



July / August 2024 Newsletter

## The Results of the 2024 WAS May Count Are in!

### President's Letter & May Count Report

Dear Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance Friends:

It is impossible to overestimate the amount of effort it takes for the over 130 volunteers throughout the 20 townships in Washtenaw County, to conduct the May Bird Count, drive, walk and bike their routes, record all the birds they observe, enter their eBird checklists, analyze the data, create the spreadsheets, email participants, check up on missing data and create a cohesive narrative of the day's bird observations. This year we tallied 179 species, tying the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number in the past 11 years. The winner of the Township species tally competition for the first year ever is Webster Township, with a whopping 122 species, thanks to the tireless efforts of Faye Stoner and her volunteers, as well as great birds!!



Dunlin (*Victor Chen*)

May Count is just one of several events that Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance conducts throughout the year that not only bring our whole birding community together, but also provide fantastic data to bird science particularly migration science, but also to population trends and status. The Christmas Bird Count is another great example, as are the Thursday morning Arb bird walks we have conducted every spring and fall since time immemorial. This year's May Count was no different in that respect, in providing a host of important data, with an abundance of effort from volunteers.

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(Please consider volunteering to take over the Christmas Bird Count from our Compiler extraordinaire, Jacco Gelderloos, as he hopes to train a replacement soon, and then retire from this position after many, many years at the helm).

What are some of the things we learned from this year's May Count and the 11 Count years for which I've been keeping the data and organizing volunteers? What are some of the long-term trends? We have a limited data set, but we can say a few important things. Game birds like Wild Turkeys are doing well, and their population has exploded (276), with this year's total a whopping 4 times larger than in 2014, when I took over the May Count organizer and compiler job. Others, like Northern Bobwhite are no longer considered a wild population in Southeast Michigan, and Ruffed Grouse are nearly extirpated, as well, while in 2015 we counted 3 Ruffed Grouse. Ring-necked Pheasants have held steady these last 11 years, undoubtedly bolstered by ongoing releases of farm raised individuals of the species, for hunting. We will need more grassland habitat, and more intact forests without hunting permitted, for either of these game birds to survive or rebound in our area. Waterfowl, like Mallards, Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, Canada Geese, Mute Swans, and Trumpeter Swans are all doing well, thanks to an increase in the quality and quantity of wetland habitat and small lakes and ponds being protected and enhanced both by Federal Laws, the MDNR, City and County Parks, and private organizations like Ducks Unlimited, as well as limited hunting. Wood Ducks doubled their count from 2014 to 2024, and Trumpeter Swans did as well (158 Wood Ducks and 32 Trumpeter Swans). Mute Swans' population, unfortunately, continues to grow, as do Canada Geese, both of whose numbers doubled in the past 11 years, undoubtedly due to their current non-migratory status and few hunters. In other water and marsh bird news, the First County Record Yellow Rail, found on May 1 by Ben Lucking in the Little Portage Lake sedge, was still clicking away on the May Count evening—so we got to include that great find in the Count!

Woodpecker numbers continue their upward trend, due to our now mature regrown forests, and the Emerald Ash-borer beetle that devastated our ash tree population but created more dead and dying tree habitat for woodpeckers and others. In fact, our 38 Pileated Woodpeckers totaled this year represent a quadrupling of their population counted in 2014. All other woodpecker numbers are on the upswing, except the rarer Red-headed Woodpecker, a Special Concern Species for the State of Michigan whose population has remained steady at around 20 individuals in our county since the mid-20 teens.

Common birds, particularly short distance or non-migratory species like American Robins, Northern Cardinals and Mourning Doves have remained common, while rarer migrant species like Hooded and Prothonotary Warbler held their own or lost numbers of population in our area. Raptor numbers, finally recovered from DDT effects, have plateaued. We may notice fewer Bald Eagles in the next few years, as the highly pathogenic strain of Avian Influenza continues to take its toll on their survival. This year's 36 individual Bald Eagles represent an increase from 2022, when the influenza outbreak devastated our birds, but they are

still at risk, as reports from northern parts of the State tell of empty nests, with parents and young both falling victim to the disease.

Warbler and other passerine diversity is still high, yet overall numbers are way down from our counts in the 20-teens. This year we counted 29 species of Warbler, including the rare Golden-winged Warbler that my husband, Scott and I spotted in an old junkyard regrown with new aspens and poplars, and Cerulean Warblers, Prothonotary Warblers and a few Mourning Warblers. My favorite species, the Scarlet Tanager, was counted in respectable numbers, with 72 tallied, up from a low of 50 one year in the last 11 years, but still down from our anticipated 90-120 individuals. >>continued on page 3<<



Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Jocelyn Anderson*)

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The Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance 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.

I stepped in temporarily in Salem Township this year to compile the efforts of Joe Kennedy who will take over in 2025, and compiled Dexter Township for our cadre of fantastic regular volunteers for area leader Rob French who was out of town on the Count. My regular routes in Lodi and Ann Arbor, as well as those in the townships above, only went smoothly because of the help of dozens of dedicated volunteers. David Amamoto helps with all things tallying and spreadsheet, and is as good a partner in this endeavor, since 2018, as one could ask for. **See his amazing spreadsheet with all our data, Township by Township, in this issue of the WBNA Newsletter.** Thank you all!!

I'll need all of your help and more, in 2025, on May 10<sup>th</sup> for the next installment of the May Count. I'll close with what I said in my first May Count summary in 2014. 'Thanks for all the help from all the volunteers, who made my job a pleasure. I am reminded daily what an intelligent, skilled, and genuinely nice group of people birders are. You all deserve a round of applause.'

Please join us at our Annual Potluck Picnic at Dexter Huron MetroPark on August 10<sup>th</sup> from 12:30-3:30 with the Wingnut and Service Awards presented at around 1:30. We'll have **new** t-shirts and hats with our new name and logo available for purchase. We'd love to see you all there!!

