



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

March / April 2023

The Washtenaw County May Count is on May 13, 2023 - Mark your Calendars!

Save the date for May 13, 2023 the Washtenaw May Bird Count! Please join dozens of enthusiastic volunteers for the May Count, on International Migratory Bird Day. This event is a great day to be out there counting all the birds we can find, and it's a super fun Big Day! Juliet Berger is the organizer, for this countywide count, which uses eBird to benefit bird science with its comprehensive results. The Compiler divides the county into townships, each of which has an Area Leader. Leaders recruit additional volunteers to count birds throughout their area.

For names and contact information for the Compiler and the Area Leaders, visit the WAS website, <https://washtenawaudubon.org/event/washtenaw-county-may-count-2/>, and please consider volunteering. There will be a signup form to facilitate volunteering. We will post detailed instructions on the WAS website on count day logistics. Please help us count the Birds!



How many Northern Cardinals will we find on the May Count? *(Craig Adams)*

President's Letter

Dear Washtenaw Audubon Society,

Many of you may know by now that WAS is considering a name change, based on John James Audubon's track record of enslaving people, desecrating Native American graves, and promoting pseudo-science in support of racist practices and beliefs. Because of these facts that have come to life in soul searching research into J.J. Audubon, Seattle Audubon, Portland Audubon, Chicago Audubon and others are in the process of making the transition to new names. While the WAS Board of Directors is committed to exploring the potential of a name change, it cannot occur without the approval of our membership community, according to our Constitution and By-laws. We'll be holding broader listening sessions and formal and informal question and answer periods during the next several months, and especially at our June program, Jun 21, 7:30 p.m. at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Please plan to attend the June 21 program in person, as we will not be broadcasting it via Zoom. We will lay out a timeline for the name change process at that time. To bring members up to speed on our process and the reasons for it, I'm sharing here WAS Education Chair Victor Chen's essay about John James Audubon's practices.

"At our last gathering of 2022, Washtenaw Audubon's president, Juliet Berger, announced to everyone attending that our organization would be considering a name change in the upcoming year. This comes amidst ongoing controversy surrounding John James Audubon's name and his racist ideology. While Audubon's work no doubt impacted the understanding and documentation of birds and their surroundings, he also impacted people of color in unacceptable ways. In an article entitled "The Myth of John James Audubon," author Gregory Nobles writes about how Audubon not only enslaved Black people, but spoke out against the abolitionist movement, once stating that "the British government had 'acted imprudently and too precipitously' in emancipating enslaved people in its West Indian possessions." Furthermore, it was clear from Audubon's writings that he never accepted people of color as socially or racially equal to himself. To show that people of other races were inferior, Audubon actually collected human skulls and sent them to a colleague to show that whites were superior to non-whites (Halley).

Washtenaw Audubon Society seeks to be an organization that is open and welcoming to people regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, national or ethnic origin, politics, or veteran status, or any other status. However, we are aware of the implications the "Audubon" name holds when it comes to issues of racism. As a board, we are committed to learning more and listening to our members about possible outcomes of a name change. In the upcoming months, we plan to have listening-sessions with members of the Washtenaw Audubon community and a retreat to discuss these issues. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns at president@washtenawaudubon.org.

Sincerely,

Washtenaw Audubon Board of Directors"

Citations: <https://www.audubon.org/news/the-myth-john-james-audubon>
<https://matthewhalley.wordpress.com/2020/06/16/the-literal-skeletons-in-the-closet-of-american-ornithology/>

We'll be sharing more about these issues in the coming months. I look forward to hearing from you with your questions and concerns. Don't miss Ben Lucking's April 19th program, about our trip to Northern Ecuador in January and February. It was an absolutely mind blowing 13 days of birding that I was lucky to experience. In the meantime, I can't wait to see you all out and about during spring migration, in a mixed flock of Warblers, trying to sort through them all. As always, I am for the birds,

Juliet Berger, President
Washtenaw Audubon Society

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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.

