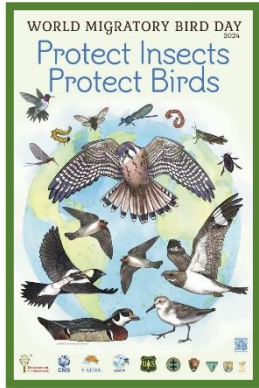


Celebrating World Migratory Bird Day @ Lake St. Clair

Young birders' families and friends celebrated World Migratory Bird Day on May 11th at Lake St. Clair Metropark. World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is observed twice a year in the spring and fall on the second Saturday of the month. WMBD highlights bird conservation and bird migration. Everyone attending this field trip received a 2024 WMBD poster featuring information about this year's WMBD's theme – **“Protect Insects - Protect Birds”**. Young birders' families and friends hoped to watch master bird bander, Allen Chartier, in action. Allen has conducted a long-term bird banding project at the park for decades. However, circumstances prevented the group from seeing Allen banding.



Overnight rains also dampened group participation in this field trip. Fortunately, rain subsided by the start of hike and a few hardy birders gathered for a morning of birding. The nature center was not open when we started but the group stopped at the feeding station which is always a hot spot for birds to gather. Red winged blackbirds were seen in mass along with several other species. It is always a treat to see the Baltimore Orioles and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

After a time bird calls lured the group onto the trail and into the woods, Surprisingly, many of the shrubs were nearly leafed out for this time of the year. This made it challenging to see songbirds hiding in the foliage. Everyone listened intently to bird songs while pinpointing movement in the tree canopy.



Some migrating warblers were seen and heard along the trail, but not as many as we expected. Warblers like the Tennessee and Cape May were passing through. Other warblers like Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats and Ovenbirds were ready to settle in for the breeding season, **Ovenbirds** are warblers that forage on the ground and are well camouflaged. Their ground nests resemble a Dutch Oven with a side entrance. Their songs are loud for a small bird. We could easily hear this call - *“Teac- her, teac- her,”* but it was harder to see these warblers.



As the group moved along the trails near the nature center, we encountered many different habitats. We walked from the forest to the wetlands and back to the forest where we eventually stopped at the nest of the **Great-horned Owl**. Great-horned owls are long time nest occupants of a wash tub in one of the tall trees at the park. The female owl was in the nest along with two owlets. Everyone had a chance to see the female Great-horned

owl on the nest. Seeing the owlets was not easy. The galvanized tub is positioned in the fork of a large tree about 5- 7 meters high.

After hiking for 2 hours, the nature center was open. The group stopped in to enjoy the exhibits and much more. One of the naturalists, Sam, spent time with the group and answered everyone's questions. We were able to see the feeding station from the comfort of the indoor viewing area and added a couple of new birds to our checklist.



The group drove to the DaySail Parking area on Lake St. Clair to explore birds associated with the lake. We added a few extra species including **Forster's Tern**. The group observed forty-nine



bird species during our visit. The rain and storms overnight may have caused some birds to move. A copy of the checklist for this field trip is available upon request. Lake St. Clair is the top birding spot in Macomb County. The park's checklist is at 291 species. There is always something great to see at Lake St. Metorpark no matter what time of year.



A special thank you to all the young birders' club families and friends who attended this field trip after a night of rain. Also thank you to **Erin Parker and Sam Volz** at Lake St. Clair Metropark Nature Center for helping with coordinating this field trip and speaking to our group.



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