



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
March/April 2009

The “First” Robin of Spring *by Julie Craves*

Many people consider the American Robin the first harbinger of spring. Data from RRBO’s annual Winter Bird Population Survey (WBPS) certainly prove that if one were to try to pinpoint the beginning of spring by the presence of robins, the date could occur any month of the year!

The WBPS examines the population dynamics of wintering birds. Each winter since 1992, RRBO has been conducting bird surveys in the natural area on the campus of the University of Michigan-Dearborn at least twice a week from late December through late February. As the first graph (on pg. 4) indicates, robins are present every winter. The bars represent the average number of robins counted per survey (visit) each year. Overall, an average of 266 robins are counted each winter, or an average of 20 per visit.

The winter diet of robins is primarily fruit. If there are shrubs and trees available that have a good crop of fruit, robins will stick around until the food source is depleted. Temperature plays a more minor role on whether or not robins remain in northern areas. Prolonged cold requires more energy for the birds to stay warm. This could result in food crops being used up faster, in which case the robins might move on. Open water is probably attractive to them, even though birds will eat snow as a water source. If the ground is bare and temperatures are fairly warm, robins will forage for invertebrates much as they do in the summer, so they tend to move out of areas where there is a lot of snow cover.

Consequently, my surveys show decreasing numbers of robins as the season progresses. The second graph (on pg. 4) depicts the average number of robins I’ve counted on our WBPS over each of the five 10-day periods spanning the survey period. By the time February rolls around, robin numbers have petered out.

(Continued on pg. 4)



Read about this year’s WAS field trip to the Soo and see more fabulous photos by Don Henise, like this one of a Northern Hawk-Owl, on pg. 5.

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President's Letter *By Ray Stocking, WAS President*

Welcome Spring!

I hope this past winter has been good to you and that everyone who wanted to see a White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll, Merlin or any other winter specialty in SE Michigan was successful in their quest. With the winter birds' pending departures, first arrivers are already settling in. Seen in the past few weeks are Sandhill Cranes, Turkey Vultures, American Woodcock, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle and, yes, even the first "nesting" Robin. If you have never experienced spring migration in Washtenaw County, I encourage you to join in on one (or more) of the many field trips sponsored by Washtenaw Audubon and the Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation (NAP) this spring. Field trips planned in the next few months include the ever-popular Tuesday Evening Birders and our Thursday morning walks in the Arb. A complete listing of our field trips can be found on pages 8-9 of this newsletter and on the web at www.washtenawaudubon.org.

If you have not been to our website recently, please take a moment to visit and see how it has improved over the past year. This site provides all the details necessary to plan your next field trip with us or to attend one of our monthly gatherings. Information is now maintained on a daily basis so you no longer have to scroll past old events just to find what you are looking for. A big thank you goes out to our webmaster, Rob French, who has dedicated many late hours working to improve this site recently.

WAS Now on Facebook

Are you one of the 175+ million Facebook users in the world? If so, did you know that Washtenaw Audubon Society now has a Facebook account? Look us up and feel free to join the site. Frequent rare bird sightings and important messages are provided to all who join. Other groups you can join on Facebook include Michigan Audubon Society and Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. Come join in on the fun.

Changes to WAS Board

There are two important changes to the WAS board that I would like to share with you. Long-time WAS member, and former WAS president, Lathe Claflin informed me last January of his intentions to step down from the board. I would like to thank Lathe for his dedicated service to the Washtenaw Audubon board. Lathe served as WAS President for four years and had at least ten additional years of service on the WAS board. Lucky for us, Lathe will continue to lead field trips and he has personally assured me that he will continue to be a regular at our monthly gatherings. Thank you Lathe for 14+ years of dedicated service to this organization!

Cathy Carroll has also stepped down from the board after 3 years as our Field Trip Coordinator. Cathy is personally responsible for keeping our field trip schedule anything but dull during her tenure. *(continued on the next page)*

Rare Bird Alerts

Michigan Bird Report

<http://birdingonthe.net/birdmail.html>

Scroll down to Michigan, Mich-listers, and SE Michigan

(President's letter continued)

Her legacy, in my opinion, will be best remembered for the suggestion that we offer weekly “leaderless” walks in the Arb in both the spring and fall. Many people, myself included, have Cathy to thank for making these walks possible. Cathy also introduced butterfly walks in the summers and even added a salamander hunt to this year’s schedule. How’s that for an organization dedicated to birds? Thank you, Cathy, for a job well done.

With these two vacancies comes the task of finding new members to take over their roles. As I have stated previously in this newsletter, Washtenaw Audubon is a volunteer organization. We have an outstanding group of people who make us what we are. I encourage you to consider serving as a volunteer on the board or even leading a trip. Please contact me by email or phone if you are interested. Based on your time commitments, we can decide what role is best for you. Thank you for your consideration in helping keep Washtenaw Audubon the outstanding organization that it is.