Local National American Butterfly Association Official Counts 2023

Time	Date	Name	Compiler/Contact person
Spring	May 27	SW Washtenaw	Marcy Breslow (mbreslow@umich.edu)
4th July	July 1	SW Washtenaw	Silas Bialecki (bialecki.silas1@gmail.com)
4th July	July 4	Chelsea	Roger Wykes (734-769-6482)
4th July	July 8	Ann Arbor	John Swales (jmswales@umich.edu)
4th July	July 8	Toledo	Jackie Riley (jriley4@sbcglobal.net)
4th July	July 29	Dundee	Marcy Breslow (mbreslow@umich.edu)
Fall	August 19	SW Washtenaw	Silas Bialecki (bialecki.silas.1@gmail.com)

Additional Details:

Counts are on Saturday (weather, Sunday), except for the Chelsea Count).

Everybody is welcome to join a count for a half or a full day. Counts generally run from about 9.30 to about 17.00. The various groups usually meet for a picnic lunch at a designated location. Generally, on a local count 35-40 species are found, with around a thousand individuals.

There is an official \$3 dollar fee for each adult participant, although compilers have often been known to pay the fees for the group.

Most of the transects are fairly easy-going, even if sometimes wet, so that wellingtons are sometimes a good idea. The few arduous treks are through fens because of tussock grass, plus some can be hard to reach. These may not be for everybody.

I am sometimes asked about butterfly field guides; the one I would now recommend is the Butterflies of Indiana by Jeffrey Belth and published by the University of Indiana Press in 2013. It has excellent accounts of all our local species, apart from the Common Ringlet.

NABA is a good organization to join; the annual subscription is modest; it offers a quarterly journal of some quality; it has an interactive website called "hot seesn", and it produces an annual report of all the butterfly counts in North America (around 350), which is what the \$3 dollar fees support.

John Swales (734-995-1139)

Red-spotted Admiral (*Rob Curtis*, per
<https://www.inaturalist.org/guide/taxa/1317696>)



WAS donation to Cuban birding club

This past June, my wife and I were fortunate enough to travel to Cuba, to visit her family there and to explore her roots on the island. In a somewhat naïve move, we decided to travel the 620 or so miles from Havana to Baracoa on the island's far eastern end driving ourselves in a rental car (the Jeep we reserved got substituted for a Peugeot sedan at the last minute). After what can only be described as a harrowing 26-hour journey on crazy roads, running out of gas, etc. (long story), we made it to our destination and settled into what can only be described as a much needed and appreciated oasis, the Villa Paradiso hostel (<https://villaparadisobaracoa.com/en/>).

I had found this lovely place while I was researching the birding around Baracoa and had come across the eBird profile of its owner, Roberto Jovel. In the weeks leading up to our stay, Roberto and I exchanged numerous emails and WhatsApp messages about what to expect, but inevitably also communicated about the local birdlife. Since he seemed quite connected with the local birding scene (he is the #1 eBirder for Guantánamo province), I asked about birding guides in the area and he ended up connecting me with an excellent local guide and park ranger for the nearby Humboldt National Park, Wisdenilde Navarro, a.k.a. "El Indio". During the four days of our stay, we explored Baracoa and its stunning surroundings, which included a hike at Humboldt NP with Roberto and El Indio. With the latter's expert help, I got to see many of the island's endemics, including the national bird, the *tocororo* or Cuban Trogon, and the emblematic *zunzuncito* or Bee Hummingbird, the world's smallest bird.

But the natural wonders of Baracoa are really only a small part of the story. Both my wife and I were absolutely blown away by the kindness and generosity of the Cuban people, several of whom went way above and beyond for us, in spite of the very difficult living conditions they themselves were in (food, medicine, and fuel shortages, as well as daily rolling blackouts of uncertain duration). This kindness planted the seed that ultimately resulted in my asking the rest of the WAS board to consider a donation to the fledgling *Club de Observadores de Aves de Baracoa* (COAB). A donation of binoculars and field guides would go a long way to help Baracoans join in on the club's outings, which in turn may well help establish a sustainable local ecotourism industry. Furthermore, allowing more of Baracoa's inhabitants to enjoy the amazing natural beauty they find themselves surrounded by will help ensure that environment is protected for future generations and, hopefully soon, more birders from this side of the Florida Strait.



