



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

May/June 2016

Birding Guatemala with Washtenaw Audubon

by Bryn Martin

The national bird of Guatemala is the Resplendent Quetzal. A bird of unimaginable beauty, it was not on the radar for this trip. We weren't going to be in likely habitat and our guides told us that there really wasn't a chance. Imagine our surprise when one morning, as we were theoretically scanning for a few missing species of hummingbirds, our guides, led by Maynor Ovando, announced that they heard one in the area. A little playback and an amazing male with a gorgeously long, flowing tail flew into a tree, mere yards in front of us! It was like a dream. Maynor said he had never seen one this close. Photos were copiously taken. One participant teared up at this extraordinary life bird. The magnificent red and green bird flew up and over our heads, its tail dancing along behind him.



(continued on page 3)

President's Letter

Backyard birding the Spring Migration:

This morning a Great Crested Flycatcher added his raspy “Weep Weep” to the dawn chorus in my yard. Since I am awake right at dawn to help get my two teenagers off to school, I hear each addition to the chorus. In March, just the American Robins, Tufted Titmice, Cardinals, and my Carolina Wren made up the morning serenade. Then the Chickadees and Nuthatches chimed in. By May, the House Wrens had arrived to join the melee. A Black-throated Green Warbler stayed to sing “See-see-see-suze-zee” for a few days. Recently I noticed that Blue Jays sing a two-note song at 6:00 a.m. “Jay jay,” pause, “Jay jay.” Over and over again....

Early this week I awoke to the sound of an Ovenbird in the yard. I went outside to investigate and discovered there were two of that ground-nesting warbler engaged in a “Teacher Teacher” vocal duel with the resident Carolina Wren, who sounded very much annoyed with the interlopers. “Teacher Teacher” vs. “Tea-kettle Tea-kettle.” I could listen to that all day.

Then the next morning came the Common Yellowthroat, and Magnolia and Cape May Warblers. An American Redstart added his voice. A Baltimore Oriole fluted, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak sang his tipsy Robin song and the Scarlet Tanager chip-burred in the background.

Often I am too busy to stop and watch. I can listen, and see the birds in my mind's eye on my way to work, if nothing else.

We are so busy in May. There is the spring migration. There are breeding bird surveys to conduct.

My son graduates from high school this spring, along with all his friends. Take some time to listen in your own yard, slow down and hear the dawn chorus.

And, please join us on some upcoming programs and field trips. Sign up to help count birds during the Stinchfield Woods census. Join our Prothonotary Paddle. Come to our June program featuring Don “the Man” Chalfant. Details are in this newsletter and on our website www.washtenawaudubon.org.

I hope to see you all a time or two on the trail while the birds sing around us.

As always,

I am for the birds.

Juliet Berger



Yellow-throated Warbler (Benjamin Hack)

Birding Guatemala

(continued from page 1)

The Central American country of Guatemala was the destination for Washtenaw Audubon Society's fifth international field trip. Ten participants spent a week in late March/early April enjoying the mild weather, gorgeous scenery (Volcanoes! Some smoking!), extremely friendly locals (I learned that over half of the people in Guatemala speak a Mayan language as their primary language and not Spanish!) and many birds (both exotic and familiar). We focused our attention on the central highlands area, which is rich in species (and subspecies) endemic to only this region of the world. We ended with over 190 species seen. These included 13 hummingbirds, 17 warblers (including the gorgeously cute and endemic Pink-headed Warbler), 21



flycatchers (including the secretive, rare endemic Belted Flycatcher), 4 trogons, 4 motmots (including the endemic Blue-throated), 7 woodpeckers, a cryptically perched Northern Potoo, 5 species of jays, and many others. Personally, I saw 48 new species and an additional 51 new subspecies. One of my favorites for the trip, though, was actually not a lifer. It was a Long-tailed Manakin. What was cool was that it was doing a distinctive courtship dance that I had only ever seen in documentaries. One male hops up and down on a branch with a literal "wing-man" who dances as his assistant. For the two that dance the best together, the female will mate with the dominant male. The assistant gets nothing, except practice for the future when he will get an assistant dancer of his own.

We stayed at a number of picturesque lodges and hotels—one in the rainforest, another on the shores of lovely Lake Atitlan. The pace was relaxed, the participants got along and I very much enjoyed myself.

