



THE NUTHATCH

www.oaklandaudubon.org

“Monarchs - Missing From Your Garden?”

Debbie Jackson

Tuesday, June 13, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.

Monarch and other *lepidoptera* (butterflies, skippers & moths) populations have been plummeting for many years. Monarchs can be 'counted' while they are at their winter habitats in Mexico but other species' numbers have decreased as well. What is happening and why are *lepidoptera* so important to bird species? Let's look at the probable reasons and discover what homeowners can do to support birdlife in their yards. Caterpillars of different species eating their natural foods will be displayed.



Follow us on 

“Birds of Prey”

Will Lubrano

Tuesday, September 12, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.

Will Lubrano, from Wildlife Revealed, a non-profit organization dedicated to the education and preservation of wildlife, will discuss the natural history of birds of prey along with their unique traits and natural abilities.



“Japan in Winter: Cranes, Eagles, and More”

Don Burlett

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.

A visit to Japan in winter is an opportunity to see many birds that spend their summers in Siberia. Cranes, eagles, owls, and many other species can be seen while visiting three of Japan's main islands. Culture, food, and the people are also of interest to the visitor. Join Don Burlett for this presentation and get acquainted with this wonderful country during a season different than what most would consider.



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Photos: Banner, G. Cummins and Pixaby. Programs, Debbie Jackson (Monarch Watch), Wildlife Revealed, Don Burlett.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Summer 2023

I recently started thinking about change. To many it is something to fear. Something to avoid. Keep things comfortable. Then, I read a quote from David Taylor-Klaus that said: "Meaningful, lasting change only happens when the pain of the status quo finally outstrips the fear or anticipated pain of the change we seek." In other words, fear of change only holds us back. Then, I read a quote from John F. Kennedy that stated "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future."

So, here we are. Facing change for the organization. We are facing change on two fronts. One involves the name of our organization and the other involves the leadership of the organization. As you may have read, the National Audubon Society (NAS) studied the history of John James Audubon and then considered the possibility of changing the name. In the end, they decided to keep the Audubon name. You can read all about this issue yourself. However, despite NAS's decision, several affiliated chapters around the country have decided to shed the Audubon name. You can also read about this yourself. At this time, we are considering this situation about our own name and will take a thoughtful and inclusive look at the options. You can watch for interaction with our leadership group.

At the same time, the current leadership of the Oakland Audubon Society will be undergoing a significant change in the next 18 months. Several officers on the board have indicated their intention to step down over this period. Our Treasurer will do so this year. Our Secretary has indicated a willingness to step aside if someone is interested in doing that job. Then, next year, all three elected positions (President, Field Trip Officer, and Program Officer) will be changing, as the current officers will be stepping down. We have asked for volunteers and have a couple of people already stepping into the new roles; we are very happy to have volunteers for some soon-to-be-vacant board positions. I'm sure that the transition through these changes will go smoothly and we will move on without too much difficulty. But having this much change all at once can sometimes make folks feel uneasy.

So, I refer to the quotes I shared in this letter and believe that we will only do better when we move forward with the changes we face. Remember, before the current board took those leadership positions, there were changes to include us. We also changed our meeting structure when Covid came along. And we did okay with those changes.

The important part of this whole "change" thing is for everyone to be part of the discussion and the actions we take. It never works well when only a couple of people make all the decisions and take on the work needed to keep us moving forward. And those officers stepping aside will still be around to advise and be part of the organization in the future.

Finally, as we enter the summer months, I hope that everyone continues to bird, work on conservation projects, and support the needs of our world. With climate change and other issues that have arisen, we all need to stay involved in finding solutions and doing the much needed hard work. If we do that, I will be the happiest leader of an Audubon group in the area.

Don Burlett
President

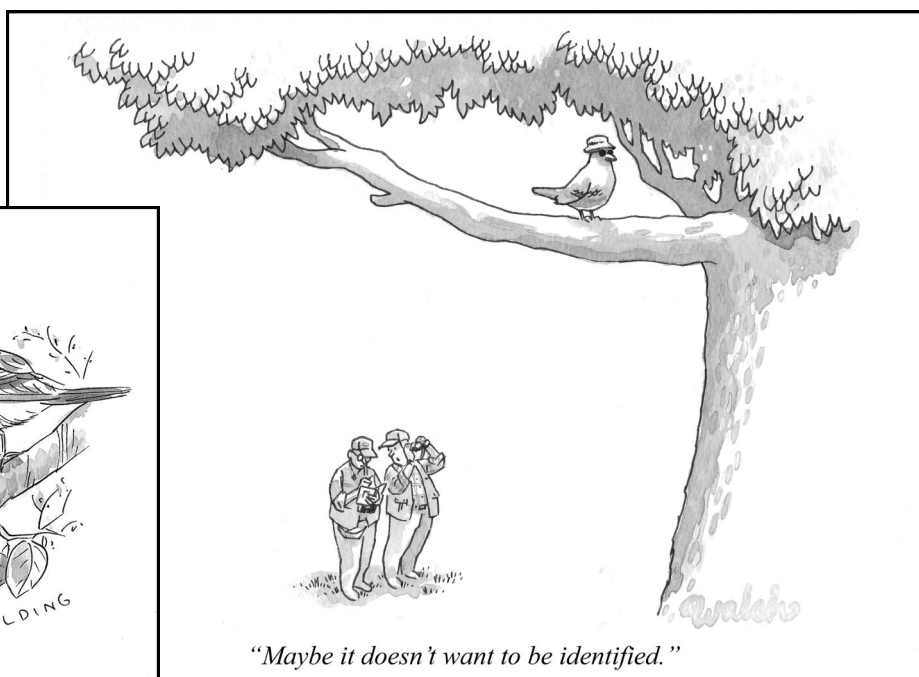
OAS BOARD MEMBERS

Elected Officers

President	Don Burlett	(330) 697-7735	baikaltea13@netzero.net
Secretary	Doris Applebaum	(248) 542-2506	ibis4247@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer	Elaine Ferguson	(248) 470-2212	fergusonelaine6@gmail.com
Membership Officer	Jen Benke	(734) 657-7498	scubadu9900@yahoo.com
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Advocacy Officer	Greg Harris		gbharrisiv@gmail.com



Top: The New Yorker Magazine
Left: <https://www.trevorspaulding.com/>

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Schedule changes and updates will be posted on our website and members will also receive email updates. Owllet trip details are listed on pages 20 - 21.

Pre-Registration is required for most trips — contact trip leader for details.

