



# EARTHSTAR

NEWSLETTER OF MACOMB AUDUBON

[www.macombaudubon.net](http://www.macombaudubon.net)

Vol. 51, No. 3 | May-Jun, 2024

## Programs

*Our free monthly programs are held the first Monday of the month at the Sterling Heights Nature Center, 42700 Utica Road (unless otherwise noted).*

**Mon., May 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.**

**Isle Royale**

**Speaker: Erin Parker**

Isle Royale is Michigan's only national park, and actually includes a string of islands situated off Michigan's Lake Superior. With no cars and widespread remote wilderness, it's a rare gem of relatively untouched natural land. Some of the mammal species there include wolves, snowshoe hare, and moose. Of course, many bird species also inhabit or visit the islands. Our very own Erin Parker, local Interpretive Services Supervisor with the metroparks, has been going to Isle Royale for over two decades and knows her stuff about it! Come watch her presentation and get inspired by Michigan's natural wonders.

**Mon., Jun. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 p.m.**

**Nature Walk / Ice cream Social**



*Spring Blooms, by Andrea Rose*

June's meeting will include a short walk along the path at the Sterling Heights Nature Center, watching for birds, interesting plant life, and whatever else catches our sights! Then we'll enjoy ice cream, courtesy of Macomb Audubon Society (no need to bring any utensils). Meet anywhere between 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to join. Follow us on [Facebook](#) if you aren't already, and check our [website](#) to stay connected.

After this June meeting, our monthly programs will be on hold until September. Continue reading and mark your calendars for all of our upcoming field trips!

---

## **Field Trips**

### **Magee Marsh Wildlife Refuge**

**Fri. to Sun., May 3-5<sup>th</sup>**  
**Coordinator: Colleen Traylor**

Join us at Magee Marsh in Ohio, a world-renowned place for an amazing migrating warbler experience. Whether you're an experienced birder or not, there will be many knowledgeable people present and willing to report rarities and help with tough identifications. You never know what amazing birds might show up.

Pre-registration was encouraged during our January-February issue, but if you missed that deadline, still contact Colleen for details on lodging availability. You may need to find alternative lodging, but you're welcome to join regardless! Contact Colleen for these details and RSVP at (248) 627-6872 or by email at [grandmothernature2@gmail.com](mailto:grandmothernature2@gmail.com).

## **Lake St. Clair Metropark Big Day Count**

**Sat., May 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 a.m.**  
**Coordinator: Erin Parker**

Lake St. Clair Metropark is looking for volunteers for its annual big day count. This yearly count demonstrates the importance of the vital habitats in the park for migrating birds, and provides an opportunity for us to see a variety of beautiful spring migrants. Birders of all levels are needed to help.

Call Erin Parker at (586) 463-4332 to pre-register. Meet at the Nature Center at 7:00 a.m. Coffee and snacks will be provided. Event ends at noon. You may also wish to bring lunch.

## **Tomlinson Arboretum**

**Wed., May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Leader: Barb Baldinger**

Tomlinson Arboretum is a 24-acre park with hundreds of native trees, wildflowers, shrubs, a wildflower prairie, a pollinator garden, and a rain garden, which are all maintained by volunteers. With its creek and surrounding woods, many species of birds, including migrating warblers, are attracted to this site. There is also a variety of nesting birds, including Mallard, Blue Jay, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, House Finch, Song Sparrow, Baltimore

Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle.

Meet at the cul-de-sac parking area at the end of 18 Mile Rd., 0.6 miles east of Garfield Rd. Contact Barb Baldinger by email at [bbwren@yahoo.com](mailto:bbwren@yahoo.com) to RSVP or obtain additional information.

## Spring Campout at Tawas

**Fri. to Sun., May 17-19<sup>th</sup>**

**Coordinator: Colleen Traylor**



*Merganser with Young, by Andrea Rose*

Join us for our annual and incredibly fun weekend at Tawas State Park and environs, including Tuttle Marsh, surrounding grasslands, and riparian habitats along the Au Sable and Rifle Rivers. The area is one of the best places in Michigan to view migrating birds, including warblers, grassland birds, waterfowl, marsh birds, and shorebirds. In addition, unexpected rarities can show up.