The biggest challenge for the trip was a strenuous hike up Volcano Paquisis, next to the more-famous San Pedro Volcano. Over two hours of steep climbing; some people announced that their Fitbits said it was the equivalent of climbing 131 flights of stairs. Everyone went more or less at their own pace, but we all got to the top where we searched for our target—the reason we'd made this climb in the first place,—the Horned Guan! This cracid is roughly the size and shape of a black turkey, but it has a peculiar red fleshy horn protruding out of the top of its head. Not only is this a unique and bizarre looking creature, it is also rare, found only in this specific part of the world and in this particular habitat at the tops of volcanoes. Time for the bad news: we didn't see one up there! The guides looked all around, but no luck. We did see people chain-sawing down trees, so maybe that had something to do with their being absent. A tough climb and a tough result, but we did see some other goodies up there and tried to look on the positive.



The good news: we did see a Horned Guan on another day! Once again, Maynor didn't want to get our hopes up and tell us that we had the chance to see one on that day. They just announced "Horned Guan!" and got it in the scope. We were ecstatic. This was most likely everyone's number one target bird of the trip. And this one was seen from a paved road. Considering how most everyone else in the world has to strenuously hike to see this species, I would wager that this was the most accessible location in the world for this species.

If you would like to hear more about this trip and see more images of these amazing birds, please attend the presentation I will give on this topic in October. *[Photo credits: Birdwatching Guatemala / Benedicto. Resplendent Quetzal (page 1); Blue-throated Motmot; Horned Guan; Azure-rumped Tanager.]*



First County Record Alert: Black-necked Stilt!

by Benjamin Hack



In the evening of May 7th, 2016, local birder Richard Wolinski located a Black-necked Stilt at Four Mile Lake, Chelsea SGA, Washtenaw County. This is the first record of the stilt in the county, and about the sixteenth record for the state. The Black-necked Stilt is a tall, elegant black-and-white wading shorebird frequenting Latin America and the South and West of the United States. Many birders relocated the stilt on May 8th, and the bird was observed until May 11th. A fantastic bird for the county and the state! [Sources: mibirdrecords.com; ebird.org.][Photo credit: Benjamin Hack]

WAS Hosted “The Messenger” a Huge Success

On Wednesday, April 27, WAS hosted a sold-out showing of the documentary “The Messenger.” WAS president Juliet Berger said, “I’ll never forget the massive piles of dead songbirds collected on Toronto streets and brought to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) as a shocking exhibit of how windows kill, nor the Ortolan Buntings caught, caged, and eaten. Nor the cats stalking and eating birds. Nor the incredible slow motion flight of the Black-throated Blue Warbler and Baltimore Oriole.”

WAS board member Sherri Smith commented: “I thought the slow motion flying was beautiful and remarkable because the birds appeared to be calmly swimming in air. I have never seen anything like it. I don’t think I will think about flying in quite the same way ever again.”

The panel after the gorgeous but sad movie was uplifting. Our panel was full of great ideas for what we can do to help birds. Dr. Cathy Theisen, local veterinarian and WAS board member, answered questions about transitioning outdoor cats to indoors. Dr. Yvette Perfect, UM Professor and author, spoke about bird friendly coffee. Heidi Trudell, Bird Collision Monitor, shared her knowledge about how to keep birds safe around windows and buildings. And Rachelle Roake, WAS board member and Conservation Science Coordinator with Michigan Audubon Society, answered questions about habitat loss and climate change.

Thanks to our amazing community for showing their support for this very important documentary.

[Photo credit: Ray Stocking]



Board Members

President

Juliet Berger
president@washtenawaudubon.org

Vice President & Programs

Mike Sefton
vp-programs@washtenawaudubon.org

Treasurer

Ellie Shappirio
treasurer@washtenawaudubon.org

Secretary

Dana Novak
secretary@washtenawaudubon.org

Membership

Rachelle Roake
membership@washtenawaudubon.org

Field Trips

Bryn Martin
fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org

Education

Cathy Theisen
cathythevet@comcast.net

Webmaster/Technology and Social Media

Rob French
rwfrenchjr@comcast.net

Past President

Sue Johnson
sjohnson@emerson-school.org

Board Member/Bird Rescue

Sherri Smith
grackle@umich.edu

Newsletter

Nancy Davis
newsletter@washtenawaudubon.org

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

WAS Field Trip to Magee Marsh—and more

by Karen Markey

Despite cold, harsh, and sometimes wintry conditions, our intrepid band of 15 Washtenaw birders toured Metzger and Magee Marshes on May 15, 2016, some of us finishing well after 5:00 p.m. at the Raab Road hotspot where



many birders reported Wilson's Phalarope and Curlew Sandpiper. Although the latter had left, we enjoyed the phalaropes and several shorebird species.

