



# THE NUTHATCH

[www.oaklandaudubon.org](http://www.oaklandaudubon.org)

## “Plant This...Not That! Attract Birds!”

Jane Giblin

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

Join us for an evening with Jane Giblin from the Wildflower Association of Michigan to talk about native trees, shrubs, and perennial plants birds love. Birds need food and shelter...move beyond lawns and exotic species to create a buffet of benefits to wintering, migrating, and nesting birds. Why native plants? Native plants support life and are essential as host plants for many native insects which are essential food for many birds, especially nesting songbirds.



Follow us on 

## “Falconry in Michigan & the Michigan Hawking Club”

Christopher Martello

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.

Christopher Martello, falconer and president of the Michigan Hawking Club, and Vesper, a 5-year-old Red-tailed Hawk, will join us to talk about the sport of falconry and the mission of the Michigan Hawking Club.



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## “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.



Photos: Banner, Pixaby. Programs, Wildflower Association of Michigan, Michigan Hawking Club, Debbie Jackson (Monarch Watch).

# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

## Spring 2023

Spring brings a pinnacle of birding excitement each year. The pending arrival of all our favorite birds, dressed in their brightest breeding plumages has our excitement at a fever pitch. What is better than spending a day chasing around to see our birds display for us? The anticipation is great and I understand the joy of the season.

Because of this, the board members and I work so hard each year to pack this season full of field trips, program meetings, and community events. We want to help spread the joy of spring as a reminder that nature is our friend and we need to both enjoy it and help it. As you will see in our website and newsletter, this is a very busy season and it keeps the board busy. I hope to see many of you in the field and at events this spring so that you can be part of the season. It always makes us feel great when people take advantage of the work and organizing we do for the season.

Of course, we also promote or participate in a variety of community events (Great Backyard Bird Count, Earth Day events, other educational activities) that are aimed at spreading the word about nature, birds, and about enjoying the community we live in. This takes a serious commitment from the board and is also an opportunity for the membership to pitch in and help us with these activities. I can't stress enough how much work we put in and a little help is always greatly appreciated. When volunteers step up to help on these events, it makes us feel a lot better about our work, indicating that the message we try to spread about having the community involved in its own betterment, is getting through.

Our group has grown since our affiliation with National Audubon and I hope that many of our new members get involved at a level more than membership in National Audubon. It doesn't take much effort to contribute to our work. And the community is the better for this effort.

I hope to see many of our members this spring at our various activities, enjoying nature and spreading the word about birds and our environment. It's best for us and our community, and the success of the organization rests in the hands of its members. See you this spring!!

Don Burlett  
President

## OAS BOARD MEMBERS

### Elected Officers

President	Don Burlett	(330) 697-7735	<a href="mailto:baikaltea13@netzero.net">baikaltea13@netzero.net</a>
Secretary	Doris Applebaum	(248) 542-2506	<a href="mailto:ibis4247@sbcglobal.net">ibis4247@sbcglobal.net</a>
Treasurer	Elaine Ferguson	(248) 470-2212	<a href="mailto:fergusonelaine6@gmail.com">fergusonelaine6@gmail.com</a>
Membership Officer	Jen Benke	(734) 657-7498	<a href="mailto:scubadu9900@yahoo.com">scubadu9900@yahoo.com</a>
Field Trip Officer	Jeff Stacey	(248) 798-0508	<a href="mailto:jdstacey@ameritech.net">jdstacey@ameritech.net</a>
Program Officer	Dave Hoch	(248) 808-3696	<a href="mailto:hochdavid1@gmail.com">hochdavid1@gmail.com</a>

### Appointed Officers

Young Birders Club Rep.	Kathleen Dougherty		<a href="mailto:kad8186@msn.com">kad8186@msn.com</a>
Hospitality Officer	Sue Wing	(586) 382-0203	<a href="mailto:slwing@ameritech.net">slwing@ameritech.net</a>
Publicity & Fundraising	Karen Kessler		<a href="mailto:karenmk@live.com">karenmk@live.com</a>
Web Editor	Hannah Dunbar		<a href="mailto:oddbirdstoonest@gmail.com">oddbirdstoonest@gmail.com</a>
Social Media Administrator	Dan Gertiser	(248) 762-4354	<a href="mailto:dangertiser@comcast.net">dangertiser@comcast.net</a>
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Seven Ponds Rep.	Dr. Greg Gossick		<a href="mailto:ggossickdds@sbcglobal.net">ggossickdds@sbcglobal.net</a>
Conservation/Environment	Greg Petrosky		<a href="mailto:gpetrosky06@gmail.com">gpetrosky06@gmail.com</a>
Advocacy Officer	Greg Harris		<a href="mailto:gbharrisiv@gmail.com">gbharrisiv@gmail.com</a>



### Look Around our Website!

**Greg Petrosky, Conservation/Environment Officer, regularly posts articles on the “[Conservation Page](#)” covering questions like these:**

- ◆ What man-made materials we manufacture and use are the most recycled and which are the least?
  - ◆ What’s all the fuss with the colorful and invasive Spotted Lanternfly?
- ◆ How is Forgotten Harvest, a local food rescue, working to improve our environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions? (upcoming)

## 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 13 - 14.

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 trip details!