Looking for endemics at El Yunque de Baracoa (Roberto Jovel)



Announcement for the recent COAB outing at El Yunque de Baracoa (Roberto Jovel)

After checking on the legality of such a donation with the US government, we arranged for our WAS donation of three sets of binoculars and field guides through the wonderful Florida-based charity of Optics for the Tropics (<https://www.opticsforthetropics.org/>). In February, these supplies were delivered to Baracoa and were immediately used for an outing to local birding hot spot of *El Yunque de Baracoa*, the city's iconic flat-topped mountain. Given how many excursions COAB sponsors, the supplies donated by WAS will go a long way increasing the enjoyment of many of Baracoa's inhabitants and will, by extension, help protect the natural environment around Cuba's first city. Making this possible is, in large part, thanks to you, the WAS membership – I, for one, am thrilled to see that WAS is extending its support to a part of the world that can really use a helping hand. Thank you all on behalf of COAB and its members!

Jacco Gelderloos



Sustaining Ann Arbor Report



Thanks to the Sustaining Ann Arbor Together (SA2T) neighborhood grant program, the Ornithological Society of Pioneer (OSP) was granted \$2,000 to launch the initiative "Bins 4 Birders" to grow the community of young birders as a means of promoting environmental literacy in the city. A grant of \$2,000 and a generous subsidy of \$100 from the Washtenaw Audubon Society enabled the purchase of seven binoculars, a spotting scope, and a tripod!



OSP is a student-run organization throughout Arbor Public High Schools that aims to promote birding and bird conservation among youth. The initiative "Bins 4 Birders" strives to enhance equity, inclusion, and diversity in the birding community by eliminating the cost of professional equipment to allow students to explore the exciting world of birds. Birding is an outdoor activity that motivates youth to explore their community parks and encourages them to live an active lifestyle. OSP club members lead weekly bird walks advertised to the general public in Ann Arbor parks. Pictured below are three Pioneer students on a weekly walk.



Since obtaining these tools, the club has grown to include over 100 members across the district and engaged Ann Arbor residents in the wonder of birding. This year, more students have recruited for and participated in local bird counts like the annual Swifts Night Out, Christmas Bird Count, and May Count. Many students, like Pioneer seniors Mimi Barnes and Sydney Bunce, have learned "so much more about the native birds of Michigan" and "started advocating for environmental sustainability" as a result of the club's efforts. The grant has made activities with AP Biology classes in the district (pictured above) and elementary students participating in the Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad "Feathered Friends" event possible and improved the club's ability to increase awareness about the power of citizen science and conservation efforts in Ann Arbor. OSP is thrilled to continue educating Ann Arbor youth and the general community about the importance of birds and how protecting them plays a role in Ann Arbor's transition to carbon neutrality by 2030. Thank you SA2T!



January-February 2023: Winter Highlights

The Highlight

That it pays off to go out birding even in, to put it mildly, less than ideal weather conditions was proven to be true when two seriously intrepid birders found the first Washtenaw County record for **HARLEQUIN DUCK** at Loonfeather Point Park on Ford Lake on the 27th of February. They did so in truly nasty weather, with cold rain/sleet/freezing rain coming down horizontally due to a stiff breeze – but what a pay-off!

Over the course of that morning, many birders braved the weather to try and see this bird, which proved to be quite a challenge at times. It moved around quite a bit and went AWOL for an hour here and there, prompting frantic search parties all around Ford Lake. Luckily, it was soon relocated to what was to become its home for the next week or two: the feeding station in Waterworks Park, off Spring St in Ypsilanti. With much improved weather conditions, many, many birders were able to enjoy this handsome little duck in all its glory.



Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus*, at left: Loonfeather Point Park, February 27 2023 (Bill VanderMolen); at right: Waterworks Park, February 28 2023 (Nui Moreland)

Waterfowl

December's **Snow Goose** at Pierce Lake was last seen on 1/1. The immature white morph that was in the Vreeland Rd corridor extended its stay until at least the first week of February. An adult white morph **Snow Goose** was seen from the Superior Rd bridge on 1/14; likely the same bird was photographed just upstream along Stark Strasse on 1/24. For much of January and February an adult blue morph **Snow Goose** roamed throughout Ypsilanti Township. It was first noted at North Bay Park on 1/5, then spent several days at Hewen's Creek Park (1/16 – 1/19), was noted at Loonfeather Point Park on 1/29, reappeared at North Bay Park on 2/9, and ultimately joined the plethora of geese at a pond off Roxbury Dr in the Greene Farms subdivision off Hitchingham Rd. This rather non-descript location also proved to be reliable for seeing a closely related **Ross's Goose**, which is a much rarer species, even if it is now essentially annual in Washtenaw County. It was present for three days (2/10 – 2/12), making an excursion to North Bay Park on 2/11.



Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*, Hewen's Creek Park, January 18 2023 (Bonnie Penet)



Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*, Greene Farms subdivision, February 10 2023 (Isaac Polanski)

—**Greater White-fronted Geese** were hard to come by – one was found at Sharon Mills County Park on 1/11 and a group of seven birds was at Four Mile Lake on 2/26. Both were single observer sightings. Mixed in with the ubiquitous Canada Geese, small numbers of **Cackling Geese** were found during January-February. One was at Gallup Park on 1/23, with another (the same?) found at Geddes & Harris on the same day. Up to nine of these cute little geese joined in with the goose bonanza in the Greene Farms subdivision from 2/10 – 2/26, occasionally relocating to Hewen’s Creek Park, where as many as seven of them were seen from 2/17 – 2/26. Lastly, a singleton was at Trinkle Marsh on 2/20.

Often, **Tundra Swan** reports concern fly-overs of migrating flocks, but during January and early February there were observations of a few duos on the ground (well, water): at Riverside Park (1/9), Gallup Park (1/31), and at nearby Furstenberg Park (2/1). After that, things went quiet, until a seemingly ever-expanding group was found at Four Mile Lake on 2/20 – this flock peaked at some 90 birds over the following week and was enjoyed by many local birders. In addition to these birds, 54 swans flew over the Riverbend Preserve on 2/20, 10 were over Hudson Mills Metropark, and two groups of 19 birds in total were seen at Ford Lake on 2/28.



Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsi*, Greene Farms Subdivision, February 10, 2023 (Bill Nolting)



Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*, Four Mile Lake, February 24, 2023 (Michael Bowen)

A lone male **Northern Shoveler** at Sharon Mills County Park on 2/26 was the only of the period. A drake **Northern Pintail** was found among the waterfowl at Waterworks Park (2/2 – 2/3); up to 20 more were found by birders attracted to Four Mile Lake by the Tundra Swan show there (20/20 – 2/28). Somewhat surprisingly, **Canvasbacks** continued to be hard to come by with only small numbers at half a dozen locations. The maximum was a group of four at Four Mile Lake during the last few days of February – time will tell if numbers of this handsome diving duck will increase during early spring. Gallup Park hosted two **Greater Scaup** on 1/14. That same day, at the nearby Barton Nature Area, a female settled in for a prolonged stay – she stayed through 2/24 and was seen and studied by many. A group of 9 birds was reported from Four Mile Lake on 2/28.

A female-type **Black Scoter** thrilled observers during its three-day stay on Ford Lake from 1/28 – 1/30. Until very recently (i.e. 2008), there were no local records of this, the rarest of the three scoter species, so even if there have been more records over the past 10-15 years, this remains a very unusual species in Washtenaw County. Not much more common, two **Long-tailed Ducks** on Barton Pond on 1/30 were equally exciting. Ford Lake was the only lake to host **Red-breasted Mergansers**: four of them were seen from Loonfeather Point Park on 1/30; up to three were seen from Loonfeather Point Park or Ford Lake Park from 2/23 – 2/28.



Black Scoter *Melanitta americana*, Ford Lake Park, January 28 2023 (Nui Moreland)



Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*, Barton Pond, January 30 2023 (Bill Nolting)

Grouse through Falcons

Although the news was a little better than it has been for the past couple of periods, **Ring-necked Pheasants** continue to struggle in Washtenaw County. There was one at the Vreeland Rd pond on 1/1, there were three at the DeVine Preserve on 2/12, one was along Schleweis Rd on 2/17, and another singleton at the Ervin-Stucki Preserve on 2/20. Perhaps the calling males during the spring months will give us a clearer picture of the true status of this species locally. **Horned Grebes** returned during the final few days of February – the most notable was, without a doubt, the bird that appeared in a small pond off Varsity & Ellsworth. One or two very hardy **American Coots** overwintered at North Bay Park; the first of the returning migrants was noted at the pond at Five Mile & Chubb on 2/25.