Seeing birds low and up close at Metzger tipped us off that conditions at Magee would be similar, and they were. We saw 23 warbler species at Magee, an average of 10 individuals per species (!!!), with most warbler species, especially Cape May, Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided, Redstart, Blackburnian, and Black-throated Blue and Green, Bay-breasted, and Magnolia warblers within touching distance.

Throughout the day, we caught sight of almost all Eastern thrushes. Philadelphia Vireos were low and conspicuous. We were so enthralled by in-your-face birds at almost every spot on the Magee Marsh boardwalk that we forgot about the cold and dampness. What an amazing and memorable day!

Thanks to all our birders for sharing so many wonderful, close views of birds with your fellow birders. Special thanks to Juliet Berger who tipped us off to so many species and added color commentary. *[Photo credit: David Amamoto]*

Magee and Metzger Marshes

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29696249>

Angola Rd. and Raab Rd., Lucas, Ohio, US

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29697005>

In Memoriam: Rita M. Burke

Reprinted with permission from The Mackinac, Autumn/Winter 2015-16

There is no greater commitment to nature than to ensure its care after you're gone, and that is exactly what Rita M. Burke did by placing the things she loved in life in her will. Rita loved to scuba dive and birdwatch. She traveled extensively, taking in some wild and exotic places like the Galapagos and Machu Picchu. She truly loved the scenic and natural wonders of Michigan and was a member of both the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club. The Michigan Sierra Club is honored to have been entrusted to fulfill Rita's legacy of preserving and protecting the wilds in our great state. *[WAS Editor's note: Washtenaw Audubon Society also received a bequest from Ms. Burke's estate, and we are very grateful for her support.]*

WAS Member Benjamin Hack Places Third Overall in ABA Young Birder of the Year Contest



Washtenaw Audubon Society is delighted to report that one of our own members, Benjamin Hack, took third place in the American Birding Association's 2016 Young Birder of the Year Contest, in the 14-18 year-old group. Benjamin, a ninth grader at Pioneer High School in Ann Arbor, also placed second in the Writing Module in the 14-18 age group.

To enter the contest, young birders must complete three of five modules. Two are major—Field Notebook and Conservation/Community Leadership—and the other three are supporting—Illustration, Writing, and Photography. Benjamin entered in Field Notebook, Writing, and Photography. Please join us in congratulating Benjamin! *[Photo credit: Daniel Hack]*

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (June 2016 – July 2016)

Bryn Martin, Field Trip Coordinator (fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org)

Washtenaw Audubon field trips are free of charge and open to the public unless otherwise indicated. For trips with constraints on the number of participants, WAS members are sometimes given priority in registering (again, as indicated). *For trips that require carpooling, minors attending without a parent must bring a written permission statement signed by a parent.* To receive a standard form for this, contact me at the email address above. Also, if you have a suggestion for a field trip, please send it to Bryn at the email address above.

Sunday, June 12, 7:00 a.m.

Stinchfield Woods Annual Breeding Bird Census

The Stinchfield Woods breeding bird census is an annual survey of elusive species breeding within the 777-acre Stinchfield Woods, located at 9401 Stinchfield Woods Rd., Pinckney, MI. Typical birds found include Pine and Black-throated Green Warblers, Blue-headed Vireos, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Hooded Warblers, Ovenbirds, and Acadian Flycatchers. This survey is mostly a hearing event so birders with a keen ear are especially needed, although all birders are welcome to participate. Please email Norka Saldana (norka.saldana@gmail.com) or Karen Markey (ylime@umich.edu) to RSVP for this event or for more details.

Sunday, June 19, 9:00 a.m.

NEW: Prothonotary Paddle

Please join WAS for the inaugural Prothonotary Paddle. As many of you know, we have up to nine singing males of the beautiful Prothonotary Warbler along a stretch of the Huron River in Hudson Mills and Delhi Metroparks. They are best viewed from the water, and there are always a large variety of other birds to see on this float trip. If you are a birding Dad, grab the family and head down the river with us for Father's Day! The trip is eight miles long, and usually takes about three hours to complete, but you can stop for good birds, a picnic, etc., because your car will be waiting for you at the other end.

