



EARTHSTAR

NEWSLETTER OF MACOMB AUDUBON

www.macombaudubon.net

Vol. 51, No. 5 | Sep - Oct, 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, as with September).

Mon., Sep. 9th, 7:00 p.m.

**Bonfire at Lake St. Clair
Metropark Nature Center**



As we near the end of our summer recess, we look forward to Macomb Audubon's annual September bonfire at the Lake St. Clair Metropark Nature Center. Bring a chair or

blanket, some binoculars if you like, and, optionally, a snack for yourself or something to pass around. We'll enjoy an evening by the fire, sharing stories of our summers and what we've experienced in nature.

In case of inclement weather, we may move inside the nature center building. If you've never been to one of our gatherings, this is a great one to get started and meet some like-minded folk. All are welcome.

Mon., Oct. 7th, 7:00 p.m.

**Waterfowl Rehabilitation with
Matt Lyson**

If you've spent time birding around Macomb County, you've likely encountered an injured duck, goose, or swan along the way. Unfortunately, finding the proper help for these animals can be difficult. Fortunately, though, certified rehabbers like Matt Lyson, owner of Michigan Duck Rescue and Sanctuary in Salem Township, provide shelter, food, and love for these birds who need it most. Join us at Sterling

Heights Nature Center in October for a free presentation by Matt. He'll walk us through the basics of waterfowl rehabilitation, which, for Matt, is truly a labor of love.

The feathered residents at Matt's sanctuary include both wild and domestic waterfowl. Come learn something you didn't know before. We hope you'll leave with new information regarding waterfowl rehabbing and conservation practices. Who knows, you might even come away with a new calling!



Mallards, by Paul Messing

Field Trips

Shiawassee NWR

Wed., Sep. 11th, 9:00 a.m.

Leaders: Joanna Pease & Wade Leonard

Shiawassee National Wildlife Reserve is known for its fall migrants, including many waterfowl and shorebirds in the wetlands and passerines along the nature trails. It has an excellent

Wildlife Drive Auto Tour with observation platforms and many opportunities to stop. One of the great spectacles there is the presence of American White Pelicans in large groups, staging before they migrate south. Sometimes, rare birds show up as well.

Because it's a bit of a drive to the reserve, we'll meet first at 9:00 a.m., in the northwest part of the parking lot of Dodge Park, 40620 Utica Rd, Sterling Heights. From there, we'll carpool to the refuge. For those who want to drive there on their own, meet at the refuge parking lot at the beginning of the wildlife drive at approximately 11:00 a.m. The refuge parking lot is on 6006-6050 Bishop Road, Saginaw MI, 48601. The coordinates are 43.32526 N, 84.03292 W. Bring a pack lunch, water, a lawn chair, and optics (binoculars, camera, and/or scope). The wildlife drive can take up to three hours depending on the birding conditions, so we will not be back to Dodge Park until around suppertime. RSVP to Joanna by text at (313) 720-9475 or mail at centhymeme@aol.com.



Black-bellied Plover, by Andrea Rose

Freedom Hill County Park

Sat., Sep. 21st, 9:00 a.m.

Leader: Joanna Pease



Seasons shifting, by Andrea Rose

Freedom Hill County Park has a newly completed nature trail which runs along Red Run and includes both dry meadow and wet riparian habitats. It is a trail not often visited by birders, so it will be fun to explore and learn what types of birds use it as a stopover point in fall migration. The trail is about 1.5 miles long and mostly level, so it is easy walking.

Be sure to bring your binoculars and or cameras. The trip should end by 11:00 a.m. RSVP to Joanna by text at (313) 720-9475 or email at centhymeme@aol.com. The address is 15000 Metropolitan Parkway in Sterling Heights.

Kensington Metropark

Wed., Oct. 16th, 10:00 a.m.

Leader: Wade Leonard

Come enjoy the nature trails at Kensington Metropark in Milford, where we'll continue our popular tradition of hand-feeding the birds. Common "takers" include Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, Tufted Titmice, and Downy Woodpeckers. While we're there, we'll also enjoy the views of other birds along the trails.

Bring some bird seed, optics, and hydration and/or a lunch for yourself. We'll meet at the Nature Center parking lot. Park entrance fee or annual sticker required. RSVP to Wade by email at wadeleonard1922@att.net.



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 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



It's hard to believe summer is coming to an end already! For me, this summer has yielded a couple life birds while traveling. On the way to Orlando, while on Merritt Island, I recorded both Florida Scrub-Jay and Swallow-tailed Kite. The kite was certainly more plentiful and widespread. While I saw my first one on the way off the island, I saw many more while traveling the freeways through the state. It started to remind me of how common Red-tailed Hawk is along Michigan freeways. However, the Swallow-tailed Kite was soaring more like a low-altitude Turkey Vulture. I was fortunate to spend about a week and a half in the state, where it was customary in the places I explored to document either ibis or Fish Crow on most every checklist.

