



THE NUTHATCH

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“Monty and Rose: Chicago’s Piping Plovers”

Bob Dolgan

Tuesday, March 8th, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for a screening of "Monty and Rose II" a documentary that tells the story of a pair of endangered Piping Plovers attempting to nest on a busy beach in Chicago. The film chronicles these special birds and the unpredictable series of events that propelled them to national headlines. Monty and Rose became the first Piping Plovers to successfully nest within the city limits of Chicago since 1948. A Q & A session will follow.



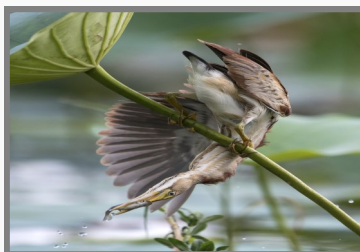
Follow us on

“Marsh Bird Monitoring in Michigan”

Erin Rowan

Tuesday, April 12, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

Secretive marsh birds have seen steep declines across the Great Lakes region, most likely due to habitat loss and degradation. Audubon Great Lakes, MI Birds, and MI DNR are working together to restore habitat and monitor marsh birds in priority areas, like St Clair Flats State Wildlife Area, an Important Bird Area and Michigan Wetland Wonder site. Learn more about this important work and how you can get involved.



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Nature Walk

E. L. Johnson Nature Center

Tuesday, May 10, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Join us for our annual spring nature walk to be held at the E. L. Johnson Nature Center in Bloomfield Hills. Meet at the parking lot in front of the main building.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Spring 2022

I would like to welcome the National Audubon Society (NAS) members who are now affiliate members of Oakland Audubon Society (OAS). As mentioned in the Winter issue of the Nuthatch, we are now officially one of only two affiliates of NAS in Michigan. We hope you will feel comfortable here with your local chapter and would love to see you at field trips and meetings.

As I write this column, we have about 12 inches of snow on the ground and temps in the single digits. I am sure we all hope, however, that when we are **READING** this, the corner will be turned and we can get more spring-like temps. It always seems amazing that our birds can continue to survive in these frigid temperatures. We have a heated birdbath, and they even continue to bathe when it is very cold! Two days this past week, there were 6 bluebirds at one time getting a drink. I hope that you have been able to enjoy the birds this winter as well. What a great pastime birding can be.

Our April membership meeting is planned to be our first in-person meeting back at the First United Methodist Church in Birmingham. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and are hoping this will still be the case!! Our field trips are running as usual, but we continue to require advance registration. Be sure to check those out.

We are still looking for volunteers to fill two open board positions—brief descriptions are provided on the next page. It is a very nice group of people to work with and your organization **NEEDS** you. Please contact myself or one of the other board members if you have any interest and availability to help out. I do want to sincerely thank all the board members who have helped me in this transition as president. They all go above and beyond to keep everything moving ahead and going smoothly. I am grateful for everything they do for our wonderful organization.

Not being able to meet in person since I have become president, I am really looking forward to seeing you all when we can get back together, or possibly at an outing this year. Enjoy the spring and get out to see what birds are in your yard or special patch!

Sue Wright



Photo Credit: Sue Wright

OAS BOARD MEMBERS

Elected Officers

President	Sue Wright	(248) 330-6861	suzwright2@aol.com
Secretary	Doris Applebaum	(248) 542-2506	ibis4247@sbcglobal.net
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Field Trip Officer	Jeff Stacey	(248) 798-0508	jdstacey@ameritech.net
Program Officer	Dave Hoch	(248) 808-3696	hochdavid1@gmail.com

Appointed Officers

Young Birders Club Rep.	Kathleen Dougherty		kad8186@msn.com
Hospitality Officer	Alice Marotti	(248) 545-4165	amarotti@aol.com
Publicity/Fundraising	Vacant		
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Seven Ponds Rep.	Dr. Greg Gossick		ggossickdds@sbcglobal.net
Conservation/Environment	Greg Petrosky		gpetrosky06@gmail.com
Advocacy Officer	Vacant		

Volunteer With Us!

Do you want to get involved with your local Audubon Chapter? Consider contributing your talents and skills as an OAS Board Member to help us realize our mission. *Please contact president Sue Wright if you are interested in either of these positions.*

Publicity / Fundraising Officer

This position leads the planning and coordination of fundraising and publicity efforts for OAS. You will publicize select meetings, programs, field trips, and events with adequate promotional materials, and also coordinate the selection and purchase of fundraising merchandise.