Good Birding!
Ray

ANN ARBOR JOINS SAFE PASSAGE GREAT LAKES: CITY HALL TO TURN OFF LIGHTS IN SPRING AND FALL ON 5TH FLOOR AND ABOVE BETWEEN 11 P.M. AND 6 A.M.

ANN ARBOR, Mich., March 17, 2009 — Ann Arbor City Council voted unanimously last night to help prevent the loss of millions of night-migrating birds by turning off lights on municipal buildings, when practical, on the fifth floor and above between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. (sunrise) during peak migration seasons. Similar Safe Passage actions in Chicago and New York City have resulted in significant reductions in migratory bird deaths. The campaign has come to Michigan with resolutions passed by Ann Arbor, Detroit, Southfield, Jackson, and a state proclamation designating the periods of March 15 to May 31 and August 15 to October 31 as Safe Passage Great Lakes Days. Roof-top airplane navigation beacons required by the FAA are exempt from the resolution.

“More than 250 species of night-migrating birds, including warblers, thrushes and tanagers, fly over Michigan, during their spring and fall migrations,” explained Will Weber of the Washtenaw Audubon Society during the public comment period. He added that the deaths of millions of birds each year has been tracked to the apparent effect of tall building lighting, which interferes with the navigation systems of migrating birds flying nearby, causing them to repeatedly circle the illuminated buildings until they either die from exhaustion or from colliding into windows.

Property owners of tall buildings are encouraged to join the Safe Passage Great Lakes efforts by turning off their lights or closing window shades and drapes at night. Individuals can help by turning off lights when they leave an office or a residence, and to raise awareness of the fatal light problem by discussing it with family, friends and colleagues.

Individuals who live or work at night in buildings with five floors or higher and who wish to minimize fatal light problems can also help by doing the following things: use blinds and curtains to conceal lighted areas if working after 11 p.m. during Safe Passage Great Lakes days; use desk lamps and task lighting to minimize perimeter lighting; re-schedule night work, such as arrange for custodial services in tall buildings to work from the top down so the upper floor lights are off from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. (dawn); and establish interior working areas for night activities.

Council co-sponsor Margie Teall noted that turning lights off from the fifth floor and up will not only protect the lives of many birds that fly over our city at night, but will save money, conserve energy, and reduce pollution as well. This strategy may be useful to consider for year-round implementation, where feasible.

A copy of the resolution and more information on the Safe Passage Great Lakes project as well as other municipal environmental goals are posted on the Web at www.a2gov.org/green.

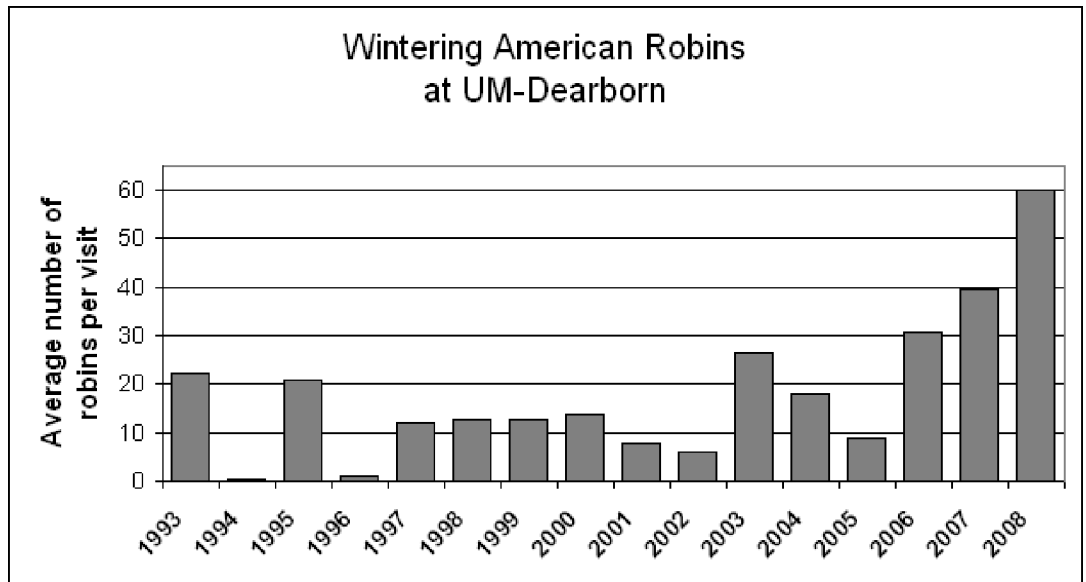
Are you subscribed to Facebook on the web? If so, please consider joining the Washtenaw Audubon Society's Facebook site. We offer rare sightings, unusual photos and stories not normally seen in the newsletter or at the Birders Listserve. All are welcome to join!