[www.oaklandaudubon.org](http://www.oaklandaudubon.org)

Date	Event	Trip Leader(s)
March 18 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Lake Erie Metropark	Mike Mencotti <a href="mailto:mmencotti9@gmail.com">mmencotti9@gmail.com</a>
March 24, 2023 (Friday) 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Stage Nature Center (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty <a href="mailto:kad8186@msn.com">kad8186@msn.com</a>
April 2, 2023 (Sunday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Waterfowl “Wild Card”	Jim Koppin <a href="mailto:jimvkkoppin@yahoo.com">jimvkkoppin@yahoo.com</a>
April 8, 2023 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Stage Nature Center	Kayla Niner <a href="mailto:shad0wc00kiecrumbs@gmail.com">shad0wc00kiecrumbs@gmail.com</a>
April 15, 2023 (Saturday) 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Lake St. Clair Metropark (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty <a href="mailto:kad8186@msn.com">kad8186@msn.com</a>
April 21, 2023 (Friday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Kensington Metropark	Mike Mencotti <a href="mailto:mmencotti9@gmail.com">mmencotti9@gmail.com</a>
April 29, 2023 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Algonac State Park	Don Burlett <a href="mailto:baikaltea13@netzero.net">baikaltea13@netzero.net</a>
May 5, 2023 (Friday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Robert H. Long Nature Center & Heritage Park	Mike Mencotti <a href="mailto:mmencotti9@gmail.com">mmencotti9@gmail.com</a>
May 6, 2023 (Saturday) **See website for details**	Magee Marsh (Ohio)	Don Burlett <a href="mailto:baikaltea13@netzero.net">baikaltea13@netzero.net</a>
May 13, 2023 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Rose Oaks County Park (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty <a href="mailto:kad8186@msn.com">kad8186@msn.com</a>
May 14, 2023 (Sunday) 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM	Oakwoods Metropark	Jeff Stacey <a href="mailto:jdstacey@ameritech.net">jdstacey@ameritech.net</a>
May 20, 2023 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Tawas Point State Park	Jen Benke & Terri Chapdelaine <a href="mailto:scubadu9900@yahoo.com">scubadu9900@yahoo.com</a>
June 3, 2023 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Oak Openings (Ohio)	Don Burlett <a href="mailto:baikaltea13@netzero.net">baikaltea13@netzero.net</a>
June 17 2023 (Saturday) 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM	Rouge Park (Owlets)	Kathleen Dougherty <a href="mailto:kad8186@msn.com">kad8186@msn.com</a>

# Field Trip Reports

## December 3, 2022 - Belle Isle

Leaders: Don Burlett and Jeff Stacey

To say this was a cold and blustery day would be an understatement. With temperatures in the 30's and the wind whipping at 30-50 miles per hour, it was something different. After the rain stopped just after 8 AM, we proceeded to carpool around the island in search of birds. It was heart-warming to have 21 people come out to brave the elements. With the wind blowing across the island, it was tough. We abandoned the Blue Heron Lagoon early because it was almost devoid of ducks. We pushed the date of the trip later than originally planned to help get more ducks, but it didn't work. It seems the lack of frozen water to the north resulted in fewer ducks coming south, even in December.

When we got to the beach on the north side of the island, the howling wind eventually forced everyone to seek shelter. There were just a few ducks on the river, mostly Buffleheads with a smattering of Goldeneyes and other ducks along with lots of Mute Swans. The Peregrine Falcon was on his usual building across the river.



First moments at the beach, leaning into the wind (left), followed by everyone taking shelter (right).

Photo Credits: Don Burlett

We proceeded around the island with just a handful of birds here and there. Later, we walked some of the nature trails to see if any land birds were out and about. We were able to kick up a few sparrows (American Tree, Song, White-throated), a Winter Wren, and Blue Jays along with a nice Bald Eagle that was sitting in a tree right over the trail. He paid no attention to us and enjoyed being partially out of the wind. We also found what seemed to be a Great Horned Owl pellet on the trail under a tree with whitewash on the pavement. We later returned to the Nature Center to find, sadly, no bird feeders up. A few treats from our hospitality folks (Laurie Schubert and Alice Marotti) warmed us after this interesting outing. We recorded 32 species.