As always, I am for the birds,

Juliet Berger, President

Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance



Sora (John Christensen)



### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The birds Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance 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 B&NA 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 washtenawbna.org](https://washtenawbna.org)

Washtenaw County May Count May 11, 2024		Species Count - Common: 138										Species Count - Rare: 41										v3.0
		Species Count Rare + Common: 179																				07/12/2024 dya
Species Count - Common:		110	64	63	73	55	77	105	84	94	85	59	64	98	107	93	97	69	110	77	80	138
Species Count - Rare:		3	2	3	4	0	2	6	5	6	4	0	1	10	9	10	6	3	12	1	5	41
Species Count - Common + Rare:		113	66	66	77	55	79	111	89	100	89	59	65	108	116	103	103	72	122	78	85	179
Species Count - Sp Only:		4	0	1	0	4	4	1	0	0	4	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	2	0	4	19
Class	Ann	Aug	Bri	Dex	Fre	Lim	Lod	Lyn	Man	Nor	Pit	Salm	Sln	Sci	Sha	Sup	Syl	Web	Yor	Yps	Count Total	
<b>Bird Count: Common</b>	8581	744	414	742	1095	1255	3155	999	1622	1779	604	724	1518	2934	1325	2042	458	2561	897	2194	35643	
Canada Goose	Com	338	32	39	12	38	90	94	21	119	259	142	22	105	91	63	283	4	110	62	274	2198
Mute Swan	Com	50		1		8	9	2	2	14	7	12		3	1	1	2	1	7		105	225
Trumpeter Swan	Com	8				2	2	2		2				7			2		7			32
Wood Duck	Com	46							17		7	4	1	4	27	12	2	8	2	19	9	158
Blue-winged Teal	Com	2												2		2	3					9
Mallard	Com	256	5	6		5	8	30	1	11	12	7	19	22	38	9	42		13	6	40	530
Hooded Merganser	Com	4				1		1		1				4	7		1					19
Wild Turkey	Com	16	8	3		15	13	15	2	11	35		5	6	20	38	50		39			276
Ring-necked Pheasant	Com			2		1		1		2			1	1	6	4			2	2		22
Pied-billed Grebe	Com	1	1							1					1				2			6
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	Com	132		4		4	4	24		4	2		5	10	15	5	18		7		43	277
Mourning Dove	Com	115	12	13	9	25	16	74	4	39	25	7	16	43	66	20	48	4	42	17	34	629
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Com		1					1							1		1	1				5
Black-billed Cuckoo	Com							1								1						2
Chimney Swift	Com	1516	6		4		13	1	3	6	10			26	3	5	47	2	16	10	295	1963
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Com	2			1			4			1				2	1	1		3	2		17
Virginia Rail	Com				1		2	1						1	2	1			2			10
Sora	Com		2				1	5	3	1		1	4	5	1	2	2		5			32
Sandhill Crane	Com	14	2	7		19	23	21	17	14	30	2	6	9	8	45	43	5	47			312
Killdeer	Com	47	13	6	3	3	8	40		12	21	5	13	26	19	2	25		22	7	11	283
American Woodcock	Com							1		3	1					3						8
Wilson's Snipe	Com							2														2
Spotted Sandpiper	Com	5						5	1			1		4	2		2	1	1	1	1	23
Solitary Sandpiper	Com	3								1		1	2	2	1		3		1		1	15
Lesser Yellowlegs	Com			2			2						2									6
Greater Yellowlegs	Com												2						2			4
Least Sandpiper	Com			5			6			2				1			9					23
Ring-billed Gull	Com							1					61								1	63
Herring Gull	Com												2								1	3
Double-crested Cormorant	Com	7								4		1		3		13	1				13	42
Green Heron	Com	13	1	1				4		2	1	2		3	4	2	9		4			46
Great Egret	Com	5										1	3	1	3	2	5		1	1	1	23
Great Blue Heron	Com	20		1			5	8	1	4	18	5	3	7	18	4	14		9	1	5	123
Turkey Vulture	Com	46	11	10	11	56	18	46	9	42	44	12	31	31	50	52	31	2	34	3	1	540
Osprey	Com	7					1		1		1				2		2		1		4	19
Cooper's Hawk	Com	3						1				1		2	3				2			12
Bald Eagle	Com	5	1	1	1	3	5	2	4	2				2	5	1	2		2			36
Broad-winged Hawk	Com							1							1		1					3
Red-tailed Hawk	Com	17	1	2	1		3	6		2	6		3	4	7	5	5		4	3	1	70
Eastern Screech-Owl	Com							1		1		3			1							6
Great Horned Owl	Com	5													1		1		2		1	10
Barred Owl	Com									1					1				1			3
Belted Kingfisher	Com	6			1					2				4	2		2		1	1	2	21
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Com	73	16	1	24	5	19	23	6	15	8	2	12	18	36	12	14	5	22	10	10	331
Downy Woodpecker	Com	39	1	1	6	1	5	20	1	2	3	1	4	5	26	2	4	1	9	5	5	141
Hairy Woodpecker	Com	21	1		5		1	6		2	2	1		4	8	1	3		10	4	1	68
Pileated Woodpecker	Com	6			1		2	2	3	4	1			4	7	1	2	2	3			38
Northern Flicker	Com	53	2	2	11	3	11	14	3	11	13	1	4	12	30	11	20	2	17	7	16	243
American Kestrel	Com	1								2		2	5		1				1			12
Peregrine Falcon	Com	2																				2
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Com				1														1	1		3
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Com	10			5	2	4	10	11	3		2	1	1	7		2	2	3	4	4	71
Acadian Flycatcher	Com		1		2					2						1						6
Willow Flycatcher	Com									1	1				1					1		4
Least Flycatcher	Com	10			1			8							9		3		2			33
Eastern Phoebe	Com	12		1			2	12	2	3	3			7	2	1	2	1	6	1	1	56
Great Crested Flycatcher	Com	31	7	3	3	2	5	12	6	6	4	2	1	5	14	15	11	2	5	4		138
Eastern Kingbird	Com	43		3	3	2	1	9	2	9	7	2		2	9	5	9	2	11	6	6	131
Yellow-throated Vireo	Com		1		2		4	7	6		6	1	1	3	5	5	4	5				44
Blue-headed Vireo	Com	3					1	1	3												1	9
Warbling Vireo	Com	92	9	1	6	6	10	21		11	2	2	2	21	20	4	5	8	17	11	44	292
Red-eyed Vireo	Com	57	6	1	21	1	6	11	24	1	2	2	5	9	14	1	6	16	3		6	192
Blue Jay	Com	280	11	8	29	9	22	95	5	57	36	6	22	36	111	28	72	7	69	28	55	986
American Crow	Com	89	20	7	18	37	34	65	11	26	42	4	24	25	88	38	35	4	58	19	20	664
Black-capped Chickadee	Com	121	6	10	36		11	46	24	15	5	5	4	7	80	5	12	14	29	3	13	446
Tufted Titmouse	Com	135	11		27	8	19	39	6	13	13	4	8	12	84	16	15	7	27	13	21	478
Horned Lark	Com		7	8				10		15	2			4	11	6	11			5		90
Bank Swallow	Com	47		1			12	59	11	2	12	5		11	28	10	1		15		1	215
Tree Swallow	Com	251	2	16	13	33	92	76	133	32	36	20	18	25	21	20	12	45	102	7	38	992
Purple Martin	Com		2				4	3	20	9	8			6								



