



September / October 2023

## Education Chair Update

With the school year underway, Washtenaw Audubon is back to running educational programs for our schools and community partners. We kicked off the year with a chimney swift extravaganza at the Ann Arbor Open School, where over 120 people from the school community joined Juliet Berger and me in watching the swifts swirl around their large chimney and drop in at dusk. Over 1,600 swifts were counted that evening and the show was enjoyed by all.

On September 30, WAS will head out to Hewen's Creek Park in Ypsilanti where Victor will lead a migration bird walk with the Ypsilanti District Library. This continues a series of walks with the library through various parks in Ypsilanti Township. Meet at 11 am if you want to join us.

Our walks for the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community started up in early September through Nichols Arboretum. This year, we are looking to expand our walks by partnering with different groups in the community, including Shades of the Outdoors: A BIPOC Outdoor Enthusiast Community, and the Bryant Community Center. As always, check our website for more information and e-mail [education@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:education@washtenawaudubon.org) if you have ideas for partnership opportunities.

Victor Chen, WAS Education Chair



A small selection of the many attendees at the Swift Night Out event at Ann Arbor Open School (*Victor Chen*)

# President's Letter

Dear Washtenaw Audubon,

Fall brings a crispness to the air, and of course, Fall Migration. We've already had over 15 species of warblers grace our Thursday Arb walks. Take a morning off work and join us, between now and the end of October.

Fall's chilly nights prompt Chimney Swifts to roost in large communal chimney towers, in preparation for migration. Our Swift Nights Out event in mid-August saw over 20 volunteers count over 3000 swifts at 20 locations in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Milan, Saline and Chelsea. Our largest spectacle was observed at the Mack School/Ann Arbor Open chimney, where upwards of 1,200 were seen on several nights. In September our Education Chair Victor Chen organized a school wide Swift Night Out, where 120+ members of the Ann Arbor Open School community attended an evening of learning about Chimney Swifts, with a chance to witness a whopping 1,600 swifts entering the massive chimney. During the August event, 2 new chimney roosts were identified, so now we can keep track of their occupants in the coming year, one in Ypsilanti and one in Ann Arbor. We monitor swifts since they are in steep decline across their range, and we want to get the community involved and proactive, lest any of the roosts are threatened with demolition or capping. We also need to keep track of their numbers, in order to notice any precipitous declines. Some favorite roosts were not in much use this fall, namely Burns Park School and 415 W. Washington, and the Milan roost which ordinarily hosts hundreds, and this year hosted single digits or none at all. We don't know why the swifts change their minds so quickly about where to roost, but we know they do, often. You'll want to get out to one of the roosts this fall to see this wonder of nature before they migrate south for the winter: Try Mack School in Ann Arbor, the First Presbyterian Church of Saline, CHS Group at 211 E. Michigan Avenue in Ypsilanti, the Northern Brewery Building on Jones Drive in A2, or our two newly identified roosts-- Cranbrook Towers in Ann Arbor, or the roost at 218 W. Adams Street in Ypsilanti, for a really big show!

Please plan to attend our October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting at Matthaei Botanical Gardens at 7:30, where we'll vote on the question of whether to drop Audubon from the name of our organization. We join sister groups around the Country in attempting to confront Audubon's legacy of shameful behavior in his lifetime. We'll have a quick recap of our June presentation by WAS Treasurer Keith Dickey, of some of the controversy surrounding JJ Audubon. Only current members will be able to receive a ballot, and everyone must vote in person at the meeting. We'll tally the ballots after the vote and announce the results. A new name will be chosen, at a later date. Come join the voting party and enjoy some refreshments, as well.

Until we meet again, on the Boardwalk, amid the magic of a late fall warbler flock....

I am, as always, for the birds,

Good birding,

Juliet Berger, President Washtenaw Audubon Society

Ace birder Ben Lucking receiving the much sought-after Wingnut Award for having observed the most bird species (241!) in Washtenaw County during 2022, at the August WAS picnic; pictured with WAS president Juliet Berger. *(Bill Nolting)*



## Board Members

### President

Juliet Berger  
[president@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:president@washtenawaudubon.org)

### Vice President & Programs

Mike Sefton  
[vp-programs@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:vp-programs@washtenawaudubon.org)

### Treasurer

Keith Dickey  
[treasurer@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@washtenawaudubon.org)

### Secretary

Jessica Adamczyk  
[secretary@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:secretary@washtenawaudubon.org)

### Membership

Diana Miller  
[membership@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:membership@washtenawaudubon.org)

