



A Detroit Audubon Publication

Summer 2022

Flyway



The Joy of Bird Feeding

The Hummingbirds Are Here!

Spring Programs Bloom in 2022

Jim Bull: Volunteer of the Century

Diane Cheklich Wins Petoskey Prize

Butterfly Watching in Eliza Howell Park

Flyway

A publication of Detroit Audubon

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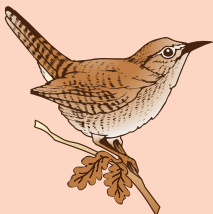
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The mission of Detroit Audubon is to foster the appreciation and conservation of birds and the environment we share. Our three mission areas are: Education, Research, and Action.



MYSTERY BIRD

Can you identify this bird from looking at the top of its head?
(A most unusual view!) Hint: we usually see it only in the first three weeks of May. Photo by Bruce Szczechowski

On the Cover: Male Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Scott Bowdich

Contents

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|
| 1 | Mystery Bird | 11 | Late Spring-Early Summer Nature Gallery |
| 2 | Shorts | 17 | Spring Programs Bloom in 2022 |
| 3 | The Hummingbirds Are Here! | 18 | The Joy of Bird Feeding |
| 5 | 2022 Upcoming Programs | 19 | 2020-2022 Volunteer Recognition List |
| 6 | Diane Cheklich Wins Petoskey Prize | 21 | Mystery Bird Revealed |
| 7 | Jim Bull: Volunteer of the Century | 22 | The Lovely, Likable Lotus |
| 9 | Butterfly Watching in Eliza Howell Park | | |

EDITOR'S NOTE: Because an article about Jim Bull is a big feature in this issue, Rebecca Minardi is the guest editor-in-chief. Jim Bull will be back as editor-in-chief for the fall issue.

SHORTS:



NEWS: Rebecca Minardi, one of our proofreaders and the editor of this issue, has been appointed as Book and Media Reviews Editor of *Birding* magazine through the American Birding Association (ABA). Congratulations!!!

RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT (RAWA) PASSES U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON JUNE 14th

This could be a game changer for the 12,000 species identified by state wildlife agencies in their Wildlife Action Plans as needing conservation assistance. These species may be getting help big time to the tune of \$1.4 billion allocated for states and tribes to implement their wildlife plans. While the Endangered Species Act has been a great success, one of the drawbacks of the current system is that once a species recovers, funding for conservation measures for that species dries up. Our very own Kirtland's Warbler, which was taken off the endangered species list in November 2019, still needs conservation measures to continue in order to sustain its population and make sure it never goes back on the list. This act could assure those measures continue. Now, the bill needs to pass in the senate as well before it can be signed by President Biden. You can help by letting our senators, Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, know your views on this act. Also encourage friends in other states to contact their senators as well. For more information on RAWA, please go to the fall 2019 edition of this magazine, pages 7-8.

TO OUR AMAZING AND DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS,

Thank you.

Detroit Audubon was founded by volunteers in 1939 and though now boasts a small staff, we continue to rely on the energy, time, and talents of our many volunteers and partners every year to sustain our outreach and conservation efforts. We could not do the work that we do without the dedication and creativity of our many volunteers.

In 2021, our dedicated volunteers committed over 600 hours by leading field trips, helping support our research projects, presenting webinars, and much more. In 2022, our volunteers have already committed over 500 hours by the end of May. We are able to accomplish all that we do because we are a bird- and nature-loving community that strives to help.

As a sign of our gratitude for all that our partners and volunteers do for us, we want to invite you to our Volunteer & Partner Appreciation Event on Saturday, August 27th from 10:30 am to 1 pm at Palmer Park. This year, we will be bringing back our Volunteer & Partner Appreciation Event in a new way with outdoor activities, food, speakers, awards, and a picture presentation. Whether you have been a volunteer or partner in the past two years, are scheduled to volunteer in the coming weeks, or are interested in the future, we would love to have you attend our event. A flier will be emailed out soon to our volunteers and partners; if you have not already received one but would like to attend, please email Brittany at programs@detroitaudubon.org.

DETROIT AUDUBON PRESENT AT STATE OF THE STRAIT CONFERENCE ON MAY 11, 2022 AT UM DEARBORN

Every two years scientists and concerned citizens from the United States and Canada gather to assess the state of our strait, the Detroit River. Détroit (pronounced *de-twah*) in French means "the strait," which is a connecting channel between two larger bodies of water. Our international water body, the Detroit River, really isn't a river at all as its French name implies; it is a connecting channel! What two water bodies does it connect? Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair.