Advocacy Officer

This position involves keeping members informed of new happenings in the area of conservation & environment, with a specific focus on advocacy. We need someone to stay abreast of national and local advocacy efforts and be a resource to the Board and our members. You will use social media, birding listservers, and OAS mailing list to inform members about opportunities to advocate on behalf of birds, their habitat, and the environment.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Covid-19 Update: OAS continues to follow health precautions and guidelines for COVID-19 (see page 11).

Schedule changes and updates will be posted on our website and members will also receive email updates. Owllet trip details are listed on pages 10-11.

Pre-Registration is required for all trips —contact trip leader to register.

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

www.oaklandaudubon.org

Date	Event	Trip Leader(s)
March 6, 2022 (Sunday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Kensington Metropark	Jeff Stacey jdstacey@ameritech.net
March 19, 2022 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Lake Erie Metropark	Mike Mencotti mmencotti9@gmail.com
March 26, 2022 (Saturday) 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Highland State Recreation Area — Early Spring Migrants (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty kad8186@msn.com
April 2, 2022 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Belleville Lake	Jim Koppin jimmykoppin@yahoo.com
April 9, 2022 (Saturday) 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Davis Lake Overlook, Davisburg — Vernal Pools & Birding (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty kad8186@msn.com
April 30, 2022 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Belle Isle State Park	Mike Mencotti & Manny Salas mmencotti9@gmail.com emmanuelvsalas@gmail.com
May 14, 2022 (Saturday) 7:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Magee Marsh (Ohio)	Jim Koppin & Don Burlett jimmykoppin@yahoo.com baikalteal@netzero.net
May 14, 2022 (Saturday) 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM	Red Oaks Nature Center, Madison Heights (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty kad8186@msn.com
May 28, 2022 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Oak Openings Metropark & Irwin Prairie (Ohio)	Jim Koppin jimmykoppin@yahoo.com



OAS is Looking for Volunteer Trip Leaders

If you are interested please contact:

Jeff Stacey
jdstacey@ameritech.net or (248) 798-0508

Field Trip Reports

November 20, 2021 - Belle Isle State Park

Leader: Jeff Stacey (Jointly with Washtenaw Audubon)

Our annual cooperative trip to Belle Isle with Washtenaw Audubon got off to a bit of a rough start due to construction issues leading to many delayed arrivals. There were also many late arrivals among the expected bird species as well. Ducks were not plentiful, but there were enough in the Blue Heron Lagoon to keep us busy for a while. Usual suspects like Canvasback, Redhead, and Hooded Mergansers were around, as well as a few Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Ducks, and a single Lesser Scaup. There was one late Common Loon in the Detroit River and the usual Peregrine Falcons nearby. The interior of the island was torn-up by construction so our trail walking was limited, but we did get the pleasure of seeing a large flock of Cedar Waxwings, a few Fox Sparrows, and some White-throated Sparrows.

January 15, 2022 - St. Clair River

Leaders: Jim Koppin

Seven hardy birders braved the 5 °F temperature during our annual St. Clair River trip. Unfortunately, colder overnight temperatures iced up the entire American side of the river, which had been open the day before. Only distant looks at waterfowl on the Canadian side were possible. A few raptors gave us some satisfaction. Overall an unproductive day.

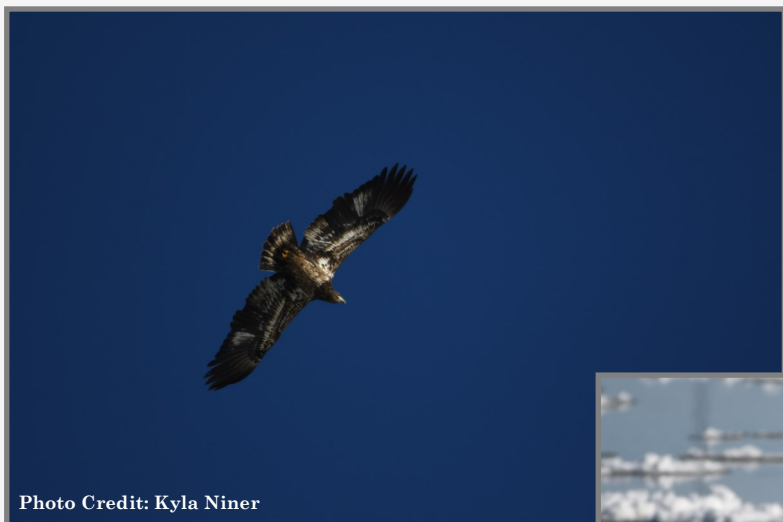


Photo Credit: Kyla Niner

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)



Photo Credit: Kyla Niner

Ringed-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)

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Field Trip Reports (continued)

February 13, 2022 - Beaudette Park & E. L. Johnson Nature Center

Leader: Don Burlett

The trip began with 12 hearty souls braving cold winter conditions – temperature about 13 °F and mostly cloudy skies. We began by checking out the open water of Beaudette Park where a number of waterfowl were present. Species of note included several Canvasback, Hooded Mergansers, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Ducks, and Trumpeter Swans. There were surprisingly low numbers of Canada Geese and no Wood Duck. A Belted Kingfisher and several other species were also found. We saw a total of 23 species of birds in the park.



