



NEWSLETTER

March/April 2017

The KIWA Diary, Part 3

Karen Markey's adventures with the 2016 Kirtland's Warbler Census

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You can read previous installments of The KIWA Diary in the November/December 2016 and January/February 2017 newsletters. You can also find an archive of past newsletters at www.washtenawaudubon.org.

Day 3 (Wednesday, June 8), CRAWFORD COUNTY (Meridian Boundary Fire area)

This morning's sunrise brings temperatures in the high 30s and high winds. I am paired with Anna, a senior at Wittenberg University, who is interning with the Forest Service all summer. We are assigned two adjacent horseshoe-shaped transects on natural regeneration that is the result of the 2010 Meridian Boundary Fire. The jack pines vary, ranging from about three- to five-foot high, and they have sprouted up in random fashion along with oaks, hardwoods, and other pine species. Downed timber is commonplace, blocking our transect, requiring us to navigate around it. Last year walking a transect on a burn, I fell into an animal's burrow, spraining my ankle, so I'm very careful with footing today. I fall backwards once, remaining partially upright due to the downed timber beneath me. Three times I catch sight of the 17 KWs we hear but as soon as I describe their location to Anna, they fly out of sight.

We are running late so we hurry to our second transect, walking a sandy two-track with some vegetation down the middle. Whack! Before I know what has happened, I have fallen flat on my face, my nose and glasses hitting the ground. I sit up, stunned, testing my limbs to make sure they still work. Evidently I stepped into a horseshoe-shaped weed that refused to yield, and I fell forward as a result. I pick myself up, and we polish off the second transect. We are amongst the last to arrive at the Branch Cafe in Mio. I like the Branch because it uses fresh ingredients and everything tastes homemade.

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President's Letter

Dear Washtenaw Audubon,

With spring migration upon us, let's all get out there and enjoy the birds. I've been reminded by Washtenaw Safe Passage Coordinator, Heidi Trudell, our March program speaker, that we can do much more than just watch the birds we all love. We can do more to protect them from harm. Consider making your home and business windows more bird safe permanently, or at the very least for migration season in spring and fall. Check out birdsmartglass.org, collisions.abcbirds.org, and flap.org for more information on how to retrofit your windows to save birds. Also, visit the Facebook pages of Washtenaw Safe Passage and Dead Birds (for Science!) for what is happening locally and around the world. Remember to keep lights out and window shades drawn in upper stories of office buildings above the 4th floor this spring, from now until the end of May, and again in the fall, to help birds avoid hitting these high structures during their nighttime migrations.

Consider transitioning your outdoor cats to indoors. See Cathy Theisen's excellent article about Cats and Birds in the January/February 2017 edition of Michigan Audubon's publication the *Jack Pine Warbler*, which is linked to our website. It is up to all of us to do what we can to keep birds safe.

Come join many Washtenaw Audubon members for the Ann Arbor March for Science, on Earth Day, April 22 at Noon, on the University of Michigan Diag. Bring signs that show your support for specific birds, to make your point about conservation in a tangible way.

We have so many upcoming field trips and terrific programs. Check our website at www.washtenawaudubon.org or this newsletter for more details. Spring Migration Walks begin at the Arb on Thursday, March 30th. I can't wait to see many of you there!

As always,

I am for the birds,

Juliet Berger



Cedar Waxwing, Benjamin Hack

The KIWA Diary, Part 3 *(continued)*

I feel fine after lunch and challenge myself to the Valley Road Prairie west of Howard Road. I've passed this prairie up for two years because it is Big-Time Tick City! Eric suggests that I walk the fire lane because its grass is shorter than other areas. I walk about a quarter mile, look down at my gaiters, and see dozens of ticks crawling up them. I extract these creepy crawlers using the tick-remover key that my California friend Connie sent me, do an abrupt about-face, and exit onto the road as quickly as possible. Farther up the road is a sandy ORV trail, and while I walk it, I monitor myself for ticks. Seeing none I press on, finding Vesper Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbirds, and Nighthawks along the way. At one point, eight Nighthawks fill the sky, entertaining me with their acrobatic hunting antics. Very cool!

Returning to the motel, I strip down, tossing my clothes outside and checking them for more ticks after I shower and dress. Then it's back to the Sky Ranch for a goodbye party for Eric who leaves Mio for Huron Shores and his new biologist position on Monday.