The first **Killdeer** appeared at the end of January and by the time February rolled around they had been reported from over 20 sites. Given the presence of one well into December, this tough plover may well soon be a regular part of Washtenaw County's winter avifauna. The first displaying **American Woodcock** returned to Hudson Mills Metropark on 2/18; others were at the West Lake Preserve (2/26) and Geddes & Prospect (2/28). On 2/26, an immature **Iceland Gull** was found among the more common species in a flooded field off Platt & Morgan. Because this bird was seen leaving in the direction of Ford Lake, birders checked the gulls present at North Bay Park on the following morning and, interestingly, located an adult **Iceland Gull**! Whatever happened to the immature bird is unclear, as it was not seen after; the adult was a one-morning wonder in its own right. North Bay Park also hosted the only **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, on 2/8.



American Coot *Fulica americana*, North Bay Park, January 5, 2023 (Bill VanderMolen)



Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*, North Bay Park, February 27, 2023 (Bruce Moorman)

By and large, **Golden Eagles** are most readily encountered on their southbound journey in October and November. So the fact that not one, but two of them were observed in February, is quite special. One bird was nicely documented over Sharon Hollow Rd on 2/17, the other passed over Vreeland Rd on 2/25. **Northern Harriers** were quite widespread during the winter months with reports coming in from at least a dozen locations throughout the county. The same was true for **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, which terrorized songbirds at 15+ locales all winter long – these feisty little raptors seem to be slowly increasing their wintering range northward, based on the increases seen in recent years. Like other species associated with more mature woodlots, **Red-shouldered Hawks** are increasing in number and expanding their range locally. Judging by the fact that they were seen in over 20 locations this winter, our year-round population was likely bolstered by migrants that stuck around instead of moving farther south. By contrast, **Rough-legged Hawks** were much harder to come by – apart from the “reliable” bird in the Vreeland Rd corridor (present through 1/30), only two others were noted: one was at M-14 & Joy on 1/13, the other at I-94 & Zeeb on 1/14.



Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, Sharon Hollow Rd, February 17 2023 (Victor Chen)



Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*, Furstenberg Park, February 8 2023 (Matt Bennink)

Much like their daytime ecological counterpart, the Red-shouldered Hawk, **Barred Owls** are steadily expanding their range in Washtenaw County. More or less expectedly, during the winter months reports of up to two birds came in from four sites in the species's traditional stronghold in the northwest of the county. However, the greater Ann Arbor area hosted up to three birds in as many as six locations! The lone **Short-eared Owl** at Vreeland & Gotfredson was last seen on 1/7. Not accessible to the general birding public, a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was in a private yard along Strawberry Lake Rd on 2/25.

Either an overwintering bird or an early migrant, a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was at Island Park on 2/3. Another sapsucker was photographed at Platt & Willis on 2/28, this one almost certainly a northbound migrant. The only **Red-headed Woodpecker** of the period was at Nichols Arboretum on February 8, but it did not hang around. By all appearances, **Merlins** were everywhere this winter – although some of the eBird reports occasionally involved the same bird, there must have been at least 20 of these feisty little falcons present in Washtenaw County during January and February. Outside of the UM campus nesting site (where as many as three birds were seen), one or two **Peregrine Falcons** were zooming around in seven locations around the county throughout the winter months.