	Class	Ann	Aug	Bri	Dex	Fre	Lim	Lod	Lyn	Man	Nor	Pit	Salm	Sln	Sci	Sha	Sup	Syl	Web	Yor	Yps	Count Total
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Com				2													1	1			4
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Com	13	1	2	7	1	2	4	14	2	2	2	2	3	7	2	4	4	16	5	8	101
House Wren	Com	72	5	1	4	7	4	49	4	19	16		1	15	20	13	19	1	14	4	9	277
Carolina Wren	Com	46		1	5	4	2	17	2	10	10		3	6	19	5	2		10	1	9	152
European Starling	Com	294	29	2	4	107	8	195	1	41	143	14	39	54	56	47	85		98	30	116	1363
Gray Catbird	Com	51	14	5	4	5	12	73	5	36	11	4	1	17	46	27	17	5	25	32	16	406
Brown Thrasher	Com			2	1		2	2	1	3				1	1	1	2		2	1		19
Eastern Bluebird	Com	14	1	8	3		8	21	2	7	15	1		7	13	25	12	2	25	14	1	179
Veery	Com	3						2	5	5	1				1	2		11	3	1	1	35
Swainson's Thrush	Com	8						1		4				1	8	1		1	1	1	1	27
Hermit Thrush	Com	2			1				3		1				1							8
Wood Thrush	Com	7	3		10			9	7	4	7		1	3	13	5	3	8	5	1	1	87
American Robin	Com	641	99	25	67	118	87	250	35	64	206	66	61	114	170	85	72	14	142	83	163	2562
Cedar Waxwing	Com	3			3	4	4	2						50			5		2		2	71
House Sparrow	Com	251	37	9	3	60	8	84	3	14	37	7	2	42	45	11	21		31	25	60	750
House Finch	Com	98	4	1	4	9	4	63	1	4	27	2	4	5	27	2	10	1	52	12	26	356
American Goldfinch	Com	200	24	6	32	40	23	72	11	27	40	12	5	25	106	25	56	4	47	41	43	839
Chipping Sparrow	Com	38	14	2	11	23	5	33	6	28	26			5	23	21	10	7	21	4	11	288
Field Sparrow	Com	5		2	3		5	27	1	19	8	6		4	10	4	18		6	8	3	129
Dark-eyed Junco	Com	2							1						1		1		1			6
White-crowned Sparrow	Com	20	4	2	3	8	1	18	1	10	10	3	3	8	24	5	12		9	8	6	155
White-throated Sparrow	Com	33	2		2	1	2	18	2	3	5	1	1	1	67	1	3		8	2	4	156
Vesper Sparrow	Com		2					2						1			4					9
Savannah Sparrow	Com	4	1	2	4			21		5	1		6	1	4	1	23			8	1	82
Song Sparrow	Com	145	44	14	25	8	46	109	10	67	34	21	16	32	65	18	60	5	68	38	19	844
Swamp Sparrow	Com	2		2	2	3	10	2	16	14	6	1		2	14	9	11	5	22			121
Eastern Towhee	Com	4	1		3		5	10	6	13	1		1		2	9	8	3	3	1		70
Bobolink	Com									3	5			1		2	6		1	2		20
Eastern Meadowlark	Com			2		1		6		2	2		1	5		6	3		2	4	1	35
Orchard Oriole	Com	6		1				5		3	1		1	1	2		2	2	2	4	3	33
Baltimore Oriole	Com	154	19	7	18	7	25	70	8	26	18	3	6	36	68	26	40	12	42	12	35	632
Red-winged Blackbird	Com	805	106	54	70	219	215	394	130	219	163	85	118	172	493	241	250	14	286	83	105	4222
Brown-headed Cowbird	Com	122	10	2	34	17	10	57	13	24	25		9	33	39	18	38	6	59	14	35	565
Common Grackle	Com	245	18	12	9	57	31	63	8	36	40	9	3	50	69	41	68		45	43	93	940
Ovenbird	Com	7			12			3	5		2			1	2	3		1	2			38
Northern Waterthrush	Com	1		1			1	2		2					2			1	3	1	1	15
Blue-winged Warbler	Com		1				1		14	7	2				1	2	8					36
Black-and-white Warbler	Com	8						2	2	1	1			1	3		1		4	1		24
Tennessee Warbler	Com	67			1	1	4	9	12	5	1	1	2	1	12	6	4	3	13	1	7	150
Orange-crowned Warbler	Com																	1				1
Nashville Warbler	Com	13			1		1	4	1	1					8			1	8		1	39
Common Yellowthroat	Com	40	5	15	13	20	46	48	56	86	22	6	9	10	73	38	56	16	39	8	9	615
Hooded Warbler	Com	1	1		1				2	1							2					8
American Redstart	Com	22	3		1		4	9	16	2	1	1	1	3	15	3	1	6	5	3	1	97
Cape May Warbler	Com	1			1	1			1										1			5
Northern Parula	Com	16	1		1			2	4	2				2	14	1		1	4		2	50
Magnolia Warbler	Com	9						2			1		1		6			1	5	1		26
Bay-breasted Warbler	Com	4													2		1					7
Blackburnian Warbler	Com	5						2	1					1	5				1	1	1	17
Yellow Warbler	Com	98	21	20	18	23	29	44	35	64	21	10	1	26	61	32	59	11	39	36	28	676
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Com	12							3					1	4			1	3		1	25
Blackpoll Warbler	Com	1	1					1						1		1				3	1	10
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Com	2							2	1												5
Palm Warbler	Com	2						1							1				4			8
Pine Warbler	Com	2			3				5	1					1	1		2	1			16
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Com	16	1		3			5			1			5	10	2	1	1	5	5	2	57
Black-throated Green Warbler	Com	16			4			4	2	3				2	12	1	1	2	3	1	1	52
Canada Warbler	Com	1																				1
Wilson's Warbler	Com	2						1							4			1	1			9
Scarlet Tanager	Com	13			10		2	6	4	4	2				4	2	10	8	4	2	1	72
Northern Cardinal	Com	272	31	10	27	34	29	136	8	30	36	5	8	35	111	27	38	11	63	32	45	988
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Com	79	13	2	24	5	14	46	11	15	11		1	18	41	20	20	9	39	12	8	388
Indigo Bunting	Com	23	3	3	8	1	11	18	15	12	5	1	2	11	17	15	6		5		2	158
<b>Bird Count: Common Only</b>		<b>8581</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>1255</b>	<b>3155</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>1622</b>	<b>1779</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>1518</b>	<b>2934</b>	<b>1325</b>	<b>2042</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>2561</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>2194</b>	<b>35643</b>