Contact Colleen at (248) 627-6872 or email [grandmothenature2@gmail.com](mailto:grandmothenature2@gmail.com) to sign up

and obtain details on lodging and meeting places.

## Welcome Warblers Bird Sit at Farmstead Park

**Fri., May 24<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 a.m.**

**Leaders: Joanna Pease & Brenda Suchenek**

Join us at Farmstead Park, which is a great place for seeing migrating birds. If you are interested in birding but have limited mobility, we would love to have you join us. The group will be sitting (please provide your own chair) just a short distance from the parking area. You could even stay in your car, but we will be birding together and helping each other find and identify birds. There is a paved trail nearby for those who would like to do a short walk with Joanna. Pack your binoculars and a chair to join Brenda and Joanna on this May morning.

Weather hotline is (586) 446-2711, so if there is inclement weather, please call this number first before coming out. Farmstead Park is located at 12160 Clinton River Rd., Sterling Heights, 48313.

## Stony Creek Metropark

Sun., June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8:30 a.m.

### **Leader: Joanna Pease**

In early June, there are still migrating warblers and breeding birds setting up their territories. Stony Creek has an abundance of both, so join us at the Southdale A parking lot to look for as many species as we can find in the woods, the meadows, and on the lake. Trip should end by noon. Entrance fee or Metroparks sticker required.

RSVP to Joanna by text at (313) 720-9475 or by email at [centhymeme@aol.com](mailto:centhymeme@aol.com)

---

## Contributions

These individuals have recently contributed to Macomb Audubon:

### Contributor Level

Tom Heatley

Thank you for your generous support!

---

## About Us

Macomb Audubon is a subchapter of Michigan Audubon. Programs are held the first Monday of most months at **Sterling Heights Nature Center**. Our programs foster community and friendship and provide

education for all ages. Macomb Audubon events are open to the public.

Macomb Audubon is a non-profit organization with a mission to:

- Promote interest in the world of nature and to aid in the conservation of natural resources.
- Provide an outlet for nature activities via field trips.
- Provide an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and experience through lectures, films, discussions, and newsletters.
- Aid organizations that provide people of all ages with opportunities to experience these above given objectives.

**To join, complete the form included on the inside back cover and bring it to our next meeting or follow the instructions on where to send it.**

The Earthstar newsletter is published bi-monthly (January, March, July, September, and November). **If you wish to submit content to be included in the Earthstar, please send by the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month before the next edition,** to: Andrea Rose at [littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com](mailto:littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com)

Members may receive this newsletter by mail, electronically, or both, though we encourage electronic to save paper! Finally, a friendly reminder to stay current with your dues, as it helps support our group.

# President's Letter



Spring has sprung. I can certainly tell by the yellow Trout Lilies blooming in the yard! So many birds have returned! Common Loon and Golden-crowned Kinglet are passing through, and Tree Swallow, Field Sparrow, and, most recently for me, Chipping Sparrow, are here for the summer. This year, I'm trying to expand my native plantings. I'm putting many of the seeds through cold and warm stratification so they will be better prepared to sprout as I get them in the ground. The species I'm trying this year include: Fringed Gentian, Cardinal Flower, Wood Lily, and Great Blue Lobelia. Besides my hopes of seeing them bloom in the yard, I hope to also encourage visits from hummingbirds and other pollinators with these flowers. I'll be sure to follow up with photos of my progress. As for another exciting sign of spring, I've begun seeing the first butterflies of the season, though not closely enough to get the details of which species I'm seeing (or I'm just not that well versed yet). Whether it's because the butterfly doesn't stop long enough to be identified or because *I* don't stop long enough, either way, it's nice to see they're back. It builds excitement for the return of monarchs from the South on their migration. As all this happens, I am nearing the end of a book I've been trying to finish, [Bicycling with Butterflies](#) by Sara Dykman. When I finish, I'd love to pass it along to others to enjoy as much as I have. Let's connect if you're interested.



