



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

July / August 2023

The Results of the 2023 WAS May Count Are in!

Dear Washtenaw Audubon Society,



White-eyed Vireo (Jocelyn Anderson)

This brief summary of the 2023 May Count will serve as my President's Letter for this Newsletter. Please take the time to peruse our data after these paragraphs. It is an astonishing testament to the work we all put into counting birds and providing the data to eBird to benefit bird science.

The Results of the 2023 May Count are in!!

Thanks to the many, many volunteer birders who came out to help tally birds for this year's Count. We couldn't do this Count without you!! 125+ volunteers this year counted 179 bird species to make this count a count to rank in the top 10 of all time for numbers of species, and one of the best attended events in May Count history. Though we didn't have huge volumes of warblers, we did have excellent variety, with all the regularly counted species and a few rarities.

The Worm-eating Warbler, found at the Arb earlier in the week, stuck around to be tallied by Jessica Adamczyk and Keith Dickey on Count Day. 2 Louisiana Waterthrush were picked up as well, by observers in Dexter, and Dave Borneman and Francie Krawke in Sharon Township. The Prothonotaries showed up for Karen Markey and Dea Armstrong at Hudson Mills MetroPark, and in Sylvan, Dexter and Webster. Maybe we'll have to move them to the expected species list for next year! Greg Jacks and Mike Kelly got the Yellow-throated Warbler on private property in Augusta TWP. The lone Mourning Warbler was found by Susan Miller at her property in Lodi TWP. Golden-winged Warbler (1) at the end of South Lake Drive in Lyndon Township, was ticked by Carol Goodman and Cathy Theisen. Overall, a whopping 32 species of warblers graced our county with their lovely songs and stunning plumage.

The Township winner was Ann Arbor again this year, with a massive 126 species. My hearty thanks to all the Ann Arbor volunteers, for making me so proud, again. Webster came in a close second with 117 species.

The birds we saw and heard are listed taxonomically and broken down into TWPs and by commonly occurring and rare, in the chart that follows, put together by David Amamoto. Please take some time to look this over, as it has all the data on our May Count 2023. The highlight of the Count for me, a whopping 89 Scarlet Tanagers, and 1 Summer Tanager, make my day when I think about them. The Waterfowl species highlight was a trio of Long-tailed Ducks on Mirage Lake in Augusta Twp, found by Greg Jacks. And Bill VanderMolen found a Black-crowned Night-Heron at Avis Farms in Pittsfield.



Least Sandpiper (Norka Saldana)



Canada Warbler (Jocelyn Anderson)

All my gratitude goes to the many volunteers and the May Count Area Leaders, David Borneman, Greg Jacks, Karl Brenner, Russell Ryan, Carol Watson and Claire Arthurs, Cathy Theisen, Rob French, Faye Stoner, Diana Kern, Bill VanderMolen, Bill Nolting and Donna Parmelee, Silas Bialecki, and me, Juliet Berger, for recruiting, supporting and assigning all the volunteers, keeping track of everything, and tallying a serious number of birds yourselves. David Amamoto arranges our data in a publishable form every year, and for that, among many other things, I am so very grateful. Thanks to my husband, Scott Huizenga, for doing all the driving!

As I've said, we can't do it without all of you. Join me and all the other enthusiastic (crazy) birders on May 11, 2024 for the next edition of the May Count.

In the meantime, I hope to see you all at the September program, at Matthaei Botanical Gardens on September 20, when Ram Ramamurthy will give us a stunning program on Birding the Deserts of Rajasthan, in India. We have changed the Name Change vote to the October program, October 18th, so save the date and look out for more details very soon! At the October 18th meeting we'll vote on whether to drop Audubon from our name. I, for one, am looking forward to leaving his shameful legacy behind, while still cherishing the beautiful art he created. You must be a member to vote, per our Constitution and By-Laws, so mark your calendars, renew your memberships, and be prepared to vote, whether in person or via Zoom, to be announced.

All the best, and good birding,

Juliet Berger

May Count Co-compiler, President-Washtenaw Audubon Society and wearing so many hats this year (including Mom of 2 recent College Graduates!!)