Then we headed to the E. L. Johnson Nature Center to see what else we could find. We started a short hike and almost immediately found a Great Horned Owl perched in a pine tree. It was within yards of the Great Horned Owl penned on the property. We continued our hike and later found Wild Turkeys enjoying a view of the grounds. We got to watch them fly quite nimbly from their roost, dispelling the idea that they don't fly well. Finally, as we arrived back at the Nature Center, we were able to find a Fox Sparrow hiding in the bushes near the feeders, along with several White-throated Sparrows.

We ended the day having seen 30 species of birds and enjoyed a good time birding together. Hope to see you next time we visit these locations.



Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*);
Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*); and
Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*)

Photo Credits: Karen Kessler

Oakland Owlets

Field Trip Reports

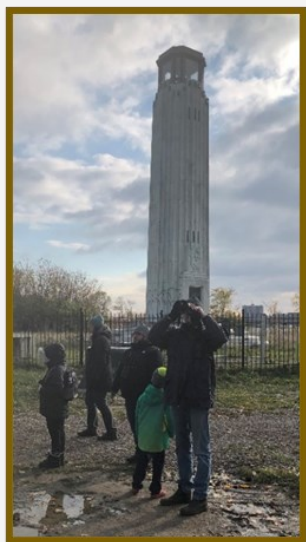
November 13, 2021 - Belle Isle

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

The Oakland Owlets families and friends explored Belle Isle and searched for birds on a windy November day. Belle Isle is Michigan's 102nd State Park. Belle Isle, located in the Detroit River, is an important recreation spot and also an important birding hot spot in Wayne County. While the group gathered at the Nature Center's parking lot, an adult Bald Eagle flew overhead to greet and send us off to an impressive start to the hike.



Erin Parker, Audubon member, educator, and former naturalist at the Belle Isle Nature Center, was one of the guides. Allen Chartier, bird bander, author, and expert birder, also joined the group.



After a brief introduction, the group headed to the Livingstone Memorial Lighthouse at the northern tip of the island. The lighthouse was built a century ago to honor William Livingstone, a respected Detroit resident who contributed to improving navigation of the Great Lakes. Livingstone was responsible for the creation of a deep-water channel on the lower Detroit River. The 58-foot lighthouse, made from Georgia marble, is the only one like it in America. Located at the northern end of the island, this spot affords a view of the Detroit River toward Lake St. Clair. Along the pathway leading to the lighthouse, diving ducks bobbed underwater as they foraged on Blue Heron Lagoon. It is always wonderful to see Hooded Mergansers and Buffleheads. The group encountered raptors too, including a Red-tailed Hawk and an American Kestrel. The Bald Eagle reappeared and perched on a tree so everyone could see this symbol of America. At the lighthouse, as Allen was discussing Cormorant nests, a Double-crested Cormorant flew overhead.

Back at the Nature Center, the group stopped at the bird feeders. There was little activity there, so we traveled to the middle of the island where many of the cultural facilities are located, including the aquarium. The morning was ending so it was a good spot for a break. Part of the group opted to visit the cultural venues, while others decided to stay longer to see the Osprey and Bald Eagle's nests. It was worth the extra time and effort.

Although the weather was windy and cold, the morning at Belle Isle was worthwhile. Our eBird checklist included 33 species. I added three species while leaving the island.

A special thank you to **Erin Parker** and **Allen Chartier**. Allen is a walking field guide and Erin helped find amazing birds!



Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty, Erin Parker, and OAS Gallery.

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Oakland Owlets

Field Trip Reports (continued)

December 18, 2021 - Orion Oaks County Park, Christmas Bird Count

Leaders: Kathleen Dougherty and Greg Petrosky

The Oakland Owlets families and friends participated in the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) held at Orion Oaks County Park. This park is within the OAS count circle, which was established in 1971. The history of the CBC is much older, however. The CBC started in 1899 as an alternative to side hunts and is the longest running community science study in the country —this was the 122nd CBC.

