



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

May / June 2022

Update from the Education Chair

Washtenaw Audubon continues to work on reaching birders of all ages and backgrounds. In our March program, we invited Dr. Jeff Galligan and Dexter Patterson, co-founders of the BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin, to talk about how to make birding more accessible for people of all cultural backgrounds, especially for those who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Following their lead, WAS has had BIPOC bird walks at Kensington Metropark, Nichols Arboretum, and Furstenberg Park over the last three months.

To reach more of our younger birders, WAS has partnered with schools and other organizations. We held a bird walk for Feathered Friends participants (an event through the Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad) at Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area that involved nearly 50 participants. WAS continues to partner with Ypsilanti's Erickson Elementary School's Feathered Friends group to introduce them to new birds and take them on short bird walks in local areas such as Loon Feather Park.



Education Chair Victor Chen hosting a Feathered Friends walk at the Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area (Jacco Gelderloos)

The kids were very excited to see Double-crested Cormorants diving for fish in Ford Lake. In early May, a fourth-grade class at Dexter's Wylie Elementary School invited WAS to share their knowledge about the local birds and to take the class on a bird walk around the school, which included views of a small kettle of Turkey Vultures circling around.

Finally, WAS has partnered with area libraries and the City of Ann Arbor to spread its bird joy. In addition to the walks mentioned in the previous newsletter with the Ypsilanti Library, we held an intro-to-birding activity with the Ann Arbor District Library at the Traverwood branch this past May, where we birded the woods near the library after the presentation.

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President's Letter

Dear Washtenaw Audubon,

Thanks for a great spring migration season. It was a pleasure to bird with all of you!

Here are some highlights from our spring birding together. As always, I am for the birds!

Good Birding,

Juliet Berger, President

Washtenaw Audubon Society



Philadelphia Vireo (Bill Nolting)



Working on our Warbler Neck on a Thursday morning Arb walk (Jamie Jacob)



Above: WAS President Juliet Berger introducing the Tuesday Evening Birders group to the Saline Mills property (Bill Nolting)



Left: Some of the 40 or so birders gathering for a lovely walk along Embury Rd for the 5/24 Tuesday Evening birders (Bill Nolting)

While our Ypsilanti migration walk along the Water Street trail was canceled due to construction, we plan on having more events with the Ypsilanti Libraries. WAS also participated in Huron River Day on May 15th, which involved sharing information about our organization and our walks. If you have ideas or educational opportunities that you'd like to have for a WAS presenter, please contact Victor Chen at education@washtenawaudubon.org.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The birds Washtenaw Audubon pledges to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference, and countless other ways. As we honor and celebrate the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Washtenaw Audubon considers the work of inclusion, diversity, and equity a top priority moving forward. We hope that, in doing so, we can bring creativity and energy to our work in Washtenaw County and beyond for birds and people alike.

[Read our full statement at washtenawaudubon.org](http://washtenawaudubon.org)

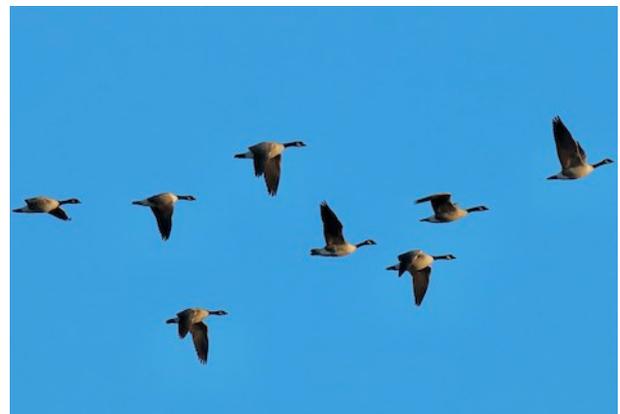
March-April 2022: Early Spring Highlights