Species Count: Rare Only	Ann	Aug	Bri	Dex	Fre	Lim	Lod	Lyn	Man	Nor	Pit	Salm	Sln	Sci	Sha	Sup	Syl	Web	Yor	Yps	Total Count	
Gadwall	R																				1	1
Green-winged Teal	R																		2			2
Canvasback	R									1												1
Common Merganser	R	1																	1			2
Ruddy Duck	R									1			4						1			6
Horned Grebe	R														3				1			4
Common Nighthawk	R													1							2	3
Eastern Whip-poor-will	R								2													2
Common Gallinule	R									1				1								2
Yellow Rail	R				1																	1
Semipalmated Plover	R															4						4
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	R													1								1
Dunlin	R			3										10								13
Bonaparte's Gull	R													1								1
Black Tern	R													1					1			2

Class	Ann	Aug	Bri	Dex	Fre	Lim	Lod	Lyn	Man	Nor	Pit	Salm	Sln	Sci	Sha	Sup	Syl	Web	Yor	Yps	Count Total
Common Tern	R					9															9
Common Loon	R							1													1
American Bittern	R														1						1
Northern Harrier	R								3					2							5
Red-shouldered Hawk	R	1					2	1										2		1	7
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	R							1										1			2
Red-headed Woodpecker	R		1			2	4		2	2			5		1			2			19
Merlin	R														1						1
Philadelphia Vireo	R												1				1				2
Brown Creeper	R				2									1			1	2			6
Sedge Wren	R								3					2	3						8
Marsh Wren	R													1		3		3			7
Northern Mockingbird	R								5				2	1	1						9
American Pipit	R			4			1						11	4	2		1			2	25
Purple Finch	R													1				1			2
Pine Siskin	R	1						1							1		1				4
Lapland Longspur	R		75	1																	76
Grasshopper Sparrow	R													1							1
Clay-colored Sparrow	R																			2	2
Henslow's Sparrow	R								2						2						4
Lincoln's Sparrow	R				1		1						1								3
Yellow-breasted Chat	R																	1			1
Golden-winged Warbler	R						1														1
Prothonotary Warbler	R				2									1		1					4
Mourning Warbler	R						1									1				2	4
Cerulean Warbler	R							21								2					23
<b>Bird Count: Rare Only</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>Species Count: Sp Only</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Bird Count: Sp Only</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>186</b>
Graylag Goose (Domestic type)	Sp																				15
swan sp.	Sp	2																			2
Mallard (Domestic type)	Sp																				5
duck sp.	Sp																	3			3
hummingbird sp.	Sp													1							1
gull sp.	Sp	5				3															8
Sharp-shinned/Cooper's Hawk	Sp					1								1							2
Buteo sp.	Sp				1	1															2
hawk sp.	Sp																			1	1
Downy/Hairy Woodpecker	Sp	1							2												3
woodpecker sp.	Sp						1														1
swallow sp.	Sp	6			33	18							16								73
Ruby-crowned/Golden-crowned Kinglet	Sp																	1			1
wren sp.	Sp								1												1
thrush sp.	Sp													2						1	3
House/Purple Finch	Sp				3																3
new world sparrow sp.	Sp				20				9												29
blackbird sp.	Sp								18												18
passerine sp.	Sp			15																	15
<b>Bird Count: Sp Only</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>Bird Count: All Birds</b>	<b>8598</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>1152</b>	<b>1289</b>	<b>3166</b>	<b>1024</b>	<b>1639</b>	<b>1814</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>1564</b>	<b>2950</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>2054</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>2583</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>2224</b>	<b>36101</b>

## May-June 2024: Spring – Early Summer Highlights

### The Highlights

As all of you undoubtedly know, Washtenaw County is one of the most intensively birded counties in Michigan and boasts an impressive total species list for a county that does not border any of the Great Lakes. That being the case, the addition of a new species is a pretty unusual event, which happens only once or twice a year at most. On May 1, a very well-prepared Ben Lucking explored some promising-looking habitat around Little Portage Lake and found his quarry: a calling **YELLOW RAIL**. This secretive bird proved to be exceedingly cooperative and was calling consistently from a location within earshot of a small pull-off along Dexter-Pinckney Rd. Against all expectations, this bird (or birds?) stuck around through at least 5/15 and was heard by many.



Yellow Rail *Coturnicops noveboracensis*, Little Portage Lake, May 14, 2024, (Hanyang Ye)

Photo by 小小鸞



Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*, Lehman Rd, May 5, 2024, (Isaac Polanski)

Apart from this record, the only prior record for (part of a) Yellow Rail was a wing found among the Peregrine Falcon prey remnants below Burton Tower near U of M campus.

Although it is not an unheard-of rarity in Washtenaw County, **Wilson's Phalarope** is a very uncommon bird that is often seen by a mere few lucky observers before moving on. On May 5, a stunningly beautiful female was found in an at best non-descript little fluddle along Lehman Rd, where she showed off her gorgeous plumage in the evening light. Best of all, this beauty stayed well into the next day, allowing many to enjoy this rarity, only the second record in Washtenaw County since 2017.

Lastly, on 5/10, a trio of intrepid birders set out to break the all-time Washtenaw County Big Day record of 143 (set on 5/16/20). Starting with the Portage Lake Yellow Rail at 3:00 a.m. and ending with a pair of Great Horned Owls at the Chelsea SGA just before 10:00 p.m., their efforts were successful beyond expectations – they ended up with a grand total of 154 species for the day! For a full report of their day, you can “follow along” at <https://ebird.org/tripreport/234284>.

## Waterfowl

May-June is not usually the time of year when this report mentions geese, but, as they say, there is a first time for everything. On 5/23, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** flew into the Hammer Pit property along with some Canada Geese, making for the first ever May record in the county. Only days before this observation, on 5/20, a **Tundra Swan** had been found at the same location, in the company of a sizeable number of Trumpeter Swans, making for a nice identification challenge. During its nearly week-long stay, this bird moved from the Hammer Pit property to another sandpit a little farther north along Feldkamp Rd; it was last reported there on 5/26. This, too, made for a first May record for Washtenaw County.

By the time May rolls around, the vast majority of duck species have moved on to nesting locations to our north, so it's always notable when species that don't breed locally stick around this late into spring. That being the case, a **Northern Shoveler** at North Bay Park on 6/7 was certainly of note. **Gadwall** didn't stick around that long, but a bird at Hewen's Creek Park on 5/11 and another (or the same?) at North Bay Park on 5/14 was certainly a bit late for that species. **American Wigeons** just barely made it into the period with a quartet at Four Mile Lake on 5/1. **Green-winged Teal** were certainly a bit easier to come by than any of the preceding dabbling ducks; small numbers (up to 7) stuck around in at least four sites until 5/11. The pair that was present along Vreeland Rd from 5/24 – 6/1 was more out of the ordinary, though.



Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*, Hammer Pit, May 23 2024 (Ben Lucking)



Common Merganser *Mergus serrator*, Nichols Arboretum, May 23 2024 (Zach Kemp)

A single **Canvasback** was found on Whitmore Lake on 5/11 but was not seen after that. Pairs of **Ring-necked Ducks** stuck around in a handful of locations into mid-May, but they were not reported after 5/12. Similarly, small numbers of **Lesser Scaup** dallied in Washtenaw County into the first third of May – just long enough for a pair to be found by the 5/10 Big Day team. **Buffleheads** will on occasion over-summer locally, but that was not the case this year – by 5/5 they had left all six of the lakes they had been found before that. More intriguingly, given their suspected nesting attempts along the Huron River, pairs of **Common Mergansers** were seen in potential breeding habitat – however, they, too, were not reported after 5/13. More unusual were the small numbers of **Red-breasted Mergansers** staying into May; that said, they vacated these last three spots by 5/3. Much like Buffleheads, **Ruddy Ducks** will on occasion spend the summer in Washtenaw County. Given the decent numbers present well into May, the lone male on the main pond at the Ann Arbor Landfill on 6/9 was not totally unexpected, then



## Gallinaceous Birds through Falcons

A trio of **Northern Bobwhites** visited a yard off Toma & Stinchfield Woods Rd on 6/23 – a truly wild population of these cute little birds is now probably a thing of the past, but they are still a treat to behold. A **Horned Grebe** in one of the ponds surrounding Briarwood Mall was a big surprise for the observer on 5/5. Three more spent a few days on Independence Lake from 5/11 – 5/14. For those willing to get up early enough (or stay out there late), **Eastern Whippoorwills** were surprisingly numerous and widespread – at least five birds were singing along Noggles Rd (5/5 – 5/11), up to three were noted at the Green Lake Campground site throughout May and June, and a further five or so birds were present in the area around Sharonville SGA through at least the middle of June. With that, two different locations set a new local high count for this lovely nightjar. **Common Gallinules** were hard to come by this spring – one was at LeFurge Woods on 5/2, and another at Earhart & Five Mile on 5/11. The most “reliable” birds were in the marshes along Lehman Rd, but even these birds were not reported after 5/29. That location also hosted one of two pairs of **American Coots** through at least 5/10. Be that as it may, these birds were exceedingly secretive and could well have attempted to nest there. The other pair of coots was in the wetland at Sharon Mills County Park – North on 5/12.



Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus*, Briarwood Mall, May 5 2024 (Russell Ryan)



Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*, Lehman Rd, May 8 2024 (Chase Masters)

**Semipalmated Plovers** moved through in good numbers during the month of May – they were seen in seven different locations, maxing out at nine individuals at the fluddle at Dixboro & Five Mile (5/23). That spot also hosted a group of 16 **Short-billed Dowitchers** on 5/15 – unfortunately, these birds did not stay more than a few hours. Small numbers of **Dunlins** stopped over at about a half dozen sites during May – the maximum at any given spot was a group of 11 at the Hammer Pit on 5/10. Generally an earlier migrant, the last **Pectoral Sandpipers** were reported on 5/7; although this species sometimes occurs in sizeable flocks, the largest group was a mere seven birds. The northbound migration of **Semipalmated Sandpipers** was, in a word, interesting: a group of up to four at Dixboro & Five Mile from 5/15 – 5/27 was pretty normal, but the massive flock of 124(!) birds at the Hammer Pit on 5/20 was completely unheard-of and (obviously) established a new record high count for the species. To round out the observations, there were two at Platt & Morgan on 6/11 – this duo could have been late migrating north or (very) early migrating south.



Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*, Dixboro & Five Rd, May 15 2024 (Nui Moreland)



Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*, Whitmore Lake, June 13 2024 (Bill Nolting)

The last flock of **Bonaparte's Gulls** was at Four Mile Lake through 5/4. However, single stragglers were seen at the Hammer Pit (5/11), Whitmore Lake (5/14), and at North Bay Park (6/16) – what exactly to make of this rather unusual pattern is unclear. The only **Caspian Terns** of the season was a group of three over Whitmore Lake on 6/24 – in contrast to past years,



none were at North Bay Park (yet). May Count Day (5/11) was apparently the day to look for **Black Terns**: one was at the Hammer Pit and another at Independence Lake. On 6/13 Whitmore Lake hosted the only **Forster's Tern** of the period, while Four Mile Lake featured a group of nine **Common Terns** on 5/11, perfectly timed for May Count.

A late **Common Loon** in basic plumage stayed on Four Mile Lake through 5/4. Nearby, the **American Bittern** at the Chelsea SGA continued through at least 5/12. Another individual was at Independence Lake from 5/3 – 5/8. Last but certainly not least, a very cooperative **American Bittern** was present in the wetlands along Lehman where it was heard and sometimes seen by many from 5/6 – 5/18. The **Least Bittern(s)** in the area around LeFurge Woods continued to be hard to pin down; that said, one was seen at the nearby Meyer Preserve on 6/15 and at LeFurge Woods proper on 6/19. Due to the added scrutiny/coverage of the Little Portage Lake marsh due to the Yellow Rail, a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was observed there occasionally from 5/12 – 5/18. Another bird was seen at the Conservancy Farm property on 6/6. As has become more or less expected, at least one bird, an adult, was at Mary Beth Doyle Park, from 6/7 through the end of the month. A one-day, one-observer wonder, a **Western Cattle Egret** was photographed among Great Egrets at the Gotfredson Rd marsh on 5/4.

**Northern Harriers** proved to be quite common throughout May and June – both male and female birds were reported from some 15 locations all over the county, which might be an indication that at least some of these birds attempted to nest locally. The default *accipiter* in Washtenaw County at this time of year is the Cooper's Hawk, but it is clearly a good idea to carefully scrutinize such raptors (particularly small ones), because **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were observed throughout the period from nearly a dozen sites. **Barred Owls** were almost ubiquitous: adults, juveniles, and apparent family groups of up to four birds were seen or heard in some 20 sites! Although not unheard of, the fact that single **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** remained in seven locations well into the third week of May was certainly unusual.