The day was snowy and cold; travel to the park was hampered by road conditions. Nonetheless, a group of 12 participants braved the elements to attend. Greg Petrosky, OAS Conservation/Environment Officer, co-led the hike. Greg is also an Oakland County Parks volunteer park ambassador and has extensive knowledge of the park.

We entered the park from Clarkston Road. Birds were sheltering due to the weather and it took some time and distance before the group saw a bird. Along the forest edge of the trail, a familiar shape and call captured everyone's attention—a Hairy Woodpecker was spotted high on a large tree near its crown. Bird sightings improved as the group ventured into forested habitat. The fluttering of small songbirds low in the forest floor caught our eyes. A family group of Eastern Bluebirds were foraging near the ground. Eastern Bluebirds are known to use the nest boxes at Orion Oaks County Park for roosting during the winter. Farther into the forest, the group was treated to a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers following each other through the forest.

After two miles of hiking, the group arrived at Lake Sixteen. Mallards flew overhead, small flocks of waterfowl, including Goldeneyes, were seen, and we could hear Canada Geese in the distance. Despite recent eBird reports of a Snowy Owl at the lake, the Snowy Owl was absent.

The overall list of species seen was lower than expected, 19 species. The weather influenced bird activity. By the time the hike ended, the snow had stopped. Everyone was happy to help with this national effort to conserve and count birds for science. Other groups were also birding in OAS's count circle on this day, OAS volunteers recorded 65 species during the CBC.

A special thank you to Greg Petrosky and the families who braved travelling to this field trip. After the hike at Orion Oaks County Park, a party of six continued the CBC surveying nearby. Thanks to Debbie Culloty, Kathleen Klein, Anand Krishnasarma, and Griffin Bray for their extra time.



Photo Credits: Sean McElmurry



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Oakland Owlets

Field Trip Reports (continued)

January 29, 2022 - Lake St. Clair Metropark

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

On one of the coldest days in January and despite the snow and temperatures near zero, a group of 10 Young Birders' Club families and friends gathered at the Lake St. Clair Metropark. We started the morning at the Nature Center's feeding station. The birds gathered in this area along with squirrels, white-tailed deer, and a muskrat. The variety of birds at the feeders was amazing; the group watched intently for a time and enjoyed watching the white-tailed deer eating side by side with the squirrels and birds. Surprisingly, several species of sparrows were seen, including a Swamp Sparrow. Concentrating on the birds, the group did not see the muskrat munching on vegetation nearby and then scurrying across the path to shelter under the deck.



A walk along the trails helped everyone generate body heat. We reached the spot where Great Horned Owls have nested in a galvanized bucket for years. Erin Parker, District Interpretive Supervisor, shared stories about owl sightings, but we could not find the owls this morning. The regular winter woodland residents did show up, including the White-breasted Nuthatch, OAS's logo bird.

After about a mile hike, the group returned to the Nature Center and gathered around a fire. Everyone took time to feel the heat and shared bird sightings —the shining sun added some extra warmth. A total of 20 species of birds were observed at the park.

The group then caravanned to the Harley Ensign Boat Launch on Lake St. Clair to search for ducks. At this site, we found a small sliver of open water filled with several species of ducks. A peninsula of land extended into the lake. Everyone unpacked spotting scopes to identify ducks at a distance. A Northern Harrier flew low over the point as we arrived, while Song Sparrows popped up along the pathway. The group scanned the area and noted Scaups, Redheads, and Bald Eagles. Eleven additional species were seen. The snow-covered lake was intriguing and lured young birders onto the ice as the rest of the group dispersed.



Thank you to **Erin Parker** and everyone attending on such a frigid day!

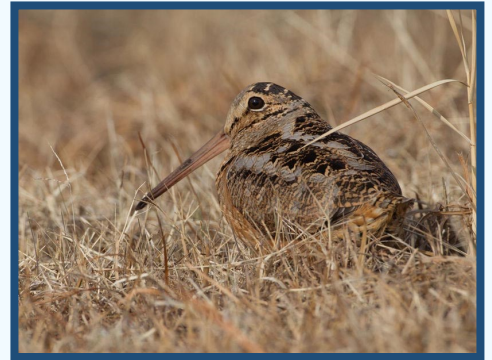
Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty, Sue Prusik, Rich Weldron, and OAS Gallery.

Oakland Owlets Field Trips

March 2022 - May 2022

An Evening with Early Spring Migrants – Saturday, March 26, 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm Highland State Recreation Area - White Lake

The Highland State Recreation Area is an excellent spot to see early migrants. The Park is over 5,000 acres and has one of the few National Natural Landmarks in Michigan. This park provides excellent stopover habitat for an unusual shorebird, the American Woodcock. In the spring, Woodcocks perform an aerial display known as the *sky dance at sunset*. If we are lucky, we can see the sky dance at sunset. Plan to hike about 1.5 miles. If available, a representative of the Friends of Highland Recreation Area will speak to the group about their support to this park. A Michigan State Parks recreation passport is required for park entry.