### Field Trips

Matthew Spoor  
[fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org)

### Conservation

Cathy Theisen  
[cathythetvet@comcast.net](mailto:cathythetvet@comcast.net)

### Education

Victor Chen  
[education@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:education@washtenawaudubon.org)

### Stewardship

Dana Novak  
[stewardship@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:stewardship@washtenawaudubon.org)

### Webmaster/Technology and Social Media

Rob French  
[rwfrenchjr@comcast.net](mailto:rwfrenchjr@comcast.net)

### Past President

Sue Johnson  
[Suejohn62@gmail.com](mailto:Suejohn62@gmail.com)

### Board Member/Bird Rescue

Sherri Smith  
[grackle@umich.edu](mailto:grackle@umich.edu)

### Newsletter

Jacco Gelderloos  
[newsletter@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@washtenawaudubon.org)

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

## Summary Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2023

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

*Year ended June 30, 2023*

REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT	
Member dues	\$ 5,965
Gifts, unrestricted	1,927
Interest earned	250
Sales of merchandise	728
<b>TOTAL REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$ 8,870</b>
EXPENSES	
Newsletter and brochure costs	\$ 1,726
Grants made	4,006
Insurance	525
Equipment purchased	919
Program expenses	245
Searle property expenses	151
Other operating expenses	744
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 8,317</b>
<b>RESULTS FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>\$ 554</b>
Additions to Property and Equipment	919
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,473</b>
<b>NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 169,942</b>
<b>NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 171,415</b>

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

*As of June 30, 2023*

ASSETS	
Cash in checking account	\$ 14,520
Savings in money market account	13,856
Savings in certificates of deposit	30,245
<b>TOTAL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>\$ 58,621</b>
Bernard Loates "After Audubon" prints	\$ 2,900
Equipment	\$ 4,454
Searles property	86,940
Wing property	18,500
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>\$ 112,794</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 171,415</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 171,415</b>



## 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)

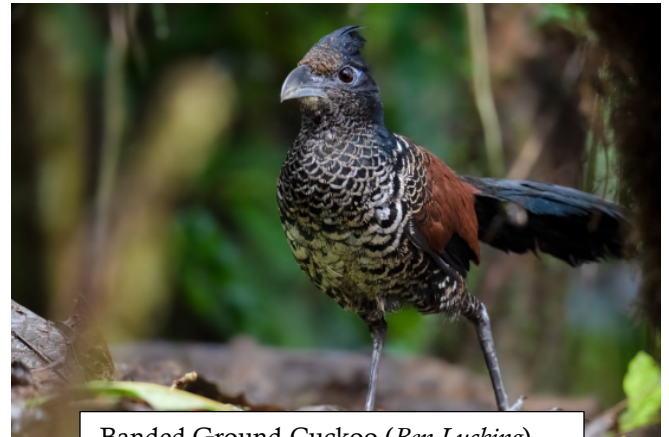
## Field Trips (Much) Farther Afield

### Birding Northern Ecuador with Ben Lucking

January 16 – 29, 2024

Northern Ecuador is arguably home to the greatest avian diversity of anywhere in the world. This tour explores a cross section of the region from West to East, covering a wide range of elevations on both slopes of the Andes. As a whole this tour aims to keep a relaxed pace and keep moves between accommodations at a minimum. The concentrated nature of Ecuador's diversity means a short drive in any direction can result in a near complete shift in birdlife.

We begin with the Western slope of the Andes, exploring the arid highlands around Quito before descending into the incredibly diverse cloud forests and rainforests of the Chocó bioregion. This area is characterized by a wide array of gemstone-like hummingbirds and tanagers, as well as world class feeding stations catering to birders. The Andes are rich in birdlife from end to end but nowhere is it perhaps so accessible as this region centered around the town of Mindo. Expect close views and excellent photo opportunities. Reserva Amagusa in particular could lay credible claim to being the best place to photograph birds anywhere in the world. From here we make our way back to the highlands as we head towards the Eastern slope and the Amazon basin.



Banded Ground-Cuckoo (*Ben Lucking*)

Expect close views and excellent photo opportunities. Reserva Amagusa in particular could lay credible claim to being the best place to photograph birds anywhere in the world. From here we make our way back to the highlands as we head towards the Eastern slope and the Amazon basin.



