

EARTHSTAR

NEWSLETTER OF MACOMB AUDUBON

www.macombaudubon.net

Vol. 51, No. 6 | Nov - Dec, 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., Nov. 4th, 7:00 p.m.

Be Where You're At –

The importance & steps to creating a native plant garden in Macomb



Macomb Audubon's next free monthly program features Beth Noren, with the topic of native plant gardening. Beth is a Macomb

Audubon member, avid birder, and native plant ambassador. In recent years, she's has taken up the project of overhauling her property from standard lawn to native plant sanctuary, a practice which invites essential pollinators (insects and birds alike). Beth was inspired to begin this project due to her frustration with the overdevelopment of land and the destruction of habitat in Macomb County, a frustration that sadly extends to not just our county but our country and our world. Now Beth is equipped to help educate others to improve their own little patch of the world.

Beth has a warm and engaging way about her and is passionate on this topic. Her talk will touch on the value of and steps toward creating a native plant garden on your property. If you're interested in learning more, please join us (and bring a friend)! Attending this program will be time well spent.

Meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. with social hour at 6:30 p.m. at the Sterling Heights Nature

Center building. Follow us on [Facebook](#) for further updates.

Mon., Dec. 2nd, 6:30 p.m.

Photo Share & Pizza Party



If you've been a Macomb Audubon member for some time, you know our December meeting is a much-enjoyed annual event. If you're new here, please join the tradition as we celebrate another year of life, birding, and friendship at our year-end meeting. The agenda for the night includes a pizza party and a photo sharing session.

Photo sharing - Members can bring up to 20 of their favorite bird or nature photos they've taken this year to share with the group. If you'd like to share any photos, send them in advance to Paul Messing at macombaudubon@gmail.com or share via Google drive or social media. You may also bring them in person via a USB/flash drive. You don't have to be a professional

photographer or anything close to it in order to share your pics. This is just about seeing the natural world through the eyes of others and sharing fun stories along the way (if you so choose).

Pizza party - For the pizza party, please RSVP to the aforementioned email so Paul can estimate how much pizza to order. Plasticware will be available, though you're invited to bring your own reusable plates and utensils if possible. Bring a beverage for yourself or to share.

Other Bird News

Nelson Park Invasive

Plant Clean-up

Tue., Nov. 12th, 9:00 a.m – 12:00 p.m.

Join the Lake St. Clair Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (LSC CISMA) staff and the City of Sterling Heights to tackle woody invasives at James C. Nelson Park. This event is a perfect tie-in to Beth's talk on native plants, as removing invasives can be just as important. As advertised by LSC CISMA, this event will be held on Tuesday, November 12th, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Snacks, water, and gloves will be provided. While equipment may be provided, feel free

to bring your own set of loppers or cutters. Visit [this link](#) to sign up. If under 18, must attend with a parent. Note, the sign up link offers options to volunteer for as little as one hour if you don't want to stay the whole time.

Christmas Bird Count

Sat., Dec. 14th

Coordinator: Brian McGee



Northern Saw-whet Owl, by Andrea Rose

For over a century, National Audubon has collected data on early winter bird populations from volunteers throughout the country, making this its 124th year. On Saturday, December 14th, Macomb Audubon will host its own 49th Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Whether or not you've done a CBC before, please think about volunteering to count the birds in our area. Many of our

members look forward to this special occasion to bird with friends then enjoy a hot soup/chili supper at the end of the day, followed by a group tally of all the birds counted.

Sign-up sheets will be available at upcoming membership meetings (see page 1 and 2 for details on these meetings). After signing up, you will be assigned to an area which you'll cover on the day of the count, with up to a few other birders. Area leaders will receive their information packets at the December membership meeting. These packets include maps of your assigned area, signs to put in your car windows, and forms upon which to tally the birds. On the day of the event, consider splitting the cost of gas with the other members of your group. If you wish to participate and are unable to attend the meetings to sign up and/or get your packet, please contact Brian McGee at brianmcgee@wowway.com to let him know.