Each year a different theme is chosen, and the conference alternates between the two counties. In 2017, Detroit Audubon was one of the principal coordinators of the conference, which was an Urban Bird summit held at the Detroit Zoo. While the conference usually happens every two years, due to COVID, strait guardians gathered together for the first time in three years!

This year's theme was an update on contaminated sediment remediation. Maybe it doesn't sound very exciting, but it is vitally important to birds, wildlife, and people. While the Detroit River is a clean water success story for the most part, contaminated sediments are still a huge problem. We heard about plans to contain toxic sediments along the Riverwalk downtown and in front of the new Ralph C. Wilson Park in front of the downtown U.S. Post Office building. Creative planning and funding can often join work to contain or restore contaminated sediment with other projects to increase or improve bird and wildlife habitat and to provide for greater access to the river corridors' natural wonders for people in the area and tourists as well. One theme we heard over and over is to be visionary in designing projects and planning how to fund them and to think big. Thinking bigger can often lead to projects that attract more funds and are more likely to get implemented. It may seem counterintuitive, but there is solid data to back this up so it is sage advice to follow!



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You'll have access to all the products sold by Amazon at the same prices, but if you sign up via their Smile site, Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase amount to a charity of your choice. If you choose Detroit Audubon, as we hope, you will help birds every time you make a purchase at no cost to you whatsoever. So, why not sign up today?



The Hummingbirds are Here!

By Diane Cheklich

This year I saw my first hummingbird on May 12th, so that was a sign to start writing this article! Renowned natural historian Sir David Attenborough has called hummingbirds “the stars of the bird world.” And if you’ve ever seen one you know why! They are beautiful, charismatic little birds with lots of personality.

Worldwide, there are over 300 species of hummingbirds. The smallest hummingbird, the Bee Hummingbird, is just over 2 inches long and found in Cuba. The largest hummingbird, aptly named the Giant Hummingbird, is 9 inches long(!) and lives in the Andes. More than 12 species of hummingbirds can be found in North America, but here in Michigan we only have one, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. This makes it easy to ID them—if you live in Michigan and see a hummingbird, you know it’s a Ruby-throated!

Our Ruby-throated Hummingbirds do indeed have ruby red throat feathers, while their head and body feathers are mostly green. The red throat feathers, called “gorgets,” are iridescent and are only found on the males. The males flash their brilliant gorgets to attract mates and to defend their territories.

In addition to their gorgets, hummingbirds have many other amazing physical characteristics. They only weigh as much as a penny, but fly over 4,000 miles from their wintering grounds in Central America to Michigan. And when they fly, they beat their wings 80 times per second. They burn a lot of calories with all this flying—in fact hummingbirds have

the highest metabolism of any living creature—so they need to feed every 15 minutes!

You might be thinking, “if hummingbirds need to eat every 15 minutes, how do they get any sleep?”

When hummingbirds sleep, they slow their metabolism down so much that they enter a state of torpor, which is almost like hibernating.

Their heart rate slows, their breathing slows, and their body temperature decreases. It is common for a sleeping hummingbird in torpor to hang upside down from its nighttime perch.

Hummingbird nests are about two inches across. They lay 1-3 tiny eggs that are about the size of a Tic Tac mint! They incubate the eggs for 12-14 days, then the babies hatch. Once they hatch, the baby hummingbirds are ready to fly in about three weeks.

Hummingbirds eat insects and nectar. Their long beaks allow them to get nectar from inside long tubular flowers, and they are mostly attracted to red, pink, and orange flowers.

So, if you want to see hummingbirds in your own yard, plant native flowers like red columbine, cardinal flower, bee balm, butterfly weed, or Joe Pye weed.

It’s such a treat to see hummingbirds in your yard! But if you do invite them



At left/below, male and female Ruby-throated Hummingbirds by Scott Bowdich

Below left, hummingbird nest by Margaret Baxter

At right, female Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Scott Bowdich



into your yard with the native flowers that they like, please make sure to remove any hazards that could endanger these sweet birds:

- If you have a pet cat, don't let your cat outdoors—cats are responsible for killing over two billion birds each year.
- If you have windows that reflect the sky or trees, birds will think those reflections ARE the sky or trees and will fly into the window, causing injury or death. Hummingbirds are actually quite susceptible to window collisions. Fortunately, there are things you can do to break up those reflections and reduce the chance of bird-window collisions:

- Install your screens on the outside of the window instead of the inside.
- Or you can use products like those from Acopian Bird Savers, CollidEscape, and Feather Friendly, which are window treatments designed to break up reflections and prevent bird collisions.