Northern Saw-whet Owl *Aegolius acadicus*, Strawberry Lake Rd, February 25, 2023 (Joe Prochaska)



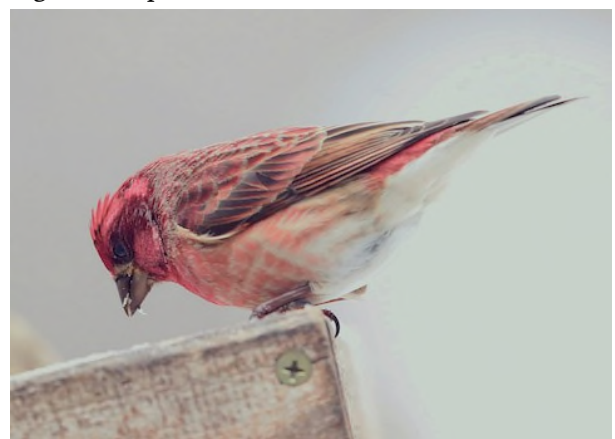
Merlin *Falco columbarius*, Vreeland Rd, January 27, 2023 (Isaac Polanski)

Passerines

A single **Northern Shrike** played hard to get near the intersection of I-94 & M-52; during its “stay” between 1/31 and 2/19, it was only seen three times. After being quite widespread in the previous period, **Winter Wrens** overwintered in impressive numbers as well. Throughout January-February, some ten locations hosted these feisty little birds, with as many as three in one of them. A **Brown Thrasher** that visited a feeding station near Eberwhite Woods from 1/31 – 2/9 was quite a surprise – there is only one other local January-February record, from 2013 at the Cherry Hill Preserve. The only **Northern Mockingbird** was reported near Stadium & Pauline on 1/10. Like quite a few other semi-hardy species, **Hermit Thrushes** overwintered in good numbers around Washtenaw County – one or two were found at nearly ten different locations throughout the period.



Winter Wren *Troglodytes hiemalis*, North Bay Park, January 20 2023 (Bill VanderMolen)



Purple Finch *Haemorhous purpureus*, Huron River Dr & Tubbs Rd, January 29 2023 (Maggie Jewett)

As was the case in the early part of winter, winter finches were hard to come by. Of the three species present, **Purple Finches** were the most widespread and numerous, if they can really be called either. The vast majority of the reports involved single birds attending feeders, with a maximum of four in a group. Single **Common Redpolls** were reported from Nancy Park (1/19) and the Matthaei Botanical Gardens (2/11). **Pine Siskins** were effectively absent: one attended a feeder through 1/4, another one was at

Thurston Pond on 1/18, and a trio was seen at Gallup Park on 2/7.

The **Lapland Longspur** flock at Vreeland & Gotfredson area was last noted on 2/3; a singleton was seen at Domino's Farms on 2/11. The last of the Vreeland & Gotfredson **Snow Buntings** stuck around until 2/4, but in the weeks leading up to that departure date the flock had swollen to an estimated 400 birds! A small portion of this flock may well have dropped into Domino's Farms from 1/28 – 2/5. There additional reports from scattered locations elsewhere: three at Maple & Willow (1/29), eight at Austin & Sharon Hollow (1/30), and another massive flock of some 200 touched down for the day at Saline Waterworks & Alber (2/1). Lastly, on 2/17, about two dozen returned to Vreeland & Gotfredson – given the two-week window between sightings here, these were likely different from the flock that spent much of the winter here.



Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus* & Snow Buntings
Plectrophenax nivalis, Vreeland Rd, January 29 2023
(John Christensen)



Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca*, Matthaei Botanical Gardens,
January 16 2023 (Chuck DeLaTorre)

Straggling **Chipping Sparrows** briefly visited feeders on 1/26 (at Warner & Judd) and on 1/28 (just west of Dexter) – there are only about ten other local records during January-February. Paralleling this duo, two separate **Field Sparrows** were observed at the tail end of January: along Stark Strasse on 1/24 and at the Foster Nature Area near Barton Pond on 1/30. And in another similarity, there are only ten or so prior Washtenaw County records for the first two months of the year. To say **Fox Sparrows** were abundant may be a bit of a stretch, but they were certainly uncharacteristically widespread in early 2023. The feeders at Dixboro & Ford continued to host up to five of them through 2/4. Four additional feeder stations were visited by additional birds, and as many as three of them were present at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens from 1/9 – 2/14. **White-crowned Sparrows** spent the winter all over the county throughout the winter with up to three observed at ten different locations. Small numbers of **Swamp Sparrows** stayed through the winter, at roughly half a dozen sites. An **Eastern Towhee** thrilled the owners of a feeder in Whitmore Lake from 1/25 – 2/2. All of these New World Sparrow species seem to be slowly adding our neck of the woods to their regular wintering ranges, aided no doubt by feeding stations and a warming climate.