Check the “Field Trips” page on our website often for current information and more details!

www.oaklandaudubon.org

Date	Event	Trip Leader(s)
June 3, 2023 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Oak Openings (Ohio)	Don Burlett baikalteal13@netzero.net
June 17, 2023 (Saturday) 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM	Rouge Park (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty kad8186@msn.com
July 8, 2023 (Saturday) 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Golden Preserve (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty kad8186@msn.com
July 22, 2023 (Saturday) 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Independence Oaks County Park (Butterfly Field Trip)	Doris Applebaum ibis4247@sbcglobal.net
August 12, 2023 (Saturday) 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Kensington Metropark (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty kad8186@msn.com
August 19, 2023 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Pointe Mouillee State Game Area	Jeff Stacey & Jim Fowler jdstacey@ameritech.net
September 23, 2023 (Saturday) 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Stony Creek Metropark (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty kad8186@msn.com

Save the Date!

12th Annual Nuthatch Open - September 9, 2023

Join us for our annual competitive birding event. Set up a team of 2-4 members and bird anywhere in Oakland County from 12:01 AM until 4:00 PM.

Contact Jeff Stacey at jdstacey@ameritech.net for details.

Register today!!



Field Trip Reports

February 25, 2023 - Lake St. Clair Metropark

Leader: Kyla Niner

In true form to the odd weather of 2023, the week before the Beaudette Park trip was scheduled to happen, we had an unusual warm spell after a major ice storm. Blanche Wicke was kind enough to do a pre-trip scout and reported the ducks had gotten the hint, and by Friday, had left Beaudette behind for colder waters. So at midday Friday, the decision was made to move the trip to Lake St. Clair Metropark, where ducks had been seen reliably all week.

Saturday morning brought treacherous snow-covered roads and a bitter eastern wind, but six of us braved the cold to look for ducks at Lake St. Clair Metropark. Pulling up, it looked like we might be out of luck, but as we studied the waves from the relative wind-block of a dumpster, we managed to find seven duck and one merganser species, including a Long-tailed Duck and several large rafts of Canvasbacks. From there we checked the little bay by the nature area wetlands, but the normally protected area was mostly frozen and getting the brunt of the east wind. Only a few Canada Geese and Mallards were there. Taking refuge once more, this time by the Daysail restrooms, we checked the rafts of Canvasbacks for any other odd ducks, but our count didn't change, unless you were counting the two overly friendly fox squirrels who were hoping for handouts. They left disappointed.

Hoping to thaw out a little, the group returned to the cars and headed to the Boat Launch. This spot was far more sheltered from the wind, and despite a little ice, was another good spot for birds. We added six more species to our list, including Tundra Swans, American Black Ducks, a Red-breasted Merganser, and two sleeping Sandhill Cranes doing their best Canada Geese impressions. Using our scopes brought us a Great Black-backed Gull. Everyone was able to see the bird through a scope and we left the Boat Launch feeling pretty accomplished with a good number of species on our list.



Photos Credits: Kyla Niner

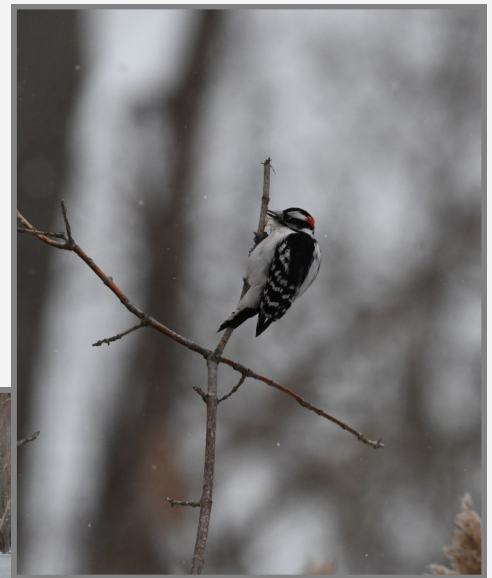


Field Trip Reports (continued)

Not done yet, we regrouped at the nature center and spent some time indoors watching the bird feeders out the window. We were treated to two Fox Sparrows digging away amongst the other birds. We also added Black-capped Chickadees, Red-winged Blackbirds, White-throated Sparrows, Northern Cardinals, House Finches, and made the field trip official with the addition of a White-breasted Nuthatch. After we were warm enough, we took to the trails hoping to spot some owls, as three species had been spotted there in the last month or so. Sadly, we found no owls, but we added another sparrow to our list, a Song Sparrow, and the group also managed to spot a Carolina Wren. We also saw a Downy Woodpecker that was pulling the bark off a twig in the hopes of a snack.

On the walk back to the nature center, a group of four deer came crashing out of the scrubby area by the river. One of the deer decided to try taking a walk across the ice and its front legs went through the ice! Thankfully, it was able to get out safely. We watched as one of the others thought about trying it too, but seemed to realize the ice was much too thin to support the weight of an adult deer and decided to stay on solid ground.

Before we reached the parking lot to split off, we added one last species to our list, a Red-tailed Hawk. With that species, we capped our list for the day at 39. All in all, we had a good trip, and by the time we left, the sun was trying to come out and the bitterness of the morning winds was all but forgotten.



Clockwise: Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*); Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*); Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*), and Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*).

Photo Credits: Kyla Niner

Field Trip Reports (continued)

March 18, 2023 - Lake Erie Metropark

Leader: Mike Mencotti

Eleven hearty and dedicated (maybe a little crazy?) birders descended on Lake Erie Metropark to look for early migrants and waterfowl. The calendar was pushing spring, but the weather was definitely mid-winter, with temperatures in the mid-20s and comparable wind speeds. Despite that, we had some highlights: a Merlin sitting in plain view in the woods, munching on a Red-winged Blackbird; a number of Bald Eagles; a cold-looking Killdeer; and a decent variety of waterfowl. The early passerines took a pass today, as all we could find were blackbirds. We spent more time in the warm Marshland Museum than we should readily admit to.



Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

The trip fittingly ended with the start of a snow squall. A total of 32 species were found.

April 8, 2023 - Stage Nature Center

Leader: Kyla Niner



Photos Credit: Kyla Niner

The morning air was full of birdsong when we arrived at the Stage Nature Center in Troy. It was a crisp morning that began below freezing, so eight birders bundled up and headed out on the trails to hunt for early migrants and, of course, Wild Turkeys. As we began the walk into the woods along the Rouge River, we briefly stopped to admire a displaying tom turkey from afar. After snapping a few photos, the group moved through the old growth woods.