Waterfowl through Shorebirds

The first **Snow Geese** of the season appeared on 3/1, with a bird on Barton Pond and another at Mary Beth Doyle Park. The next day a small group of up to four birds (on 3/4) started its stay at North Bay Park – they were last seen on 3/6. A month later, on 4/1, a single bird was noted near the Scio Church & Parker intersection, from where it likely moved to a fluddle at Steinbach & Liberty for the next few days. A duo of blue morph birds was seen at the Schneider Rd Pond on 4/3, but after that date no further Snow Goose reports came in. The group of Snow Geese at North Bay Park was joined by a **Ross's Goose** starting 3/4 – it, too, was last reported on 3/6. Another Ross's Goose roamed rather widely in the area loosely centered around Scio Church & Parker from 3/30 through 4/3 – at times, this bird was hard to make out, prompting at least one observer to enter it into eBird as a Snow x Ross's Goose hybrid (4/2). The only **Greater White-fronted Geese** seen this period was a group of four flying over Barton Pond on 3/1. A group of **Cackling Geese** added to the early March waterfowl bonanza at North Bay Park from 3/1 – 3/6. Although they were at times hard to pick out from among the plentiful Canada Geese, there were at least nine of them there on 3/5. The month of March is the traditional migration window for northbound **Tundra Swans** in Washtenaw County and this March proved to be no exception to that rule. Skeins of 109 (3/5, over Gallup Park) and 146 (3/6 over Independence Lake) were the clear high counts among the reports from some dozen locations.



Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*, North Bay Park, March 5 2022
(Birding Withjohn)



Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii*, North Bay Park,
March 1 2022 (Jack Kew)

Starting in mid-March, **Blue-winged Teal** appeared in Washtenaw County – most reports were of small groups, but there was an impressive gathering of 25 of these dapper little ducks at Sharon Mills County Park on 4/24. Generally an earlier migrant, roughly 11 sites hosted **Northern Pintails** during March; by the time April rolled around that number had been reduced to three, although the peak number of 60 birds occurred on 4/2, at Four Mile Lake. A fairly sizeable group of Pintails at North Bay Park was joined by its hybrid cousin (with a Mallard) on 3/5.

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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.

Canvasbacks appear to have had a pretty good spring migration locally, in that they were reported from roughly 15 locations – the high tally of 70 occurred on 3/11 at North Bay Park. Similarly, **Greater Scaup** were present at eight sites though 4/12 – most impressively, there may have been as many as 25 of them on Independence Lake on 3/21. Two different **White-winged Scoters** spent a considerable amount of time locally in early to mid-March: one was on Barton Pond from 3/2 – 3/26, another was at North Bay Park (where else?) from 3/9 – 3/18. Most of the larger bodies of water hosted **Red-breasted Mergansers** this March-April, with the largest concentration of 54 birds on Whitmore Lake on 4/1.



White-winged Scoter *Melanitta deglandi*, Foster Nature Area, March 16 2022 (Ben Lucking)

With the arrival of the spring display season, **Ring-necked Pheasants** were noted from 15+ locations, which is some good news after the rather paltry numbers over the past several months. **Horned Grebes** displayed their wide array of plumages (depending on the progression of each bird's molt) at many a local lake through mid-April; the tally of 21 birds on Whitmore Lake on 4/2 must have been an impressive sight! Late April saw the arrival of the first **Eastern Whippoorwill** with a bird at Nichols Arboretum on 4/24 and another one in Lodi Township on 4/29. Likewise, **Chimney Swifts** returned starting on 4/21; birds were reported from essentially all over the county by the end of the month. **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** lagged a few days behind – the first of four birds was seen on 4/25. Generally the hardier of the rails, **Virginia Rails** arrived locally as of 4/10; the four birds at Iron Creek Mill Pond on 4/29 were the high count. A single **Common Gallinule** at Furstenberg Park on 4/30 only stuck around long enough to be seen by its sole observer.