Photo Credit: Jeff Stacey

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

# Field Trip Reports

(continued)

## February 5, 2023 - “Wild Card” Gull Trip

Leader: Don Burlett

Seven birders braved chilly but warming weather—it was cloudy and breezy when we arrived at Crosswinds Marsh. Although the gates were locked until nearly 8 AM, we proceeded to check out the frozen ponds for gulls and found them totally absent. The gulls we did see were swirling around above us. These were mostly Ring-billed Gulls, a Herring Gull, and a very nice Iceland Gull. However, with the landfill inactive, the prospects for more gulls were very low.

We proceeded to drive to a nearby field where five different gull species were seen the prior Saturday but, alas, they were not there. We did spot a Northern Harrier flying across the fields along with a couple of Horned Larks. A Bald Eagle cruised over the landfill as we were leaving that area.

Then we drove to Lake Erie Metropark, knowing this was also an area where gulls had been seen. Sadly, the only gulls we found there were Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. These results were consistent with this year’s gull situation – not many gulls and not much variety. Luckily, the lake at Lake Erie Metropark had lots of ducks, geese, swans, and other species. A huge flight of Canvasbacks flew in and we were very impressed with the number of ducks. Along with a handful of Great Blue Herons, swans were abundant.

It turned out to be a decent outing but the gulls were outclassed by raptors, 4 to 3. Maybe next year will yield a few more gulls. The combined total of all stops was 28 species.

## February 10 - 12, 2023 - Weekend Trip to the U.P.

Leader: Don Burlett

On Friday morning, our merry band of birders headed north in search of great winter birds. With just a bit of snow in the upper Lower Peninsula, we easily made it to the U.P. and celebrated with a picture at the Mackinac Bridge.

We quickly got on our way and drove through St. Ignace in search of Bohemian Waxwings. We were greatly rewarded when we found a large flock of between 100 and 200 of these wonderful birds, chattering noisily in the trees and moving from one tree to another. At near midday, they weren’t feeding but socializing. It was a great start to our weekend. We also added a group of Red-winged Blackbirds that seemed to be out of place in the winter.



# Field Trip Reports

(continued)

We then headed north to Rudyard hoping to find Snowy Owls and Snow Buntings. However, the weather gods were set on foiling us. By the time we reached Rudyard, the “Snowy Owl Capital of Michigan,” the winds were howling and it was snowing enough to make visibility a problem. The wind is really a Snowy Owl problem, they don’t like the howling wind. We barely found one young bird at 300 yards and barely ID’ed him. No Snow Bunting to be found. We did get a few ducks, a few swans, some Wild Turkeys, and a few raptors on the way. On our way north, we also got a nice group of Pine Grosbeaks at someone’s feeders and spotted a Northern Shrike near Kinross.



Clockwise: Bohemian Waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulus*); Northern Shrike (*Lanius borealis*); Boreal Chickadee (*Parus hudsonicus*); Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*)

Photo Credits: Jeff Stacey

We stopped at the Dafter Dump later in the afternoon but blizzard-like conditions made it difficult. We did spot a couple of Glaucous Gulls in the mix of Ravens, Bald Eagles, and Herring Gulls floating on the wild wind. We left and went to Dafter where things were pretty dead. We then finished the day by visiting the ferry terminal for Sugar Island, where we found a few ducks and not much else. A tough first day but hope always prevails.

# Field Trip Reports

(continued)

We ended Friday with a traditional stop at the Antlers Restaurant, enjoying the many stuffed animals with an ID contest. Not high-end cuisine but a fun time for everyone.

Saturday arrived with no snow and partly cloudy skies; the winds were calm at the beginning of the day as we headed to Paradise with hopes of seeing a Boreal Chickadee that was visiting a set of feeders. With only Pine Grosbeaks seen on the drive north (except for the always present Ravens), we got there and waited patiently for their arrival. While we were waiting, a group of Ruffed Grouse walked under the nearby trees and Blue Jays joined the foragers here. Finally, the Boreal Chickadee made his appearance and everyone enjoyed this rare bird.

We were hoping for a Canada Jay that had been there the day before but we didn't have all day for him. We are thankful to Susan Saran for her hospitality as she welcomed us to her yard and helped us with spotting. We always enjoy visiting folks who want to share the birds. We then drove back to the east and tried the Rudyard loop again with no success —no Snowy Owls to be found. The howling wind was back and that curtailed their desire to sit out looking for prey. We did get a couple of Rough-legged Hawks, but it was a very tough day for birding.

Saturday night was our visit to the Palace Mexican Restaurant, where we enjoyed cervezas and margaritas to celebrate our life birds for the day.

Sunday morning brought hope of better things. The weather was calm and looked as if we would get some sunshine to help with our cause. On our way to a traditional Sharp-tailed Grouse site, we thought we spotted a woodpecker on a tree, but it turned out to be a Flying Squirrel flying between trees. A new mammal for many on the trip. We proceeded to the grouse site and saw a number of them along the way. We then headed to another home with feeders on which Evening Grosbeaks had been reported; there were several there indeed. We missed an Eastern Meadowlark that was there because shortly after, the homeowners came back home, honked at us, and came out to shoo us away. The opposite of our Boreal Chickadee experience. We then headed to Rudyard with hopes of making up for the first two days and we were overjoyed to see almost a dozen Snowy Owls out and about, perching on poles and buildings looking for meals to make up for two hard days.