Washtenaw County May Count	Species Count - Common: 140										Species Count - Rare: 39										v1.1	
	Species Count Rare + Common: 179																				6/17/2023 dya	
Species Count - Common w/o sp:	116	61	82	88	67	77	101	80	96	91	66	60	98	100	85	103	73	112	88	93	140	
Species Count - Rare:	9	3	2	6	1	4	5	2	8	3	2	2	4	4	10	7	3	5	4	3	39	
Species Count - Common + Rare (w/o sp):	125	64	84	94	68	81	106	82	104	94	68	62	102	104	95	110	76	117	92	96	179	
	Ann	Aug	Bri	Dex	Fre	Lim	Lod	Lyn	Man	Nor	Pit	Slm	Sln	Sci	Sha	Sup	Syl	Web	Yor	Yps	Grand Total	
Bird Count - Common + sp:	8097	510	1498	1530	1128	1475	3231	510	3276	1005	757	598	1796	2646	1042	2706	513	2148	926	2239	37631	
Graylag Goose (Domestic type)	sp			3																	1	4
Canada Goose	C	364	24	156	38	97	94	131	9	195	212	64	18	105	96	69	221	2	73	36	191	2195
Mute Swan	C	98		2	10	5	6			26	6	8					10		10		43	224
Trumpeter Swan	C	17		2		2	2	0											2			25
swan sp.	sp			2																		2
Wood Duck	C	19		4	3			6	2	25	4	3	6	8	4	1	12	3	14	1	12	127
Blue-winged Teal	C	4									3					2	1		1			11
Mallard	C	271	7	5	10	6	7	37	4	24	8	11	11	26	20	10	36		17	9	53	572
Mallard (Domestic type)	sp	1																				1
Green-winged Teal	C																		2			2
Hooded Merganser	C												2						3			5
Wild Turkey	C	21	12	8	5	1	3	8	3	17	35		9	4	5	9	52		21	12		225
Ring-necked Pheasant	C			4		1		2		5				6		7	2					27
Pied-billed Grebe	C							1		2		1				3			2			9
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	C	138		3			5	9		16	3			8	8	4	37		4		21	256
Mourning Dove	C	132	19	24	22	27	33	84	12	78	19	7	25	43	33	13	59	4	51	25	40	750
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	C	1				2																3
Black-billed Cuckoo	C	1							1		1								1			4
Chimney Swift	C	203	2	6	1	1	20	29	1	32	1	1	9	8	2	44		6	13	248	627	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	C	16		1	2	1		6	1	3	3				7	1	3		6	3	2	55
Virginia Rail	C	1						1		5	1			1	1	2		1	2			15
Sora	C							1		3				1	1				2			10
Sandhill Crane	C	5		16	17	15	32	23	9	57	12			10	5	85	32	3	62	2		385
Killdeer	C	43	11	15	4	11	17	52	1	19	12	11	11	34	19	8	27		19	7	16	337
Least Sandpiper	C					1	4				3				5		5					18
Semipalmated Sandpiper	C															8						8
American Woodcock	C	2	3		2					5					2	3						17
Wilson's Snipe	C										2								2			4
Spotted Sandpiper	C	12					1	5				4		2	5		5	1	1	1	2	39
Solitary Sandpiper	C	3								1		1		1	1		12				1	20
Greater Yellowlegs	C	2								1					1		5					9
Lesser Yellowlegs	C	1					2			1						2						6
large shorebird sp.	sp							2														2
Bonaparte's Gull	C						1															1
Ring-billed Gull	C	6							1								8		2		16	33
Herring Gull	C																					1
gull sp.	sp															9						9
Double-crested Cormorant	C	3					2					1							1		50	57
Great Blue Heron	C	17	1	2	4		3	8		11	12	1	2	8	17	5	23	1	12	6	12	145
Great Egret	C	2					1				2	1	1				7		3		1	18
Green Heron	C	8		1				2	1	6	4		3	4	3	3	16		6		3	60
Turkey Vulture	C	19	4	17	31	22	34	35	2	57	18	1	10	31	19	15	41	1	32	1	9	399
Sharp-shinned Hawk	C									1						1						3
Cooper's Hawk	C	5		1				1		1				2	3	1			1		1	16
Bald Eagle	C	2					5			2									2	2	3	16
Broad-winged Hawk	C	2								1							1					4
Red-tailed Hawk	C	10		5	2	1	2	1		6	2	1	2	6	2	4	6	1	6	2	2	61
Buteo sp.	sp	1					4						1									7
Eastern Screech-Owl	C				1			2			1		3		1				2			10
Great Horned Owl	C	3	2		1						1						4		1	2		14
Barred Owl	C				1					2				1		1			1			6
Belted Kingfisher	C	5			1			1		3	1			1	2	2	1		1	1	2	21
Red-bellied Woodpecker	C	120	5	14	39	13	22	36	7	36	5	3	6	23	54	9	33	10	40	14	16	505
Downy Woodpecker	C	84		10	7	1	6	18	2	8	2	4	3	11	24	3	11	3	14	11	8	230
Hairy Woodpecker	C	24	1	1	4		2	10	1	1	1	1		3	11	1	2	2	5	5	1	76
Downy/Hairy Woodpecker	sp	1															2					3
Pileated Woodpecker	C	7		1	3	3		4	2	10	2		2	3	1	1	5	5	4	1		54
Northern Flicker	C	66	4	5	15	4	8	29	2	21	11		3	18	23	8	19	1	24	7	27	295
woodpecker sp.	sp									2												2
American Kestrel	C							1							2	1						4
Peregrine Falcon	C	3																				3
Eastern Wood-Pewee	C	16	1	4	12	1	5	12	5	5	1	4		8	7	1	8	8	9	3	2	112
Acadian Flycatcher	C				2				1						1	4		3				11
Willow Flycatcher	C			3					3			1		1	2		1		1	1	1	14
Alder/Willow Flycatcher (Tra)	sp													1								1