Taking steps like these to protect the safety of hummingbirds will help ensure that you can continue to enjoy them for many years to come.

*Leucistic
Red-tailed
Hawk at
Elmwood
Cemetery
by Brittany
Leick*



2022 Upcoming Programs

People of all ages, genders, cultures, experience levels, and walks of life love to go birding. With that in mind, we have a wide range of events we are planning for 2022.

We will now be listing our field trips with these experience levels: Beginner level (B), Intermediate level (I), Experienced level (E), or All Experience levels (A). Any and all experience levels are invited to attend our field trips, but for those interested we will be offering field trips with experience levels listed.

Go to www.detroitaudubon.org/birding/field-trips/ to learn more and to sign up! Detroit Audubon Chapter members receive priority registration. Please email us at staff@detroitaudubon.org if you have questions regarding these field trips or your membership status. In order for us to notify you about a field trip prior to a public announcement, make sure we have your email address. Here are the field trips so far, but there could be pop-up field trips as well, so keep checking our website or our Facebook page.

Color Key: Field Trips / [Webinars](#) / [Volunteer Programs](#) / [Kids' Programs](#) / [Special Event](#)

July

Sat. July 16 - [Bird Watcher's Garden Family Program](#)

Tue. July 19 - [The Great Lakes Way Webinar](#)

\$ Sat. July 23 - Eliza Howell Park: Wildflower & Butterfly Walk

Sat. July 30 - Corrado Park: Butterfly, Bird & Bee Walk

August

Fri. Aug. 5 - Beginner Birders Field Trip (B)

Sat. Aug. 6 - Pointe Mouillee Driving Birding Event (I/E)

[Thurs. Aug. 11 - Autumn Skies: Hawk Migration at Lake Erie Metropark Webinar](#)

\$ Sat. Aug. 13 - Elmwood Cemetery Bird & History Walk (B/I)

Sat. Aug. 13 - Milliken State Park Birding Walk (B/I)

Sat. Aug. 20 - Plants, Bugs and Birds Prairie Walk at Rouge Park (B/I)

[Sat. Aug. 20 - Bird Watcher's Garden Family Program](#)

Wed. Aug. 24 - Wayne State Campus Urban Birding Field Trip (B)

[Sat. Aug. 27 - Volunteer & Partner Appreciation Event](#)

September

\$ Sat. Sep. 3 - Point Pelee Field Trip (I/E)

Sun. Sep. 4 - Beginner Birders Field Trip (B)

Thu. Sep. 8 - Wayne State Campus Urban Birding Field Trip (B)

\$ Sat. Sep. 10 - Elmwood Cemetery Bird & History Walk (B/I)

\$ Sat. Sep. 10 - Lake St. Clair Metropark Field Trip (I/E)

[\\$ Sun. Sep. 18 - Birds, Bikes & Wines Bike Tour in Traverse City](#)

Fri. Sep. 23 - Birds & Poetry Program

Sat. Sep. 24 - Swift Night Out

[Thu. Sep. 29 - How to Start Birding Part 2: Equipment & Knowhow](#)

Diane Cheklich Wins Petoskey Prize

By Rebecca Minardi



We are incredibly excited to announce that Detroit Audubon board member and friend of the birds Diane Cheklich has been awarded the 2022 Petoskey Prize for Environmental Leadership by the Michigan Environmental Council.

Diane has been at the forefront of the Detroit environmental activist scene for years. Everything she does, from her art to her work to her volunteering, is about protecting the environment. As a promoter of small-scale solar energy with her company D2 Solar, a filmmaker whose pieces focus on conservation (her most recent film, *Pheasants of Detroit*, premiered at the 2022 Freep Film Festival and won the Hometown Talent Award for the best Michigan-based director of a festival documentary), and an activist working to keep Belle Isle natural and for the people, Diane has a clear passion for the environment. But her work with Detroit Audubon is where Diane has especially made a big difference for birds.