After that and having had a good weekend, we headed south toward home. The trips to the U.P. are always different and we just couldn't find any crossbills, siskins, or redpolls this year. But the birds we did see were worth the trip.

We observed 41 species this time around. Maybe next year there will be more treasures to discover. We'll see.



Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*), top; Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*), bottom

Photo Credits: Jeff Stacey



# Oakland Owlets

## Field Trip Reports

### December 9, 2022 - Owlets' CBC at Eagle Valley

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

The Oakland Owlets families and friends participated in the 123<sup>rd</sup> Christmas Bird Count (CBC) at Waste Management's (WM) Eagle Valley Landfill in Orion Township. Eagle Valley is certified through the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC), which sets standards for businesses to create wildlife habitat on their lands.



We gathered at the site's office before birding. Ms. Kathleen Klein, WM's Community Representative, briefly talked about the site, industry safety measures to protect the environment, and the facility's wildlife areas. Questions from the young birders were answered before venturing out on the property. We reviewed the site's restrictions and were provided reflective vests.

People may not associate birding with a landfill, but birds visit the facility regularly. The concentration of birds, in turn, attracts predators to the site. Eagle Valley is appropriately named; it is a site that eagles frequent.



We carpoled along the perimeter road and stopped several times. At each stop, the group walked short distances to listen and look. The weather was cold and windy, so we stayed close to the vehicles.

At the first stop, many gulls were spotted circling the top of the landfill. The flock primarily included Ring-billed Gulls of various ages —gulls mature over several years and as they age, their plumage changes. We also saw American Crows winging away from the site and heard their distinctive calls “caw” “caw.” The

second stop was a mitigated wetland, where a few Mallards were feeding in the open water. In the shrubby edges we were able to see songbirds, including Northern Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, and Black-capped Chickadee.

We travelled about a half mile toward the north end of the property hoping to see more birds. However, except for the gulls, bird activity was slow. In about an hour, we returned to the office area. At the parking area, two Bald Eagles soared overhead along with a Red-tailed Hawk, making the conclusion of the visit memorable. Everyone had a great chance to see both an immature and adult Bald Eagle. The group watched the raptors for some time before leaving.

The eBird checklist for the owlets trip included 15 species. OAS supports Eagle Valley with their WHC certification, so a small team traveled to the top of the landfill to verify the checklist. Other CBC observers for this area continued to bird nearby through the day. The final CBC report in OAS's CBC circle tallied 67 species.

Thank you to **Kathleen Klein** and **WM staff** at Eagle Valley for making this field trip possible.

Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty

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# *Oakland Owlets*

## Field Trip Reports (continued)

**January 28, 2023 - Kensington Metropark**

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

The Oakland Owlets' families and friends visited Kensington Metropark and met at the west boat launch parking lot. A midweek snowstorm had added a half foot of fresh snow onto the trails; the weather was average for a late January day.



We started our birding adventure by setting up a spotting scope on Kent Lake. A long ice floe served as a night resting spot for 21 Sandhill Cranes. The cranes were beginning to stir and moved onto land. Several species of waterfowl were observed in the open water, including Mute Swan, Trumpeter Swan, as well as diving ducks at a distance and dabbling ducks near the shoreline. Everyone took turns using the spotting scope to see the various waterbirds. One birder mentioned seeing a Great Blue Heron in the park, but our group did not find it.

The group moved along the trails from the parking lot towards the Nature Center in search of more birds. Along the boardwalk, at the edge of Wildwing Lake, songbirds sheltered in the brush darted into the open for everyone to see. Kensington is known for songbird handfeeding. Black-capped Chickadees, Song Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, American Tree Sparrows, and even the larger Northern Cardinals approached the group seeking seed handouts. Moving slowly along the boardwalk, we saw some ducks in the sliver of open water on Wildwing Lake, which was otherwise completely frozen. The empty heron nests, prominent in the trees on the islands, were waiting for occupants to return in the spring.



Near the Nature Center, we stopped to try handfeeding birds. This activity brought smiles to everyone. Some birders wanted a special bird to land on their hands, like a Red-bellied Woodpecker. This shy bird required more patience and time for success. Many birders brought their own special seed mixes. Valerie advocated the Costco brand which was packed with peanuts —she was in fact successful. Everyone was focused on watching and waiting for birds to land in their hands. Meanwhile, Wild Turkeys tramped by the group without much notice.