Virginia Rail *Rallus limicola*, Trinkle Marsh, April 19 2022 (Michael Bowen)

Shorebirds through Falcons

A group of six **Dunlin** at one of the ponds along Vreeland Rd on 4/23 delighted numerous observers. The same spot hosted the first **Least Sandpiper** of the season from 4/27 – 4/28. A fairly early **Pectoral Sandpiper** appeared at Scio Church & Parker on 3/30 and stayed until 4/2. Larger numbers of the species were noted at the Vreeland Rd pond (6 birds on 4/24) and at Park & Staebler (2 birds on 4/30). Rather more retiring than most other shorebird species, it was a bit of a surprise that over ten sites hosted **Wilson's Snipes**, with as many as 12 birds along Willow Rd on 4/15. The 16 (!) **American Woodcocks** calling at the West Lake Preserve on 4/13 established a new record high tally. During the last week of March, the first **Greater Yellowlegs** appeared, but no more than two birds were reported from any of the 15 or so locations they visited.

Northbound **Bonaparte's Gulls** were widespread starting mid-March – the maximum was 46 over Silver Lake on 4/16. Both black-backed gull species were seen during March, with an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at North Bay Park from 3/6 – 3/14 and an adult **Great Black-backed Gull** at Portage Lake on 3/19. Small numbers of our most regularly occurring tern species, the **Caspian Tern**, passed through during April: 1 at Four Mile Lake (4/6), 3 at North Bay Park (4/12 – 4/23), 2 at Wildwood Lake (4/23), and 1 over Thurston Pond (4/23). The only **Forster's Tern** was seen on 4/21 over the Huron River, just west of the Foster Rd Bridge.



Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, Vreeland Rd, April 23 2022 (Bill Nolting)



Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*, Four Mile Lake, April 20 2022 (Nui Moreland)

Although the species was very rarely reported until only a few years ago, **American White Pelicans** have become expected (if still very uncommon) annual spring migrants in Washtenaw County – the group of three that spent a short time on Four Mile Lake on 4/4 continued that trend. An **American Bittern** was calling from the wetland in the northwest corner of Vreeland & Prospect on 4/28; starting that same day, at least two bitterns were calling at the Chelsea State Game Area and continued to do so until the end of the month. Adult **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were noted at Scio Church & Parker (4/2/ - 4/6), North Bay Park (4/18 – 4/22), and Concordia University (4/22).



American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*, Four Mile Lake, April 4 2022 (Ben Lucking)



Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*, Arbor Hills Nature Area, April 23 2022 (Victor Chen)

A species that is apparently slowly expanding its range, a **Black Vulture** was observed over Trinkle Marsh on 4/24 – this is the fourth year running the species has been observed in Washtenaw County, and the sixth out of the past eight years. **Ospreys** were seemingly everywhere starting 3/28 – most of these birds were likely migrants, but several pairs returned to known nesting sites.

Northern Harriers continued their strong showing from January-February, with migrants adding to the birds that wintered locally. The same went for **Sharp-shinned Hawks**; single birds were observed in dozens of locations county-wide throughout March and April. **Red-shouldered Hawks** also appear to be doing well – not only were they seen at some 20 sites, but a major northbound push was noted over Hudson Mills Metropark on 3/6, where a whopping 27 birds passed overhead, setting a new county high count. Individuals and small groups of up to nine **Broad-winged Hawks** appeared as of 4/16. Only two **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen: a bird over Barton Pond on 3/15, and another over the east side of Saline on 3/18.

Territorial **Barred Owls** were observed in their usual strongholds in the western portion of the county, but two calling birds in the Ann Arbor area are indicative of ongoing range expansion. The only exception to this pattern was a bird heard along Huron Parkway several times during January. The last of this winter's **Short-eared Owls** left the fields at Vreeland & Gotfredson after 3/11. A spontaneously calling **Northern Saw-whet Owl** along Toma Rd on 3/17 was a great surprise for the lone observer. The arrival of returning migrant **Red-headed Woodpeckers** was likely behind an increase in numbers and reports. Chief among them was the continuing family group of five at Independence Lake. Single **Merlins** were found in scattered locations throughout the county during March and April. There were no reports of **Peregrine Falcons** away from downtown Ann Arbor and nearby spots; as many as three birds were on U/M's Central Campus.