(“First” Robin continued from pg. 1)

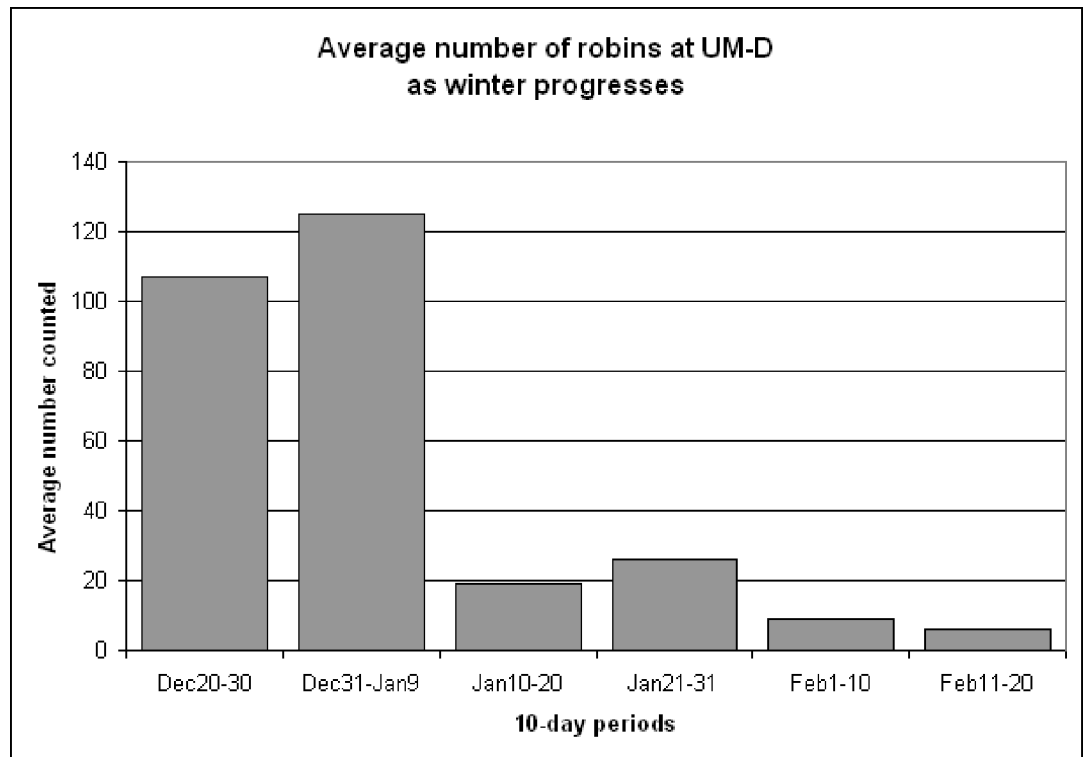
Taking a broader view, we can look at the Great Backyard Bird Count, a citizen science project operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The GBBC takes place annually over four days in mid-February, providing a “snapshot” of the continent’s wintering birds. Results can be viewed on the GBBC web site (www.birdsource.org/gbbc/). Maps reveal that even that late in the season, robins are still present and widespread in the Northeast and upper Midwest. In Michigan, robins are typically reported on 4 to 8% of the checklists submitted each year, with an average of 9 robins per checklist.

Christmas Bird Count (www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/) and Project FeederWatch (www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/) data also show the northerly distribution of wintering robins. In general, the wintering range of this species is considered to be most of the continent south of southern Canada.

Are there more wintering robins in the area in recent years, as my first graph seems to indicate? Much depends on weather conditions, as noted above. The proliferation of fruiting ornamental shrubs in developed areas may be contributing to what appear to be increased numbers of robins spending at least part of the winter in northern areas. If warmer winters are a result of global climate change, we could expect even more robins to find favorable winter conditions at increasingly higher latitudes.



If you are looking for a better signal that spring has arrived, it might be Common Grackles, which winter sparingly here (Red-winged Blackbirds, on the other hand, are more common). On the other hand, perhaps the remedy for the winter blues is to “think spring” each time you see a robin eating frosty berries on a gloomy winter day.



For more information on the WBPS and all the annual results, please go to the RRBO web site at www.rrbo.org and click on “Research.”

Soo Field Trip *By Gary Siegrist*

The annual birding trip led by Lathe Claflin and Gary Siegrist to Sault Sainte Marie (January 4-January 8) turned out to be a great success. This trip is a Jackson Audubon / Washtenaw Audubon co-sponsored trip and we had 18 hardy souls with us this year. The weather conditions on Saturday were marginal at best with freezing rain, fog, and icy roads. Sunday's weather was perfect for viewing with temperatures in the low 30s and partly cloudy. Highlights of our trip, including the scouting days:

Great Gray Owl (Seen both Saturday and Sunday), Northern Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl (we had 9 different birds), Rough-legged Hawk (widely scattered locations in the south Soo area; both morphs were seen on both days), Sharp-tailed Grouse (numerous sightings especially on Sunday morning), Ruffed Grouse (many locations south of the Soo), Glaucous Gull (5 were seen), Pine Grosbeak, Northern Shrike (good numbers seen south of the Soo), Snow Buntings, White-winged Crossbill (scattered groups in wooded areas), Evening Grosbeak (we had flocks at 5 different locations), Pine Siskin, Common Redpoll, Purple Finch, Hoary Redpoll (1), and American Robins. Mammals for the trip included Red Fox and Porcupine. We did miss the Boreal Chickadees and Gray Jays at Hulbert Bog on Sunday. I had put out suet on Thursday before the trip, but no luck

All in all, a great trip this year and the group we had with us were a joy to be around and share the sightings. Special thanks to Don and Robyn Henise for great eyes and ears for the whole trip and to Brad, Becky, and Libby for being the caboose of our car train. It was a big help. Good Birding to all!