Our first non-turkey sightings included a Red-bellied Woodpecker and a Cooper's Hawk. We continued along the path, to a spot by the bridge that is normally good for New World sparrows, but none were present. The upland forest continued to have surprises, however, and we spotted a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Even though they are not often reported at that park, we could tell, by the lines of holes on the tree he visited, that he was no stranger to the area. It was a great find and everyone got good views of the bird. We also added a few

Downy Woodpeckers to our list and a few of us spotted an Eastern Phoebe before it flew away. Farther down the trail we finally re-found our Wild Turkeys and one tom was happy to give us a good show, displaying his tail feathers and warning us in a loud gobble that those hens were his!

Field Trip Reports (continued)

Before we left the upland forest for the marshy part of the park the forest had one final surprise — a Pileated Woodpecker. Even the trip leader, who comes to the park often, had never seen one at Stage Nature Center before.

The marshy part of the park along the Blackbird Trail held some good birds as well, and we found Song Sparrows, a Northern Cardinal, and many Red-winged Blackbirds, one of which didn't quite sound like a Red-winged Blackbird — it couldn't trill! We went up to the observation deck to check the stream and grassy area, but there were no birds in the area, except a few Northern Flickers, until a Double-crested Cormorant flew over. We all got good views of the bird before it continued northwards. Along the boardwalk, we briefly saw and heard Winter Wrens! They have a delightful bubbling song that we all enjoyed. In the lowland area along the Bluebird Trail, we found several Brown Creepers and Golden-Crowned Kinglets.



We ended the trip by visiting the nature center's captive owls. We appreciated the chance to see these owls up close, as it is typically not possible with wild owls. We were all standing there enjoying the captive birds and a few robins that were poking through the surrounding lawn, when all of a sudden there was a loud squawking sound. A bold Cooper's Hawk had just caught an American Robin barely ten feet from us and it sat next to the owl enclosure for a few moments before flying away with the robin. It was quite an exciting end to our field trip, and everyone admired the Cooper's Hawk, but also felt sorry for the robin.



Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*); Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*); Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*).

Photo Credits: Ray Bosshard (left and right) and Kyla Niner (center).

Field Trip Reports (continued)

April 21, 2023 - Kensington Metropark

Leader: Mike Mencotti

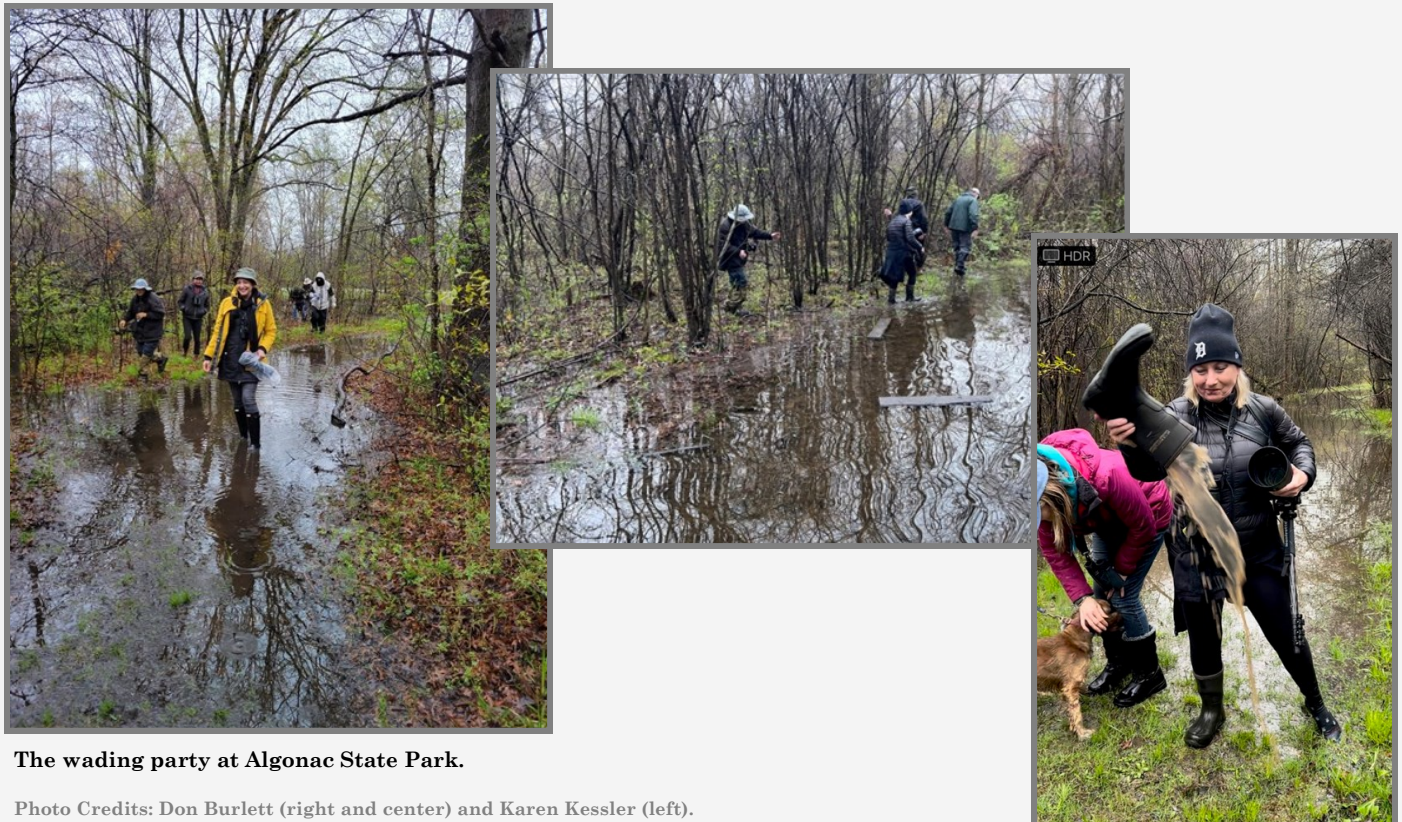
Spring isn't spring for Michigan birders until we see the first warbler, and eight of us were not disappointed as we came across a beautiful vocal Yellow-rumped at Kensington Metropark on a rainy April morning. Of course there were other highlights, especially the gorgeous Eastern Bluebirds and an elusive but vocal early Marsh Wren. Sandhill Cranes and Wild Turkeys seemed to walk the trail with us as the little birds begged for handouts of seed (we didn't let them down). A cooperative Common Loon and a nesting Bald Eagle capped off a delightful Friday morning that the steady drizzle couldn't dampen.

A total of 45 species were ID'ed by the group, a number of them first-of-the-year for us.