CBC birding typically begins at or before dawn (before if you go out looking for owls) and continues until dusk. The tally supper is held at 5:00 p.m. in the Stony Creek Metropark Nature Center building. Participants may bring shareable items such as drinks, desserts, soups, chilis, or snacks to share. Please bring your own bowl and spoon.

Contributions

These individuals have recently contributed to Macomb Audubon:

Contributor Level

Marilyn Grosteffon
Pierre Hendricks

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 12th of the month before the next edition,** to: Andrea Rose at littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com

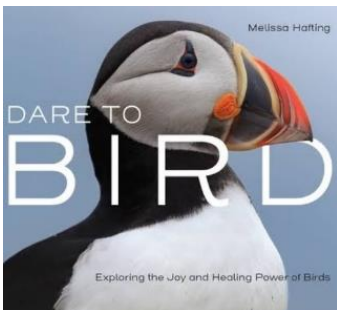
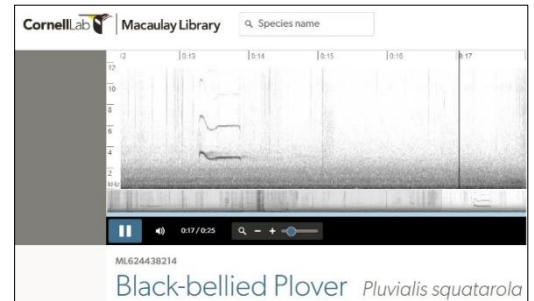
Members may receive this newsletter by mail, electronically, or both, though we encourage electronic to save paper! Finally, a friendly reminder to stay current with your dues, as it helps support our group.

President's Letter



With fall migration wrapping up, I hope everyone gets to enjoy the last sightings of birds still moving south (that is if you aren't chasing them south yourself)! Today I had nice looks at a Palm Warbler, perhaps my last of the season. It was bopping its tail up and down in the Honey Locust tree along a reflecting pool at work. It was such a nice sight and sound, noticing something a bit unusual flitting through the trees. It's a pleasure to see such random occurrences so often when I'm out walking and enjoying the world around me. Would we keep this up if the same birds were out there every day? Some of us would need to find another hobby! We each have a bit of variation or tolerance for certain aspects of birding. I tend to be content with repeating the same geographic area on a regular basis, while others seem to be off on a different international trip every month or so. That's the nice thing about birding; there are so many ways to do it. Some of us find the need to list, like me. Others choose to document in pictures.

I've been dabbling in recording bird calls. Half the time, I'm kicking myself for missed learning opportunities. Luckily, on one of my work outings, I was both recording and trying to photograph when a Black-bellied Plover appeared. Although I couldn't find a decent photo in the bunch, I recorded the call as it flew to and fro. One way to publish a sound recording is to document it as a spectrograph, a representation of the frequency and volume of the recording through time. A few different apps will do this for you, including eBird, where you can see can your spectrograph soon after uploading. Other tools you may have heard about do this as well, including Merlin and BirdNet. What I like about BirdNet is that it will show a percentage match for the overall recording against species in the database. When I do this, I see how closely my recording matches a Black-bellied Plover, according to the data that's been loaded into the AI. On this [website](#), you can play through a recording and see the probability of a match. This can be especially useful when multiple birds are singing in your recording. If you haven't uploaded or used these apps to evaluate audio files, I hope you get a chance to look at bird sounds through eBird, Merlin, or BirdNet.



As winter approaches, what that means to me is A, FeederWatch is beginning soon and B, so is the Christmas Bird Count. I missed participating in FeederWatch last year. It seems I just couldn't commit to the time two days a week to watch the feeders. That's no excuse, though, since the program is flexible to whatever time you can commit. You can even submit just one sighting for the season, but I'm sure I can do more than that. I've already set up the information about natural features in my yard, for example the number of evergreen trees, fruit-bearing trees, and other natural areas, as well as the information about my feeders. To learn more about this Cornell Lab of Ornithology Citizen Science project, [click here](#). If you feed birds, whether through this project or as a casual feeder, consider connecting with a Christmas Bird Count group to submit information to that count. Your feeders would need to be within the [count circle](#), but with it being about 170 square miles of Macomb County, you probably have a good chance of being in the area. If all that isn't relaxing enough for you, I want to share a book I checked out from the library. It's called *Dare to Bird*, by Melissa Hafting. It contains wonderful bird photos, diary/anecdotal accounts of birding in the life of one individual, and how birding helped her deal with various events in her life. I hope you get a chance to find it at your local library or bookstore.