Photos by Don Henise.

Clockwise from top left: Great Gray Owl on pole, Rough-legged Hawk in flight, Evening Grosbeaks at a feeder, Snowy Owl on wires



Bird related NAP events

Natural Area Preservation (NAP) offers opportunities for birders to participate in Breeding Bird Surveys, park restoration workdays and outings to look at birds both in our well known natural areas and parks and in some rather out of the way sites like the former Ann Arbor landfill. For a more complete description of NAP, see below:

NAP works to protect and restore Ann Arbor's natural areas and to foster an environmental ethic among its citizens. This involves conducting plant and animal inventories, ecological monitoring, and stewardship projects in Ann Arbor parks. These tasks are performed by both staff and volunteers. One third of NAP's field work is done by volunteers, so community involvement is vital to the success of its conservation efforts. NAP projects take volunteers well beyond the realm of litter clean-up into broader areas of concern, such as maintaining biodiversity and restoring damaged ecosystems. Through the combination of hands-on involvement and scientific understanding, NAP hopes to encourage and support a connection between individual volunteers and their surrounding natural environment. By sharing this experience with friends and neighbors, volunteers play a crucial role in fostering an environmental ethic in the community.

April 5, Sunday, Dolph Park Workday

(1:00 pm to 4:00 pm)

Please bring a friend and join us in getting the site ready for the birds and birders! Meet at the parking lot off Wagner Rd. Please wear pants and closed-toe shoes. Minors must be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form (734-794-6627). Snacks, water, and tools are provided.

April 21, Tuesday

Breeding Bird Survey Kick-Off

1831 Traver Rd (Leslie Science Center)

(7:30 pm to 9:00 pm)

Ann Arbor's Natural Area Preservation group and volunteers survey our city parks for breeding birds every year. Come and find out what the trends are, which birds are most common in our parks and find out if you might be interested in helping out! Please call 734.794.6627 for more information.

May 15, Friday, Bird-Watching Walk

Gallup Park (6:00 pm to 8:00 pm)

Free for all ages and family-friendly! Join City Ornithologist Dea Armstrong as she leads a walk to look for birds in Gallup Park and Furstenberg Nature Area. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at the paddleboat dock in Gallup near the canoe livery.

Book Review by Mike Sefton

Birdwatcher: the Life of Roger Tory Peterson

By Elizabeth J. Rosenthal

The Lyons Press, 2008, hardcover, 437 pages, photos

For book availability, go to www.petersonbird.com

Elizabeth Rosenthal has written the definitive biography of the best-known ornithologist of the 20th Century. Peterson was respected by academic ornithologists, though he had no formal education in science, having dropped out of high school to pursue his interest in birds. He was widely hailed for his contributions to the field identification of birds, his paintings and photographs, and for his popularization of conservation issues and environmental education.

Rosenthal has organized her book around various aspects of Peterson's life, rather than in a conventional time-line. The influence of Peterson's early teacher, Miss Hornbeck, and joining the Junior Audubon Club whetted an already keen interest in birds. Reading Ernest Thompson Seton's *Two Little Savages* sparked the idea of a few field marks as a means to bird identification, without the need to collect a specimen with a gun. The publication of his first field guide to birds in 1934 led to his becoming a celebrity, and to the publication of a whole series of natural history field guides under his name.

Peterson's contributions to conservation and the environmental movement are covered in detail by Rosenthal, including his activities aiding the effort to ban DDT, and his work to help preserve the Coto Donana in Spain and Lake Nakuru in Kenya. His trip around the United States with his friend James Fisher resulted in the publication of *Wild America*, an early landmark in conservation issues (and, coincidentally, the book that helped to start the Big Year phenomenon among recreational birders).

Peterson's three marriages are covered in detail, particularly his second marriage to Virginia Peterson, who became not only his wife, but, in effect, his personal manager. His influence on younger birders and naturalists such as Pete Dunne, Kenn Kaufman, and Scott Widensaul is described at length, with many quotes from this younger generation who knew and admired the "King Penguin," as Peterson was called in some circles.

Rosenthal's book is well written and is a very enjoyable read. She interviewed over 100 friends and colleagues of Peterson, as well as family members. The book is indexed and has a good number of photos, some never before published. This is a book everyone interested in birds and conservation will want to read, about one of the most fascinating figures in ornithology.