American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*, Lehman Rd, May 8 2024 (Diana Cook)



Barred Owl *Strix varia*, Stinchfield Woods, June 3 2024 (Jeff Hollobaugh)

## Passerines: Tyrannid Flycatchers through New World Sparrows

**Olive-sided Flycatchers** moved through in regular numbers from 5/6 – 6/2 – reports came in from all over the county. Following their typical migratory pattern, a handful of **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were noted on their way through; during the 10-day span from 5/21 – 6/1 one or two were seen in a mere six sites. A visit to the Nan Weston Preserve at Sharon Hollow on 6/20 proved to be noteworthy: the 18 **Acadian Flycatchers** and 39 **Red-eyed Vireos** both set new Washtenaw County high counts. Often tricky to track down, **White-eyed Vireos** were at Jones Dr & Plymouth (5/7), Nichols Arboretum (5/8 – 5/13), and at the DeVine Preserve (5/23); only the bird in the Arb was seen by more than the original observers. **Philadelphia Vireos** migrated through in ones and twos from 5/4 – 5/19 – they were by no means common, though, and were seen in only eight locations.



Philadelphia Vireo *Vireo philadelphia*, Crooked Lake, May 4 2024 (Andy Dettling)



Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis*, Stinchfield Woods, May 16 2024 (Scott Buchanan)

Although they have on occasion nested at Stinchfield Woods, the last of the spring's **Golden-crowned Kinglets** had left Washtenaw County by the end of the first week of May. By contrast, **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were present in appropriate habitat throughout the period and based on sheer numbers (at least six at Stinchfield Woods, for example) bred locally. The same was true for **Brown Creepers**: not only were they present in eight locations, but they did so throughout the period and in numbers indicative of at least attempted nesting (up to six in Stinchfield Woods). The last of the spring's **Winter Wrens** were at Doph Park (5/2) and along the path off Dino Dr in the West Scio Preserve (5/5). In appropriate habitat at places like the DeVine Preserve, the Sharonville SGA, and Chelsea SGA, **Sedge Wrens** could be found quite easily – as many as six singing birds were present in the sedge meadow of the latter natural area. Even more widespread than their congener, **Marsh Wrens** could be found in cattail marshes throughout the county; they were most numerous at LeFurge Woods and Four Mile Lake, where at least six singing males were eBirded on several dates.



Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*, Eberwhite Woods, May 13 2024 (Debi Bailey)



American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*, Lehman Rd, May 7 2024 (Nui Moreland)

By some margin, **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** are the least common of our *catharus* thrushes; this spring, only about a dozen individuals were reported, none of them after 5/14. Their close relative, the **Veery**, breeds locally and does so in good numbers; that said, the whopping 43 birds reported from Embury Rd on 5/14 were quite extraordinary and set a new high count for that species. **American Pipits** were almost common during the first two weeks of May – they were seen (and often nicely photographed) at almost 30 locations. Even if most of these reports involved one or two birds, on several occasions good-sized groups were seen, with the flock of 42 birds along Vreeland Rd on 5/9 the clear winner. As May arrived, **Purple Finch** reports dropped off and the last of handful of these dapper finches had left by 5/15. **Pine Siskins** were notably widespread and common well into May this year: eBird show them in more than 15 different spots, even if the flocks were never large than six birds. Intriguingly, a pair was seen at Stinchfield Woods on 6/2, so at least some of them may have tried to breed in our county. Given its name and its association with Snow Buntings, **Lapland Longspurs** are considered by many to be winter visitors to southeastern Michigan. However, oftentimes these birds leave for their far northern breeding territories much later than Snow Buntings do and on occasion stay well into May. Such was the case in 2024; ten of them were at the Hammer Pit on 5/10, one along Braun Rd the next day, and a flock of at least 75 was seen in the fields at the northern edge of the Searles Preserve on 5/11.



Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida*, Sharonville SGA, May 16 2024 (Ben Lucking)



Henslow's Sparrow *Centronyx henslowii*, Sharonville West, May 26 2024 (Andy Dettling)



Of the rarer grassland sparrows, **Grasshopper Sparrow** nesting territories often differ from year-to-year and it is therefore probably the trickiest species to pin down. During May, a mere five of these territories were evident, only one of which held more than one bird. Previously considered a nearly impossible to find spring migrant, in recent years **Clay-colored Sparrows** have proven to be nesting in Washtenaw County in moderate numbers. Small colonies are now known to exist in roughly half a dozen natural areas, with multiple males *bzzz-bzzz-bzzz*'ing in most of them throughout May and June. As a rule of thumb, **American Tree Sparrows** leave when Chipping Sparrows arrive in Washtenaw County – this spring a couple of Tree Sparrows opted to buck that trend, staying (barely) into May: one was at a feeder at Huron River Dr & Tubbs on 5/2, the other in a yard near Pioneer Woods on 5/4. The last of this spring's **Fox Sparrows** visited a yard on Lakehurst Ct on Ann Arbor's north side on 5/2. Prairie restoration work has greatly benefitted our breeding population of **Henslow's Sparrows** – they were present in at least patches of tall-grass prairie, but they proved to be quite abundant in a few of those: 16(!) singing males at the Sharonville SGA on 5/21 was certainly an impressive tally and set a new record high count for Washtenaw County.

### Passerines: Yellow-breasted Chat through Cardinalids

**Yellow-breasted Chats** had what can only be described as a fantastic spring season. In most years there are one or two in as many locations. This year, there were chats in six different sites: at Sharonville SGA (5/10–6/10), at Independence Lake (5/11–5/20), along Feldkamp Rd (5/21), at the DeVine Preserve (5/24–5/27), at Sharonville West (5/25–6/8, three birds), and at the Draper-Houston Meadows Preserve (6/8–6/9).

A **Worm-eating Warbler** was at Stinchfield Woods on 6/2 – this bird proved to be very difficult to track down subsequently, courtesy of the multitudes of Chipping Sparrows in the area. The **Louisiana Waterthrushes** at the Portage River crossing of Dexter Townhall were last reported on 5/10 – their falling silent could well be an indication that this pair was rearing young. In addition, one was at Loch Highland (5/5) and along Lehman Rd (5/8). Encountering a **Golden-winged Warbler** is, for many, the highlight of the spring (and fall) migration window: eight sites hosted one or two of these gems from 5/1 – 5/18 and delighted their observers. Four possible Golden-winged x Blue-winged hybrids were reported, but none of these sightings were conclusive as to which of the hybrid forms was involved. Nichols Arboretum was the only spot for **Connecticut Warbler** this spring – one or two of these skulkers was there from 5/17 – 5/23. **Mourning Warblers** were easier to come by; singletons were found at seven sites from 5/4 – 5/29.

The **Yellow-throated Warbler** at the Cedar Lake Campground continued to sing through 5/5 but was not seen or heard after that. A **Prairie Warbler** was a one-day, one-observer wonder on private property in Lodi Twp on 5/3. Typical of their rather extended migration window, **Canada Warblers** moved through 5/5 – 6/1. They were seen in more than a dozen spots during that four-week period. All in all, a very impressive 33 warbler species were observed during May; a still very respectable 19 species were reported during June – the vast majority of the latter involved locally nesting species.



Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*, Sharonville West, May 26 2024 (Andy Dettling)



Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera*, Cherry Hill Nature Preserve, May 14 (Andy Dettling)

The **Summer Tanager** at Skyline High School on 5/4 was the only of the period and fit neatly in the pattern of northbound birds overshooting their destination in the first week of May. **Blue Grosbeaks** appear to be expanding their breeding range in Washtenaw County. A pair was at Zeeb & Scio Church from 5/5 – 5/19, the pair at Sharon Mills County Park – North returned for another nesting attempt from 5/17 through the end of June, a singing male spent a few days at the Hammer Pit from 5/21 – 5/25, and another pair was at the Sharonville SGA from 5/21 – 5/31.

**\*\*NOTE:** For much of this year, we have been able to access and bird on the grounds of the Hammer Pit, just southwest of Saline. Unfortunately, not long after the May Count, the property owners withdrew their permission for access to this very productive area due to liability concerns at what is still an active sand pit. Please do not access this property any longer!\*\*



## Field Trip Calendar

### Shorebirds & Waders at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area

**Saturday, August 10, 8:00 am - 1:00**

**pm**

Pointe Mouillee, on Lake Erie near the mouth of the Huron River is one of the premier destinations in the Midwest for viewing shorebirds and waders, but access is limited. Jim Fowler knows this territory as well as anyone and leads several field trips each year at this location. Usually, vehicles are restricted, but for this event, we will be allowed to bring in four vehicles. As a result, this trip will be limited to 20-25 attendees depending on the size of the vehicles driven (as of this writing, the trip has reached capacity). Preference will be given to current WBNA members.

**Directions:** Registered participants will meet at the Pointe Mouillee SGA parking lot on Sigler Road ([map](#)) at 8AM and from there will consolidate into 4 larger vehicles. Bring insect repellent, wear a hat and dress for warm weather—there is no shade or shelter at Pointe Mouillee. Bring all of the food and fluids you think you will need to sustain you for approximately five hours of birding.

We will need four larger vehicles to accommodate the group. If you have one and can drive, please email Matt Spoor at [fieldtrips@washtenawbna.org](mailto:fieldtrips@washtenawbna.org). Please note that registration is required for this field trip!

**Leader:** Jim Fowler.

### Annual Picnic and the Coveted Wingnut Award Ceremony

**Sunday, August 11, 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm**

Join us for the Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance Annual Picnic! In addition to connecting with fellow bird and nature enthusiasts, we will present the 2023 Wingnut Award to the individual who identified the most bird species in Washtenaw County last year. We will also be awarding WB&NA Service Awards.

Bring a dish to share and drinks for yourself, and feel free to use the onsite grill. Although there is no electricity, we have our own picnic shelter for the entire group! Nearby, you'll find restrooms and the Huron River to cool off. We'll also discuss our community efforts over the past year. Everyone is welcome, so please join us!

There is a \$10 per vehicle daily fee to enter. An annual pass is \$40 (\$29 for seniors). Free passes can be checked out via the Ann Arbor District Library through the Michigan Activity Pass Program.

**Directions:** Meet at Dexter-Huron Metropark, Shelter B ([map here](#)).

### Butterfly Walk at Matthaei Botanical Gardens

**Sunday, August 18, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Please join us for a return to Matthaei Botanical Gardens as Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance and resident butterfly experts help to observe, appreciate, and learn about another one of our winged beauties. We will catch (with permission) observe, photograph, and release many species to provide attendees with an up-close study of organisms.

Portions of the walk will be in the prairie so prepare to be in the sun. Walking will be along trails on flat terrain. We will have extra binoculars for those that need them. Bring your curiosity and questions for this wonderful walk.

Photographers are highly encouraged to attend as we attempt to document all of the species we find. Data gathered will be shared with Matthaei staff and to iNaturalist. You can view our past butterfly observations and photos [here](#).

**Directions:** Meet at the conservatory steps of Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Parking is \$2 per hour, but bikes are free! Unfortunately, AAATA does not provide reasonable transit to this location

**Leader:** Jerry Paulissen & Matt Spoor

### Swift Nights Out

**August 23, 24, & 25, 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance and the City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation invite you to join us for our Annual Ann Arbor-Washtenaw County Chimney Swift count. Watching Chimney Swifts enter their roosts at dusk is a spectacular sight (video and more information [here](#)). Volunteers will choose a known Chimney Swift roosting location and stake it out before dusk, counting the Swifts as they enter the chimney, as darkness falls. You can sign up for one night/one location at a time or count each night of the weekend.

Chimney Swifts are in steep decline across North America, so let's help find out how they are doing in Washtenaw County. Habitat loss is one reason, as well as decline of the insects they eat, and other unknown factors. We are helping bird science by conducting this count! Bring your friends and family to show them how these very cool aerial insectivores share our cities and towns with us.

NOTE: Occasionally the Swifts will not use a particular location on a given night due to a predator such as a Cooper's Hawk, or another issue. In that case, "No Swifts" will still be good information for us! Email Juliet Berger with your results after the survey and post it on eBird if you have an account. Please share your eBird list with usernames Washtenaw Audubon Society and NAPBBS. Thank you for your help!

If you know of an active roost that's not listed, email Juliet Berger and she will add it to the sign up.

Sign up for dates and locations [here](#).

**Thursday Fall Migration Walks at Nichols Arboretum  
am****Thursdays, August 29 through October, 8:00 am - 11:00**

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.

Curious about what birds you may see? Explore photos taken at the Arb in the months of [September and October here](#). Or, view an eBird illustrated checklist for [September at the Arb here](#).

**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 Riverview Ct. cul-de-sac.

**Annual Fall Migration Walk at Hudson Mills Metropark****Saturday, August 31, 8:00 am – 11:00 am**

Join us for our annual fall migration walk with trip leader Karen Markey. Hudson Mills is one of the top county birding hotspots in September.

**Directions:** Meet at the flagpole at the Activity Center-HQ building.

**Leader:** Karen Markey

**Moth Night at Black Pond Woods****Saturday, August 31, 8:30 pm – 10:30 pm****Moth Night at Devine Preserve****Saturday, September 7, 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm**

We are having another moth party! Join us at Black Pond Woods Nature Area for our August installment, and at DeVine Preserve for the September edition. Just as the species observed change throughout the night, so too do we see new species as we move through the calendar. It will be fun to see what we see at a new location and a month later. Check out our [Moth Nights of Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance iNaturalist project](#) to view hundreds of observations with photos, species details, and more for all of our past moth night events.