		Ann	Aug	Bri	Dex	Fre	Lim	Lod	Lyn	Man	Nor	Pit	Slm	Sln	Sci	Sha	Sup	Syl	Web	Yor	Yps	Total	
Cape May Warbler	C	4			2			4						6	2		4					1	23
Northern Parula	C	9	1	1	4	1	1	12	2	2	1	7		9	2		1	3	3	3	2		64
Magnolia Warbler	C	13		4	2	1		8	1		1			2	1				5	4			42
Bay-breasted Warbler	C	6	1		4			2			1			1	2						1	2	20
Blackburnian Warbler	C	8	1		2		1	5	1	1	2	2		6	3		1	1	2	1	1		38
Yellow Warbler	C	153	23	37	46	34	34	61	21	97	18	17	11	47	98	28	60	21	54	15	48		923
Chestnut-sided Warbler	C	3	1	1	3	1		6	4	3				1	5		1		1	1			31
Blackpoll Warbler	C	6			1	1		3							2			1	2	1	3		20
Black-throated Blue Warbler	C	4													2	1		2			1		10
Palm Warbler	C	3						1						3	2	1	3		5	1	1		20
Pine Warbler	C	7			10				1	3					1			1	2				25
Yellow-rumped Warbler	C	19	1	4	4	1	1	6	1	5	1	2		2	6		13	1	4	3	6		80
Black-throated Green Warbler	C	2		1	1			8	1		2	5	2	2	5				2	1			32
Canada Warbler	C																			2			2
Wilson's Warbler	C	1									1						1		3	1	1		8
new world warbler sp.	sp																		2				2
Scarlet Tanager	C	14		5	19		1		12	8	3	1		1	2	6	6	8	2	1			89
Northern Cardinal	C	265	9	37	55	32	45	125	15	73	22	17	15	24	106	17	49	20	81	38	48		1093
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	C	132	8	14	47	9	17	47	17	22	9	5	3	18	24	14	34	8	36	17	20		501
Indigo Bunting	C	48	5	20	18	10	17	32	7	18	4	3	4	10	16	6	26	4	9	4	3		264
Bird Count - Common + sp:		8097	510	1498	1530	1128	1475	3231	510	3276	1005	757	598	1796	2646	1042	2706	513	2148	926	2239		37631
Bird Count - Just Common:		8090	510	1493	1529	1111	1463	3228	510	3274	1001	757	597	1771	2646	1042	2695	512	2146	924	2238		37537
Bird Count - Just sp:		7	0	5	1	17	12	3	0	2	4	0	1	25	0	0	11	1	2	2	1		94
Species Count - Just sp:		6	0	2	1	2	2	2	0	1	2	0	1	3	0	0	2	1	1	2	1		18
Species Count - Rare only:		9	3	2	6	1	4	5	2	8	3	2	2	4	4	10	7	3	5	4	3		39
Bird Count - Rare Only:		13	3	3	8	2	7	6	11	14	4	2	2	8	5	13	10	3	7	6	10		137
Canvasback	R						1																1
Ring-necked Duck	R															1							1
Long-tailed Duck	R																		3				3
Bufflehead	R		1																				1
Ruddy Duck	R										1												1
Northern Bobwhite	R									1													1
Common Nighthawk	R																					7	7
Eastern Whip-poor-will	R									2													2
Semipalmated Plover	R															3							3
Black-crowned Night-Heron	R											1											1
Osprey	R	4					1				2			1			1		1	1	2		13
Northern Harrier	R						1						1		1		1						4
Red-shouldered Hawk	R																1						1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	R	1																					1
Red-headed Woodpecker	R	1		1	1	2	4	1		1	1			5		1			2	1			21
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	R	1														1							2
White-eyed Vireo	R							1											1				2
Philadelphia Vireo	R	2						1							1								5
Brown Creeper	R																		1				1
Sedge Wren	R									1													1
Marsh Wren	R									2						1							3
Northern Mockingbird	R	1	1		1			2		2					1								9
Gray-cheeked Thrush	R	1			1											1				1			4
American Pipit	R																1						1
Pine Siskin	R											1											1
Grasshopper Sparrow	R									2					1	2	2	1			1		9
Clay-colored Sparrow	R																					1	2
Henslow's Sparrow	R									3						1							4
Lincoln's Sparrow	R				2									1									3
Yellow-breasted Chat	R												1										1
Rusty Blackbird	R																				4		4
Worm-eating Warbler	R	1																	4				1
Louisiana Waterthrush	R				1											1							2
Golden-winged Warbler	R									1													1
Prothonotary Warbler	R				3																		6
Mourning Warbler	R							1										1	2				1
Cerulean Warbler	R				1					10													11
Yellow-throated Warbler	R		1																				1
Summer Tanager	R	1																					1
Bird Count - Rare Only:		13	3	3	8	2	7	6	11	14	4	2	2	8	5	13	10	3	7	6	10		137
Bird Count - All:		8110	513	1501	1538	1130	1482	3237	521	3290	1009	759	600	1804	2651	1055	2716	516	2155	932	2249		37768

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Newsletter

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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.

The Ann Arbor CBC is looking for a new Compiler

As most of you will know, the Ann Arbor CBC is among the State's longest running and most successful Christmas Bird Counts. Not only has it been active since the late 1940s, but to this day it maintains some of the highest levels of participation and species counts, especially considering the count takes place in an inland county.

Be that as it may, the count relies entirely on volunteers: over the past few years, there have been dozens of feeder watchers, and as many as a hundred field observers. All of these observer's efforts are coordinated by a team of eight area leaders, a feeder watch coordinator, and a potluck coordinator. At the head of this organizational pyramid sits the count compiler. For the past 17 years that has been me, Jacco Gelderloos.