Day 4 (Thursday, June 9), ELDORADO (Hughes Lake Burn area)

We have another windy and cold start with temperatures in the high 30s initially but warming into the high 60s by mid-morning. Today I am paired with Dave who is a summer-seasonal worker based in the western LP and is finishing a biology degree at EMU in Ypsilanti. Dave's navigational skills, honed in the military, are exceptional, so he navigates while I triangulate. Our 2.25-mile transect cuts in dogleg fashion through a jack pine plantation. We walk east-northeast with a second team about a quarter-mile away to the south. Navigation is a breeze with Dave in charge. Of the 25 KWs we hear, 3 are in view, sometimes perched for long periods of time, and I must tear myself away from them so that we can finish this long first transect in a timely manner. While hearing a singing KW nearby, something flushes from the bottom of a jack pine as Dave walks by it. He backs up, examines the tree's base, and finds a nest-like depression bearing three brown-speckled eggs. We both take photos with our smartphones.

When I return home, I plan to sign onto the "Birds of North America" (BNA) database through the Ann Arbor District Library (AADL) to search for KWs and other birds with which KWs share the jack pine forest and to determine whose nest we disturbed. BNA is a comprehensive birding resource published by the trusted Cornell Lab of Ornithology—thanks AADL for subscribing to it!

Eventually, we relocate to a second half-mile transect on a road where we hear 3 KWs singing on the southeast margin of our first transect—most likely all but one of these KWs duplicates birds we heard earlier.

We finish well after 11 a.m., and I snooze on the drive back to the Mio Ranger Station. We join a potluck lunch already in progress to celebrate the send-off of the acting Mio head ranger prior to the new Mio ranger's arrival.

I always celebrate my final afternoon up north by a hike at Wakeley Lake on MI-72, a few miles east of Grayling. Hitting the trail, I hear the call of the Common Loons at the campsite area. Finding the Loons in my binoculars, I can't quite make out whether they have a family in tow. I'll have to circle the lake to get a closer look. The trails reveal the usual suspects—Nashville, Redstart, and Pine Warblers, Pewees, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Hermit Thrushes. Reaching the southwest side of the lake, I see mom Loon but she's still floating far away. I make out three youngsters, two bobbing beside her and the third on her back. How cool is that! Mom calls repeatedly for dad who dives under and comes up with food to feed the hungry youngsters. Awesome!

It's late so I drive directly to Lewiston Lodge where I join several other volunteers and USFS staff for dinner, choosing the walleye again along with the Michigan salad. The fellowship is sincere, the view is perfect, and the food is terrific. This is Pure Michigan!

I've walked eight miles today so I'm really tired, I need a shower, and I have to pack and awaken at 4 a.m., so I leave as soon as I'm done eating and head back to Mio.

The final installment of Karen's KIWA Diary will appear in the May/June 2017 newsletter.

Meet the Flock: Ray Stocking

Ray and his wife Alena have two kids: Shannon, age 14, and Christopher, age 12. Remarkably, they also have one dog (a pure-bred mutt who was a rescue dog from Arkansas), two cats, and many fish. They live and maintain their “zoo” in northeast Ann Arbor.

Ray received both his bachelor’s (BBA) and master’s (MBA) degrees in business management from Eastern Michigan University. Never closing the door on anything, he hopes to someday return to school and take up environmental studies and/or non-profit management. He has spent the last 20+ years working in the high-tech and cyber security industry. He currently works for Cisco Corporation as a Security Enablement Manager. The idea of retirement is exciting, but still many years away.

Ray’s first and most significant mentor in birding is his father, Jerome Stocking. While in college, he was asked to join his father for a weekend of birding at Point Pelee. His father asked him to keep a list of the birds seen that day—so not only did he become a passionate birder that very day, but he also became a “lister” at the same time. He still has the list from his first birding experience back in May 1993.

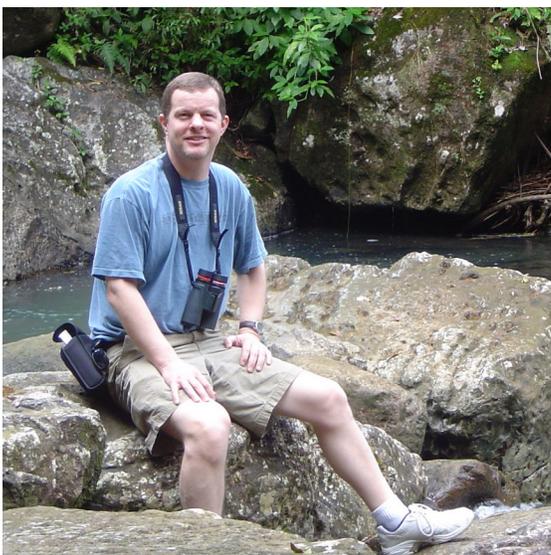
Ray has been a member of Washtenaw Audubon since 2004. He became President of Washtenaw Audubon the following year and held that position for the next 5½ years. He served on the Washtenaw Audubon Society Board for a total of nine years. Today Ray serves on the Board of Directors for Michigan Audubon and is a member of the executive committee serving as the board vice-chairperson.