April 29, 2023 - Algonac State Park & Wetzel State Recreation Area

Leader: Don Burlett

For most birding field trips, the biggest concern is which birds you will see. Of course, the weather does play a role in most outings but, in some, the weather and its effect on the nature of the outing are very important. The trip to Algonac State Park with ten hearty birders fits into the category of challenging, to say the least. Having visited this park in spring in the past, I knew what was coming. I alerted the group about conditions and we carried on with great gusto and perseverance.



The wading party at Algonac State Park.

Photo Credits: Don Burlett (right and center) and Karen Kessler (left).

Field Trip Reports (continued)

Early spring birding can be challenging because all the desired warblers are not present and it tends to be cooler than late spring. We did get a couple of warblers, along with several sightings of Eastern Towhee, sparrows, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. However, traveling on water-covered trails along the Oak Savannah Trail for part of the hike proved challenging and diverted attention away from the birds and onto how to traverse the trail without getting your boots full of water (not always possible). Everyone on this field trip earned their “mudder” merit badge along with some trail-blazing work. We did manage to see (or hear) 33 species along the way on this day of cloudy skies and drizzly rain. But we did have fun and enjoyed this portion of the field trip.

After the Algonac “wading party,” six of us headed to Wetzel State Recreation Area to check on birds there. We enjoyed seeing a Kingfisher on territory along with nesting Trumpeter Swans and a family of Sandhill Cranes. Although we cut our walk short, so as to not disturb the Sandhill Crane family, we managed to see 16 species here and brought our overall count for the day to 38 species. We expect that the counts at these sites will go up from here as spring unfolds.

Many thanks to this spirited crew for enduring trail conditions not often encountered. It was a fun outing.



Photo Credits: Ray Bosshard

Field Trip Reports (continued)

May 5, 2023 - Robert H. Long Nature Park & Heritage Park

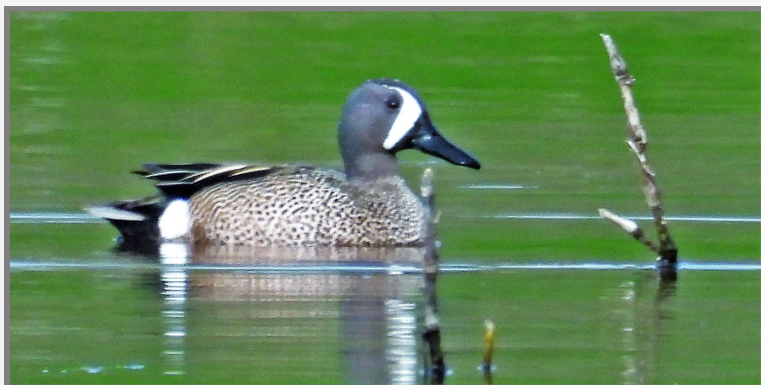
Leader: Mike Mencotti

May brings migration, and migration brings out birders. The May 5 field trip brought both as seven of us enjoyed blue skies, beautiful temperatures, and about 60 species of birds. One of the pleasures of May has to be, for most of us, that first sighting of beautiful orioles and grosbeaks. We certainly enjoyed both! We started at Robert H. Long Nature Park, which had a fine variety of waterfowl, passerines, and even a cooperative Sora that wandered into view. Ospreys were nesting, and the swallows were swooping. Then on to Heritage Park, which brought its own pleasures from a Broad-winged Hawk to gobbling turkeys, to orioles. A distant calling Barred Owl was a mid-morning treat. Strangely enough, only two warbler species were found on the trip, but migration is late this spring. They will be here soon enough.



Clockwise from top left: Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*); Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), Bread-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*), Blue-winged Teal (*Spatula discors*).

Photo Credits: Ray Bosshard



Field Trip Reports (continued)

May 6, 2023 - Magee Marsh

Leaders: Don Burlett & Jim Koppin

The annual visit to Magee Marsh and environs was enjoyed by 13 people and two leaders on a very nice spring day. Mostly sunny with temperatures ranging from the upper 40s to the upper 60s made this trip enjoyable. Spring migration is always a gamble regarding timing. This year, we were there a week before International Migratory Bird Day and the migration was just in its early stages. However, the damage done last year to Magee Marsh was very evident. The “woods” that stood here have pretty much been demolished by storms, and the woods and boardwalk both showed signs of destruction and rebuilding.

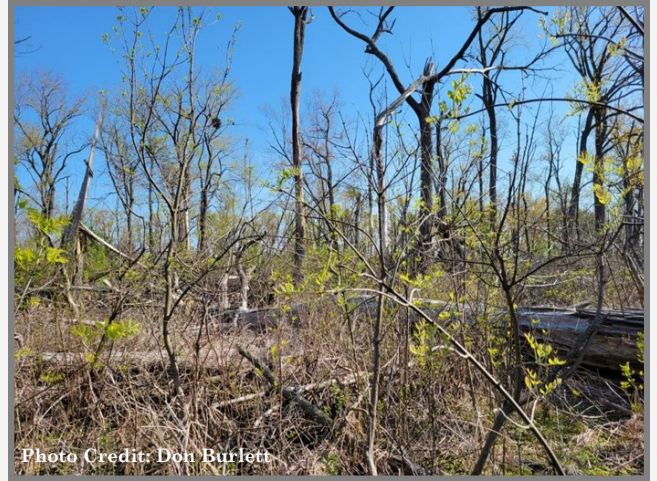


Photo Credit: Don Burlett

Despite the destruction, we began the day birding the entire boardwalk in search of warblers and other early migrants. Warblers were about the grounds, and we enjoyed seeing a Virginia Rail pair work along a channel near the boardwalk. The area abounded with Ruby-crowned Kinglets and all the breeding birds that nest here (blackbirds, grackles, robins, etc.). We also saw a pair of Eastern Whip-poor-wills roosting along the boardwalk, a nice find for the day, and a well-hidden American Woodcock.



Photo Credit: Rick Rigney

Top: Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*)
Right: Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*)



Photo Credit: Rick Rigney

Field Trip Reports (continued)



Photo Credit: Malissa Bossardet



Photo Credit: Karen Kessler



Photo Credit: Malissa Bossardet



Photo Credit: Malissa Bossardet



Photo Credit: Nick Rigney



Photo Credit: Karen Kessler

Field Trip Reports (continued)

We then headed to the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and drove the auto drive. There were lots of Canada Geese, Trumpeter Swans, Tree Swallows, Red-winged Blackbirds and other denizens of the impoundments. Next was Metzger Marsh, where more swans were observed, but this spot was not very fruitful and the wind had picked up, coming off the lake, cooling the situation.

