encountered in almost 20 (!) different sites. All in all, a very respectable total of 28 warbler species were reported during September. However, it is worth stressing that even during October nearly 20 parulid species moved through – that statistic goes to show how much more prolonged fall migration really is!



Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis*, Ivywood Dr, September 2 2022 (JR Bacolor)



Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla*, Furstenberg Park, September 6 2022 (Bill Vandermolten)

Elsewhere: Wild October in Michigan!

Although the spring migration window tends to get the accolades for being such an impressive spectacle, this past fall period put on a show that many Michigan birders won't easily forget! As such, it might be of interest to add a post-script to the regular Washtenaw County rarity report and add a short selection of the amazing rarities that were seen in the State this fall period. Note that what follows does not include such "regular" rarities as [American Three-toed Woodpecker](#), [Scissor-tailed Flycatcher](#), and [Smith's Longspur](#) (to name but a few), which under normal circumstances would clearly be worthy of inclusion here.

More or less expected, given that the species was being found in all surrounding states, Michigan's first ever [Limpkin](#) appeared in Ottawa County on 8/23 and was still being seen through the end of October. Stuningly, a second [Limpkin](#) was found in Montcalm County on 10/27! Oscoda's main summertime tourist attraction, a wayward [Southern Lapwing](#), continued its months-long stay until at least 10/29 – if accepted as a genuine vagrant, this would represent a first record for the ABA and Michigan. A handful of very lucky observers were at the right place (Whitefish Point) at the right time (10/16) to witness a fly-by [Bar-tailed Godwit](#), Michigan's first and one of very few inland records of this Siberian shorebird. The State's tenth (or so) record for [White Ibis](#) was a rather scraggly-looking individual at the Shiawassee NWR (9/1 – 9/4). [Swainson's Hawks](#) are not necessarily rare in Michigan, but they are most often very hard to pin down at any given site; the bird that spent three days hunting the open fields near Port Austin was very much an exception to that rule.



Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*, Oscoda, September 9 2022 (Gary Nelkie)



Variegated Flycatcher *Empidonomus varius*, Port Austin, October 16 2022 (Emily Simon)

A juvenile male [Vermilion Flycatcher](#) near Marquette on 10/24 made for the 12th State record, but unfortunately did not stick around for more than a day. Arguably THE find of the fall was the ABA's 8th (and Michigan's first) [Variegated Flycatcher](#) at Port Austin on 10/16 – this species breeds in southern South America and winters in the Amazon but has a spotty history of vagrancy into the ABA area. In spite of at times very inclement weather, this dapper bird stayed around for some two weeks, feeding on Virginia creeper berries and flycatching when conditions allowed. During that stay hundreds of birders from far and wide came to

see it (and discovered the aforementioned Swainson’s Hawk in the process). Yet another rare tyrannid flycatcher, a [Tropical/Couch’s Kingbird](#), graced Macomb County for a day (10/24) – there are only five or so prior records for the State. Showing that it’s most worthwhile to closely check the birds at your feeder, Michigan’s 6th [Brambling](#) was picked out among sparrows underneath a feeder in St. Ignace, drawing in many birders during 10/8 – 10/15. Last, but certainly not least, the State’s second ever [Sagebrush Sparrow](#) was found in the dunes in near Marquette on 10/22 but could only be enjoyed by a handful of observers during its all too short stay.



Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*, St Ignace, October 10 2022 (Skye Haas)



Sagebrush Sparrow *Artemisiospiza nevadensis*, Marquette, October 22 2022 (Skye Haas)



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The birds Washtenaw Audubon pledges to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference, and countless other ways. As we honor and celebrate the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Washtenaw Audubon considers the work of inclusion, diversity, and equity a top priority moving forward. We hope that, in doing so, we can bring creativity and energy to our work in Washtenaw County and beyond for birds and people alike.

[Read our full statement at washtenawaudubon.org](http://washtenawaudubon.org)

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="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Household	\$25 (online only \$20)
Name: <input type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$15 (online only \$10)
Address: <input type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Senior	\$15 (online only \$10)
Phone: <input type="text"/>	Email: <input type="text"/>	<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

Washtenaw Audubon's in-person programs at the Botanical Gardens are currently on hold; we intend to resume in-person/hybrid Zoom programs in May. To view our online Zoom programs, you will need access to an internet-capable computer, phone, or similar device. An announcement of the web address to view the program will be on our web site, Facebook page, and on the Birders email list a few days before the program. We may add more online programs for April and the future, which will be announced on the same internet platforms.

November 16, 7:30 p.m. Wildlife Photography, with Jocelyn Anderson

Please join us in-person at the UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens or online via Zoom for a program of Jocelyn Anderson's wildlife photographs. Jocelyn is a wildlife photographer and Washtenaw Audubon member in southeastern Michigan who is a big fan of birds. She focuses on capturing moments of wildlife, looking to showcase the beauty of the natural world. These photos range from dramatic moments of action to birds simply being. Her work has been featured by the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and BBC Wildlife.

This will be a hybrid presentation, both in-person at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens and online via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/93611857032>

Meeting ID: 936 1185 7032

Passcode: 551598

Or dial-in: 312-626-6799

December 2022

No Program due to the Ann Arbor CBC

January 18, 7:30 p.m.

The MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System and Bird Migration Research, with Rich & Brenda Keith

Washtenaw Audubon Society

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