We will be leaving on the first trip at 9 a.m., in the hopes that we will be the first group out and avoid flotillas of party boats. We will have a picnic spot picked out that is approximately halfway, for those who wish to stay with the group. Please bring your own picnic and beverages. Please let me know you are attending, and book your own boat(s) directly from Skip's Canoe Livery: <http://skipshuronrivercanoeliveryllc.com/Rates.html>. Please book early (now) to avoid disappointment. If you have your own boats, we will put in at Rapids View picnic area at Hudson Mills and leave some cars at Delhi Metropark for shuttling. You will need a park pass for any car that is delivering boats to Hudson Mills. Please let Cathy Theisen (cathythetvet@comcast.net) know ASAP if you are bringing your own boat, so we can work out shuttling logistics. Hope to see a WAS flotilla on Sunday, June 19!

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (June 2016 – July 2016)

Bryn Martin, Field Trip Coordinator (fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org)

Saturday, July 23

Butterfly Field Trip

Leonard Preserve, Manchester

Please see www.washtenawaudubon.org for more details.

Weekend in August

Driving Tour to Pointe Mouillee

This popular field trip is still being put together for a weekend day in August. Please see www.washtenawaudubon.org for more details. Once it is officially on the web site and announced, we will accept participants on a first come/first serve basis.

Local National American Butterfly Association Official Counts 2016

Time	Date	Name	Compiler/Contact person
4th July	July 2	SW Washtenaw	John Swales (jmswales@umich.edu)
4th July	July 4	Chelsea	Roger Wykes (769-6482)
4th July	?July 10	Ann Arbor	?John Swales (jmswales@umich.edu)
4th July	July 9	Toledo	Jackie Riley (jriley4@sbcglobal.net)
Fall	August 6	Dundee	TBA
Fall	August 20	SW Washtenaw	John Swales (jmswales@umich.edu)

Everybody is welcome to join a count for a half or full day. Counts generally run from about 9:30 a.m. to about 5:00 p.m. The various groups usually meet for a picnic lunch at a designated location. Generally on a local count 35-40 species are found, although on a few occasions we have found 50 or more. There is an official \$3 fee for each adult participant, although compilers have been known to pay the fees for the group. Most of the transects are fairly easy-going, even if sometimes wet, so that wellingtons are sometimes a good idea. The few arduous treks are through fens because of tussock grass, plus some can be hard to reach. These may not be for everybody. I would recommend the *Butterflies of Indiana* by Jeffrey Belth, published by the University of Indiana Press in 2013. It has excellent accounts of all our local species, apart from the Common Ringlet. NABA is a good organization to join; the annual subscription is modest; it offers a quarterly journal of some quality; it has an interactive website calls "hot sees," and it produces an annual report of all the butterfly counts in North America (around 500), which is what the \$3 fees support. Submitted by Count Leader, John Swales.

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	Membership Dues	
Additional Donation \$ _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Household	\$25 (online only \$20)
Name: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$15 (online only \$10)
Address: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Senior	\$15 (online only \$10)
Phone: _____	Email: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$50

We encourage you to join at a lower rate if the suggested rates would otherwise preclude your membership, or at a higher rate if you possess the means. **Note:** WAS will only use your email address to communicate with you about WAS programs, field trips, or matters of interest to you, such as membership renewal and emailed WAS newsletters (in color!). We will not give your email address to anyone else.

WAS Monthly Programs

WAS monthly events usually are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. at the U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Free and open to the public. **Please note:** *The Matthaei Botanical Gardens charges for parking at the rate of \$1.20 an hour, enforced 7 days a week from 8am to 8pm. Members of the Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum park for free.*

June 15 The Bird a Day Big Year

Join popular Washtenaw Audubon speaker Don “The Man” Chalfant for his entertaining story about his latest birding game, the Bird a Day Big Year. Don is a retired Ann Arbor teacher who holds many Big Year and Big Day birding records for Washtenaw County, and who has ludicrously large lifetime bird lists for Washtenaw County and its townships, the states of Michigan and Florida, and North America.

September 21 The Birds of Uganda

Paul Tamwenya loves leading Journeys trips in Rwanda and Uganda. His knowledge of East Africa is exceptional since he was born in eastern Uganda near the foothills of Mountain Elgon National Park, and as a young boy accompanied his grandfather, a great hunter of birds and small mammals. Join us for a very special look at some of the 800-plus species Paul has seen in Uganda.

October 19 Birding Guatemala—Washtenaw Audubon Trip Report

Join Bryn Martin for a program on Washtenaw Audubon’s most recent overseas field trip, to the Central American country of Guatemala, where there are a number of birds found nowhere else in the world. Bryn Martin is an avid world birder, a high school teacher, and Washtenaw Audubon’s field trip coordinator.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

P.O. Box 130923
Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923