The last stop on this trip was Howard Marsh—a wonderful spot with water impoundments and many nice birds. The featured birds were the Black-necked Stilts that have been breeding here for several years. We observed at least seven of these birds, one on a nest. We also added Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, two terns, and several gulls here. Of note is the fact that the new impoundment on the west side of Howard Road is well set up for shorebirds. Here we found hundreds of Dunlin, good numbers of Lesser Yellowlegs, and groups of ducks of several species.

The group enjoyed a good day. The group observed (with some or all seeing each species) a total of 88 species. This is not a bad total for an early spring day where the number of warblers species available was limited. Obviously, spring is just busting out now!!!



Happy birders...on a birdy trip!

Field Trip Reports (continued)

May 20, 2023 - Tawas Point State Park

Leaders: Jen Benke and Terry Chapdelaine

On Saturday, May 20th, 14 individuals decided to join trip leaders Jen Benke and Terri Chapdelaine for a chance to experience the great birding destination known as “the point” at Tawas Point State Park. There was a bit of concern regarding rain in the forecast, but it held off for the group as we worked the trails while staring at clouds of midges (wonderful bird food) that were quite an experience.

The birds did not disappoint and the group was treated to 80 different species of birds, including a wonderful assortment of 16 warbler species. The group even experienced the chase and strain of assorted positions to see a very uncooperative Connecticut Warbler. To add to the merriment, we even added a delightful mammal to our trip—a porcupine sleeping up in a tree along the trail. As we were winding down our search for birds, a notice came across for a rare bird at the feeders. The group picked up the pace and headed over to the area, where many viewed their new life bird—two Eurasian Tree Sparrows. Then, we had a quick lunch which included the sighting of 15 American White pelicans floating off of the beach. We then headed down the road to Oscoda, where the rain finally showed up that had been looming on the radar screen. Undeterred, the group reached its final destination where we were treated to a piping plover sitting on its nest. What a great experience to share the sight of this rare bird.

As we stood under a shelter out of the falling mist, we reveled in our day, said our good-byes and hoped to see each other on another OAS trip.



Photo Credit: Malissa Bossardet

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)



Photo Credit: Jen Benke

Oakland Owlets

Field Trip Reports

March 24, 2023 - Stage Nature Center

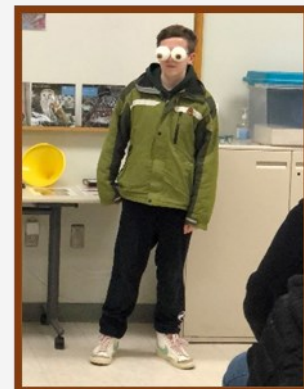
Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

Southeast Michigan is a good place to see several species of Michigan owls. Early spring is a special time to see and hear owls. Because they nest early in the year they are incubating eggs by March. Oakland Owlets families and friends gathered at the Stage Nature Center in Troy for “*An Evening with the Owls*” —a special program with naturalist Christina Funk. The nature center houses five owls that are unable to survive in the wild and have become education ambassadors for the center. Christina is also the primary owl caretaker and has a special relationship with the owls; some even recognize her voice.

The Owlets explored the exhibits in the nature center before meeting Christina for the presentation. The nature center has native animals in aquariums along with beautiful rock and mineral displays. In addition, there is an area to watch local birds at feeders —young birders Megan and Stacey discovered a whitetail deer dining there.

Christina invited everyone into the classroom to learn about Michigan owls. Using biological artifacts, known as biofacts, including talons, skulls and feathers, Christina shared some of the superpowers that owls possess. Comparing owl feathers to Turkey Vulture feathers, Christina explained that owls’ flight feathers have fringes and comb-like structures along the edges. These features reduce turbulence and sound, and contribute to their silent flight, an adaptation that gives owls an advantage to overtake prey by surprise. In addition, owl talons are strong and arranged in a way that allows owls to grasp food. Using talons as weapons, owls apply pressure and can break their prey’s backs. Christina noted that Great Horned Owls can apply 500 pounds per square inch (psi) of pressure; this species is often known as the “tiger of the woods” because they can consume larger prey like skunks.

Christina passed each biofact to the participants to examine. One striking feature of owls is their eyes. Owl eyes are large and critical for hunting. Christina used the skull of a Great Horned Owl to show the special bony sockets, known as “sclerotic rings,” that hold the eyes in place and prevent the movement of the owl’s eyes. Owls watch objects by moving their heads — it may appear that owls are moving their heads in a complete circle, but instead the range of motion is 270 degrees. Extra vertebrae in their necks allow this rotation. Christina recruited a volunteer from the audience to demonstrate this adaptation. The large eyes of an owl can be a hindrance in looking side to side, but owls have extraordinary methods to compensate. Owls have keen eyesight even in low light.



Oakland Owlets

Field Trip Reports (continued)

Owls swallow prey whole without chewing. Their prey includes bones, fur, feathers and so forth. Christina explained the prey is digested in the owl's crop and any undigested food is regurgitated in the form of pellets. Owl pellets can be dissected to examine an owl's diet. Sometimes the entire skeletons of mice, rats, voles, and squirrels can be reconstructed. Christina showed examples of the contents of owl pellets. Owls consume many rodents and are important in controlling rats and mice; therefore, rodenticide, a poison used to control rats, can kill owls if they eat poisoned rodents.

After looking at owl adaptations, the group met one of the owl ambassadors — Mortimer, a gray-phase Eastern Screech Owl. Christina held Mortimer on a tether and took him around the room so everyone could see him closely. Mortimer injured his eye when he was young and would not be able to survive in the wild. Mortimer sat very still on Christina's hand as she shared details about Eastern Screech owls and played their calls. Everyone was silent and respectful.

After seeing Mortimer, everyone went outdoors and walked a short distance to the owl cages behind the nature center. The group huddled outside the owl enclosures in the dark. Christina returned Mortimer to his enclosure and prepared to show another owl. She rejoined the group with Sam, the Barred Owl, who was found as a juvenile owlet and has imprinted on people. Sam relates more to people than other owls. She knows Christina's voice and will communicate with her when she is nearby. Sam called so everyone was able to hear the Barred Owl's distinctive call — the mnemonics sounds like "Who Cooks for You, Who Cooks for You-All." Christina gave all the owls in the enclosures, including Autumn, the Great Horned Owl, rats and mice for dinner. The group was able to watch the owls swallow their prey whole. It was dark and hard to see, but one young birder had night vision binoculars.