Explore Vernal Pools & Birding – Saturday, April 9, 8:30 am - 11:00 am Davis Lake Overlook, Davisburg



Vernal Pools are rich biological communities found in Michigan woodlands in spring. By summer, these pools may vanish. This habitat is critical for many amphibians and invertebrates; some of them are only found in vernal pools. Lynn Simmons, Conservation Steward and vernal pool specialist at Blue Heron Headwaters Conservancy, will co-lead this field trip. The Davis Lake Overlook is within the Shiawassee Basin Preserve, a 515-acre natural area managed by Springfield Township Parks and Recreation. Plan to hike and dress for the weather. Bring binoculars.

Wood Warbler Wanderings – Saturday, May 14, 8:30 am - 10:30 am Friendship Woods at Red Oaks Nature Center, Madison Heights

Seeing colorful wood warblers returning to Michigan is a highlight of spring migration. Some are just passing through, while others are arriving at their summer breeding grounds. The mature trees at Friendship Woods/Red Oaks Nature Center provide essential stopover habitat for migrating birds, especially wood warblers. Discover these small active insectivores as they flit along tree branches gleaning insects and invertebrates. Plan to hike over a mile and visit the nature center (if open). Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Learn more about wood warblers in advance of this hike at the “Warble into Spring” event scheduled at Red Oaks Nature Center on May 7th.



Oakland Owlets Field Trips

March 2022 - May 2022

OAS continues to follow health precautions and guidelines for COVID-19

1. Pre-registration is required and number of participants is limited.
2. Face masks may be required to enter some facilities.
3. Stay home if you are sick or have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19.
4. Directions and details are sent in advance to those that pre-register.



The Young Birders' Club ~ Oakland Owlets offers field trips for youth 8 – 18 years. Young birders 15 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. These age appropriate programs provide educational experiences and snacks for kids. 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

2021 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The weatherman did us no favors for the 2021 Oakland Audubon's Christmas Bird Count. We had light snow, heavy snow, and sleet with some high winds thrown in just to make things fun. Still, the count came out about average, with 65 species and 64 participants. The most notable species found were Eastern Towhee, Rough-legged Hawk, and American Coot. Surprisingly, we were unable to find a single Great Blue Heron or Turkey Vulture this year.

Domestic goose sp. (Domestic type)	American Coot	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Canada Goose	Sandhill Crane	White-breasted Nuthatch
Mute Swan	Ring-billed Gull	Brown Creeper
Trumpeter Swan	Herring Gull	Winter Wren
American Black Duck	Great Black-backed Gull	Carolina Wren
Mallard	gull sp.	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Redhead	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	Eastern Bluebird
Ring-necked Duck	Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush
Lesser Scaup	Eastern Screech-Owl	American Robin
Bufflehead	Great Horned Owl	European Starling
Common Goldeneye	Belted Kingfisher	Cedar Waxwing
Hooded Merganser	Red-headed Woodpecker	Snow Bunting
Common Merganser	Red-bellied Woodpecker	American Tree Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Wild Turkey	Hairy Woodpecker	White-throated Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted)	Song Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	Swamp Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	American Kestrel	Eastern Towhee
Accipiter sp.	Blue Jay	Northern Cardinal
Bald Eagle	American Crow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Horned Lark	House Finch
Rough-legged Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	American Goldfinch
Buteo sp.	Tufted Titmouse	House Sparrow



American Tree Sparrow by Kyla Niner

NATURE NOTES *by Allen Chartier*

These Nature Notes were originally published on December 2016

What causes species irruptions? The Snowy Owls are one example, but that's been covered a lot I think. I was more interested in winter finches. Two years ago, you couldn't find a single Pine Siskin anywhere in southern Michigan. Last year, they were absolutely all over the place; this year, pretty much in-between.

“Winter finches” consist of a few species in the family Fringillidae, namely Pine Siskin, Common and Hoary Redpoll, Purple Finch, Pine Grosbeak, Red and White-winged Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak. Every 3-5 years, these species migrate farther south than normal, in slightly irregular, but predictable movements called “irruptions”. Other species do this as well, including Blue Jays, Bohemian Waxwings, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. It has long been known that annual variations in food availability, such as cone crops and “mast” (beech), are the drivers of these movements. But until recently, predicting these irruptions has not been very reliable. But my good friend in Ontario, Ron Pittaway, has been publishing his “winter finch forecasts” for over a decade now. Ron is widely connected with birders, as well as foresters, throughout Canada, and has come up with ways to predict which species will move south, and how far, based on cone, berry, and mast crops across northern Canada. Jean Iron, his wife and an outstanding birder in her own right, posts these forecasts on her website annually. The current forecast can be found at <http://www.jeaniron.ca/2016/finchforecast16.htm>.