Coming this May: Camping for Kids at Waterloo! *Article and photo by Cathy Carroll*

This May we have a new field trip offering for kids only. On Friday, May 15th through Sunday, May 17th, trip leader Tim McKay will host a Waterloo State Recreation Area bunkhouse full of kids.

Sometime last year, WAS president Ray Stocking, wrote a piece in the newsletter about how fewer and fewer young people are involved with outdoor activities and wildlife. Additionally, I had been looking for ways to offer a field activity for kids. With this in mind, Tim McKay and I put our heads together and came up with a low-key camping experience for pre-teens and teens. Tim is the father of two teens and a frequent family camper, so he has some experience with this. We selected the weekend of Friday, May 15th though Sunday, May 17th. This weekend coincides with the peak spring migration of birds and the weather is not yet too hot or insecty. With the school year not yet finished, we realize that mid-May is a busy time for kids, but it's also a beautiful time to spend a weekend camping. That's the whole idea and we think the kids will love it.

We are targeting kids between the ages of approximately 10 through 16. Children and grandchildren of WAS members will be given first priority. Tim has reserved a 20 bed Waterloo bunkhouse with a wood stove. Tim has enlisted Alex Dopp, President of the new U of M birding club, to organize and lead the weekend field trips around Waterloo.

We will meet at the #4 sign nears Sears in the Briarwood Mall parking lot at 6:00 pm Friday evening, the 15th. Camping will be on Friday and Saturday

nights. Departure from Waterloo will be Sunday +/- around noon. Pick-up of kids will be at the #4 sign nears Sears on Sunday, the 17th, at +/- 1:00 pm. Because of the limited bunkhouse space, this will be a first-come, first-serve sign-up trip. We hope to have a young camper in 18 of the 20 bunks. Nine of those 20 bunks are already spoken for, so please do not delay in sign-up. We will also keep a waiting list in case of dropouts. Since this is camping, we highly recommend packing light – sleeping bag, pillow, a fresh pair of underwear and socks should be all that is needed. And, of course, binoculars! If your kids or grandkids do not have binoculars, just let us know in advance and we will make sure that binoculars are available for anyone who needs them.

Five meals and all of the assorted snacks that teenagers always seem to need will be provided. We have not fully decided how we will pay for all of this food, so there may be a \$10.00 to \$20.00 food allowance fee. Details about this are still to follow.

If you would like to read more about Waterloo State Recreation Area before making your decision: please go to the following web address: <http://www.michigandnr.com/parksandtrails/images/parknav/washtenawarea.htm>.

Click on the upper red dot that straddles the Washtenaw and Jackson county line and the Waterloo SRA information will come up for you.

Finally, and this is an important point, a parental permission form is required for every camper. Email Tim McKay at tamckay@umich.edu to sign-up.



Tim McKay with Henry Novak-Messing and Tim's son, Jordan, last December at the AA CBC tally. Jordan will be on the camping trip. Henry is still a bit young. But, hopefully, WAS will still be sponsoring this camping trip when Henry and his twin brother, Oliver, are old enough to sign-up.

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (March - May 2009)

The WAS field trips are a great opportunity for anyone interested in getting outside and reacquainting yourself with all that you share the world with. After a long week at work or school - join us to restore your awareness and faith in what we work so hard to protect. All of our activities are free and open to the public; membership in the WAS is not required. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. We do trips in the heat and the cold, including rain and snow. When introducing a field trip schedule so far in advance, there are bound to be updates and changes as the actual dates arrive. Check with our primary communication resources: birders@umich.edu and our website (click on the field trips icon) as field trips approach. Additionally we list all of our field activities in the Ann Arbor News and the Ann Arbor Observer. Join us if you can!

**Mar 29,
2009**

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Leader: Greg Norwood. Meet at 9:00 am at the Humbug Marsh Unit gate which is located along Jefferson Avenue at the intersection of Vreeland Road at the Trenton/Gibraltar border. The Detroit River is one of North America's most impressive ecological recovery stories and provides some of the best birding in North America. The DRIWR was created by Congress in 2001 and encompasses over 5,000 acres. The refuge contains some of the most productive wild celery beds in the river for fish and waterfowl habitat and some of the best birding areas in southeast Michigan that include lands at Lake Erie Metropark, Erie Marsh, Plum Creek, Swan Creek as well as a few others. Greg Norwood, biological technician at the refuge, will take us to the best birding spots at the Humbug Marsh Unit which is currently closed to the public. Rusty Blackbirds will be in peak migration and the influence of the Detroit River as a navigational path for birds from waterfowl to songbirds is apparent. Many will remember Greg from the Point Mouillee trip he led for us in August, 2007. Greg has excellent birding credentials from his many years working as a field ornithologist for the Rouge River Bird Observatory and from summers spent doing shorebird research on the north slope of Alaska.