Most of the group walked to the Nature Center, which by late morning was open. Sandhill Crane greeters were stationed near the entrance. Undeterred by people, the Sandhill Cranes waited for fallen seeds. Signs clearly stated, "*Do Not Feed the Sandhill Cranes.*"

Stopping at the building was an opportunity to warm up and view the exhibits along with a group photo opportunity.

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# *Oakland Owlets*

## Field Trip Reports (continued)

The group decided to venture to a bridge east of the Nature Center for a chance to see a Brown Creeper reported there. A short walk to this point proved successful and added another new bird to the checklist as well, a Red-tailed Hawk. Our eBird checklist totaled 29 species.

Several photographers attended this field trip. Kensington Metropark is a unique park with amazing birding opportunities. Birds are accustomed to people; this close contact with birds allows birders to discern important identification features that are challenging to see in other situations.

A special thank you to **Nathan Stouffer** and **Mary Korde** for sharing their photographs. Also, a thank you to **Justin Smith** from Kensington Metropark for helping schedule this field trip. Thanks for all in attendance including our new young birder, **Henry!**



Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty, Mary Korde, and Nathan Stouffer.

### **February 18, 2023 - Great Backyard Bird Count**

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

The Oakland Owlets families and friends gathered at the Johnson Nature Center in Bloomfield Hills to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). This year was the 26<sup>th</sup> year of this four-day global birding event. It was a chilly, but sunny morning with temperatures rising as the day progressed. Birds were singing in response to the increased daylight. We started our hike from the parking lot led by Johnson Nature Center Lead Naturalist, Cass Arsenault.



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## *Oakland Owlets*

### Field Trip Reports (continued)

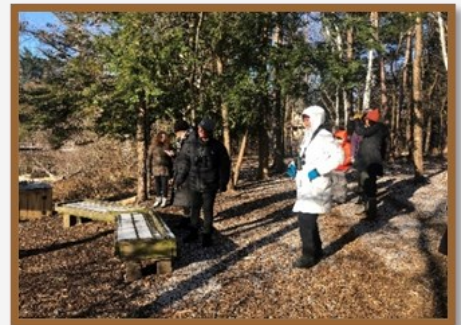
One of the first stops along the trail was the shelter of an animal ambassador at the nature center, a Great Horned Owl. The nature center cares for a few injured animals that are used for educational purposes. Beyond the shelter, we encountered a wild Great Horned Owl that swooped overhead silently. Silent flight is one of the superpowers of owls.

Bird calls and songs filled the air as we approached the big pond. The loudest call was the honking of Canada Geese; it sounded like an entire flock but only one pair was making all the noise. Smaller birds were harder to spot. The repeated “yank yank” of the White-breasted Nuthatch was unmistakable. The White-breasted Nuthatch is a must-see bird on all Owlet field trips. Along the pond’s shoreline we discovered a pair of Mallards. The group eventually reached a tributary of the Rouge River near the northern property border. A Northern Cardinal was singing—one young birder shared a mnemonic he created for the Cardinal’s song, saying it was singing “*Sweetheart*.”

Cass pointed out the prairie opening along the trail, which is maintained for pollinators and grassland birds. Cass noted Eastern Bluebirds are commonly seen in this habitat during warmer months. Instead, the group saw the Bluebird’s cousin, the American Robin (several were dining on berries in the shrubs). We also stopped to see another animal ambassador, a Peregrine Falcon. This up-close view allowed everyone to see the falcon’s key identification features.

At the nature center’s feeding station, three new species were observed, Hairy Woodpecker, White-throated Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird. Young birders also worked on matching bird bills to bird diets during a fun activity. The Owlets report for the GBBC included 22 species.

Greg Petrosky, OAS Conservation/Environment Officer, helped participants make suet log feeders while OAS President, Don Burlett, led public hikes for the GBBC. The Johnson Nature Center, owned and operated by the Bloomfield Hills School District, is open to the public during weekends.



In 2023, Oakland County eBirders reported 70 species during the GBBC. One of the top listers was OAS member Blanche Wicke! The GBBC 2023 results can be accessed here: [Top subregions - World - Great Backyard Bird Count \(ebird.org\)](https://www.ebird.org/gbbc/2023/results)

Thank you to **Cass Arsenault** and the staff at the Johnson Nature Center for their help. Also, thank you to **Don Burlett** and **Greg Petrosky** for supporting the GBBC public event at the Johnson Nature Center.

Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty

# Oakland Owlets Field Trips

## March 2023 - June 2023

**An Evening with Owls – Friday, March 24, 2023, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**  
**Stage Nature Center, Troy**



Owls are amazing birds; they are often challenging to see because many are secretive and nocturnal. These characteristics make them one of the most mysterious birds in the world. Luckily, the Stage Nature Center is home to owls that cannot live in the wild due to disabilities. This trip includes a presentation to learn the facts about Michigan owls and to meet those that live at the nature center. Following the indoor event, we will venture outdoors for a nocturnal hike to explore this natural area and the animals that are active after sunset. Space is limited.