Besides migration and native plantings, it's nice to see nesting underway. For those that made it out to Owl Fest at Lake St. Clair Metropark, perhaps you saw the owls occupying the bucket nest. The latest nesting pair have laid eggs! While they may not be viable this season, next year, the owls will be used to their surroundings and even more likely to be successful (fingers crossed). Around town, other birds are nesting too. I am hoping for success at the GM Tech Center in Warren. Besides the Peregrine Falcon with four eggs, there is also a Red-tailed Hawk that seems to be sitting on eggs at a recently discovered nest (found during the survey described below). Also, the Tree Swallows I've seen return should be pairing up to use bird boxes that are ready for them. I can see why people dedicate themselves to assist birds in this way, as it is so rewarding to lend a hand. We can help provide the shelter they need, along with ensuring some of the other survival elements as well.

Speaking of success, fifteen of our Audubon friends surveyed the Tech Center this past Easter Monday. We set a one-hour record for the survey with 30 species. Our total for the day tied last year's 37 species, and there were 563 individuals when accounting for all the day's species high counts. That is a record for the site in a day! Thanks to all those who helped with the count. We found species you might see in your yard such as Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Song Sparrow, and Common Grackle, along with others seldom seen in Warren, like Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, and Horned Lark.



I wish everyone a rewarding spring migration and I look forward to seeing you at the meeting, on the field trips, and elsewhere this spring and summer.

Happy Birding! -Paul Messing, Macomb Audubon President

*(Warren Peregrine, Wilma, and Northern Flicker, by Paul Messing)*

# Editor's Note



Hello again, bird nerds! It's my favorite time of year... How about you? I love the renewal, the birding, the blooms, and even the rain. In keeping with Paul's update with his hopes for the spring and summer, I'll give you mine. Like Paul, I hope to add more native plants to my garden this year. It's always amazing to see that the more you add, the more varieties of butterflies, moths, bees, and birds you see. I hope more people add native plants and flowers to their yards as well, moving away from sterile, over-mowed lawns to something more natural and inviting for the ecosystem. Speaking of the ecosystem, I also plan to continue my very small-time butterfly raising operation. I plant lots of dill and parsley to attract Black Swallowtails, and have some pretty prolific patches of milkweed as well, to attract Monarchs. I try to help at least a handful of both species every year, bringing caterpillars or eggs into an enclosure, feeding them their native plants, and housing them until they're ready to be released and fly free. Of course, my spring and summer goals must include birding as well! I've been away on a long road trip to the Southwest recently, so I have a few regularly occurring species to catch up on. In just the last few days, however, I've gotten a big boost of FOYs, or "first of the years", including: Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Merlin, Bonaparte's Gull, Willet, Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern, Purple Martin, Wood Duck, Great Egret, Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, Baltimore Oriole, Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, House Wren, and Chimney Swift.

Speaking of my road trip, I had an amazing time birding through Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. I picked up 20 new species: Hutton's Vireo, Black-crested Titmouse, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Harris's Hawk, Cave Swallow, Rock Wren, Pyrrhuloxia, Zone-tailed Hawk, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Yellow-eyed Junco, Berylline Hummingbird, Green Kingfisher, Gilded Flicker, Curve-billed Thrasher, Costa's Hummingbird, Lucy's Warbler, California Condor (the most epic!), Clark's Nutcracker, and American Dipper. Speaking on just a few of these, I loved the Pyrrhuloxia, that



stunning southwestern cousin to our Northern Cardinal, with its gray and red coloring and its ultra chunky beak. The Berylline Hummingbird was the rarest of the hummers I saw, but admittedly not the most extravagantly colored (that award probably goes to the Broad-billed, which I've seen before, but they are stunning). My Green Kingfisher sighting was just a super quick flyby, but wow, what a beauty! It's like a smaller version of our Belted, but with the color of my birthstone, a shining emerald green. The condors got me most excited, as seeing them was a major life goal. Not too long ago, they almost went extinct. It felt profound seeing them flying through the Grand Canyon, an adult and a juvenile, tag numbers E3 and Z1, respectively. If you go to [condorspotter.com](http://condorspotter.com), you can look up these tags and see how old each bird is, how many offspring it has, where it was born, and more. Finally, the American Dipper was one of those serendipitous sightings where knowing a bird's preferred habitat helps a lot with finding it! We were hiking down the Big Arsenic Springs trail in Wild Rivers, north of Taos, New Mexico, and came upon a section of the Rio Grande with lots of large, wet boulders along the edges, and small rapids. I said out loud, "This would be the perfect place for an American Dipper," even though I'd never seen one before. Sure enough, minutes later, I heard an unfamiliar call and saw a bird flapping in, only to land on a rock and reveal itself as a dipper! What a unique bird, the only aquatic songbird in North America. Nature is amazing. Take some time to enjoy it this season.