**Apr 09-
May 28**

Nichols Arboretum for Spring Migration 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

There is not an assigned leader for these walks. Eight week series Thursdays from April 9, 2009 through May 28. Park and meet at the Riverview Court cul-de-sac off Geddes Road at 8:00 am. All are welcome. This is our fourth season monitoring spring migration through Nichols Arboretum. Join us for one or all of the walks through the Arb to follow spring migrants as they storm northward on the way to their breeding grounds. These are well-attended, leaderless walks and a great opportunity to meet and bird with others. The Arb is beautiful as spring emerges and we shake off our winter blahs. As late April merges into early May the trillium blooming throughout the wooded hillsides are spectacular. The Arb is terrific for spring migration! Please join us if you can; you won't be disappointed. You may join or leave the group at any time between 8am and 11am. If arriving late, just walk to the left until you reach the river, looking for a group with binoculars.

Apr 25

Salamander Hunt 10:00 AM Leader: Eddie Sanchez. Something new in 2009! Please join us for some fun and learning on a daytime salamander hunt at Hudson Mills Metropark. Eddie is the regional expert and we will have a terrific morning turning over rocks and logs to locate these secretive little amphibians. Salamanders we hope to find include: Yellow-spotted, Blue-spotted, Red-backed, Northern Four-toed and Eastern Newt. Meet at the Oak Grove parking lot located within Hudson Mills. Depending on the weather, boots or old shoes may be best for muddy conditions. I don't know if we'll be handling the salamanders we find. Just in case, please do not use any soaps, creams, detergents (?), etc. on your hands for this morning. Unless you have an annual sticker, there is a vehicle fee to enter the metropark. Please purchase an annual sticker to help support our metroparks.

**May 05-
May 26**

Tuesday Evening Birders 6 PM, Tuesdays Leaders: Dea Armstrong, Lathe Claflin, and Mike Sefton

Back by popular demand. Arguably one of our favorite spring birding events. Meet at 6:00 pm at the Miller Road/M-14 park and ride for a 6:15 pm sharp (!) departure. Dea will alternate weeks with Lathe and Mike for leading the trip. At the park and ride we breakdown into fewer cars and then drive the back roads of Washtenaw County to see some really great birds. Over the years the good birds (Red-necked Phalarope ...) and memorable sights (Sandhill Crane with young ...) are too numerous to mention. The field trip goes until dusk.

May 09

International Migratory Bird Count Washtenaw County compiler: Roger Wykes

Also known as May Count, arguably one of the most anticipated birding events to take place every year on the second Saturday in May. Participate in this international event at the local level. In prior years Washtenaw County has been the Michigan leader in number of species counted and number of participants counting. Roger has divided the county up into sections and each section has a leader. To make sure that each section is adequately counted, volunteers are always needed. As the date gets closer, more details will become available. Check here and on birders@umich.edu for updates.

May 15--17

Camping for kids at Waterloo: See pg. 7 for more details.

May 16

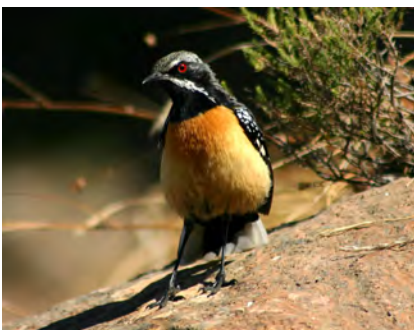
Crane Creek/Ottawa NWR Leader: Karen Markey. Meet in the Busch's Supermarket parking lot on the corner of Green and Plymouth Roads in Ann Arbor at 6:00 am and arrange carpools for a 6:15 am sharp (!) departure. Alternatively, you may meet Karen at the warbler sign on the boardwalk at Crane Creek at 8:00 am. This is the third year that Karen has offered to do this trip for the Washtenaw Audubon Society. Crane Creek is an internationally known migrant trap where the neotropicals stop to refuel before their long flight across Lake Erie. We know you've heard about Crane Creek; now's your chance to see what all the fuss is about. Warblers, flycatchers, sparrows, thrushes, owls, and more ... are just some of the many birds you will see. It's not uncommon to end a day birding at Crane Creek with having seen more than 100 species. The trip usually goes until approximately mid-afternoon. Bring hat, insect repellent, lunch and adequate fluids for hydration.

WAS's 2nd International Field Trip: South Africa! (July 31-Aug. 15, 2009)

In August of 2009 WAS will be embarking on its 2nd international field trip, this time to the beautiful country of South Africa! While the main focus will be on seeing as many birds as we can (especially the endemic species special to southern Africa and South Africa in particular) we will also be attempting to view as many species of Africa's famous mammals, as well. For this 16-day trip, you can plan on seeing 450-480 species of birds (over 100 of these birds are endemic to southern Africa!) and 40-50 species of mammal! Besides the large number of endemics, South Africa is an ideal location within Africa to go birding with its superb infrastructure for tourists (excellent accommodations, food, roads, etc...) It is the only true First World country in Africa. An example of a lodge we will be staying at (as well as many of the birds we will see) can be viewed at: www.aftongrove.co.za. The accommodations will be a lot nicer than the last WAS international field trip (to Peru) and the trip a lot less strenuous over all.