**Early Spring Migrants & More – Saturday, April 15, 2023, 8:30 am - 11:00 am**  
**Lake St. Clair Metropark, Harrison Township**

Life along Lake St. Clair begins to stir in April and it is a great time to see early spring migrants. Lake St. Clair serves as an avian superhighway during migration. The park is also famous for their breeding Great Horned Owls—some years they nest along the trail in a metal tub. We will hike and explore the park in search for birds. Plan to stay afterwards for the Owl Fest, a free public event. Bring binoculars and dress for walking. A Metroparks vehicle permit is required for park entry.



**World Migratory Bird Day Hike – Saturday, May 13, 2023, 8:30 am - 11:00 am**  
**Rose Oaks County Park, Rose Township**



Celebrate world migratory bird day with the Oakland Owlets! In May, birds are moving north to their breeding grounds and resident birds are moving about. Learn about World Migratory Bird Day. This year's theme is water. Rose Oaks is located at the headwaters of the Shiawassee River and it is an ideal place to see water habitats. Plan to hike about two miles. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars. Conservation Steward, Mike Dougherty, will co-lead this hike. An Oakland County Parks vehicle permit or day pass is required for park entry and it needs to be purchased in advance.

(continued on next page)

# Oakland Owlets Field Trips

## March 2023 - June 2023

**Roaming the Rouge – Saturday, June 17, 2023, 8:30 pm - 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.



### **OAS is following the following field trip guidelines:**

1. Pre-registration is required and number of participants is limited.
2. Stay home if you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19.
3. 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](mailto:kad8186@msn.com)*

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

Photo Credits: Kathleen Dougherty and OAS Photo Gallery

# The 123<sup>rd</sup> Christmas Bird Count

Every year the Oakland Audubon Society (OAS) Christmas Bird Count is different and the 2022 edition fit that pattern perfectly. The weather was much better than the previous year, but the overall species count remained the same at 67.\*\*

The 64 participants had to work a little harder than normal to find some usually common species. Gulls were a challenge this year after having two great counts for gulls in a row, but Eastern Bluebirds were found in great numbers. Only two irregular birds were found on the count – a Gray Catbird in section 5 and a Northern Saw-whet Owl in section 8. Unfortunately, no photos were obtained of either species.

After a two year hiatus, the OAS tally was held at Independence Oaks County Park in Clarkston.



Photo Credit: Meredith Meyer

Canada Goose	American Coot	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Mute Swan	Sandhill Crane	White-breasted Nuthatch
Trumpeter Swan	Ring-billed Gull	Brown Creeper
Wood Duck	Herring Gull	Winter Wren
American Black Duck	gull sp.	Carolina Wren
Mallard	Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	Eastern Bluebird
Redhead	Mourning Dove	Hermit Thrush
Ring-necked Duck	Eastern Screech-Owl	American Robin
Lesser Scaup	Great Horned Owl	Gray Catbird
Bufflehead	Barred Owl	European Starling
Common Goldeneye	Northern Saw-whet Owl	Cedar Waxwing
Hooded Merganser	Belted Kingfisher	American Tree Sparrow
Common Merganser	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored)
Red-breasted Merganser	Downy Woodpecker	White-throated Sparrow
Wild Turkey	Hairy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Pileated Woodpecker	Swamp Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	American Kestrel	Northern Cardinal
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Northern Shrike	Common Grackle
Cooper's Hawk	Blue Jay	House Finch
Accipiter sp.	American Crow	Purple Finch
Bald Eagle	Black-capped Chickadee	American Goldfinch
Red-shouldered Hawk	Tufted Titmouse	House Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk		

\*\* [Results compiled by Scott Jennex are posted on our website.](#)

## NOT EVEN “BIG BIRD” MAY BE SAFE FROM WINDOW COLLISION

by Doris Applebaum

Since 1992, the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Canada has been documenting deaths of birds who collide with glass windows. As of 2021, they had a list of 174 different species of birds that had died from these collisions.

Over the years, songbirds and other small species have provided the majority of casualties, though some larger birds are occasionally victims, some as big as hawks or owls.

In 2022, two more species have been added to the list. One fairly large species, a Green Heron, was a bit of a surprise. However, the really big surprise (and “big” hardly does it justice) was a female Wild Turkey. She not only crashed into the window, she actually broke it!

FLAP Canada has been working diligently to decrease the risk to birds by encouraging building owners in Toronto and the surrounding area to make bird-safety improvements to their windows, and to reduce the vegetation that is reflected in their windows, which often fools birds into thinking there is no barrier there. They also encourage building owners to turn off lights at night, especially during spring and fall migration seasons, to avoid confusing night-migrating birds.