Barred Owl *Strix varia*, Embury Rd, April 12 2022
(Maggie Jewett)



Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, Gallup Park, March 5 2022
(Jocelyn Anderson)

Passerines: Flycatchers through Longspurs

Often the first of the *Empidonax* flycatchers to arrive, single **Least Flycatchers** just squeaked into the period on 4/30, at Park & Staebler and Matthaei Botanical Gardens. The last week of April saw the arrival of the first **Great Crested Flycatchers** and **Eastern Kingbirds** as well. Several vireo species also followed this pattern: **White-eyed Vireos** were at Greenview-Pioneer (4/23), Dolph Park (4/26 – 4/30), and West Park (4/29 – 4/30). The latter bird was particularly cooperative and showed very well for many birders. A few **Yellow-throated Vireos** made it to Washtenaw County before the end of April; up to three **Blue-headed Vireos** were present at more than 15 sites (after 4/21); and **Warbling Vireos** started setting up territories in local parks after 4/24.



Least Flycatcher *Empidonax minimus*, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, April 30 2022 (Jocelyn Anderson)



Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*, Dolph Park, April 30 2022 (Todd Palgut)

Both **Purple Martins** and **Bank Swallows** were first noted on 4/14; the first **Cliff Swallows** were seen on 4/23 – the 20 birds at North Hydro Park on 4/26 may indicate the establishment of a colony there. Surprisingly large numbers of both **Red-breasted**

Nuthatches and **Brown Creepers** remained through the end of April – both species were present in dozens of locations, with up to four birds in some spots. 15 **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** at the Sharon Hollow Preserve on 4/24 was an impressive number; the first of these woodland sprites arrived in Washtenaw County on 4/10. Starting 4/16, **House Wrens** arrived in force and they were soon singing from dozens of prospective territories. Many individuals of its congener, the **Winter Wren**, stayed through the end of April, in some 25 locations – four birds at Nichols Arboretum on 4/14 was an impressive number. On 4/30, **Marsh Wrens** were singing at Independence Lake and Dolph Park.



Cliff Swallow (et al.) *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*, M-52 & Lehman Rd, April 25 2022 (Michael Bowen)



Winter Wren *Troglodytes hiemalis*, West Scio Preserve, March 20 2022 (Dennis Pozega)

Continuing the pattern of wintering **Gray Catbirds**, an individual at Barton Pond on 3/22 was well ahead of the usual April arrival date. After the first report on 4/10, **Brown Thrashers** were widely distributed by the end of that month – four of them at Nichols Arboretum on 4/21 made for the period's highest count. Likely due to being more notable while singing, **Northern Mockingbirds** were observed at over ten sites throughout the county. A **Veery** at Dolph Park on 4/16 was quite early; the only others were two at Nichols Arboretum (4/26 – 4/30) and one at the West Scio Preserve (4/27). Birders visiting the West Park White-eyed Vireo were also treated to first one, then two **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** on 4/29 – 4/30. **Wood Thrushes** started trickling in after 4/23 and were noted at 8 locations by the end of the month.



Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*, West Park, April 30 2022 (Ivan Prates)



Purple Finch *Haemorhous purpureus*, Loch Highland, April 27 2022 (Cathy Theisen)

Three **American Pipits** at Vreeland & Gotfredson on 3/25 were the only ones during March and April. Northbound **Purple Finches** attended many a local feeder, although several of them were observed in natural areas as well. This winter's **Common Redpoll** irruption was over by 3/17; the flock of 100 birds at the Foster Nature Area on 3/2 continued the January-February spectacle. Rather widespread but not as numerous as the redpolls, **Pine Siskins** remained well into April, although the largest numbers (24 on 3/6 at Nichols Arboretum) had left by then. Decent-sized flocks of **Lapland Longspurs** were at Webster Church & Zeeb (20, on 3/5) and at Maple & Mooreville (40, on 3/12). By mid-April none were left, apart from two along Vreeland Rd from 4/16 – 4/24.