The Fleming Creek drainage was the place to look for **Yellow-rumped Warblers** this winter. As many as six of them were at Parker Mill Park on 1/9, and individuals were recorded at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens (1/15 – 2/12), again at Parker Mill (2/5 – 2/6), and at Geddes Dam (2/13). Away from here, one was in a yard in Lodi Township on 2/11.



Snow Bunting
Plectrophenax nivalis,
Vreeland Rd,
January 28 2023
(Ivan Prates)

Field Trip Calendar

Thursdays at the Arb

March 30th through May 25th, 8:00 am

Join us at Nichols Arboretum Thursday mornings (March 30th through May 25th) to observe migrants making their way north. These leaderless walks are a great opportunity to join with other birders of all skill levels. Meet at the east end of the arboretum at the Dow Prairie entrance. From Geddes Ave., turn north onto Riverview Dr. and stay right until it terminates at Riverview Ct. cul-de-sac. Check the website for a link to the map if you have never been there.

Directions: Meet at the east end of the arboretum near the Dow Prairie entrance.

Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad (WESO) Feathered Friends Walk Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area

Saturday, April 1, 2023, 9:30-11:30 am

This event is meant specifically for students participating in the WESO event "Feathered Friends." We will take a walk through and around the Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area to look and listen for the birds in the area. All ages and skill levels are welcome. We will have extra binoculars if you do not have any. Wear boots as the nature area can get very muddy.

Directions: Meet at the parking lot of Scarlett middle school. Leader: Victor Chen

BIPOC Bird Walk, Matthaei Botanical Gardens

Saturday, April 8, 2023, 9:30-11:30 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 early spring migrants. All ages and skill levels are invited. We will have extra binoculars if you do not have any. There is a fee of \$2.00 per hour (max of \$5.00) for parking.

Directions: Meet outside the Visitor Center, 1800 N. Dixboro Rd. Leader: Victor Chen

Exploring the Pittsfield Preserve, Partnering with Pittsfield Twp Parks

Saturday, April 22, 2023, 8:00 am

The Pittsfield Preserve is a large natural area that was acquired by Pittsfield Township in 2002. Its 500+ acres encompass a myriad of habitats, including mature woods, tallgrass prairie, a marsh, and a variety of actively farmed fields. Not surprisingly, then, a wide range of birds have been observed here and new species continue to be added to the park's checklist on a regular basis.

This walk is in collaboration with the Pittsfield Township Parks Department, which means pre-registration and signing a liability waiver will be required. The group will likely be limited to 15 participants – be prepared for lots of mosquitoes and wear rubber boots to handle the often very muddy trails.

Please register at <https://recreation.pittsfield-mi.gov/ViewCourseActivityDetails.aspx?id=C15389>

Directions: Meet at the parking lot off Thomas Rd, just south of Morgan Rd. Leader: Jacco Gelderloos

Weekend Walk for Wildflowers & Birds at Nan Weston Preserve

Sunday, April 23rd, 8:00 am

Join us to explore spring ephemerals and migrant birds and Nan Weston Preserve. This 248-acre preserve is owned and protected by the Nature Conservancy. It should be a beautiful, educational and enjoyable walk. Check the Washtenaw Audubon Society website for more detailed location information.

Directions: Meet in the parking lot off of Easudes Rd (map here: <https://goo.gl/maps/BA5as5GmZkKWaDz78>). Leader: Dan Sparks-Jackson

>> Note that this walk is not yet confirmed – keep an eye on the WAS website and our social media <<

Spring Birding Activity and Walk, Partnering with the Ypsilanti Library

Saturday, April 29, 2023, 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Meet at the Downtown Library, 229 W. Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti

Have you ever been curious about the feathered friends singing and flying around your home or in your parks? Are you looking for a fun activity to do outside with your family and friends? Join the Washtenaw Audubon Society for an introductory look at birding. We will take a walk down the Water Street Trail and then come back to the library to make a homemade bird feeder. If you have binoculars, bring them along! We'll have a few extra pairs for guests to share.