After joining the board in 2015, Diane quickly jumped at the chance to work with the Detroit Parks and Recreation Department to convert abandoned park parcels into native grasslands with spaces for neighbors to walk, relax, and enjoy nature. Over the past seven years, Diane has worked tirelessly with volunteers, community members, and Detroit Audubon to transform eight acres across five Detroit parks into beautiful meadows of native plants. From the beginning Diane made it clear that the only way this transformation were to happen would be if each of the parks' neighbors wanted these abandoned parks to become natural spaces. Therefore, Diane set out on a mission of outreach, connection, and listening. Through holding community forums, going door-to-door in park neighborhoods, meeting with city officials, collaborating with community organizations, grant writing, and partnering with conservation and reclamation experts, Diane made it her charge to bring more green

space back to the city she calls home. In 2019 the first park, Callahan, was officially converted to grassland. Today it truly is a site to behold. Almost immediately, native birds and insects returned, and neighbors enjoy walking its trails, sitting on benches, and checking out books from the free nature library. The space is peaceful and alive with all manner of species.

That was just the beginning. Since then, four other Detroit parks have been converted for a total of eight acres of native meadows; four more acres will be planted in 2022. Throughout this process, Diane consistently worked to make sure these spaces were truly wanted by the neighbors adjacent to the land. By hosting park cleanups, bird house-building workshops, and bird-watching walks, Diane has taken care to make sure these parks remain community owned, cared for, and enjoyed. Her passion for this project, dubbed Detroit Bird City, is evident through her determined efforts to convert more vacant land despite many hurdles. Diane was an obvious winner for the Petoskey Prize as she is a clear example of a volunteer activist whose outstanding grassroots environmental leadership is marked by commitment, creativity, and courage. Detroit Bird City has been inspiring others throughout metro Detroit to convert more land into natural spaces for the species that so desperately need more habitat. Diane is absolutely making a difference in our community, both for the people who live here, and for the native species that share our home.

Diane will be awarded the Petoskey Prize at Michigan Environmental Council's 24th Annual Environmental Awards Celebration on July 21, 2022, from 6 to 8 pm at Eastern Market in Detroit. Join us in celebrating her!

Above, Diane Cheklich from Detroit Audubon, and Callahan Park by Ava Landgraf



Jim Bull: Volunteer of the Century

by Rebecca Minardi

As Jim Bull tells it, he has been a part of Detroit Audubon since before birth; his parents met on a Detroit Audubon Society bird walk, and the rest is history. No one lives, breathes, and advocates more for birds than Jim. I have known Jim for almost eight years from when

he first offered to drive me to a Sandhill Crane migration spot during a field trip. Soon after we met, I asked if I could join Detroit Audubon's board because his enthusiasm for the organization was infectious. I've been a board member ever since. In that time, it has been thrilling to watch the organization bloom during his tenure as board president and then in the dozens of other roles he has now. I have never met anyone more devoted to any cause than Jim is to Detroit Audubon.

Sara Srinivasan, former Detroit Audubon program coordinator and current board member, sees Jim as "a visionary, big-picture thinker whose leadership has transformed our organization and helped to make it what it is today: an organization that unifies the human and natural communities to elevate both." She continues with highlighting how this leadership has "prioritized diversity, inclusion, and accessibility to people of all backgrounds and ability levels." Sara notes that Jim is "one of the most open, considerate, humble conservation leaders I know. I am proud to call him a friend and a role model, and I thank him for everything he does to inspire others, including me."



Jim has filled many roles at Detroit Audubon over the years. As a child in the 1960s, he helped staff Detroit Audubon's booth at the Cobo Hall Flower Show with his father, and his whole family staffed Detroit Audubon's bookstore at the National Audubon Wildlife films shown at Detroit's Rackham Auditorium. In grad school at MSU in the late 1970s, he would do three days of programming for the annual Memorial Day Weekend Spring Campout. Since the late 1980s, Jim has been on the board of Detroit Audubon and has been president three times. No one has been connected with Detroit Audubon longer than Jim. Throughout his decades of leadership and service he has given countless hours to the organization (he currently logs about 900 volunteer hours a year). He leads field trips, organizes events, connects with donors, edits the beautiful publication you are reading now, hosts trainings and webinars, and plans programming.