Happy Birding!

Paul Messing, Macomb Audubon President

Editor's Note



Hello, bird nerds. Are you as astonished as I am that the year is almost over? Some events from earlier in the year feel like lifetimes ago, but others, mere seconds. Time is weird that way, relative, sometimes sticky, other times slippery fast. However it passes, I'm always glad when I get to spend some of it birding. The amount of time I do so may fluctuate, but it's an overall constant and has been for about 10 years now. As someone with many interests and curiosities, it says a lot that birding remains at the forefront in my life, integral to who I am at this point.

Since last checking in, my birding has slowed down a bit, though I know there are still plenty of opportunities for good sightings. For people who haven't done much birding, winter might seem like a slow time, but it's actually quite productive. Of course, by this point, the vast array of spring migrants like flashy warblers, colorful hummingbirds, and many other songbirds have moved along for the season, but others will trickle in in their place. We'll start to witness the return of regular species like Dark-eyed Juncos and American Tree Sparrows, waterfowl such as scoters and mergansers, elusive Northern Shrikes, regal Rough-legged Hawks, and more. Other species are less predictable but still possible, arriving some winters but not others. These intermittent visitors can include Snowy Owls, Common Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, crossbills, and others. Winter birding has its specific perks too, a big one being the lack of leaf cover which normally obstructs the view of birds. Another benefit, in my eyes, is the cold weather, though I know not everyone feels the same. Still, I challenge you to spend more time outside this winter if you can. With the right gear (especially on your head, hands, and feet), the cold becomes a refreshing and enlivening thing. Finally, winter brings the Christmas Bird Count (see page 2), which many birders look forward to each year. If you've never done it, make this year your first! Don't worry about your experience level. Each car group will likely have at least one person who's particularly skilled at birding, while others may play supporting roles. You might be the scribe or tally person. You may be a spotter who sees and counts the birds while someone else takes care of the IDs. As long as you get eyes on the birds and can count, you're good, and you'll definitely gain experience along the way.

If you're seeing this before the November meeting, I encourage you to go see Beth's talk (see page 1) on native plants. Knowing Beth personally, I think she'll be an informative, passionate, and compelling presenter. A number of years ago, I wrote a blog post interviewing Beth as part of my "Behind the Lens" series (which reminds me... I haven't posted a blog post in way too long). Anyway, in this interview, she even mentioned her native planting project back then. You can read it [here](#).

I don't have much else to say this time in the way of birding and nature thoughts, though I will say I just became an aunt for the first time, which is taking up a lot of excitement in my brain. I can't wait to show her the beauty of nature, to teach her about birds, and to experience that wonder through the next generation. I hope you're finding something to smile about today too.

Take care, happy birding, and (though it kills me to say it this early, it'll be here before we know it), so have a wonderful holiday season too!

-Andrea Rose, editor-in-chief

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 with questions, suggestions, or to join our mailing list.

Board Members & Committee Chairs

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1st VP (Programs): Mike Champine - mikechampine02@gmail.com
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3rd VPs (Field Trips): Joanna Pease & Wade Leonard - centhymeme@aol.com & wadeleonard1922@att.net
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Corresponding Secretary: **Vacant**
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Facebook Rep: Barbara Baldinger - bbwren@yahoo.com

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Conservation/Legislation: Beth Noren - maxgoodbird@gmail.com
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Hospitality (Door Prizes): Denis & Laura Barbour
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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

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<http://www.macombaudubon.org>