Their example has been followed by many other cities in North America, including Detroit. Nevertheless, deaths from collisions continue. In the Toronto area, hundreds (in most years, thousands) of casualties are found each year by volunteers who patrol areas known to be dangerous.

The people at FLAP Canada know that even after 30 years of efforts to educate building owners there is still much more to be done, and they are determined to keep up this good fight.

**Source:** The Fall 2022 issue of “*Touching Down*” newsletter published by [FLAP Canada](#).

### *Editors Note:*

March 15 to May 31 + August 15 to October 31 = migration!

Info on this topic to explore:

- ♥ [FLAP Canada 2022 Bird Species List](#)
- ♥ [Frequently Asked Questions & Common Problems \(from FLAP Canada\)](#)
- ♥ [National Audubon’s Lights Out Program](#)
- ♥ [Why Birds Hit Windows—and How You Can Help Prevent It | All About Birds](#)
- ♥ [Glass Collisions: Preventing Bird Window Strikes | ABC \(abcbirds.org\)](#)



## WHEN FIREWORKS AREN'T FUN

by Doris Applebaum

Many people who own a dog know that fireworks can be very frightening to animals. In this country, the major focus on fireworks is on the Fourth of July, but in Europe fireworks have long been a staple of New Year's celebrations.

Your dog probably gets over its fright once the fireworks are over. However, some researchers in Europe decided to see if wildlife would have any long-term effects from a fireworks barrage. They studied four species of migratory geese (Greater White-fronted, Bean, Barnacle, and Pink-footed) to see how they responded to the massive fireworks on New Year's Eve in Europe. These birds spend the summers in the Arctic but migrate to northern Europe to spend the winter.

It turned out that the geese not only responded to the massive fireworks on New Year's Eve but also showed effects long after the fireworks ended.

More than 340 geese representing the four species were outfitted with GPS transmitters so that their movements could be followed. What the researchers learned was that the geese changed their locations by several miles and flew much higher than usual around New Year's Eve compared to the several days preceding the holiday. Tracking the geese also showed that some individuals flew hundreds of miles in one night, a distance that they would normally fly only during migration.

The disruption to the normal behavior of the geese lasted for about 10 days, during which period they spent more time than usual foraging. The researchers believe that this was an effort to compensate for the extra energy that they had to use up because of the fireworks.

One idea of how to avoid this problem is to ban fireworks near bird sanctuaries and other major roosting areas. However, when such a ban was instituted in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in all countries of Western Europe, two of the four species showed behavior indicating that fireworks were used anyway. It's believed that a lot of people ignored the temporary ban, so a permanent ban would probably not be successful.

It's obvious that what is fun for people can be a headache for animals, which unfortunately is not much of a surprise.

**Source:** An article in the *Anthropocene Weekly Science* e-mail on December 21, 2022.

## THE UNUSUAL FIGHT TO THE FINISH

by Doris Applebaum

It happened in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. A man looked out of his cabin in the deep woods and saw an eastern chipmunk in a tussle with an eastern garter snake. Fortunately for the chipmunk, the snake was only about 14-15 inches long.

As the man watched, the snake wrapped itself around the chipmunk but, in the end, it was the chipmunk that survived. It bit the snake and eventually killed it, eating the head. Then it took the snake away, perhaps to save it for another meal.

Chipmunks are mainly vegetarians, but they are known to eat insects or other invertebrates, even sometimes a small bird, but having a snake on its menu is something that is not seen very often. The incident in the U.P. may very well have been a first. Fortunately, the man was able to take photographs to verify what happened.

**Source:** November 2022 issue of *Natural History* magazine.

## **NATURE NOTES**

*By Allen Chartier*

**Do you want this column to continue? 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](mailto:amazilia3@gmail.com)**

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

from Don Burlett

### [New species of owl discovered in the rainforests of Africa's Príncipe Island \(phys.org\)](https://phys.org)

The discovery of a new species evidences that exploration by professionals and amateur ornithologists is making headway showing the undiscovered biodiversity of our planet. This is an extraordinary example of birds moving through time to locations we didn't think about. A fun read with cute pictures.

### [Rescuing and rehabilitating U.P. raptors \(secondwavemedia.com\)](https://secondwavemedia.com)

A nice article about dedicated raptor rehab folks in the U.P. It's good to read about local folks doing good work for our birds.

### [New map of 'stopover hotspots' provides insights for conservation of eastern US migratory landbirds \(phys.org\)](https://phys.org)

This article discusses the study of birds in migration using weather radar and its manipulation to provide data on birds in migration. By looking more closely at radar data, researchers are able to pinpoint where birds are stopping over and provide a better picture of migration and stopover habitat. Surprisingly, small patches of forest that normally don't support bird populations are very useful for rest and refueling during migration. Interesting article.