As the count compiler, I organize where volunteers are assigned (which has been largely automated over the past five years) and compile each of the count areas' results into a circle-wide count total, which is then reported to the National Audubon Society. NAS incorporates all of our data into its overall CBC database, which is an impressive dataset of winter bird distribution, compiled by citizen scientists all over our hemisphere.

After 17 years, I believe the time has come for me to pass on the compiler baton to a new person. Ideally, I would like to use the coming months leading up to this year's CBC as the transitional period, and work with the new compiler to pass on my responsibilities for the next years' counts. If you are interested in taking on this labor of love, please reach out to me via email at jjgelderloos@yahoo.com – I would be more than happy to discuss what is involved with the job and to go over improvements, changes, etc. I hope to hear from you soon.

Best regards,

Jacco Gelderloos
 Ann Arbor CBC Compiler



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

May-June 2023: Spring & Early Summer Highlights

The Highlight (sort of)

Every so often, evidence turns up for the occurrence of rare birds that eluded the larger birding community. Most often, a (novice) birder takes a photo of a bird whose identity comes to light well after the bird in question has left. Sometimes a rare bird falls prey to a hunter: the human variety is most often a (duck) hunter, which is how Washtenaw County's only record for [Tufted Duck](#) from October 1973 came to be established. On rare occasions the hunter responsible for the discovery is a bird itself, as was the case for the only local record for [Yellow Rail](#), which came to light when the leftovers at the Burton Tower Peregrine Falcon roost were examined in October 2008.



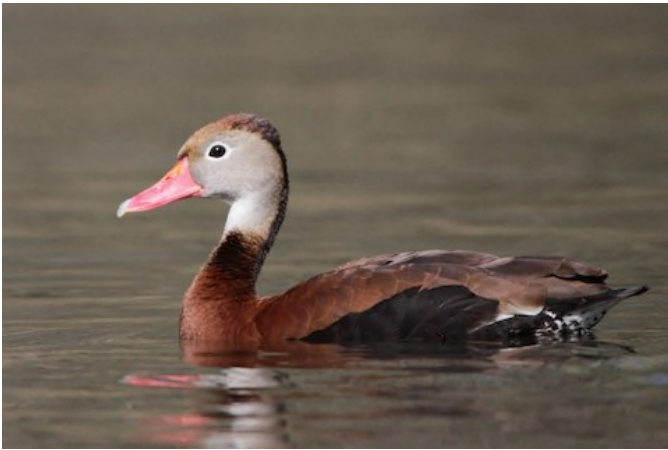
At left, the late May-early June flight path of Eriean, a female Ferruginous Hawk *Buteo regalis*, over SW Ontario and southern Michigan (MOTUS). At right, a flight shot of the bird during its stay in Newaygo County on June 5, 2023 (Caleb Putnam)

More and more, however, our knowledge of bird occurrence is increased and improved through the deployment of a wide range of scientific tools. Flight call monitors detect the nighttime calls of migrating birds that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. An ever-expanding number of monitoring stations making up the MOTUS network (www.motus.org) tracks the movements of radio-tagged birds all over North America and parts of Europe. One of these birds, a **Ferruginous Hawk** named Eriean for the town in Ontario it was retrieved in, was fitted with a tracker that allowed MOTUS to follow this rarity's flight path across southern Ontario and, eventually, Michigan (and beyond). A few days after the event occurred, MOTUS maps showed that Eriean crossed over the far northeastern corner of Washtenaw County on 5/30, thus establishing a local record for a bird that no one ended up seeing. Some very fortunate birders were able to locate this regal hawk in Newaygo County a few days later, courtesy of some excellent planning on their part.

Waterfowl

The **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** on private property in Lodi Township stayed through 5/12 – it never left the property in question, unfortunately. A handful of **Northern Shovelers** stayed into May, with two at Trinkle Marsh (5/1), two at Scio Church & Parker (5/2), and a lone bird at M-52 & Lehman (5/20). Similarly, a few **Gadwall** were tardy leaving favored spots, with a pair at South Pond (5/1) and one at North Bay Park (5/17). Two **American Black Ducks** at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens from 6/28 – 6/29 made for a very unusual summer record locally. The added intensity of May Count coverage on 5/13 turned up a few **Green-winged Teal**, two at Zeeb & Merkel and one at Trinkle Marsh.

May Count was also responsible for the sole **Canvasback** of the period, when one was found on Four Mile Lake. **Ring-necked Ducks** were oddly widespread – single birds stayed well into May at six different locations. Moreover, diligent birders found them at two of these sites during the closing days of June – it could be that injured birds were involved, but perhaps a nesting attempt took place? A handful of **Lesser Scaup** stuck around until 5/9, but none were reported after that. A very dapper-looking trio of breeding-plumaged **Long-tailed Ducks** spent some time on Mirage Lake on 5/13. What had been a sizeable group of as many as 15 **Buffleheads** had vacated Gallup Park by 5/5 – the final Bufflehead of the spring season was at Hitchingham & Talladay on 5/13. Contrary to the past few years, no **Common Mergansers** stayed into the summer period; the last birds were seen at a couple of spots along the Huron River on 5/3. Straggler **Ruddy Ducks** were on Pierce Lake (two, through 5/3) and Whitmore Lake (5/13).



Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*, Lodi Twp, May 4 2023 (Andy Dettling)



Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*, Mirage Lake, May 13 2023 (Mike Kelly)

Grouse through Terns

Establishing a first local record for this exotic species, a **Helmeted Guineafowl** was observed at Seven Mile & Dixboro on 6/10. **Northern Bobwhite** is now considered extirpated from Washtenaw County (and Michigan as a whole?) and local observations are now treated as released or escaped gamebirds. Still, hearing calling males at three scattered locations remains a treat, if a sad reminder of a species that is likely gone from Washtenaw County. Although none were reported at all from the woodlands in the western part of the county this spring, at least one **Ruffed Grouse** was found to be hanging on at their former nesting location at Marshall Park, where a bird was flushed on 5/28 and relocated on 5/29. **Ring-necked Pheasants** were observed in over two dozen locations throughout the county during May-June, which is a welcome trend, given their near-total absence during fall and winter.

Seven **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** during the Stinchfield Woods census on 6/3 established a new county record high count. Small numbers of **Common Nighthawks** moved through at some 20 sites this spring, with a few hanging around for possible nesting attempts – Ypsilanti's Depot Town area, where as many as seven were seen, was the most reliable spot. Away from the likely breeding location at Green Lake (where at least two were present starting on 5/15), calling **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were very hard to pin down: birds were heard at Loch Highland (5/7), Noggles & Wellwood (5/13), and Redbud Park (5/17) – this is the second year running that one has shown up in this small city park on Ann Arbor's east side. Up to three **Common Gallinules** remained at the fluddle at M-52 & Lehman through 5/28; the only other report was from Trinkle Marsh (one bird, on 5/27). An **American Coot** was observed at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens on 5/17; more surprisingly, another bird spent the entire period at North Bay Park.



Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*, Seven Mile & Dixboro, June 10 2023 (Sandy Bauerschmidt)



Eastern Whip-poor-will *Antrostomus vociferus*, Green Lake, June 26 2023 (Ben Lucking)

Although they are not rare locally during migration, **Semipalmated Plovers** moved through in good numbers between May 7 – 21 – the largest concentration was a flock of 23 at Wildwood Lake on 5/18, which made for a new record high count for the County. Associating with that flock were seven **Dunlin**; the only other Dunlin were two at Scio Church & Parker from 5/10 – 5/13. **Least Sandpipers** moved through during the second and third weeks of May, stopping over at some ten sites – the maximum was a flock of 23. Of note is that a few southbound migrants were seen as early as late June, when singletons were at Domino's

Farms (6/28) and Mary Beth Doyle Park (6/29). The last of what had been a huge flock of **Pectoral Sandpipers** left Scio Church & Parker after 5/9. The third week of May was the time for finding **Semipalmated Sandpipers**: small groups were at four locations from 5/13 – 5/22. It's unclear if the flock of nine at Olson Park on 6/10 involved late northbound migrants, or some exceedingly early southbound birds. After the great showing during April, the last **Wilson's Snipes** had vacated Washtenaw County by 5/13. One last **Bonaparte's Gull** graced Four Mile Lake on 5/13. At least a few **Herring Gulls** tend to hang around over the summer months, so a few birds here and there, mostly in the Ypsilanti area was not too unusual. However, a northbound flock of 17 birds over Depot Town on quite surprising! During mid and late May, a few **Caspian Terns** showed up, with the trio over the S Parker Rd Marsh on 5/22 likely the most unexpected. The first of the annual over-summering flock at North Bay Park showed up on 6/19. A report of a *sterna* tern over Dolph Park on 5/7 was left unidentified to species.



Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* & Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, Wildwood Lake, May 18 2023 (Jocelyn Anderson)



Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* & Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*, North Bay Park, June 20 2023 (Bill Nolting)

Loons through Falcons

Oftentimes a few **Common Loons** stay around into May, but this year as many as five if them graced several bodies of water through 5/13. An **American Bittern** stopped over in Scio Township on 5/16; the next day a very cooperative bird spent the day at North Bay Park, where it regularly walked out into the open, allowing for many a photo to be taken. A **Least Bittern** flew over Wildwood Lake on 5/17. Throughout May, single **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were seen here and there around the Ann Arbor area; starting on 6/5, as many as three started hanging out at their now annual haunts at Mary Beth Doyle Park.



American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*, North Bay Park, May 17 2023 (Bill VanderMolen)



Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*, Wildwood Lake, May 17 2023 (Jocelyn Anderson)

The fact that **Northern Harriers** were noted well into June in potentially suitable habitat may be an indication that some may have attempted nesting locally. Northbound **Sharp-shinned Hawk** migration petered out during early May, with the last report coming on 5/25. Although some of the **Red-shouldered Hawk** reports clearly involved northbound migrants, the numerous observations are clear indications that this handsome woodland *buteo* is continuing to re-colonize local territory. In the same vein, **Barred Owls** also continued to be well-represented with reports from some 15 locations. **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** don't nest in southern Michigan, so for as many as seven birds to remain until 5/13 was quite surprising. The only **Merlin** was at County Farm Park on 5/11; it seems the potential nesting pair in Ypsilanti moved on. Away from downtown Ann Arbor, the only **Peregrine Falcon** was at Joy & Tower on 6/5 - the nesting pair on UM's central campus appears to have successfully nested with two large young in the nest on 5/27.



Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Mary Beth Doyle Park, June 6 2023 (Bonnie Penet)



Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, UM North Quad, May 27 2023 (Norka Saldana)

Passerines: Tyrannid Flycatchers through New World Sparrows

All of the spring's northbound **Olive-sided Flycatchers** were one-day wonders, with the exception of the bird at Nichols Arboretum, which spent three days there (5/20 – 5/22). **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** had a pretty decent spring migration window, with birds reported from some ten locations between 5/11 – 6/2. As many as five **Alder Flycatchers** were requesting frreeeBEER at the Clark & Avis Spike Preserve on 6/2, which set a new county high count. **White-eyed Vireos** proved to be very hard to pin down in any given location; although they were observed at Independence Lake (5/13), Stinchfield Woods (6/3), near Lyndon Twp Hall (6/4), and at the Leonard Preserve (6/27), they could generally not be relocated at any of those sites afterwards. May 2023 was amazing for **Philadelphia Vireos** – up to three birds were present in 30+ locations all over the county during the two weeks from 5/12 – 5/26! Migrant **Golden-crowned Kinglets** moved through until 5/15; the Stinchfield Woods census on 6/3 turned up a likely small breeding population of these evergreen specialists.

The last of the season's **Winter Wrens** were at Furstenberg Park (5/5), at Stark Strasse (5/9), and at Nichols Arboretum (5/23). The first **Sedge Wrens** were noted in mid-May, but it took until June for numbers to build to their maximum, when they had established territories at seven scattered sites. **Marsh Wrens** were quite a bit easier to come by, gracing over twenty wetlands with their presence during May-June. Northbound **American Pipits** moved through in an exceedingly small window (5/11 – 5/14) and were found at only four locations, with a maximum of three birds. Single **Purple Finches** persisted until 5/13, at some eight different sites. Similarly, the handful of **Pine Siskins** that wintered in Washtenaw County (or father south) had all moved on by 5/22.



Philadelphia Vireo *Vireo philadelphia*, County Farm Park, May 18 2023 (Norka Saldana)



Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, June 25 2023 (John Christensen)

Grasshopper Sparrows had quite a decent spring: one or two birds set up shop in about ten locales, starting 5/13. Previously considered a very rare migrant locally, **Clay-colored Sparrow** are now firmly established as a breeding species in Washtenaw

County – territorial males were regaling observers with their insect-like buzzy song in as many as five different grasslands this spring period. A sole **American Tree Sparrow** realized its tardiness and moved on after 5/2. A **Fox Sparrow** in full song serenaded a group of Thursday morning birders at the Arb on 5/4; this bird appears to have relocated to nearby Furstenberg Park, where one was seen the following day. Not as widespread, but certainly more numerous at favored sites, **Henslow's Sparrow** numbers built to quite impressive levels, with as many as 12 (!) at the Sharonville SGA on 6/24. **Lincoln's Sparrow** migration petered out by 5/19 – these dapper little sparrows graced some dozen sites during the first few weeks of May.



Clay-colored Sparrow *Spizella pallida*, Rolling Hills County Park, May 13 2023 (Bill Nolting)



Henslow's Sparrow *Centronyx henslowii*, Conservancy Farm, June 11 2023 (Isaac Polanski)

Passerines: Chat through Cardinals

Yellow-breasted Chats were found in an uncharacteristically large number of locations and settled in for the long haul in at least two of them, where they delighted many observers: they were seen at Frains Lake & Ford (5/13), at the Clark & Avis Spike Preserve (5/15 – 6/10), at Rolling Hills County Park (6/1), and two were at the Watkins Lake County Preserve (6/9 – 6/30). A few **Rusty Blackbirds** trickled through the county through 5/13 – no more than four were seen at any of the handful of sites.

Typically a one-day wonder spring overshoot, **Worm-eating Warblers** tend to be few and far between in Washtenaw County. For two days (5/12 – 5/13) one stayed at Nichols Arboretum, singing and being generally fairly easy to find – as a result, numerous local birders were able to add this elusive species to their county lists. A small number of **Louisiana Waterthrushes** were found during the first two weeks of May: at Hudson Mills (5/8 – 5/10), at the Nan Weston Preserve at Sharon Hollow (5/13), and along Dexter Townhall Rd (5/13) – the fact that there were no follow-up observations in the first two, well-birded natural areas casts doubt on whether or not this species is still (consistently) part of our breeding avifauna. As is the norm during spring migration, **Golden-winged Warblers** moved through in small numbers, largely between 5/9 – 5/16. A late report from Embury Rd on 5/31 was quite intriguing, in that a **Brewster's Warbler** hybrid was observed there a few days later on 6/2 – given that these hybrids can sing like either of the parent species, this may well have been one and the same bird.



Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*, Watkins Lake County Park, June 27 2023 (Michael Bowen)



Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*, Nichols Arboretum, May 12 2023 (Victor Chen)

Previously considered a rare spring overshoot and sporadic breeder, the **Prothonotary Warbler** is now firmly established along many local waterways – as many as nine of them were seen during the annual WAS Prothonotary Paddle event. It seems reasonable to assume that both the improving water quality in our rivers and streams and the warming climate are factors in this species' ongoing colonization. Considered by many to be the holy grail of spring migration, four different **Connecticut Warblers** were found during the third week of May: in Lodi Two (5/16), at Nichols Arboretum (5/18 – 5/21), at Snyder Lake (5/21), and at the DeVine Preserve (5/23). Its former congener, the **Mourning Warbler**, was slightly more widespread, with observations coming in from seven different sites between 5/13 – 5/24.



Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*, Independence Lake, May 13 2023 (Jocelyn Anderson)



Mourning Warbler *Geothlypis philadelphia*, Nichols Arboretum, May 20 2023 (Jocelyn Anderson)

Given the species' rather precipitous decline in much of its breeding range, **Cerulean Warblers** were pleasantly abundant and widespread this spring. Migrants were seen in three locations around Ann Arbor, and likely breeders were present at a dozen plus sites around the Waterloo and Pinckney State Rec Areas throughout May and June, with as many as five singing males noted at several of those. A **Northern Parula** at Eberwhite Woods on 6/30 was likely a (very) early southbound migrant. Based on this spring's records, **Yellow-throated Warblers** may no longer nest in Washtenaw County – only three were reported and all of those were single-day observations. One was along the Saline River at the Maple Rd bridge (5/6), one was at the Sharon Hills Preserve (5/12), and one was found near Whittaker & Liss during May Count (5/13). **Canada Warblers** put on a great show this spring – more than a dozen sites hosted one or two of these gorgeous little birds from 5/11 – 5/31. Their close cousin, the **Wilson's Warbler**, was almost abundant, with as many as four birds (at Dolph Park, on 5/16) at 25 or more locations from 5/7 – 5/28. All in all, a whopping 33 species of *parulids*/wood-warblers were reported this spring!



Cerulean Warbler *Setophaga cerulea*, B2B Trailhead Lyndon, June 10 2023 (Ben Lucking)



Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*, Sharon Mills County Park, June 26 2023 (Maggie Jewett)

Field Trip Calendar

Annual WAS Picnic & the Coveted Wingnut Award Ceremony

Sunday August 20, 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Join Washtenaw Audubon Society members and friends for the Washtenaw Audubon Annual Picnic. Bring a dish to share and drinks for yourself. You can also use the grill onsite. We don't have electricity, but we do have our own picnic shelter for the whole group! Nearby, there are restrooms and the Huron River to cool off. We'll present the Wingnut Award to the member who saw the most bird species in Washtenaw County in 2022. We'll have a chance to talk about all the things we've been doing on behalf of our community in the past year. Everyone is welcome, so please join us!!

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

Directions: Meet at Dexter-Huron Metropark, Shelter B - Dexter-Huron Metropark: 6535 Huron River Dr, Dexter, MI 48130

Swift Nights Out

Friday August 18 – Sunday August 20, 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Washtenaw Audubon Society and the City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation invite you to join us for our 8th Annual Ann Arbor-Washtenaw County Chimney Swift count. Watching Chimney Swifts enter their roosts at dusk is a spectacular sight (video and more information here). Volunteers will choose a known Chimney Swift roosting location and stake it out before dusk, counting the Swifts as they enter the chimney, as darkness falls. You can sign up for one night/one location at a time or count each night of the weekend. Please see our website for more information and to sign up.

Moth Night at County Farm Park

Friday August 25, 8:30 pm - 11:00 pm

We are having another moth party! Join us at County Farm Park for our August installment. Just as the species observed change throughout the night, so too do we see new species as we move through the calendar. It will be fun to see what we see at a new location and a month later. Once again, Susan Kielb and Heidi Trudell will guide us through the process of attracting, identifying, and enjoying these amazing creatures. Suggestions for Attendees:

A headlamp or flashlight would be nice to have.

Ninja night with moths! Wearing black is the best way to keep moths on the sheet and not your shirt.

It might be nice to bring a camp chair if you would like to sit.

Directions: Meet at the County Farm Park Pavilion at the entrance off Medford Road

Restoration Workday at Searles Nature Preserve

Saturday August 26, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Did you know Washtenaw Audubon owns a nature preserve? We do! Located just a mile south of Rolling Hills County Park, Searles Nature Preserve is a 50-acre natural area that hosts the headwaters of Stony Creek. Join us as we work to remove woody invasive species and create habitat for native plants and insects that support the birds we all love.

Tools and know how will be provided. Please bring leather work gloves, wear long pants, tall socks, and closed-toe shoes or boots.

Directions: Meet at the entrance to the preserve on Bolla Road between Crane and Stony Creek Roads

Recurring: Thursday Fall Migration Walks at Nichols Arboretum

Thursday August 31, 8:00 am – 10:30 am

Join us Thursday mornings through October at Nichols Arboretum as we search for fall migrants. These walks are a great opportunity to join with other birders of all skill levels. In addition to the birds, the Arb's trees and other flora offer delights of their own.

Directions: Meet at the east end of the arboretum at the Dow Prairie entrance. From Geddes Ave., turn north onto Riverview Dr. and stay right until it terminates at Riverview Ct. cul-de-sac.

BIPOC Bird Walk at Nichols Arboretum

Monday September 4, 9:30 am

We invite all people from the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community and our white allies to join us on this walk to look for fall migrants around the park. All ages and skill levels are invited. We will have extra binoculars if you do not have any.