Ray’s father will always be his first and most important mentor. However, there are multiple people within Washtenaw Audubon who took him under their “wing” and inspired him to learn more about birding and to find excitement in each and every bird sighting to be had. There are so many to mention, but special mentions go out to Mike Sefton, Dea Armstrong, Don Chalfant, Ellie Shappirio, and Sarah Toner (yes, Sarah Toner!).

His most memorable birding experience was “finding that ‘life bird’ for my father for the first time. It was a turning moment when it was me showing my Dad a new bird versus the other way around. I realized for the first time that I had as much joy in showing him a new bird as he did showing me in all the years I was growing up.”

His most wanted birding experience is always the next birding adventure. Alaska, Costa Rica, Antarctica, Magee Marsh, or Nichols Arboretum (The Arb)—this is what excites Ray most about birding. The NEXT adventure remains the most wanted—near or far. But Europe is just around the corner, so let’s just say that is the next most-wanted adventure for now.

His favorite birding spot in Washtenaw is, hands down, The Arb. Dolph Park is a close second, but often too far away for the limited time allowed between kid sporting events and other chores on weekends.



He believes the most pressing issue for birds is conservation of habitat. Programs like “Lights out” and “Safe Passage” which both focus on eliminating all barriers to birds and their survival, especially window collisions, are near and dear to his heart. The City of Ann Arbor’s delayed mowing program for grassland birds also comes to mind. The above issues are indeed important, but Ray believes the one most pressing issue for bird conservation is actually the education of our youth. “Without a personal connection to the outdoors, and birds in general, we risk losing future leaders to stand up for the birds.” Ray’s philosophy is simple: Ask someone who is not a birder to join you for a bird walk (similar to what Ray’s Dad did for him). You never know when you will change someone’s life. And if/when you do that, you score another win for conservation. Do it!

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

Meet the Flock: Ray Stocking

He advises new birders to find a mentor. Go on bird walks with your local Audubon group. Stay in front of the group near the leader of bird walks. Ask questions. Study up on your birding field guide. And when you find yourself more knowledgeable than the novice birder standing next to you, be sure to take the time to share your expertise with that person. Birding should always be shared, and it should be fun. Add a walk or two on your calendar and arrive early. Expect great things from the great people of Washtenaw Audubon Society!

Photo of Ray by Alena Stocking. Photo taken in the El Yunque Rainforest near San Juan, Puerto Rico.

May Count

Washtenaw County
Saturday, May 13, 2017

With spring finally here, birders' thoughts turn to spring birding. As you think about the ways you will bird in the county this spring, please consider participating in the Washtenaw County May Count, on International Migratory Bird Day.

Juliet Berger is the Compiler for this informal count. The Compiler divides the county into townships, each of which has an Area Leader. Leaders recruit additional volunteers to count birds throughout their area. For names and contact information for the Compiler and the Area Leaders, visit our website, and please consider volunteering.

This year, the May Count will be a Washtenaw County-only event, as our state wide compilers have retired. All Washtenaw County birders are welcome to bird all or part of the day on May 13, and report their bird sightings to eBird and their township area leaders. We will have information about how to share your eBird lists with the Washtenaw Audubon Society eBird account. Then, a compiled list will be available for all the birds seen during this 24-hour period. As the date gets closer, please check the website, www.washtenawaudubon.org, for more information about how to participate.

March for Science!

April 22, 2017, Ann Arbor, MI
Noon to 2:00 p.m.

Ann Arbor will be hosting a sister march to the National March for Science on Saturday, April 22. The march will start on the U of M Diag at noon with plans to leave the Diag around 12:45 p.m. The exact route of the march will be announced closer to the date.

We want to make a recommendation: If you plan to attend in support of Washtenaw Audubon, please bring a sign with an interesting or compelling fact about birds on it. You could highlight populations at risk due to climate change or urban encroachment such as the declining populations of Upland Sandpiper, Red Knot, or Black Rail, or the challenges of the Kirtland's Warbler population, or, anything you feel passionate about. This makes your sign relevant and calls attention to the challenges of bird populations.

We hope to see you there in support of birds and the environment.

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (April 2017 - May 2017)

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.

Thursdays in April and May, 8:00 a.m.

Spring Migration Walks at the Arb

Join us on Thursday mornings in April and May (April 6, 13, 20, 27; May 4, 11, 18, 25) at Nichols Arboretum to observe migrants making their way north. These leaderless 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 plants offer delights of their own. Park and meet at the Riverview Court cul-de-sac off Geddes Road at 8:00 a.m.; the walks will end around 11:00 a.m., but participants can leave whenever they prefer.

Saturday, April 8, 8:00 a.m.