Passerines: Sparrows through Cardinalids

A very early **Savannah Sparrow** showed up along Gale Rd on 3/16 – mid-April is a more expected arrival time for this grassland sparrow. The first of the year's **Henslow's Sparrows** were setting up territories at the Sharonville SGA as of 4/16. Usually among the last of the sparrow species to arrive, a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at the Leslie Niethammer Preserve on 4/28 was right on cue.

The only **Bobolink** to be observed in April was a male along Mast Rd on 4/24. The day after, three different **Orchard Orioles** were reported: along Superior Rd, at Loch Highland, and along Farrell Rd. A major influx of **Baltimore Orioles** kicked off on 4/23, and by the end of the month they were present in dozens of locations throughout Washtenaw County. Since it is a species of some conservation concern, the large numbers of **Rusty Blackbirds** that pushed through this spring was a welcome sign. Not only were they observed in more than two dozen locations, but a flock of some 100 birds at Zeeb & Daly on 4/9 was a very nice find as well.



Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*, Farrell Rd, April 25 2002, (Mary Clark)



Rusty Blackbird *Euphagus carolinus*, Waterloo SRA, April 27 2022 (Andrew Schopieray)

The only **Louisiana Waterthrush** of the period was a one-day wonder at Thurston Pond on 4/3 – worryingly, the previously reliable nesting spot at the Nan Weston Preserve no longer appears to be. A very early **Hooded Warbler** was reported from the Matthaei Botanical Gardens on 4/4, but it could not be relocated afterwards. Not surprisingly, **Pine Warblers** were singing from local evergreens from as early as 3/16; this species is generally second to arrive after that hardiest of warblers, the Yellow-rumped. In addition, early April also saw migrant **Palm Warblers** and **Yellow Warblers** make an appearance.

These early arrivals notwithstanding, the final ten days of April is the time to really start looking out for the arrival of the bulk of the *parulid* warblers, and a warm southerly flow on 4/23 and 4/24 really pushed birds north this year. By the time May rolled around, a whopping 25 (!) warblers had already been recorded locally! Highlights include a **Golden-winged Warbler** in Lodi Twp (4/28 – 4/29), three different **Prothonotary Warblers** (at Matthaei Botanical Gardens on 4/24, at North Bay Park from 4/26 – 4/27, and at Argo Nature Area on 4/27), two **Orange-crowned Warblers** (at Thurston Pond on 4/22 and at Four Mile Lake on 4/28), a **Cerulean Warbler** at Tubbs & Huron River Dr (4/29), and a very early **Blackpoll Warbler** at North Bay Park on 4/26. Needless to say, an excellent start to May, before May had even started!



Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla*, Thurston Pond, April 3 2022 (Victor Chen)



Blackburnian Blackbird *Setophaga fusca*, Thurston Pond, April 24 2022 (Victor Chen)

Known to overshoot the mark on their way north, **Summer Tanagers** occasionally appears in southern Michigan, and on 4/29 an immature male was photographed at a feeder along Salem Rd. Their locally nesting cousin, the **Scarlet Tanager**, arrived along with the plethora of wood-warblers over the last week of April and at least five birds had been reported by the end of the month. Right along with them, the first **Indigo Buntings** trickled in and they, too, were establishing breeding territories as May arrived.



Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*, Salem & Five Mile, April 29 2022 (Amy Donoghue)



Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*, Nan Weston Preserve, April 24 2022 (Jocelyn Anderson)



Above: Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors*, North Bay Park, 3-24-22 (Bill Nolting)

Right: Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*, Loch Highland, 4-25-22 (Cathy Theisen)



Field Trip Schedule

Prothonotary Paddle

Saturday, June 11, 9:00 a.m.