Some individuals of normally migratory species choose to overwinter in colder climates. How do they survive (or not)? What do they do differently during the winter (e.g., diet) and what do you think their survival rate is? A couple examples we had last winter included the Northern Mockingbird at Lake Erie Metropark and the Harlequin Duck in Michigan Center.

Most of the migratory species that overwinter in Michigan are short-distance migrants. Every once in a while, a longer-distance migrant will stay for a while, such as Cape May and Pine Warblers, Baltimore Orioles, and even Summer Tanagers. But most of these do not stay all winter and either move on before winter deepens in January or February, or they perish. Many of these short-distance migrants are seed-eaters, at least in part, and can survive on wild seed crops, and at our feeders. These include sparrows like Song, White-throated, and White-crowned, as well as one strict seed-eater, the American Goldfinch which is also migratory. Other species change their diet in winter, from largely invertebrates in summer to fruit in winter. This includes species like American Robin, Eastern Towhee, Gray Catbird, and Brown Thrasher. I would include Northern Mockingbird in this category too, except they tend to be only partially migratory or non-migratory in most of their range. Also, Cedar Waxwing tends to favor fruit all year, and so even though they too are migratory, they can overwinter in Michigan in good numbers.

What I find interesting is that a few other species change their diet to fruit in winter, but do not overwinter in colder climates, including Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, and Eastern Kingbirds. Yellow-rumped Warblers and Tree Swallows are well known because they overwinter farther north than any other members of their families. This is due to changing their diets to fruit in winter. Indeed, the eastern subspecies of Yellow-rumped Warbler, perhaps to be re-split to a full species, is known as “Myrtle” Warbler because they feed extensively on Wax Myrtle berries in the southeastern U.S. In Michigan, they seem to survive the winter by feeding largely on Poison Ivy berries. Tree swallows have only

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NATURE NOTES *(continued)*

rarely been noted in Michigan as late as the Christmas Bird Count period. I do not know if this is related to the berry species they prefer to feed on in their vast overwintering flocks in Florida, or if it is more physiological related to their cold-tolerance.

Perhaps most amazing are the rare instances of strict insectivores that overwinter in Michigan. This includes the Brown Creeper and kinglets, most often Golden-crowned Kinglets. The creeper searches the surface, and under the bark, of trees for insect larvae and eggs that are laid in late fall by insects with spring hatches. The kinglets do the same, though they typically search dead flower heads of herbaceous plants including asters and goldenrods, for insect eggs and larvae. It is not clear to me why the slightly larger Ruby-crowned Kinglet almost never overwinters as far north as Michigan, while the Golden-crowned Kinglet does so every year.

Ducks that overwinter tend to be influenced more by weather conditions than food sources. Many species only migrate as far south as the freezing lakes and rivers force them to go. This includes many diving ducks such as scaup, Redhead, and Canvasback, and even more tied to the ice-edge are Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and Common Mergansers. Harlequin Ducks are very rare migrants through Michigan, so it is hard to say why one would linger in an inland location, such as the one at Michigan Center last year (a first as far as I know), other than the availability of open water and food sources. As climate change continues to progress, there will no doubt be more winters that are warmer, with less ice on the Great Lakes, which will allow (force?) some of these species to linger farther north.

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

SPOONIE GETS SOME HELP: WILL IT BE ENOUGH?

by Doris Applebaum

The critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper (*Calidris pygmaea*), affectionately called Spoonie by many birders, has experienced a catastrophic decline in population over the past several decades. One scientist predicted in 2010 that this Asiatic shorebird would be extinct by 2020.

That has not happened, but the prediction wasn't far off, as a 2021 re-search paper stated that there were only 773 individuals left, with only 490 breeding adults. And another scientist thinks there may actually be fewer than 350 individuals altogether.

The Spoon-billed Sandpiper gets its name from the unique shape of its bill. It is one of the smallest of the world's sandpipers, and certainly one of the rarest. And yet, small as it is, it undertakes a migration of some 5,000 miles every year.



Since the turn of the 21st century, there have been relatively few young birds returning to nest after their first migration, mainly because they starve on the journey. Many of the wetlands that used to provide food for the birds on their migration have been destroyed by draining or reclamation projects. This prevents the birds from finding enough food to carry them all the way back to the breeding grounds. The inexperienced youngsters often can't find alternative food sources.