Andean Cock-of-the-Rock (*Ben Lucking*)

The second half of the tour will be an exploration of Napo Province, an area roughly half the size of New Jersey that has recorded over 1000 species. From high elevation páramo to Amazonian lowlands this area packs unbelievable diversity of scenery and wildlife into a small area. This side of the Andes is somewhat wilder and more intact than the West, with massive swathes of land protected by the trio of Cayambe-Coca, Sumaco Napo-Galeras, and Antisana National Parks. These parks have limited access by road and are therefore havens for a wonderful array of special wildlife. What limited access there is offers a glimpse into this wild world, with a host of rare species to be found amongst the impressive scenery.

### Spring Migration in Texas with Ben Lucking

April 16 – 24, 2024

Each April, a significant proportion of North America's migratory birds descend on Texas in what is among the world's greatest migratory spectacles. The Gulf Coast's famed migration hotspots such as High Island and Sabine Woods see mass afternoon arrivals of birds that left the Yucatan the evening prior. Hooded, Kentucky, and Swainson's warblers fill dark understories while flocks of Indigo Buntings and Bobolink find themselves in grassy verges and saltmarsh. Adjacent mudflats and beaches are alive with vast numbers of American Avocets, peeps, and plovers. Rice fields just inland hold plentiful Black-necked Stilts, White-faced Ibis, dowitchers, and the odd Hudsonian Godwit.



Vermilion Flycatcher (*Ben Lucking*)



Colima Warbler (Jesse Huth)

In addition to the migratory riches of the Gulf Coast, Texas is home to a rich diversity of landscapes. Heading West of Houston, prairies filled with Scissor-tailed Flycatchers make way to Texas Hill Country. This region is something of a crossroads in avian diversity. Eastern migrants such as Black-and-White Warbler, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Least Flycatcher meet dry Southwestern species such as Cactus Wren, Scott’s Oriole, Scaled Quail, and Greater Roadrunner; Southern species such as Green Jay, Ringed Kingfisher, Tropical Parula, and Morelet’s Seedeater; and a whole cast of regional specialties such as Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-capped Vireo, and Black-crested Titmouse. Heading further West, the landscape grows increasingly dry, culminating in the vast expanses of the

Chihuahuan Desert. Rising up from this desolate landscape are Big Bend National Park’s Chisos Mountains. The wetter, vegetated valleys high among these peaks are home to one of the ABA area’s rarest breeding birds, the Colima Warbler.

Texas’s diversity of habitats and location at the heart of the Central Flyway give it the greatest avian diversity of anywhere in the ABA area. The current ABA area record of 294 species seen or heard in a day, set by a Cornell team in 2013, was set using a route from Texas Hill Country to the Gulf Coast. This tour aims to be a relaxed pace, extended version of that record day’s incredible route. We’ll begin on the Gulf Coast, before making our way West across Hill Country and the Edwards Plateau to Big Bend’s Chisos Mountains. We will fly in and out of Houston, and the tour will include a one-way flight from West Texas to Houston at the end of the tour.

**Please see our website for additional details on these two trips!**

## Trip Report – Hudson Mills Metropark (9/3/23)

A whopping 33 birders spent their Labor Day Sunday at Hudson Mills Metropark, peering high into the treetops and catching sight of 10 warbler species, especially buckets of Bay-Breasted Warblers, and 4 vireo species including the difficult-to-find Philadelphia Vireo. 55 species were observed with cameo appearances made by a Pileated Woodpecker, Ovenbird, and Red-Tailed Hawk. It was a perfect morning weather-wise too, cool at the start with brilliant sunshine illuminating passerines darting in the leafy canopy.

Karen Markey



Above: Cape May Warbler (Dan Fox)  
At left: Philadelphia Vireo (Amanda Maduko)

## July-August 2023: Summer Highlights

### The Highlight

Most birders are familiar with the phenomenon of the Patagonia Picnic table effect, when birders looking for a rare bird in a given location come across another rare bird. Although this particular scenario did not 100% apply to this summer's birding highlight, it was striking that on 8/7 a juvenile **Little Blue Heron** was found in the exact same pond in Saline's Wilderness Park where a juvenile Roseate Spoonbill was located in July 2021. Although it was only a one-day wonder, this youngster was very cooperative, actively feeding in the roadside pond and offering great views to the numerous birders that came to Saline to see it. This made for the 10<sup>th</sup> record of this wanderer from the southeastern states, but only the third in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, after adults at Schneider Rd Pond (June 2001) and Lillie Park (June 2015). Based on these records, it seems that the best times to look for this handsome little heron are during spring migration in May-June and during the post-breeding dispersal period in August.



Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* & Great Egret *Ardea alba*, August 7, 2023 (Michael Bowen)

### Waterfowl

Dabbling duck presence during the summer months is, by and large, limited to the ubiquitous Mallard. However, there is a trend of **Northern Shovelers** appearing in Washtenaw County during August, which was borne out by a trio at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens on 8/31. Similarly, **American Black Ducks** started to trickle in during August, which three birds at North Bay Park (8/19), one at West Park (8/24), and two more in the wetlands near Textile and Huron River Dr (8/27). It is worth noting that identifying these birds can be a challenge among groups of Mallards in eclipse plumage. A female **Northern Pintail** at Four Mile Lake on 8/21 was highly unusual; there is only one prior August record for this species when a female spent nearly three weeks at a puddle along Vreeland Rd in August 2021.



Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*, Sharon Mills County Park, July 14 2023 (Michael Bowen)



Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*, Oakwoods Nature Area, August 30 2023 (Victor Chen)

**Ring-necked Ducks** continued their strong showing from the May-June, although there was no evidence of nesting attempts. The lone female at Sharon Mills County Park was reported through 8/16, a drake was seen at the M-52 & Lehman wetland, and another female was present at a pond along Spencer Rd from 8/20 on. The only summertime record of 2023 for **Common Merganser** was pair of female-type birds that flew in from the north and briefly circled Four Mile Lake on 7/31, only to fly off whence they came.

A **Northern Bobwhite** was calling along Notten Rd on 8/9 and was the only one reported this summer. Not surprisingly, numbers for **Ring-necked Pheasants** dropped back off after the spring months when they tend to be most readily observed – single birds were seen/heard on half a dozen locations scattered throughout the County. The abundant **Mourning Dove** does not generally feature in this report, but the massive gathering of 382(!) doves along Schneider Rd on 8/16 most certainly deserves mentioning and established a new County record high count. The rarer of the two cuckoo species, a few **Black-billed Cuckoos** remained into summer in a handful of places, a likely indication of the approximate size of our breeding population. Similarly, Washtenaw County continues to host a small number of nesting **Common Nighthawks**, most readily found in downtown Ypsilanti's Depot Town area. As August started coming to an end, migrants moved through the area during the evening hours, topping out at 28 birds near the Foster Rd bridge over the Huron River on 8/31. **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** continued to be reported from the Green Lake access site, on 7/4 and as late as 8/21. Another one was reported from Sharon Mills County Park on 7/15.

After going AWOL during June and July, a **Common Gallinule** re-appeared at the fluddle at M-52 & Lehman 8/1, where it stayed through at least 8/20. The fact that none were reported from traditionally reliable Trinkle Marsh, may have been an indication of difficulty viewing the marsh, not necessarily of a lack of gallinules there, especially since they had been seen in late May. The North Bay Park **American Coot** stuck around until 7/5; the only other observation of this species came from the Winnewanna Impoundment on 7/22.

### Shorebirds through Falcons

The only **Semipalmated Plover** of the period was on the mudflats at Mary Beth Doyle Park on 8/22. In a sign of the potential for discovery of new technologies, an **Upland Sandpiper** was detected when an intrepid birder was recording night-time bird calls at Eberwhite Woods on 7/30. Three **Pectoral Sandpipers** were noted during July-August: at Mary Beth Doyle Park (7/25), at Domino's Farms (8/5 – 8/11), and at the nearby Toyota facility (8/9 – 8/12) – since it is unclear if there ever were overlapping observations, this may in fact have been on and the same bird. A handful of **Semipalmated Sandpipers** moved through, starting with two at Mary Beth Doyle Park on 7/25, followed by one there from 8/3 – 8/13, one at South Pond on 8/20, and two more at Domino's Farms between 8/20 – 8/23. A big surprise for late August was an **American Woodcock** at Draper Houston Meadows Preserve on 8/31.

An over-summering **Bonaparte's Gull** visited Four Mile Lake for much of the summer, from 7/18 – 8/21. Also notable was the presence of a group of four Bonies on Portage Lake on 7/24; additionally, individuals were at North Bay Park (8/5) and Silver Lake (8/17). Perhaps this "influx" of sorts was related to the widespread forest fires in the species' boreal nesting grounds? **Caspian Terns** spent the summer at North Bay Park in fluctuating numbers, with a maximum of 10 birds there on 8/18. Away from this reliable spot, there was one over Scio Church & Parker (8/13), two over Barton Pond (8/20), and two more over Four Mile Lake (8/27). More unusual was a single **Common Tern** over Four Mile Lake on 8/21 – although this species has become significantly less mythical in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than it was in the 20<sup>th</sup> (when there were only two accepted records!), it is still a rarity and a major treat for any birder who clinches the ID. Its congener, the **Forster's Tern**, was seen over Whitmore Lake (one on 7/6) and at North Bay Park (two on 8/4).



Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, Four Mile Lake, August 21 2023 (Benjamin Hack)



Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*, North Bay Park, August 4 2023 (Bill Nolting)

Another species previously considered near-mythical, **American White Pelicans** have become, in essence, annual migrants through Washtenaw County: since 2015, only 2017 had no records of this impressive waterbird. This summer singletons were at North Bay Park from 7/16 – 7/17 and again on 7/30 – photos of these birds indicate that different individuals were involved. An **American Bittern** was oonk-a-loonking in the marsh of Park Lyndon County Park on 7/22. The only **Least Bittern** of the summer was at Hewen’s Creek Park on 7/29 – it is unclear why no observations came from LeFurge Woods this year. The status of **Black-crowned Night-Heron** as a nesting species locally has, in recent years, become rather murky – the presence yet again of a (likely) family group of up to five birds of varying ages at Mary Beth Doyle Park continues to feed suspicions that the species may be breeding somewhere nearby. Away from this Ann Arbor city park, an immature spent most of the summer (from 7/14) at North Bay Park, where it was briefly joined by an adult on 7/30. This young bird is also likely to be involved in a string of sightings farther downstream in various Ford Lake parks (8/10 – 8/18). Other than that, there were one-day wonders at Eberwhite Woods (7/24), the Meyer Preserve (8/28), and the Whitmore Lake Preserve (8/30).



American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*, North Bay Park, July 16 2023 (Brian Beauchene)



Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Mary Beth Doyle Park, August 30 2023 (Nui Moreland)

There was a **Northern Harrier** along Merritt Rd on 7/15; more intriguingly, a number of observations came from the area around the Conservancy Farm along Vreeland Rd between 8/9 – 8/28 – given the presence of suitable habitat in that area, could a nesting attempt have taken place there? The first of this fall migration’s **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were at Toma & Stinchfield Woods (8/17) and over Manchester (8/23). Continuing their recent trend, **Red-shouldered Hawks** were quite widespread this summer, being present in at least seven locations. **Broad-winged Hawks** had a very good summer season locally: although some of the observations later in August likely involved at least some migrants, the fact that reports for this breeder came in from nearly 20 locations was certainly notable.



Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*, Eddy Discovery Center, July 18 2023 (Michael Bowen)



Red-headed Woodpecker *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*, Sharon Mills CP, July 8 30 2023 (John Mills)

**Barred Owl** sightings dropped off notably from spring to summer and only a handful were entered into eBird – single birds were at the West Scio Preserve (7/5), at South Lake (7/19), the Cherry Hill Preserve (7/20), and at the Eddy Discovery Center (8/5). **Red-headed Woodpeckers** had a very good summer and were noted at some 20 locations – the maximum number was a whopping nine birds at Sharon Mills County Park on 7/31. **Merlins** started their southbound movement on



8/27, when the first of the season appeared at North Bay Park, where it stayed through 8/29. Additional birds were at Mary Beth Doyle Park (8/29) and in Whitmore Lake (8/31). Downtown Ann Arbor continues to be the place with the best odds of seeing **Peregrine Falcons**, where the breeding pair and their offspring were seen on UM campus and several nearby locations. Away from there, two were seen over the EMU tennis courts on 7/7.

### Passerines: Tyrannid Flycatchers through New World Sparrows

Starting on 8/11, **Olive-sided Flycatchers** started arriving and were present in good numbers throughout the county – as is often the case during the fall migration window a few places even hosted two of these well-dressed *tyrannids*. **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were quite hard to come by; the first of these *empids* showed up on 8/18, but away from a half dozen or so spots around Ann Arbor, none were found. A whopping 32 **Eastern Kingbirds** at South Lake on 8/21 established a very impressive new high count for Washtenaw County.



Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*, Eddy Discovery Center, August 26 2023 (Michael Bowen)



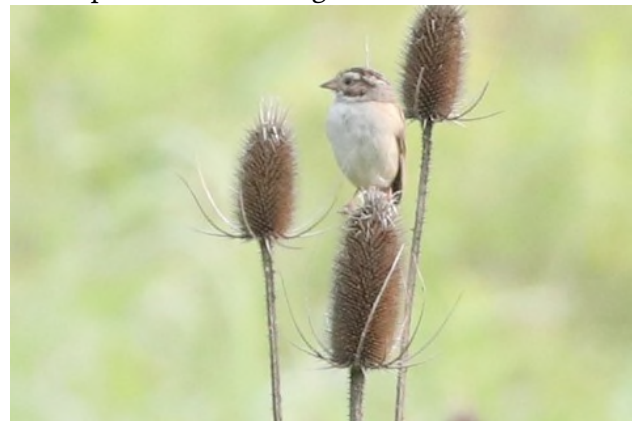
Purple Martin *Progne subis*, Maple & Willow Rd, August 16 2023 (Ben Lucking)

The two **White-eyed Vireos** at the Leonard Preserve (7/4 – 7/17) were likely involved in a nesting attempt, since the habitat looked to be ideal there. Two (very) late **Blue-headed Vireos** were reported during the first week of July, at the Whitmore Lake Preserve (7/2) and at Rolling Hills County Park (7/3); since this species nests at Stinchfield Woods (almost) annually, this may have involved nesting attempts. The first southbound individual was at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens on 8/31. There were a few **Philadelphia Vireos** at four spots around Ann Arbor as of 8/30 – the bulk of the fall migration for this species will no doubt push through during September. Known for their colonial nesting style, **Purple Martins** can often be seen in good numbers at select sites – however, the multitude of some 425 individuals in the air and on the wires at Maple & Willow on 8/16 was clearly unheard of and made for a record tally.

Successful breeding of a pair of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** was confirmed at the Lyndon Twp trailhead of the B2B Trail, when an adult was observed tending to two juveniles on 7/3. Proof of the small local breeding population of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** came from three locations in July and four in August. Similarly, the continuing presence of **Brown Creepers** well into July is probably an indication that this secretive species is also part of our breeding avifauna.



Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*, Sharon Mills CP, July 7 2023 (Paul Miller)



Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida*, Leonard Preserve, July 16 2023 (Diana Cook)

The best place to enjoy **Sedge Wrens** was at the Watkins Lake County Preserve in the far southeastern corner of the county

– as many as five birds were reported by birders visiting through 8/5. Away from this hotspot, these grassland wrens could be found along Sharon Hollow Rd (7/4), at the Leonard Preserve (7/9), and the traditionally reliable DeVine Preserve, where two were present from 8/3 – 8/9. As was true in the prior period, **Marsh Wrens** were a bit easier to come by, continuing at some ten wetlands around the county through at least 8/20. **Northern Mockingbirds** had a pretty good summer season – one or two were observed at almost ten spots, well into August.

After a promising spring, **Grasshopper Sparrows** rather vanished – apart from the healthy concentration of five birds along Meyers Rd on 7/3, the only other report came the Conservancy Farm, where one was seen/heard. To see **Clay-colored Sparrows** this summer, birders had to visit either the Leonard Preserve (7/9 – 7/16) or Rolling Hills County Park (through 7/14); each site hosted two singing males. Away from the Greater Manchester are, where up to two territorial males were present well into August in five locations, **Vesper Sparrows** were along Vreeland Rd (through 7/28) and at Rolling Hills (through 7/25). **Henslow's Sparrows** continue to hang on as a breeding species in Washtenaw County, no doubt helped by grassland restoration efforts at quite a few parks and preserves – the biggest concentration was at one of those, the Sharon Mills County Preserve, where as many as five were regaling visitors with their insect-like song on 7/3.

### Passerines: Chat through Cardinals

The **Yellow-breasted Chats** at Watkins Lake County Preserve were last noted when one was seen on 7/1. Likely involving southbound migrants, **Northern Waterthrushes** were at Eberwhite Woods (three birds on 8/15), in Manchester (one on 8/22), and at the Burns Stokes Preserve (one from 8/27). After several intriguing reports from the Embury Rd area in late May – early June, an apparent **Brewster's Warbler** hybrid was reported (again) from Park Lyndon County Park on 7/3. **Prothonotary Warblers** continued to be readily found along the Huron River in Hudson Mills Metropark (one on 7/1) and along the B2B trail from Hudson Mills into Dexter (up to five birds through 7/19). Skulking **Mourning Warblers** were seen at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens (8/20), Eberwhite Woods (8/25 – 8/28), and Nichols Arboretum (from 8/30) – the latter two birds were quite cooperative and could be enjoyed by many birders.