Directions: Meet at the east end of the arboretum near the Dow Prairie entrance. This is located at the end of Riverview Drive.

Leader: Victor Chen

Oakland Audubon's Nuthatch Open

Saturday September 9, 12:00 am – 4:00 pm

Some of us Washtenaw folks love participating in this annual competitive birding event from Oakland Audubon. Find as many species as possible anywhere in Oakland County until 4:00 PM and then meet later ([location TBD](#)) for awards presentations and a cookout.

Checklists need to be submitted by 4:00 PM or a species will be deducted for every minute late. Teams consist of 2 to 4 members, and all members must see or hear the species for it to be listed. Youth teams must be at least 50% youth (under 18 years of age) to be eligible. Check the [Oakland Audubon](#) website for the entry form and more details.

Weekend Walk for Birds at Matthaei Botanical Gardens

Sunday September 10, 8:00 - 10:30 am

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

Leader: Matthew Spoor

NAP Fall Shorebird Walk at Mary Beth Doyle Park

Sunday September 10, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation event: The mitigation wetland at Mary Beth Doyle is home to breeding shorebirds, Killdeer and Spotted Sandpipers, and migrating shorebirds like Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers and more, and this is prime migration time. Join NAP’s ornithologist, Juliet Berger, and other enthusiastic bird watchers for a tour of this bird-rich nature area. The paths around the wetlands are wheelchair accessible, but not the wooded area.

We’ll search the ponds for these species, and others, like the secretive Black-crowned Night-Herons that we believe nest nearby. If we have time, we’ll search the woods and trails for migrating Warblers and other songbirds. [Register here.](#)

Weekend Walk for Birds at Matthaei Botanical Gardens

Sunday September 10, 8:00 - 10:30 am

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

The Detroit River Hawk Watch – Lake Erie Metropark

Saturday September 16, 10:00 - 1:00 pm

A standardized monitoring program – the [Detroit River Hawk Watch](#) – is conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR), and its friends group, the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA), at the Lake Erie Metropark in Gibraltar, MI. Join us and witness spectacular flights of Broad-winged Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Golden Eagles, and potentially more! Join us as we search for and learn to identify migrating raptors in flight. Hawk watching is a largely stationary event so bring a comfy chair, dress for the weather, and bring something to eat and drink.

Directions: Upon entering Lake Erie Metropark, follow the signs to the boat launch ([map](#)). A metropark pass per vehicle is required for entry. [Pass information here.](#) Those interested in carpooling, we will meet at the Plymouth Road Park and Ride ([map](#)) for a 9:00 am departure.

Fall Foray for Mushrooms

Saturday September 23, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Join local mushroom aficionados for a fun fall fungal foray. We will gather and explore the woods to see what we can find. Following the foray, we will come together for lunch and mushroom identification. Here is an [iNaturalist view of mushrooms](#) reported there for you to explore. We had so much fun last year. Please join us! We may be walking off trail through the woods so dress appropriately. Knowledge and knowhow will be provided. Bring lunch, a basket for carrying your collection, and a knife for harvesting. A pocket knife will work fine. Leader: Jim Buschman

Directions: Enter Hudson Mills Metropark, turn right immediately after the ticket booth, and proceed straight to the end of the parking lot. ([map](#))

Restoration Workday at Searles Nature Preserve

Saturday September 30, 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Did you know Washtenaw Audubon owns a nature preserve? We do! Located just a mile south of Rolling Hills County Park, Searles Nature Preserve is a 50-acre natural area that hosts the headwaters of Stony Creek. Join us as we work to remove woody invasive species and create habitat for native plants and insects that support the birds we all love.

Tools and know how will be provided. Please bring leather work gloves, wear long pants, tall socks, and closed-toe shoes or boots.

Directions: Meet at the entrance to the preserve on Bolla Road between Crane and Stony Creek Roads

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 has resumed in-person programs, although some of them will also be viewable on Zoom as hybrid programs, as well. Please check the website or Facebook before you come to Matthaei Botanical Gardens for a program, as occasionally a program will be moved from in-person to Zoom only, for various reasons.

September 20, 7:30 p.m.

Birding the Deserts of Rajasthan

Join Amurthur Ramamurthy for an interesting program on the colorful desert birds of India, including the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard. Ram is a native of India and an avid birder and photographer.

This is a hybrid event and will be offered in person and via Zoom.

<https://umich.zoom.us/j/99433486554?pwd=aVY1eE1mQ1h0aGJNTTI4RmJOYXA5OT09>

Meeting ID: 994 3348 6554

Passcode: 572061

Or dial-in: 312-626-6799

*** NOTE: The Name Change meeting and vote has been changed to take place at our October 18th program. See details below and stay tuned for more information. ***

October 18, 7:30 p.m.

Special Member Meeting to Vote on Changing our Name

Save the date for this important program where we'll learn more about the controversy surrounding Audubon's actions during his lifetime, and the movement to remove Audubon from the name of many of our sister birding organizations. We will vote on whether to remove the Audubon name at this meeting and decide on a new name at a later date. We want to hear from as many members as possible and are working on details to do this as effectively and inclusively as possible. Details on the process and expectations will be shared with members in the coming weeks via email, our Facebook page, and posted to the events details on our website.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

P.O. Box 130923

Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923