Trapping of shorebirds is another danger, as Spoonies are sometimes taken in that way.

The good news is that there are efforts under way to enforce laws against illegal trapping and even help the trappers turn to other activities. There is also a captive-breeding program (not very successful yet) and a head-starting program, where eggs are removed from nests, and the chicks are hatched in a protected aviary, then released to migrate (some success so far).

Another helpful step is the purchase of an important wetland in Thailand to protect the birds there, and also efforts to protect three wetlands in Vietnam.

China has worked to stop destruction of some important wetlands in that country, and the Republic of Korea has worked to stop destruction of some of their vital wetlands also.

Unfortunately, the species continues to decline. What a shame if this delightful little shorebird were to disappear. Only time will tell if the protective efforts under way will end in success.

Source: The January-March 2022 issue of *BirdLife* magazine, published by [BirdLife International](#).

THE WESTERN MONARCH BOUNCES BACK (A LITTLE)

by Doris Applebaum

The count of wintering Western Monarch butterflies in California that occurs on Thanksgiving Day each year found nearly 250,000 individuals in 2021. This was a very nice surprise, considering that only 30,000 were found in 2018 and again in 2019, and the 2020 count found a frighteningly low total of fewer than 2,000. Extinction of this population appeared imminent.

While the latest count is certainly encouraging, it does not mean that the Western Monarch is no longer in danger. The unpleasant truth is that this population used to be found in the millions and has declined by 95% since 1980.

No one knows exactly why there was a large increase in 2021, but it is well known that insect populations can fluctuate greatly from one year to the next. For the present at least, it does seem that the possible extinction of the Western Monarch has been averted, and that's certainly good news.

Source: An email from the [Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#), received on January 26, 2022.

Bird Briefs (articles to look at online)

from Don Burlett

[The mysterious case of America's dying songbirds - CNET](#)

This is an interesting review of the sudden series of bird deaths last summer, primarily in the Eastern U.S. The situation is still not clear but work to solve this mystery is ongoing.

[Why is sympatric speciation rare in birds? – Avian Hybrids \(wordpress.com\)](#)

A scientific article about hybridization in birds. It covers some of the language and concepts involved in this topic.

[The 'Lord God Bird' might be extinct, but the story of the ivory-billed woodpecker isn't over yet \(theconversation.com\)](#)

Another article about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and its apparent extinction. An easy read on current happenings.

[New genus and species of tanager \(Passeriformes, Thraupidae\) from the lower Yungas of western Bolivia and southern Peru | Ornithology | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)

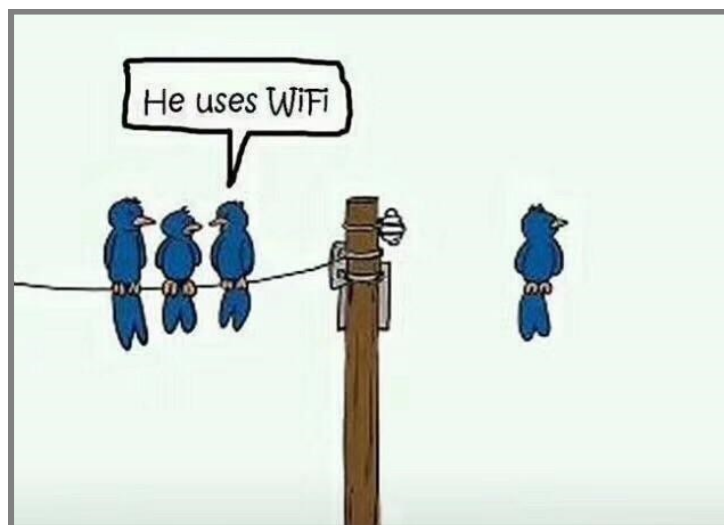
For those international birders in the crowd, a new species of Tanager was finally fully identified in Peru. It is a good read about the process of finding, identifying, and scientifically pulling it all together to get a new species. Of course, it's more fun when you personally know two of the authors.

[A Miracle of Abundance as 20,000 Whimbrel Take Refuge on a Tiny Island | All About Birds All About Birds](#)

You might have read about this already—the discovery of a location where Whimbrels seem to cluster during migration is another nice find.

[Bait and Click: How China's Bird-Loving Photographers Became a Menace \(sixthtone.com\)](#)

An article about Chinese photographers causing a stir over their lack of a code of conduct. This may sound familiar with some local cases of photographers stepping outside the bounds of respect for birds. Another aspect of our birding world that we need to remain vigilant about.