Nichols Arboretum Early Migrants

Leader: Karen Markey

Early springtime walks through the Arb are productive for Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, White-throated Sparrows, Winter Wrens, Fox Sparrows, Ruby- and Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Brown Creepers. These early birds are joined by the first warblers—Yellow-rumped, Pine, Palm, and Orange-crowned. Maybe a Blue-headed Vireo will join them. We will wander the Arb's meandering gravel and dirt paths in search of early spring migrants. We will meet at the Riverview Court entrance to the Arb at 8:00 a.m. sharp. Dress appropriately for the weather including coat, gloves, scarf, hat, and sensible footwear. No strollers, dogs, or wagons please. The walk should end between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday, April 9, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

In Search of Salamanders at Hudson Mills Metropark

Leader: Edwin Sanchez

Join leader Edwin Sanchez at Hudson Mills Metropark in search of salamanders. Eddie is an expert on these amphibians and this will be a fun morning turning over rocks and logs to locate some of the six species known to reside in the park. Meet at the parking lot for the River Grove Shelter area located within the park (turn right after the entry kiosk, then your next left into the lot). Expect muddy grounds. In case we end up handling any salamanders, please do not use any soaps, creams, or detergents on your hands for this morning. This fun, hands-on field trip is perfect for little ones, as well. This field trip is free of charge, but a Metroparks Pass is required for admission to the park.

Saturday, April 15, 8:00 p.m.

Woodcock Walk at Barton Nature Area

Leader: Ray Stocking

The American Woodcock, known for its unusual flying pattern during courtship, can be seen at dawn and dusk in the spring. Park at the Barton Dam lot on Huron River Drive, across the street and slightly north/upriver from Bird Road, and follow the trail around the building to the foot bridge. We will meet right on the other side (the dam side) of the bridge at 8:00 p.m. PLEASE NOTE: Do not park in the Barton Nature Area lot on Huron River Drive just after Main Street, or else you will have a LONG walk back to your car in the dark. Please wear good walking shoes and dress warmly. (The temperature will drop quickly at sunset.) Bring a small flashlight to assist you in exiting the park after the program ends. Plan on returning to your car around 9:15 p.m. if all goes well.

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (April 2017 – May 2017)

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

Sunday, May 7, 7:30 a.m.

Hudson Mills Metropark Migrants

Leader: Karen Markey

Target birds include cuckoos, woodpeckers, vireos, flycatchers, thrushes, warblers, and tanagers. Meet at the flagpole in front of the Activity Center at 7:30 a.m. The trip will last roughly until 11:00 a.m. This field trip is free of charge, but a Metroparks Pass is required for admission to the park.

Sunday, May 14

Magee Marsh and Metzger Marsh, NW Ohio

Leader: Karen Markey

Magee Marsh is an internationally renowned migrant trap where birds stop to refuel before their long flight across Lake Erie. Warblers, flycatchers, sparrows, and thrushes are just some of the many types of birds you can see there. Birders may see more than 100 species. Meet at the park-and-ride lot at Plymouth Road and US 23 at 5:50 a.m. to arrange carpools for a 6:00 a.m. sharp departure. Or meet the group at the warbler sign near the boardwalk entrance at Magee Marsh at 8:30 a.m. Karen plans to return in the late afternoon, but individual drivers and their carpools may arrange to come back at any time.



From left to right: Northern Parula; American Redstart; Golden-winged Warbler by Benjamin Hack

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.*

April 19 21st Century Science with 19th Century Specimens: Next Generation Ornithology at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology

The University of Michigan Museum of Zoology (UMMZ) houses over 200,000 specimens of birds, making it one of the most important ornithological research collections in the world. Today, technological developments such as genome sequencing enable scientists to use these specimens to unlock secrets of the past as well as make predictions about the future of bird populations. Join Dr. Ben Winger, Assistant Professor and Curator of Birds in the University of Michigan's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Museum of Zoology, as he discusses several exciting ongoing areas of research that draw insights from the UMMZ's bird collections. He will also discuss how data from citizen science efforts, such as your contributions to eBird, interface powerfully with historical data from specimens to help us understand migratory birds' past, present, and future.

May 17 From Magnificent to Montezuma: Birding Southeast Arizona

Some might say it's crazy to go to Southeast Arizona in the summer, but not birders. Join Washtenaw Audubon young birders Benjamin and Matty Hack as they share the amazing adventures they had at Camp Chiricahua in summer 2016. From desert scrub land to the canyons to the Sky Islands, you'll see the highlights of their birding expeditions. When they are not tracking Buff-collared Nightjars near the Mexican border, Matty is a freshman at Yale University and Benjamin is a sophomore at Pioneer High School.



Washtenaw Audubon Society

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