From the beautiful coastal area around Cape Town to the classic African savanna of the world-renowned Kruger National Park, to the teeming Zululand game reserves, the endemic-rich mist-belt forests of the Natal Midlands, the mangroves and mudflats along the coast to the lofty peaks of the magnificent Drakensberg. Some highlights: Ostriches, 8 species of stork, Southern Bald Ibis, Hamerkop, Taita Falcon (extremely rare world-wide), Secretarybird, over 35 species of raptors, 10 species of bustards, 3 species of crane, 4 species of turacos, 11 species of owl, mousebirds, trogons, rollers, bee-eaters, 6 species of hornbills, 7 species of barbet, drongos, 2 species of rockjumpers, 15 species of lark (most endemic), 2 species of sugarbirds, 10 species of starling, oxpeckers, 14 species of sunbirds, 14 species of weaverbirds, lions, elephants, giraffes, monkeys, bushbabies, African Wild Dogs, Cheetahs, Leopards, Hyenas, Meerkats, Hippos, Rhinos, Buffalos, and over 20 species of antelope!

For more information such as costs and what is included, a detailed trip itinerary or list of birds and mammals, do not hesitate to email Bryn Martin at brynmartin@sbcglobal.net. We hope that you will have the opportunity to share with us in this amazing experience!



Drakensberg Rockjumper



Noteworthy Local Sightings, 1 Jan 09 to 28 Feb 09 (all in Washtenaw County, unless otherwise noted).

Species	Date	Location	Observer	Comments
Varied Thrush	22 Nov -	1314 Newport Rd., Ann Arbor	Bob Hotaling	Extremely rare. 2nd record for county. Adult female.
White-winged Crossbill	25 Nov - period	MUCC campground, Waterloo RA	B. & C. Arthurs, R. Kuhlman	50 birds. Very rare in southern Michigan.
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1 Jan	MUCC campground, Waterloo RA	Roger Kuhlman	First report of the year. Very rare in January.
Purple Finch	1 Jan	Discovery Ctr., Waterloo RA	Roger Kuhlman	2 males, 2 females. Rare in southern Michigan.
Pine Siskin	1 Jan	MUCC campground, Waterloo RA	Bob & Carol Arthurs	Daily reports this period of good numbers of this rare winter visitor.
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1 Jan	MUCC campground, Waterloo RA	Bob & Carol Arthurs	Scarce this winter after an invasion year last winter.
Red-shouldered Hawk	1 Jan	Pierce Rd. south of Cavanaugh L..	Bob & Carol Arthurs	Rare in winter.
Turkey Vulture	2 Jan	Dexter-Ann Arbor Rd.	Robyn & Don Henise	Very rare in winter, but always present in last few years.
Bald Eagle	2 Jan	Geddes & Superior Rds.	Tony Unwin	2 adults, 1 immature. Uncommon resident.
Northern Hawk-Owl	2 Jan	Pickford, MI	Bev & Jack Kirby	2 birds at different locations. Very rare winter resident in UP. Later seen on Whitefish Point Bird Observatory field trip by participants.
Red-headed Woodpecker	3 Jan	Dancer Rd. at Dexter-Chelsea Rd.	Keith Taylor	Juvenile. Rare in winter. Declining in Michigan.
Northern Pintail	6 Jan	Little Lake, Ann Arbor	Lee Hefner	Rare in January.
Northern Goshawk	7 Jan	Werkner Rd. & N. Territorial Rd.	Steve Hinshaw	Rare.
Peregrine Falcon	7 Jan	Burton Tower, Ann Arbor	Joseph Brown	Rare. One of two birds that have been in campus area for past two years.
Eastern Phoebe	11 Jan	13360 Bethel Church Rd.	H Eyster, A Johnson, D. Armstrong, M. Sefton	Probably only the 2nd January record for Michigan. Near open water. Photo.
Eastern Meadowlark	12 Jan	Steinbach & Textile Rds.	Dan Sparks-Jackson	Very rare in January.
Wild Boar	13 Jan	Bethel Church & Parker Rds.	Nicole and Mike Sefton	3. Rare in county. Probably descendents of stock released by hunters.
Red Crossbill	13 Jan	Milan, MI	Jeff Schultz	Extremely rare in county. Only report in county this winter. One female.
Rough-legged Hawk	15 Jan	Vreeland & Gotfredson Rds.	Joe Prochaska	Rare in January. Good number of sightings this winter.
Ross's/Snow Goose	18 Jan	Little Lake, Ann Arbor	Tom McLinden	Hybrid of extremely rare Ross's & rare Snow Goose.
White-winged Crossbills	19 Jan	MUCC campground, Waterloo Rec	Jacob Job	70 birds. Present in all townships in county, & in all Michigan counties in this unprecedented invasion year for a bird that is usually very rare in southern Michigan.
Merlin	19 Jan	Earhardt Rd. west of US 23	Roger Kuhlman	Rare.
Northern Shrike	26 Jan	N. Delhi Rd.	Joe Prochaska	Rare.
Hoary Redpoll	1 Feb	Arb	Roger Kuhlman	Very rare.
Barn Swallow	9 - 10 Feb	Marquette, MI	Skye Haas	Probably the first February record for Michigan.
Hermit Thrush	14 Feb	Arb	Sean Bachman, Lyle Hamilton	Very rare in February.
Tundra Swan	15 Feb	Little Portage Lake	Maggie Jewett	Uncommon in county.
Short-eared Owl	15 Feb	Vreeland & Gotfredson Rds.	Ray Stocking	Rare. Scarce this season compared to prior recent years.
Common Redpoll	18 Feb	Loch Alpine	John Mills	60+. One of good numbers of sightings in county this season of this rarity, though fewer than last season's invasion.
Probable A. Goldeneye X H. Merganser	20 - 21 Feb	N. Bay Park, Ypsilanti Twp.	Will Weber	Probable rare hybrid between these two common species. Photos.
Greater Redpoll	22 Feb	Wyandotte, Wayne Cty., at feeder	Jerry Jourdan	Rare subspecies of Common Redpoll. Larger and darker. Photos.
Snowy Owl	25 - 28 Feb	Lenawee County	Bill Fox, SOBs	Rare in southeast Michigan.
Eastern Towhee	Thru period	Superior Twp.	Jan Berry	2 birds overwintering in Jan's yard. Very rare Jan.-Mar. 1 other in AA.