Cerulean Warbler *Setophaga cerulea*, Park Lyndon CP, July 3 2023 (Michael Bowen)



Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*, Sharon Mills CP, August 22 2023 (Michael Bowen)

**Cerulean Warblers** continued to be present in the Embury Rd area through 7/23; away from there, one was noted along the Eddy Discovery Center's trails on 8/10 – this appears to have been the last sighting of the species for the year. An early-ish **Palm Warbler** at the Conservancy Farm on 8/31 was the first of that species' southbound push. A very late **Canada Warbler** was at Park Lyndon County Park on 7/4; even for this regularly tardy species that was quite the straggler. By the time mid-August rolled around, these attractive little warblers appeared in our neck of the woods again, at some seven different sites, with up to three at Everwhite Woods from 8/15 – 8/18. This pattern neatly matched that for **Wilson's Warblers**, which trickled in here and there as of 8/20. The 14 warbler species that were found during July rather accurately represent the number of *parulids* that nest locally; with the advent of August, migrant species increased that number to 26.

The territorial **Blue Grosbeaks** at the Sharon Mills County Preserve were present throughout the summer months; based on observational details, the pair that set up shop there was able to raise at least one youngster to fledging. Although no further reports came in from nearby Sharonville SGA, on 8/16 another cluster of **Blue Grosbeaks** (2 males and a female) was found on a property with restricted access in Lodi Twp. Although it may stretch to say that the Sharon Mills County Preserve was overrun with **Dickcissels**, a whopping 18 birds there in 7/22 was certainly a stunningly high tally. Given how widespread this species was during the spring months, it was somewhat surprising that they were reported from only four other locations during the summer months.

## Field Trip Calendar

### Thursday Fall Migration Walks at Nichols Arboretum

**Thursdays, October 5, 12, 19, and 26, 8:00 - 10:30 am**

Join us Thursday mornings through October at Nichols Arboretum as we search for fall migrants. These walks are a great opportunity to join with other birders of all skill levels. In addition to the birds, the Arb's trees and other flora offer delights of their own.

**Directions:** 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 the Riverview Ct. cul-de-sac.

**Leader:** Juliet Berger

### The Big Sit! at Independence Lake County Park

**Saturday, October 7, 6:00 am - 2:00 pm**

How many birds can you identify in one day while staying within a 17-foot / 5.2-meter diameter circle? This free, annual, semi-competitive international birding event was started by the New Haven Bird Club in 1992. [More information on The Big Sit! here.](#) Join WAS birders as we count as many species as we can from our circle. Great for those with mobility issues, and who enjoy the more relaxed pace of birding in place. Bring a comfy chair and some warm food and beverage and enjoy the birds, conversation, and camaraderie. While many will, none are expected to be there the entire time so feel free to drop in for an hour or four. We would love to see you.

**Directions:** Meet at the grassy knoll just past the boat launch area as you enter the park from Jennings Rd, it's ¼ of a mile into the park on your left.

**Leader:** Matthew Spoor

### BIPOC Bird Walk at Crosswinds Marsh (Wayne County)

**Saturday, October 14, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

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 fall migrants and waterfowl around the marsh. All ages and skill levels are invited. We will have extra binoculars if you do not have any.

**Directions:** If you would like to carpool to Crosswinds Marsh, please contact Victor Chen at [education@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:education@washtenawaudubon.org) to arrange. The parking lot is located at 27600 Haggerty Rd, New Boston, MI.

**Leader:** Victor Chen

### Michigan State Bird Observatory Banding Stations

**Sunday, October 15, 7:00 am - 2:00 pm**

We are excited to announce our first field trip to the Michigan State Bird Observatory (MSBO) where we will have the opportunity to observe research and field biologists in action as they capture and band birds. The MSBO operates two bird banding stations – the Burke Lake Banding Station (2011 – present) and the Corey Marsh Banding Station (2019 to present). Each can accommodate up to 20 people so we will limit registrations to 40. There are two stations two miles apart that can accommodate 20 people each. We will work out final logistics as we get close and see how many folks we have.

**Registration Required.** Please register on our website: <https://washtenawaudubon.org/events>

**Directions:** We will want to carpool as much as we can so, please plan to meet at the Miller Road Park and Ride for a 7:00 am departure with plans to arrive at the banding stations around 8:00am. **SEE WEBSITE** for important details about carpooling.

**\*\*ADA:** If you are in a wheelchair, or have other accessibility needs, there is a ramp that allows visitors to get into the bird banding barn to view the banding process and see birds up close. Please let us know up front so we can make sure you are in the correct group visiting that station.

### Restoration Workday at Searles Nature Preserve

**Saturday, October 28, 3:00 - 6:00 pm**

Did you know Washtenaw Audubon owns a nature preserve? We do! Located just a mile south of Rolling Hills County Park, Searles Nature Preserve is a 50-acre natural area that hosts the headwaters of Stony Creek. Join us as we work to remove woody invasive species and create habitat for native plants and insects that support the birds we all love.