## *Winter Birds* — by Meredith Meyer



Top: Red-bellied Wood Pecker (female & male) and Northern Cardinal (female) at Kensington Metropark.  
Bottom: Fox Sparrow, Downy Woodpecker, and White-throated Sparrow at Johnson Nature Center.

# BIRD ID QUIZ

(Spring - 2023)



A) \_\_\_\_\_



B) \_\_\_\_\_



C) \_\_\_\_\_

**For the answers and explanation for this issue's quiz see Page 23**

**No Peeking!**

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### February 2, 2023

Treasurer Elaine Ferguson reported that our finances are in excellent condition.

We have two new field trip leaders —Kayla Niner and Jennifer Benke, OAS Membership Officer. Very welcome additions to the thin ranks of volunteers for these important events.

Our Christmas Bird Count results are on the National Audubon website. This information used to be on the OAS website, but not recently. It will now be on our website again.

Get ready to shop. We have a new supply of winter hats and ball caps available for purchase.

Our Facebook page receives about 2,700 visits each month. To the board's surprise, typically 74% of visitors are women and only 26% are men.

Alice Marotti presented her final report, as she turned over the Hospitality Officer position to Sue Wing, who was welcomed to the board.

Seven Ponds Nature Center had very successful holiday auction and Winterfest events.

Conservation/Environment Officer Greg Petrosky decided to help reduce the appalling amount of food that is wasted each year and ends up in landfills, increasing greenhouse gases like methane. He is volunteering with Forgotten Harvest, where he picks up donated food that is just past its "sell by" date but is still perfectly good, and delivers it to various food pantries, where it is put to use immediately instead of going to a landfill. He urged everyone to do what they can to reduce food waste.

Our new projector was purchased and is working well. This will allow us to have our in-person meetings available on Zoom also.

OAS will again do wildlife surveys at Stellantis Headquarters in Auburn Hills this year, to help them retain their prestigious "Wildlife at Work" certification from the Wildlife Habitat Council.

Doris Applebaum  
Secretary



Photo Credit: Meredith Meyer

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY 2022 INCOME STATEMENT (unaudited)

### Assets (as of 1-1-2022)

Citizens Bank and PayPal \$ 19,641.66

### Income

Dues 4,795.00

Donations 4,604.09

Merchandise 350.98

**Total Income \$ 9,750.07**

### Expenses

Bank Charges \$ 36.00

Charitable contributions 900.00

Insurance 994.00

Mail fees and postage 340.00

Michigan filing fee 20.00

PayPal service fee 112.27

Printing - Nuthatch and other 179.26

Programs and field trips 1,257.97

Publicity 390.00

Rent 300.00

Website 385.81

Young Birders 392.81

**Total Expense \$ 5,247.56**

**Net Income \$ 4,502.63**

**Net Worth as of 12-31-2022 \$ 24,144.17**

*Prepared by  
Elaine Ferguson, Treasurer*

# MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

## Welcome New Members!



Mark Isken & Family, Prateek Kalyankar, Karen Krupp, Carolyn Ludwig, Susan McGaw, Lauren Niemiec, Karen Rich, Rich Rustad & Family, Brenda Shufelt, Jeffrey & Amy Shulak, Carol Trupiano, Sally Walker, Sue Wing

**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 24)

**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](mailto:scubadu9900@yahoo.com).

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

## Your Membership At Work

***Thank-You*** letters were received from the *Michigan Nature Association* and the *Blue Heron Headwaters Conservancy* for donations OAS provided.

**Thank you for helping OAS support local conservation-minded organizations.**

## 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](http://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., March 14	7:00 pm	Plant This...Not That! Attract Birds!	Zoom
Tues., April 11	7:00 pm	Falconry in Michigan & the Michigan Hawking Club	First United Methodist Church
Tues., June 13	7:00 pm	Monarchs - Missing From Your Garden?	First United Methodist Church

### Bird Quiz Answers for Spring 2023 Quiz on Page 19

This issue’s photo quiz: a) Mallard (female), b) Gadwall (female), c) American Black Duck (female)

Explanation: Female ducks can be a difficult set of birds to ID. However, there are differences that are easy enough to learn.

- a) These are good sized ducks, they have a prominent dark line through the eye, brownish belly with mottled brown and tan markings. The bill is orange/yellow and black, often with the tip colored yellow/orange. Orange legs are also a key; there is variation within Mallards so this may also make this a difficult ID.
- b) Very similar to female Mallard, but the facial pattern is not as strong and it is smaller than Mallard. Shows a white triangular patch on the secondaries, but this can be harder to see and less obvious than on males (as seen in the picture). Bill is most often dark down the center with yellow on the sides.
- c) This bird is very similar to female Mallards, the body is darker than for Mallard with dark feathers with light fringe. The bill is usually a solid color, yellowish to dark olive; the facial pattern is very similar to Mallard. Watch out for hybrids, since they frequently hybridize with Mallards.

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.*