After the road trip, it was nice to be back in Michigan. In fact, I couldn't wait another day to check on things at the GM Tech Center in Warren. A not-quite-20-minute survey yielded 15 species, including Osprey, which was still on a nest. Even as I write this today, there is one juvenile in the nest, exercising its wings and looking like it is being urged by its parent to move along already. Referring to a DNR breeding document from a number of years back, late eggs and fledgling range into the fourth week of August in Michigan. It's such a pleasure to document this nest in Warren, which is easily visible from such a high platform nearly every trip I make to and from work.



As far as reading goes, it's been quite a challenge to keep up with the kids. The Sterling Heights Public Library sponsored a reading challenge this summer. I personally read through two Doug Tallamy books, *Nature's Best Hope* and *The Nature of Oaks*, and Kenn Kaufman's *The Birds That Audubon Missed*. Now I'm well into Linda Jo Hunter's *Lonesome for Wilderness*. These books have each been a treasure trove of stories, information, and inspiration. They each cover a facet of exploring, observing, and caring for the natural world that can plunge us into further engagement in this wonderful passion we share. Kaufman is so optimistic in the impact we can all have, especially if we can all align our efforts toward a common goal. Whether to spur your own motivation or to pass along to others, it's uplifting to read about the part we can play in creating what he calls the "Homegrown National Park" in the former book, and about the importance of oaks in the landscape in his later book. Kaufman offers an in-depth look at the era when the modern binomial, two-word genus and species description of North American birds was exploding. It offers a perspective to the great history we call upon with our namesake Audubon legacy.

No matter the viewpoint you bring to the organization, in the field behind your optics or from your couch behind your readers, I look forward to seeing everyone again as we get back together this fall to meet, sharing stories, and be enlightened by the presentations in store for us again this coming season.

Happy Birding!

-Paul Messing, Macomb Audubon President

(Ospreys & Common Checkered Skipper, by Paul Messing)

Editor's Note



Hello again, bird nerds. As fall comes around, I'm reminded of the time of year I first started seriously getting into birding. Unbelievable as it is, it was 10 years ago now. Back in the late summer of 2014, I attended a seminar at Red Oaks Nature Center about eBird and how to use it. That really started to open my eyes to how prevalent a hobby this could be, and how many tools were at my fingertips in order to hone it. Admittedly not the most dedicated eBirder, I tend to neglect to submit a checklist if I'm not recording a milestone type of sighting such as first-of-the-years or life birds. Still, it's pretty cool to look at my eBird stats from the lists I *have* submitted. I have more than a sneaking suspicion that *many* birders are equally interested in lists and stats. Looking at my dashboard, I see I've submitted over 1,500 checklists with over 400 species, including 275 different species in Macomb County alone. I'm sure, back when I started, I didn't think it'd even be possible to see that many species in this county. It's part of the reason I got into birding though, because once I realized there was so much to be discovered, I just had to take part. There was no option for me to remain in the dark. Why keep all that beauty and wonder from ourselves anyways?

Since those early days, my birding knowledge has grown and evolved, from staring for hours on end at field guide pages and websites, trying to discern every little identification detail I could, to having a better grasp on IDs without all those details, to using other clues like habitat, time of year, flight style, and feeding behavior. I take it for granted sometimes that I can look up at some faraway bird, just a moving black speck in the sky, and know what it is within seconds, just based on some clue like how it flies or the proportions and angles of its body. Of course, it's not like that with every bird - hardly! I still have many moments of pouring over field guides and refreshing myself on something I thought I held firmly in my head, only to realize it had faded with time or under real-life conditions. What can I say,



birding is far from easy, and what you see in the field does not always match perfectly with one example on a page. Fall warblers are a great example of this. You can have a great handle on warbler IDs as they pass through in spring migration, only for them to go and lose their bright colors, passing back through as a blurry, watercolor group of blended yellows, whites, and grays. If you're at a stage of birding where this is frustrating, embrace the challenge! Learn in many different ways so something can stick, whether it's talking it out with better birders, doing research online or in your field guide, taking notes and making sketches, studying photographs you've taken, or taking an online quiz. I'm sure I'm late to the party here, but I recently realized there's a whole array of online courses through Cornell's All About Birds website. I got a free code to any one course and chose a shorebird one, which was normally \$124.99! It's been a really cool way to brush up on shorebird IDs, another category of fall birding that can prove difficult. I love how the class not only covers those specific ID characteristics like color, pattern, et cetera, but also adds more abstract and arguably more helpful info like body proportions, feeding styles, and behavioral clues.

I realize not everybody is quite the detail nerd that I and some of my birding friends are, but I hope you at least keep your mind and your eyes open to the beauties of nature, whether painted with the vibrant brush of spring or the muted one of fall.

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

(Fall Nashville Warbler, 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 with questions, suggestions, or to join our mailing list.

Board Members & Committee Chairs

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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
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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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