With 97% of North American landbirds relying on animal protein to raise their young, it is critical that there's enough native habitat to support the populations of insects required for them to raise their young. Most of these insects, largely moth and butterfly caterpillars, have evolved to require specific, native, host plants for successful reproduction. This is why it is so important that we continue to foster the biodiversity necessary to support all the beautiful birds.

Tools and know-how will be provided. Please bring leather work gloves, wear long pants, tall socks, and closed-toe shoes or boots.

**Directions:** Meet at the entrance to the preserve on Bolla Road between Crane and Stony Creek Roads.

**Waterfowl at Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve**

**Sunday, October 29, 9:00 - 11:30 am**

This gem features beautiful rolling land covered in a mixture of open meadow, mixed hardwoods, low wetland areas, open water, and the property’s most popular feature, Watkins Lake. Watkins Lake has been designated a Waterfowl Refuge by MDNR due to the significant habitat provided for migrating and breeding birds; many species of ducks, geese, grebes, and more may be seen, especially in spring and fall. The park also has historical significance as being part of the Underground Railroad and being awarded membership to the Network to Freedom program through the National Park Service ([read more here](#)).

Directions: A Recreation Passport is required for each vehicle entering the park. Meet at the main parking lot on Arnold Rd ([map](#)).

Carpooling: For those interested in carpooling, we will depart from the Miller Road Park and Ride ([map](#)) at 8:15 am.

**BIPOC Bird Walk at North Bay Park/Ford Lake**

**Saturday, November 11, 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 waterfowl around the lake. All ages and skill levels are invited. We will have extra binoculars if you do not have any.

Directions: Parking will be in the entrance located at 526 Grove Street, Ypsilanti.

Leader: Victor Chen

**Belle Isle State Park with Oakland Audubon**

**Saturday, November 18th, 8:00 am - 12:00 am**

Join WAS friends and Oakland Audubon Society for a tour of this State Park, a gem on 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 and overwintering songbirds of interest.

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

**Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count**

**Saturday, December 16, 12:00 am - 5:30 pm**

Keep the third Saturday of December open on your calendars, folks, and join us for the 78<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count (CBC). During this annual event, we scour a 15-mile diameter circle centered around the Foster Rd bridge over the Huron River to census the birdlife present in and around Ann Arbor. The data collected will be added to the huge dataset assembled over the decades by a huge number of citizen scientists like us and contribute to a better understanding of the wintertime distribution of the birds we all love to enjoy.

As count day approaches, the CBC page on the WAS website will be updated with the most up-to-date registration information, so please stay tuned! Of course, there will be a formal announcement in the November-December issue of this newsletter. Reminder – the Ann Arbor CBC is looking for a new compiler to replace outgoing compiler Jacco Gelderloos. See the July-August newsletter for more information, or email Jacco at [JJGelderloos@yahoo.com](mailto:JJGelderloos@yahoo.com).

Compiler: Jacco Gelderloos

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	<b>Membership Dues</b>	
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 some 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.

**October 18, 7:30 p.m.**

### **Special Member Meeting to Vote on Changing our Name**

**Notice to all current members of Washtenaw Audubon:** Save the date for this important program to learn about the controversy surrounding Audubon's actions during his lifetime, and the movement to remove "Audubon" from the name of many of our sister birding organizations. **We will vote on whether to remove the "Audubon" name at this meeting and decide on a new name at a later date.** You will hear from board members on their recommendations to remove "Audubon", and from any member wishing to share their opinion. If you have any questions or cannot attend to vote and would like a statement read on your behalf, please email [treasurer@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@washtenawaudubon.org). Full details on the process and expectations will be shared with members via email and our website.

Voting will be via anonymous paper ballot. Only in-person voting is permitted. Only current members as of Sept. 13, 2023 are eligible to vote

**November 15, 7:30 p.m.**

### **Birding Oaxaca**

Join Washtenaw Audubon's longtime foreign field trip leader, Bryn Martin, for a report on the WAS trip he led to the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca in August of this year. The trip started in Oaxaca City and visited a variety of habitats from high mountains to the Pacific coast.

The trip yielded 220 species, including 45 endemics, as well as many butterflies and a visit to fantastic Zapotec ruins.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/99433486554>

Meeting ID: 936 1185 7032

Passcode: 572061

Or dial-in: 312-626-6799

## Washtenaw Audubon Society

P.O. Box 130923

Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923