It was late so the hike to see owls along the trail was canceled. It was an amazing presentation, and everyone thanked Christina for her time and expertise. The group dispersed but was invited for snacks in the parking lot to take home.

The Stage Nature Center is supported by the Troy Nature Society, a non-profit organization supported by membership and donations. There is a special fund for the owls' care. Visit this link to learn more: [Support Our Owls – Stage Nature Center \(troynaturesociety.org\)](https://troynaturesociety.org)



Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty and Nathan Stouffer.

Oakland Owlets

Field Trip Reports (continued)

April 15, 2023 - Lake St. Clair Metropark

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

April is always an exciting month for birders. Waves of migrating birds are making their way north and everyone wants to see their favorite birds returning. The Oakland Owlets families and friends gathered at Lake St. Clair Metropark —the park's nature center was hosting the annual Owl Fest, which was an added educational bonus. The weather was fantastic with summer-like temperatures. A small group started at the feeding station outside the nature center. Numerous Red-winged Blackbirds were observed along with the typical birds that visit feeders.

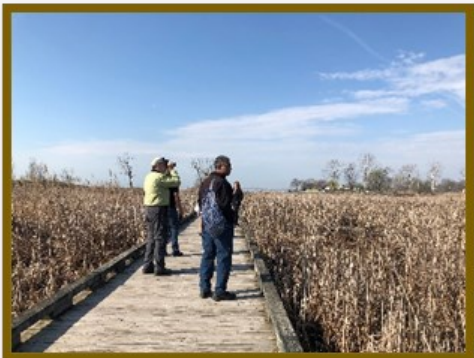


After a time, the group headed to the trails leading to the boardwalk near Lake St. Clair. Along the path by the swamp we saw Wood Ducks actively surveying nesting cavities in the large eastern cottonwoods. One odd duck slipped into a cavity and occasionally peeked out. Everyone was also fascinated to see the face of a Mallard hen. Thanks to Ray for providing a great photo to document this behavior!

Farther along the trail, the group encountered the famous owl bucket, which is often used by Great Horned Owls. However, this year the bucket is occupied by a Red-tailed Hawk. Northern Flickers and Red-bellied Woodpeckers watched as we walked.

The trails to Lake St. Clair and the channel of water provided opportunities to see Mallards, Canada Geese, Mute Swans, Song Sparrows, and several species of turtles basking on fallen logs at the water's edge. Tree Swallows chased each other in the sky above.

Red-winged Blackbirds were just about everywhere in the park. Reaching the boardwalk through the marsh, the dried cattails provided perches for birds to stake out breeding territories. Deeper pools of water in the marsh were prime spots to see Green-winged Teals, Gadwalls, and Mallards. Everyone took time to observe these ducks from a distance. Mute Swans and Canada Geese were sitting on their nests in the marsh.



Oakland Owlets

Field Trip Reports (continued)

We continued birding along the path back to the nature center and added Carolina Wren and Dark-eyed Junco to our list. Everyone was invited to take the short drive to the boat launch parking lot to explore the Double-crested Cormorant colony. By this time, the park was bustling with visitors, and boaters and anglers filled the parking lot. This activity did not bother the cormorants — the birds were diligently foraging the channels and ponds nearby, gathering nesting materials, and attending to mates on the nests.

A few people set up spotting scopes to view the cormorants closely. Our goal was to find the rare Neotropic Cormorant reported in this colony. We spent some time watching the cormorants and the other birds in this area. It was remarkable to see the attention and care the cormorants exhibited to each other. This cormorant colony is extensive and some trees have multiple nests. We ultimately found a Neotropic Cormorant, smaller than the Double-crested Cormorant, with white under its bill.

The combined total species for the two sites visited during this field trip was 45.

The field trip was longer than expected, but the birds and the weather were fabulous. A special thanks to **Ray Bosshard** for sharing his excellent photos and to **Kayla Niner** for providing a group photo and checklist from the cormorant colony.

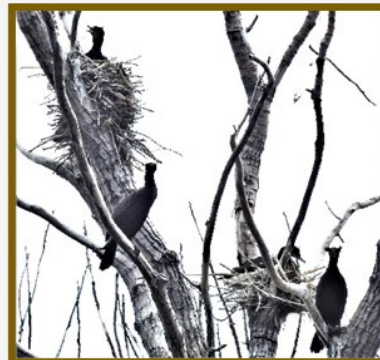
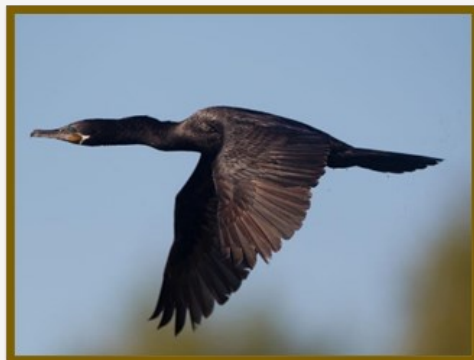


Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty, Ray Bosshard, and Kyla Niner.

Oakland Owlets Field Trips

June 2023 - October 2023

Roaming the Rouge – Saturday, June 17, 2023, 8:30 am - 10:30 am Rouge Park, Detroit

Rouge Park is one of Michigan's largest urban parks. It is located where the Rouge River flows into the Detroit River. The Rouge River watershed is one of the major watersheds in southeast Michigan, it encompasses 427 acres in three counties and over 75% of the land is developed. Rouge Park provides recreation and protects water quality in the watershed. Detroit Parks and Recreation naturalists, Rachel Felder and Chris Jackson, will help the Oakland Owlets explore birds at Rouge Park. We will start near the heron rookery. Celebrate birding as an activity for all people. Like birds, birders are diverse. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars.



Counting Butterflies for Science – Saturday, July 8, 2022, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm Golden Preserve, Springfield Township



The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of butterflies in North America. NABA holds annual butterfly counts in mid-summer to assess butterfly populations throughout the continent. These counts inform research and conservation needs. We will participate in a NABA count at the Golden Preserve. This preserve, which is owned and managed by Six Rivers Land Conservancy, is a biologically diverse property that protects several unique habitats. Butterfly experts and ecologists, Doris Applebaum and Sue Greenlee, will be our guides. Dress for the weather and bring your binoculars.

Water Bird Walk and Cruise – Saturday, August 12, 2022, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm Kensington Metropark, Milford

Explore Kensington Metropark and learn how many species of birds depend on water for habitat, food, shelter, and reproduction. We will hike in the morning and then take a boat ride on the Island Queen at noon (the boat tour is optional and dependent on availability). The boat tour will provide opportunities to view the shoreline along Kent Lake. A 2023 Metropark pass or daily permit is required for park entry.