As many of you know, we typically have a number of singing males of the beautiful Prothonotary Warbler along a stretch of the Huron River between 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. The trip is eight miles long, and usually takes about 3 ½ 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. Dexter Huron is the picnic spot, approximately halfway, for those who wish to stay with the group. Bring your own picnic and beverages. Please let us know if you are attending by messaging Juliet at president@washtenawaudubon.org and book your own boat(s) for the “Hudson Mills to Delhi Metropark Long Trip” directly from Skip’s Canoe Livery: <http://paddlethehuron.com/services-rates/> and review the details on their site, being sure to select the 9am option on June 11th.. On the day of the event, if you are renting a canoe/kayak, we recommend arriving at Skip’s by 8:30 to check-in, park, and pick up the required, provided personal flotation device. If you are bringing your own boats, the put in spot is River Grove, as Rapids View is closed for construction. See the WAS web site for more details. Join the flotilla!

Leaders: Juliet Berger & Matthew Spoor

Butterfly Walk

Sunday, July 24th, 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Please join Washtenaw Audubon and resident butterfly experts at the Leonard Preserve in the Manchester area. Our leaders will catch butterflies and display them in jars. We’ll release them when we’ve had a chance to view them and take photos. The Leonard Preserve is also a fabulous place for birding, so bring binoculars too! A clean plastic jar and any butterfly nets you have could be used as well.

Shorebirds at Pointe Mouillee

Saturday, August 13

Explore the famous Pointe Mouillee State Game Area for shorebirds and waders with guide Jim Fowler. This event allows us to take a maximum of four vehicles onto the dikes of Pointe Mouillee. It will be by registration only and members will be given first priority. Stay tuned for the registration form and more info, which will be posted two weeks before the event.

Leader: Jim Fowler

Thursday Morning Fall Migration Walks at the Arb

Thursday, August 25 et al, 8:00 a.m.

Join us for the fall equivalent of this past spring’s walks at Nichols Arboretum. We will be meeting at the Riverview cul-de-sac parking lot.

Swift Nights Out

August 19, 20 and 21st– 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

We are looking for volunteers for our 7th Annual Ann Arbor-Washtenaw County Chimney Swift count. Watching Chimney Swifts enter their roosts at dusk is a spectacular sight. 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. We report this information to Michigan Audubon which keeps track of all the known Chimney Swift roosts in the State.

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

Washtenaw Audubon's in-person programs at the Botanical Gardens are currently on hold; we intend to resume in-person/hybrid Zoom programs in May. To view our online Zoom programs, you will need access to an internet-capable computer, phone, or similar device. An announcement of the web address to view the program will be on our web site, Facebook page, and on the Birders email list a few days before the program. We may add more online programs for April and the future, which will be announced on the same internet platforms.

June 15, 7:30 p.m.

A Goal Attained: 300 Species Seen in Washtenaw County! - with Don Chalfant

Join Don Chalfant for a program on achieving his longtime dream of seeing 300 species of birds in Washtenaw County. This rare milestone has been reached by only four birders. The program chronicles the growth of his list from his beginning years as a birder in the mid-1980s to the present and includes photos of each of the birds he's seen in the county.

Don is a retired Ann Arbor Public Schools teacher, a past president of Washtenaw Audubon, and a popular field trip leader and speaker. His current goal is to see 150 species of birds in each township in the county.

This is a hybrid program, in-person at the UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens, and via Zoom for those who can't attend in person. All are welcome, Washtenaw Audubon membership is not required to attend or view the program.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/99959530793>

Meeting ID: 999 5953 0793

Passcode: 289387

Or dial-in: 312-626-6799

July **No WAS Program**

August **No WAS Program**

See you in September!

Washtenaw Audubon Society

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