Directions: This program begins in the Ypsilanti Library downtown branch, followed by a guided walk down the Water Street Trail. Participants are welcome to join at any point in this event. Leader: Victor Chen

Tuesday Evening Birders

Each Tuesday in May at 6:00 pm

Each Tuesday will feature a new trip leader and a location of their choice. Check the website for details a week before the event, Details for these walks tend to come together closer to the event than our other walks.

BIPOC Bird Walk, Nichols Arboretum

Saturday, May 6, 2023, 9:30-11:30 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 early spring migrants. All ages and skill levels are invited. We will have extra binoculars if you do not have any.

Directions: Meet at the east end of the arboretum near the Dow Prairie entrance. Leader: Victor Chen.

Magee Marsh

Hudson Mills Metropark

Details for these trips will be announced on our website and on our social media.

Saturday, May 6

Sunday, May 7

Washtenaw County May Count

Saturday, May 13

With spring finally here, birders' thoughts turn to spring birding. Washtenaw volunteers take this day to count all the birds in our County, Township by Township. Each Township has an Area Leader who assigns volunteers to specific territories to count birds. Please consider participating in the Washtenaw County May Count, on World Migratory Bird Day. Visit washtenawaudubon.org for details and registration.

Organizers and Complers: Juliet Berger and David Amamoto

Spring Birding Activity and Walk, Partnering with the Ypsilanti Library Superior Branch

Saturday May 20, 2023, 11:30 am -12:30 pm

Meet at the Superior Branch for the Ypsilanti Library, 1900 N Harris Rd, Superior Charter Twp

Have you ever been curious about the feathered friends singing and flying around your home or in your parks? Are you looking for a fun activity to do outside with your family and friends? Join the Washtenaw Audubon Society for an introductory look at birding. We will take a walk around the library and explore the new grounds to see what birds and creatures are around. If you have binoculars, bring them along! We'll have a few extra pairs for guests to share.

Directions: This program begins in the Ypsilanti Library Superior branch, followed by a guided walk around the library. Participants are welcome to join at any point in this event.

Leader: Victor Chen

Update from the Education Chair

As spring approaches, Washtenaw Audubon is ramping up the educational opportunities for our elementary school students. From our past partnerships with the Ypsilanti township libraries, WAS developed a relationship with Erickson Elementary School in Ypsilanti. Each week, WAS members Victor and Morgan Chen spend time with a wonderful group of 2nd to 5th graders and help them learn fun facts about the birds of Michigan. This is to help them prepare for their Feathered Friends event for the Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad (WESO) and to hopefully help them gain more of an interest in birding.

On April 1st, WAS will hold a bird walk for all WESO Feathered Friends participants at the Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area. On April 29th, WAS will hold an event at the downtown Ypsilanti library where we will make bird feeders and take a walk down the Water Street trail. On May 20th, we will hold our inaugural bird walk at the Ypsilanti Superior township library. Stay tuned in our upcoming issues for pictures of these activities.

Victor Chen



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 has resumed in-person programs, although most of them will also be viewable on Zoom as hybrid programs, as well. Please check the website or Facebook before you come to Matthaei Botanical Gardens for a program, as occasionally a program will be moved from in-person to Zoom only, for various reasons.

April 19, 7:30 p.m.

WAS Birding Adventure to Ecuador, with Ben Lucking – Zoom only

Join Ben Lucking for a journey to Ecuador, which has more than 1,800 species of birds, the fourth largest number of any country in world. Ben led a Washtenaw Audubon-sponsored trip to Ecuador this past January and is planning another trip there early next year. Ben will talk about the diversity of habitats, from the high Andes to the Amazonian rain forest, and the birds that can be seen in each habitat, as well as some of the best lodges that cater to birders.

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

Meeting ID: 936 1185 7032

Passcode: 551598

Or dial-in: 312-626-6799

May 17, 7:30 p.m.

Program to be announced. Watch our web site and Facebook page!

Washtenaw Audubon Society

P.O. Box 130923

Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923