Oakland Owlets Field Trips

June 2023 - October 2023

Bats & Birds – Saturday, September 23, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Stony Creek Metropark, Shelby Township

Bats are key members of natural communities because they provide many environmental services. For instance, bats can consume 600 to 1,000 mosquitoes per hour! They are unappreciated animals that control insects and fight diseases. Michigan has nine species of bats, several are endangered or threatened species. Naturalist Erin Parker will guide a night hike in search of local bats. Erin is an experienced bat monitor and will use an *echo meter*, a device that identifies bats by their echolocation signatures. Dress to be outdoors and bring insect repellent. A 2023 Metropark pass or daily permit is required for park entry.



OAS is following the following field trip guidelines:

1. Pre-registration is required and number of participants is limited.
2. Directions and details are sent in advance to those that pre-register.



The Young Birders' Club ~ Oakland Owlets offers age-appropriate educational experiences for youth 8 – 18 years old. Young birders 16 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. All young birders must complete a release form.

Young Birders' Club programs are open to all birders.

To register for Oakland Owlets field trips contact – Kathleen Dougherty, Coordinator at kad8186@msn.com

Visit <https://www.oaklandaudubon.org/young-birders>

Photo Credits: OAS Photo Gallery & University of Michigan Animal Diversity Website.

OAKLAND AUDUBON AROUND TOWN

Community Connections - March and April 2023

Volunteers and board members shared their knowledge of birds, the joy of birding, and the conservation work of OAS at four community events during March and April: *Spring Into Science* at Cranbrook Institute of Science (March 29 & 30); *Owl Fest* at Lake St. Clair Metropark (April 15); *Eco Frenzy Fest* at Johnson Nature Center (April 16); and *Heritage Park Earth Day* at Heritage Park (April 22). Volunteers contributed over 80 hours and connected with nearly 500 people during these events.

Many thanks and appreciation to *Don Burlett, Kathleen Dougherty, Jody Harrington, David Hoch, Karen Kessler, Alice Marotti, and Laurie Schubert* for sharing their expertise and time to further conservation and promote birding to the public!



Partnership with Stellantis - May 3 & 4, 2023

OAS partners with Stellantis by conducting wildlife surveys, participating in Earth Day activities, guiding nature walks, and/or participating in outreach events. Our work helps them maintain the facility's Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) certification.

On May 3, OAS President Don Burlett was invited, along with other community organizations, to Stellantis' "We Care" outreach event and later led a nature hike.

On May 4, Don Burlett, Dan Gertiser (Social Media Administrator), and Guadalupe Cummins (Newsletter Editor) conducted a spring bird survey. A butterfly survey will be later in the summer and an additional bird survey will take place in the fall.

OAS greatly appreciates Stellantis ongoing support and partnership!



Young Birders Recognition –2023

Since 2018, OAS has recognized members of the Young Birder's Club (YBC) —the Oakland Owlets, for their attendance and dedication to birding.

This year, Kathleen Dougherty, YBC Coordinator, recognized three Owlets for their participation during the 2022 calendar year. A certificate of recognition and bird books were awarded and gifted to these dedicated birders.

Members' support make this possible!



THE CASE OF THE MISSING MIGRANTS

by Doris Applebaum

For those of us old enough to remember the thrilling spring bird migrations of the 1970s, the 2022 migration was very disappointing. You might even have called it horrifying, seeing the truth of the recent report that there are nearly 3 billion fewer breeding birds in North America than there were just a few decades ago.

The loss is not just in our area, as Europe has seen a similar decline. In the United Kingdom, researchers have found that the population of the European Turtle dove plummeted by 82% between 1967 and 2007. Bad enough, but by 2018 the decline had hit a frightening 98%. Even the Common Nightingale was hardly common anymore, with a decline of 93%.

Many other species have mirrored these declines. Another “common” species, the Common Cuckoo, is down by 78% and the Common Swift by 58%. Other species, including the Barn Swallow (it’s not just a New World species), the Wood Warbler (not related to our wood warblers), and Spotted Flycatcher, have shown alarming levels of decline.

For some species, tracking devices have allowed researchers to learn of migration routes that were previously unknown. Unfortunately, there is not yet enough information to indicate specific areas which might be contributing to population losses.

At present, there appear to be two likely possibilities. One is the steep reduction in insects, which is noticeable all over the world. Since insects are the main food for many birds, it stands to reason that the human penchant for destroying insects is having an extremely negative effect on birds.

The other possibility is overhunting, though this is more of a problem in Europe and Asia than in our part of the world. It is definitely the reason for the tremendous loss of European Turtle doves.

Bird migration is one of the wonders in nature, but it appears to be declining each year. Like so many other problems, human behavior is a major reason. Sadly, wishing for that to change is not likely to be a wish that comes true.

Source: The April-June 2023 issue of *BirdLife* magazine, published by [BirdLife International](#).

NATURE NOTES by Allen Chartier

Don't be shy! If you have a question you would like Allen to answer in a future *Nature Notes* column or there is a topic you are interested in hearing more about, you can email him at:

amazilia3@gmail.com



***Bird Briefs* (articles to look at online, click titles below)**

from Don Burlett

[Found: Mysterious songbird rediscovered in Madagascar after eluding scientists for 24 years - BirdLife International](#)

Much like other efforts to find birds not seen for years, this was a successful effort. The article also mentions other species that are being pursued by science.

[To know where the birds are going, researchers turn to citizen science and machine learning: Scientists unveil BirdFlow, a new predictive model that anticipates migratory patterns -- ScienceDaily](#)

An exciting new development in the study of birds is taking place with data and scientists from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. In order to predict where birds are going, they are taking data from the lab and using machine intelligence to predict where the birds are going to go during migration. The new technology, called BirdFlow, may very soon be available for scientists as well as citizens. It is an interesting application of technology to a part of the natural world. Worth taking a look.

[Press release: Lead ammunition finally banned from wetlands across the EU - BirdLife International](#)

The European Union has banned the use of lead shot and lead sinkers near or at wetlands throughout their region. This is a very important step but does not solve the problem completely. This still leaves a lot of natural areas and other properties without such a protection. Maybe we should be pursuing this for all our natural areas.

[‘A bit of a hoarder’: woodpeckers stash 700lbs of nuts in California home | Birds | The Guardian](#)

If you think the noise from a woodpecker is an annoyance, try dealing with hoarding Acorn Woodpeckers. This story shows their persistence to store acorns. Funny, but a problem for some folks.