Other Area Audubon offerings

Events are typically free and open to the public. If you are interested in more information on any of these, please visit their respective websites.

Detroit Audubon www.detroitaudubon.org

Woodcock watch field trip---April 10

Frog symphony field trip-----April 17

Magee Marsh, Ohio-----April 18

Point Pelee, Ontario-----April 25

Humbug Marsh-----May 3

Metropolitan Beach-----May 9

Macomb Audubon

www.geocities.com/macomb_audubon

Bay Port and Fish Point Wildlife Area - March 21

Galapagos Islands Program-----April 6

Stony Creek Metro Park -----April 18

Maple River State Game Area -----April 25

Antarctica and South Georgia Program---May 4

Jackson Audubon

www.jacksonaudubon.org

Early waterfowl field trip-----March 21

Birdscaping your yard program-----April 9

EARTH DAY IS SUNDAY,
APRIL 26, 12:00 TO 4:00 AT
LESLIE SCIENCE CENTER at 1831
Traver Road in Ann Arbor and
Washtenaw Audubon will be there
with fun things to see and do. Look
for us near the live birds! Other
topics covered at this event will
be Air Quality, Conservation,
Food, Renewable Energy, Solid
Waste, Trees, Transportation,
Water, and Wildlife. This free
family-friendly event includes the
participation of over 40 local
organizations. Youth-oriented
educational displays, art projects,
and experiments will all be part
of the fun. Additional highlights
will include green building, live
animal programs, musical
entertainment, and face painting.
The All Species Parade is a chance
for area children to dress up as
their favorite animal or plant and
join a parade to celebrate. Look
for more information at
<http://www.lesliesnc.org/>

To become a member of Washtenaw Audubon Society, please complete the form below (or a copy) and mail it with a check or money order payable to **Washtenaw Audubon Society - WAS Membership**
PO Box 130923, Ann Arbor, MI 48113

_____ RENEWAL _____ NEW MEMBER

_____ ADDITIONAL DONATION \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership Dues:

___ Individual/Household \$20

___ Student \$10

___ Senior \$10

___ Patron \$50

___ Life (individual) \$200

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, or possibly emailed WAS newsletters (in color!). We will not give your email address to anyone else.

WAS Monthly Programs

WAS monthly events usually are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Programs begin at 7:30pm at U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Free and open to the public. Call 677-3275 if you have questions about the program.

- Wed., March 18** **Michael Gay's Photo-Journal: Outdoors and AroundAnnArbor.com:** Join local photographer Michael Gay for a program of nature and sense of place themes, plus an occasional “etc.” Michael is a local realtor and amateur photographer who has some interesting takes on nature-themed and other photography.
- Wed., April 15** **Birding Sinaloa and Nayarit:** Join Kevin Sharp for a program on birding the central Pacific coast Mexican states of Sinaloa and Nayarit. This area has varied terrain with great birding and beaches, and the popular resort town of Mazatlan, with Puerto Vallarta just to the south of Nayarit. Kevin Sharp is a bird photographer and member of the Indonesian Parrot Project.
- Wed., May 20** **To be announced**
- Wed., June 17** **Birders and Their Lists :** Join Don “The Man” Chalfant for a program on the many, varied, and sometimes bizarre lists that birders keep. Don will take you far beyond the simple Yard List and Life List, deep into the realm of Total Ticks and other esoteric listing. Don is a Master Birder, a certified Bird Magnet, and has a Washtenaw County life list of 285 species, a Michigan life list of 362, and an ABA Area list of 757.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

PO Box 130923

Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923