BIRD ID QUIZ

(Spring 2022)



A) _____



B) _____



C) _____

For the answers and explanation for this issue's quiz see Page 20

No Peeking!

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING & 2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

January 20, 2022

We currently have two vacancies on the board of directors: Publicity/Fundraising Officer and Advocacy Chair. Volunteers are needed.

For a variety of reasons, we have fewer field trip leaders than in the past. Anyone interested in leading a field trip should contact Field Trip Officer Jeff Stacey.

Some good news: The mobile version of our website is now available. This is especially useful for people wanting to look at the website on a cellphone or tablet.

The Young Birders Club (Oakland Owlets) will participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count event at the E. L. Johnson Nature Center on February 19, 2022.

Thanks to our recent affiliation with the National Audubon Society, we now have many new members. Welcome to Oakland Audubon!

Doris Applebaum
Secretary

OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY 2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENT (unaudited)		
Assets (as of 1-1-2021)		
	Citizens Bank and PayPal	<u>\$ 16,430.85</u>
Income		
	Dues	\$ 3,908.00
	Donations	3,241.87
	Merchandise	1,295.00
	Total Income	\$ 8,442.87
Expenses		
	Bank Charges	\$ 88.25
	Charitable contributions	900.00
	Insurance	971.00
	Mail fees and postage	184.30
	Michigan filing fee	20.00
	PayPal service fees	71.67
	Printing - Nuthatch and other	179.26
	Programs and field trips	1,208.89
	Publicity	999.37
	Website	320.77
	Young Birders	187.10
	Total Expenses	\$ 5,130.61
	2021 Gain	\$ 3,314.26
	Net Worth as of 12-31-2021	<u>\$ 19,745.11</u>
<i>Prepared by Elaine Ferguson Treasurer</i>		



If you are an Amazon user and would like to help benefit OAS, simply [CLICK HERE](#), add us to your favorite charity list, and then shop!

A percentage of your purchases will be donated to OAS and will help support our organization.

If you aren't using Amazon Smile, try it out. We'll appreciate it!

MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

The 2022 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 21)

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!**

Climate Watch Volunteers Needed!

Climate Watch is a National Audubon Society community science program that explores how North American birds are responding to climate change. The program uses a specific protocol to monitor 12 target bird species, including OAS's own *White-breasted Nuthatch*.

Climate Watch takes place during two distinct seasons each year, winter (January 15 - February 15) and summer (May 15 - June 15). Volunteers survey appropriate habitat within a specific block to conduct 12 5-minute point counts, recording all birds (target and non-target species) seen and heard within 100 meters. Surveys are started in the morning and completed before noon, or started in the afternoon and completed before sunset.

OAS surveys 10 blocks within Oakland County located near Clarkston, Farmington, and Milford. We are looking for volunteers to participate starting in May 2022!

If you are interested in learning more about this important citizen science project, contact Kathleen Dougherty at kad8186@msn.com.

Oakland Audubon depends on the generosity of its members to continue this work to inform science and conservation.

Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS & PROGRAMS

Monthly membership meetings normally held on the second Tuesday of each month (except December, May, July and August) at the First United Methodist Church in Birmingham are on hold. **OAS meetings and programs continue to be offered online via Zoom. The April 12 meeting is tentatively planned to be in-person at the church. Meetings open at 6:30 PM and talks begin at 7:00 PM.** 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 each 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., March 8	7:00 p.m.	Monty and Rose: Chicago’s Piping Plovers	Via Zoom
Tues., April 12	7:00 p.m.	Marsh Bird Monitoring in Michigan	First United Methodist Church (tentative)
Tues., May 10	6:30 p.m.	Nature Walk	E.L. Johnson Nature Center
Tues., June 14	7:00 pm	Wildlife Rehabilitation (Children’s Program)	TBD
Tues., September 13	7:00 pm	Soundscapes	TBD

Bird Quiz Answers for Spring 2022 Quiz on Page 17

This issue’s photo quiz : a) Orange-crowned Warbler, b) Nashville Warbler, c) Tennessee Warbler

Explanation: Note that all three of these warblers lack wingbars.

- a) Generally, yellow-olive overall, but females and immatures can have grayish head; faint broken eye-ring, thin, pointy bill, and yellow undertail coverts when visible.
- b) Small, round-headed warbler with short tail, olive green back and no wing bars, white eye-ring is diagnostic; chestnut crown patch often not seen.
- c) Thin and pointed bill. Yellow-green above with gray head, whitish underside sometimes with yellow wash, more obvious eyebrow.

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.*