[Rebound for bird on brink of extinction \(phys.org\)](#)

This story is about the work done to save the Plains Wanderer, a bird in Australia. It was the highest priority amongst birds of the world on the brink of extinction. In 2018, there were only 47 of these birds known to exist. In two years, they have increased to 101 birds. The success is attributed to land management and protection. Having seen this bird in the wild, I am happy to hear about this valuable work.

[Study examines memory in birdwatchers, finds having expert knowledge helps us memorize new information \(medicalxpress.com\)](#)

As you would expect, having a hobby like birding, which forces you to understand a great deal about birds, is very useful in maintaining memory skills and overall function of your brain. This study compared birders to gardeners and other groups and found birding was very beneficial. Of course, you all knew this, being a very bright group!



Pixaby.com

BIRD ID QUIZ

(Summer 2023)



A) _____



B) _____



C) _____

For the answers and explanation for this issue's quiz see Page 28

No Peeking!

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

March 24, 2023

Our financial condition continues to be excellent. As we do each year, we have prepared a list of donations to organizations that share our values regarding conservation and the environment. The board is also considering a number of other ways to make good use of some of our funds.

After our recent book sale, we still have many books remaining, so we will have another book sale at our June membership meeting.

Spring bird migration is underway, bringing with it the danger that many night-migrating birds will crash into buildings because they are confused by the lights. At our April membership meeting, Advocacy Officer George Harris will provide some information about how we can help prevent some of these tragedies.

When OAS became an affiliate chapter of National Audubon, the territory assigned to our chapter was increased. There has now been another increase in our territory, bringing us more members from the added zip codes, and we look forward to seeing some of our new members at Oakland Audubon Society (OAS) events.

April 20, 2023

Our income for 2023 continues to exceed our expenses. The board is looking into ways to improve our outreach materials, among other ways to make good use of excess funds.

There has been considerable negative publicity recently about John James Audubon, the namesake of all Audubon societies. National Audubon has decided not to change its name, but some Audubon chapters have either changed or plan to change their name. Should Oakland Audubon Society (OAS) change its name? After considerable discussion, the board decided to send a survey to our members to gauge sentiment about this.

We are very happy to have volunteers for some of the soon-to-be-vacant board positions.

OAS will once again do wildlife surveys at the Stellantis Headquarters in Auburn Hills to help that facility retain its Wildlife at Work certification from Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC). The spring survey will occur on May 4, 2023.

Doris Applebaum
Secretary



Pixaby.com

MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

Welcome New Members!



Bruce Donigan, Neil Donohue & Family, Jane Giblin, Mark Grozde, Kay Hemsall-Williamson & David Williamson, Rachel Herman, Ashley Mirasol & Family, Douglas Rusch, Maria Sislock, Janet Smith, Doug Willoughby

Our 2023 membership drive is underway. You can renew your membership in one of two ways:

- 1) Use the “Renew OAS Membership” link on the Membership tab on our website (<http://www.oaklandaudubon.org>), to pay online using PayPal. [CLICK HERE](#) or
- 2) Mail a check along with a membership form (page 29)

Mail renewal forms to:

Oakland Audubon Society
C/O Jenifer Benke
2145 Colony Club Ct.
West Bloomfield, MI 48322

If you would like to check the status of your membership or have questions, contact OAS Membership Officer Jen Benke at: 734-657-7498 or scubadu9900@yahoo.com.

**Thank you for helping us sustain OAS with your membership contributions.
We would be nowhere without you!**

More than 50 species available

Native Plant Sale

June 3

10-4

Neiman's Parking Lot
7121 Dixie, Clarkston



<https://www.blueheronheadwaters.org/>

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS & PROGRAMS

Monthly membership meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month (except December, May, July, and August) at the First United Methodist Church in Birmingham. **Some OAS meetings and programs will be at the Church and also transmitted online via Zoom, while others will be offered only via Zoom. Meetings open at 6:30 PM and talks begin at 7:00 PM.** If a meeting is offered via *Zoom*, specific instructions and links will be posted on the “meetings” page on our website at www.oaklandaudubon.org and on OAS’s Facebook page prior to that meeting. **Updates to the schedule will be posted on our website.** Please contact a Board member if you have questions.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

Date	Time	Program	Location
Tues., June 13	7:00 pm	Monarchs - Missing From Your Garden?	First United Methodist Church
Tues., September 12	7:00 pm	Birds of Prey	First United Methodist Church
Tues., October 10	7:00 pm	Japan in Winter: Cranes, Eagles, and More	First United Methodist Church
Tues., November 14	7:00 pm	Panama: Darien Province and the Chiriquí Highlands	First United Methodist Church

Bird Quiz Answers for Summer 2023 Quiz on Page 25

This issue’s photo quiz : a) Red-eyed Vireo, b) Philadelphia Vireo, c) Yellow-throated Vireo

Explanation:

- These birds have a long bill with long, flat crown; the gray crown has a clear black edge above the eyeline, which is white over red eyes; white breast with pale yellow undertail coverts; back is green.
- This vireo is similar to the Red-eyed Vireo, but the facial markings are less distinct; a dark gray crown without the black edge softens the facial pattern; dark lores and a shorter bill; the back is more gray than green; the underparts are drabber and not completely white; the tail is shorter than the Red-eyed Vireo.
- This vireo is much more yellow, especially on the throat; the facial pattern is mostly yellow-green on the crown and nape, yellow on the throat and has a white belly; unlike the other two vireos, this bird has two white wing bars; the back is gray and the bill is short.

How did you do identifying these birds? Keep score throughout the year to see how you do!



OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Mobile: (____) _____

Email address: _____

Please indicate with an (X) in the box any personal information above you do not want listed in the OAS membership directory.

Check also if you are a member of:

- ____ National Audubon Society
- ____ Michigan Audubon Society

OAS needs and welcomes volunteers — please participate if you can!

Check if you have the skills to help:

- ____ Become a board member
- ____ Lead a field trip or present a program
- ____ Fill an open position (Position: _____)

Check appropriate line:

- ____ Member renewal
- ____ New member
- ____ Change of address

OAS Membership Fees

- Individual \$15
- Family \$20
- Contributing \$25
- Supporting \$50
- Benefactor \$100

Our Mission

- To provide, on a local level, access to the natural world through educational programs such as meetings and field trips.
- To advocate the preservation of wildlife habitats and endeavor to create interest in native birds, other animals and plants in Michigan.

Please make checks payable to:

OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Mail to:

OAS MEMBERSHIP

C/O JENIFER BENKE

2145 COLONY CLUB CT.

WEST BLOOMFIELD, MICHIGAN 48322

*Oakland Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.
Your donation is 100% tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*