Why care about moths? Ninety seven percent of all North American land birds rely on animal protein to raise their young. For most birds, that means insects. And for most of them, that means caterpillars. Without abundant moth larva, there is not enough animal protein to raise the young of our beloved birds. It takes approximately 9,000 caterpillars to raise one brood of Black-capped Chickadees from hatching to fledgling! Now, think of all the birds you see out there. It's hard to imagine the numbers required. So, you can see, moths are integral to the reproduction of most of our birds we love. They're our allies in birding and getting to know them is a joy.

They are among the most diverse and successful organisms on earth. Scientists estimate there are 150,000 to more than 500,000 moth species. Their colors and patterns are either dazzling or so cryptic that they define camouflage. Shapes and sizes span the gamut from as small as a pinhead to as large as an adult's hand. Most moths are nocturnal and need to be sought at night to be seen – others fly like butterflies during the day. Finding them can be as simple as leaving a porch light on and checking it after dark. Serious moth aficionados use special lights and baits to attract them. Once again, Susan Kielb and Heidi Trudell will guide us through the process of attracting, identifying, and enjoying these amazing creatures.

Suggestions for Attendees:

- A headlamp or flashlight would be nice to have.
- Ninja night with moths! Wearing black is the best way to keep moths on the sheet and not your shirt.
- It might be nice to bring a camp chair if you would like to sit.

**Directions (Leslie Science Center):** Meet at the Leslie Science and Nature Center Parking Lot.

**Directions (DeVine Preserve):** From I-94: Exit 169-Zeeb Road, southbound. Turn right at Liberty Road. Preserve entrance and parking area is on the right (north) side of Liberty Road, approximately 0.5 miles west of Zeeb Road (and approximately 2.4 miles east of Parker Road) ([map](#)).

**Weekend Walk for Birds at Matthaei Botanical Gardens****Saturday, September 14, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm**

This is one of the top Washtenaw County birding hotspots in September and always a pleasure to walk. Join us as we search the beautiful grounds of the botanical gardens for fall migrants. Meet at the steps to the conservatory. Matthaei members park for free with metered parking for everyone else.

**Directions:** Meet at the steps to the conservatory at 1800 N Dixboro Rd.

**Leader:** Matthew Spoor

**NAP Fall Shorebird Walk at Mary Beth Doyle****Sunday, September 15, 6:30 am – 8:30 pm**

City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation event: The mitigation wetland at Mary Beth Doyle is home to breeding shorebirds, Killdeer and Spotted Sandpipers, and migrating shorebirds like Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers and more, and this is prime migration time. Join NAP's ornithologist, Juliet Berger, and other enthusiastic bird watchers for a tour of this bird-rich nature area. The paths around the wetlands are wheelchair accessible, but not the wooded area. We'll search the ponds for these species, and others, like the secretive Black-crowned Night-Herons that we believe nest nearby. If we have time, we'll search the woods and trails for migrating Warblers and other songbirds.

Space is limited, [register here](#).

## Education Chair Update

The end of the school year has been a busy time for the Washtenaw Bird and Nature Alliance (WBNA). Each day as Victor teaches his classes, he shows pictures and mentions some of the birds that can be seen in Michigan at the time. Occasionally, he takes his students outside to look at the sky but since his school is mostly surrounded by concrete, the habitat for birds is not great. In May, Victor led a walk for the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) at Eliza Howell Park in Detroit (photo at right). The park is located near Thurston High School, where Victor teaches, and he hoped that some of his students could possibly attend. One of them did, as well as a few other folks! The highlight was getting to see a scarlet tanager, an indigo bunting, and nesting Baltimore orioles in an open part of the park.



Photos courtesy of Megan Thomas

Black Birders Week happened May 26-June 1 and WBNA collaborated with the Ypsilanti District Library on two events. Ryan Henyard, a member of our Name Change Committee and a social justice busybody, gave a talk about his experiences as a bird photographer (photo at left). Following the presentation, Brandan Freeman and Victor Chen led a nature walk at North Bay Park. We were treated with parent blue-gray gnatcatchers feeding its nest of babies. Later, we walked down to the water to listen and see some songbirds and waterfowl.

On June 19, 2024, Victor led our first Juneteenth bird walk. We started at Wheeler Park, named after Ann Arbor's first and only Black mayor, Albert Wheeler. Our walk started with a reflection on the Juneteenth holiday and its meaning, and then proceeded with a walk around the park and surrounding areas. (PICTURE 2733)

To help inspire the birders of tomorrow, WBNA is collaborating with several summer camps in the area. One such camp is the Apple Scouts, which is an organization that strives to give students experiences in the outdoors. At this camp, Victor and his daughter led a session about different types of summer birds in our area and took the kids on a short bird walk. (PICTURE 2732)

We are always looking for collaborations, especially over the summer. If you have ideas, please e-mail Victor at [education@washtenawbna.org](mailto:education@washtenawbna.org).

To become a member of Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance, please complete the form below (or a copy) and mail it with a check or money order payable to **Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance—WB&NA Membership, P.O. Box 130923, Ann Arbor, MI 48113.**

\_\_\_\_ Renewal      \_\_\_\_ New Member  
 Additional Donation \$ \_\_\_\_

**Membership Dues**

____ Individual Household	\$25 (online only \$20)
____ Student	\$15 (online only \$10)
____ Senior	\$15 (online only \$10)
____ Patron	\$50

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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:** WB&NA will only use your email address to communicate with you about WB&NA programs, field trips, or matters of interest to you, such as membership renewal and emailed WB&NA newsletters (in color!). We will not give your email address to anyone else.



## WB&NA Monthly Programs

Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance 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 the downtown Ann Arbor District Library for a program, as occasionally a program may be moved from in-person to Zoom only, or back to the Matthaei Botanical Gardens, for various reasons.

### **Sunday, August 11, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.      Annual Picnic & the Coveted Wingnut Award Ceremony**

In lieu of an August Program, please join us for the Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance Annual Picnic! In addition to connecting with fellow bird and nature enthusiasts, we will present the 2023 Coveted Wingnut Award to the individual who identified the most bird species in Washtenaw County last year. We will also be awarding WB&NA Service Awards.

Bring a dish to share and drinks for yourself, and feel free to use the onsite grill. Although there is no electricity, we have our own picnic shelter for the entire group! Nearby, you'll find restrooms and the Huron River to cool off. We'll be at Shelter B – Dexter-Huron Metropark is located at 6535 Huron River Dr, Dexter, MI 48130.

### **Wednesday, September 18, 6:00 p.m.      Birding South Africa, with Ram Ramamurthy**

### **Wednesday, October 16, 6:00 p.m.      Birding Taiwan, with Victor Chen**

### **Wednesday, November 20, 6:00 p.m.      Recent Bird Strike Research & policy, with Heidi Trudell**

## Washtenaw Bird & Nature Alliance

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