Happy Birding! -Andrea Rose, Earthstar Editor and ["Little Bird Nerd"](#)

*(Pyrrhuloxia by Andrea Rose)*

## Partners, Contacts, Support

### Organizations We Support:

Burgess Shadbush Nature Center,  
Lake St. Clair Metropark Nature Center,  
Michigan Nature Association,  
Seven Ponds Nature Center,  
Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy,  
Sterling Heights Nature Center,  
Stony Creek Nature Center,  
Tomlinson Arboretum,  
Wildlife Recovery Association

Visit your local backyard bird feeding experts at Wild Birds Unlimited in Macomb or Grosse Pte. Woods

Contact Macomb Audubon at: [macombaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:macombaudubon@gmail.com) with questions, suggestions, or to join our mailing list.

### Board Members & Committee Chairs

President: Paul Messing - [macombaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:macombaudubon@gmail.com)  
1<sup>st</sup> VP (Programs): Mike Champine - [mikechampine02@gmail.com](mailto:mikechampine02@gmail.com)  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP (Membership): Beverlee Babcock - [beverleebabcock4@gmail.com](mailto:beverleebabcock4@gmail.com)  
3<sup>rd</sup> VPs (Field Trips): Joanna Pease & Wade Leonard - [centhymeme@aol.com](mailto:centhymeme@aol.com) & [wadeleonard1922@att.net](mailto:wadeleonard1922@att.net)  
Recording Secretary: Laura Barbour - [denilaur@sbcglobal.net](mailto:denilaur@sbcglobal.net)  
Corresponding Secretary: **Vacant**  
Treasurer: Brandy Ciaciuch - [mamachach38@gmail.com](mailto:mamachach38@gmail.com)  
Facebook Rep: Barbara Baldinger - [bbwren@yahoo.com](mailto:bbwren@yahoo.com)

### Committees

Car Pool Coordinator: **Vacant**  
Christmas Bird Count: Brian McGee - [brianmcgee@wowway.com](mailto:brianmcgee@wowway.com)  
Conservation/Legislation: Beth Noren - [maxgoodbird@gmail.com](mailto:maxgoodbird@gmail.com)  
Historian: **Vacant**  
Hospitality (Refreshments): Michael Ciaciuch  
Hospitality (Door Prizes): Denis & Laura Barbour  
Newsletter Editor: Andrea Rose - [littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com](mailto:littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com)  
Michigan Audubon Rep: **Vacant**  
Newsletter Production, Mailing: Denis & Laura Barbour  
Publicity Chairperson: Holly Vaughn Joswick  
Seven Ponds Representative: Paul Messing  
Web Editor: Paul Messing  
Volunteer Coordinator: **Vacant**

### Macomb Audubon Society Dues

Please make checks payable to **Macomb Audubon Society** and send to:

Beverlee Babcock, Macomb Audubon Membership, 50229 Pepper Tree Dr., Macomb, MI, 48044

Your name and the names of family members (please print)

Family membership applies to family members living at the same address

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ (check one) \_\_\_\_\_ Family membership \$20.00  
Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ Individual membership \$15.00  
Amount of donation over membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Student membership \$10.00  
*Contributor - up to \$49.99 Supporter - \$50-\$99 Donor - \$100 and up* \_\_\_\_\_ Senior (60+) single membership \$12.00  
\_\_\_\_\_ Senior couple membership \$15.00

Macomb Audubon shares its membership list with members. Check if you want your phone number **left off** the list \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Check here to receive the Earthstar by email \_\_\_\_\_ hard copy \_\_\_\_\_ both versions \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if a Michigan Audubon member \_\_\_\_\_ Check here if a National Audubon member \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) are interested in becoming a Macomb Audubon volunteer. Please contact me \_\_\_\_\_

*Macomb Audubon Society*

C/O 1156 Avon Manor Rd.

Rochester Hills Mi. 48307-5415

<http://www.macombaudubon.org>