It is primarily thanks to Jim that Detroit Audubon is where it is today: housed in the heart of Detroit with program coordinators widely connected throughout the region. When I joined the board in 2015, we had a small office in Southfield with a part-time staff and little outreach and programming. Jim saw a bigger future for the organization, one where we were front and center in the Detroit conservation movement; engaging with citizen scientists, students, and nature-lovers; and helping to bring about a more bird friendly city for all species. Diane Cheklich, Detroit Audubon board member, admires Jim's "depth of knowledge about birds and how he uses that knowledge to advocate for birds." She continues by listing some of his achievements: "He participated in the successful

conservation of Michigan's Kirtland's Warbler, he signed Detroit Audubon on to the Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds, he advocated for an Environmental Impact Study to determine the effect of Detroit's Grand Prix race on Belle Isle's wildlife, and he successfully lobbied against legislative measures that would allow the hunting of birds like Mourning Doves and Sandhill Cranes." Diane sees Jim as a true champion for Michigan's birds.



In part thanks to Jim, we are well connected throughout the region with other conservation organizations, volunteers, and communities. In fact, many of our largest donors are involved specifically because of Jim's tireless outreach. Our budget has grown by leaps and bounds through his conversations with funders and friends. Tom McKarns, another Detroit Audubon board member, described Jim as "the scientific soul of Detroit Audubon for as long as I have known him." He continued: "His birding knowledge and general ecology and habitat knowledge have made him a sought out guide for many who enjoy birding. Jim's ability to impart the excitement of birding and to interact with major donors makes him an

invaluable member of the team at Detroit Audubon. His editorial skills in putting together the Flyway, together with his countless donated hours of service to our organization have distinguished him as our Most Valuable Player."

As a professor at Wayne County and Macomb Community Colleges for decades, Jim is a passionate educator whose love for the outdoor world truly inspires others to love and care for the environment. Through his work both in education and through Detroit Audubon, Jim really does not stop. Because of him, birds have a better chance at continuing to survive and thrive throughout our region. Detroit Audubon is ever so lucky to count Jim as a volunteer, leader, and champion. It is difficult to picture the organization where it is today without him behind it.

I'll end this with an anecdote from Jack Smiley, the only person who has been on the Detroit Audubon board longer than Jim.

"Many years ago, at one of Detroit Audubon's traditional campouts at Camp Mahn-Go-Tah-See, Jim invited a number of people to join him on a nighttime search for owls. Jim led the group into a small clearing and then made several imitations of the "who cooks for you" call. Two faint responses could be heard in the distance. Those responses grew louder and louder until two Barred Owls appeared in the trees above us. The owls excitedly called back and forth to each other and a third owl quickly joined in. Their raucous calls echoed through the treetops. Everyone was delighted to get such close-up views of these remarkable birds. I'm sure that Jim was also thrilled to see the owls but, ever the teacher, he seemed most pleased that he was able to introduce so many to such a memorable experience."

Jim, we thank you!

L-R from top: Jim banding a Common Tern chick at age 8 on Bob-Lo Island.

Jim leading a Kirtland's Warbler field trip after the 1980 fire.

Jim Bull with Michelle Cote at our Spring Campout at Camp Mahn-Go-Tahsee.

With Wayne County Commissioner Ilona Varga as she presents Jim with the Year of the Bird Proclamation in 2018 on the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Jim leading a Belle Isle field trip in 2018.

With Rep. Rashida Tlaib, her son, and Ava Landgraf, our Research Coordinator.



Butterfly Watching in Eliza Howell Park

Story and photos by Leonard Weber

Anyone interested in local butterfly watching might consider a July visit to Detroit's Eliza Howell Park.

Each year, I spend many enjoyable hours during the warm days of summer walking among the meadow/prairie wildflowers in the park. I return frequently, both to admire the variety and beauty of the flowers and to observe the many insects they attract.

While bees, wasps, flies, and beetles are all of interest, nothing seems to compare with butterflies. They are the insects that can pull my attention away from whatever else I am observing. Delicate, colorful, often large, they alight on brightly blooming flowers and present an almost irresistible invitation to be admired.

I usually see 30 or more butterfly species annually in the park, not counting some of the small ones that I am not able to identify. It is not just the variety that makes butterfly watching so enjoyable in the wildflower field. It is also the opportunity to get close-up looks when they are nectaring and to get photos without a long-distance lens. (All the photos here were taken with a cell phone camera.)

I sometimes spend part of my watching time standing quietly near the flower species that the butterflies especially like. Purple Coneflower in full bloom seems to be the most successful in attracting butterflies. Wild Bergamot, Joe Pye Weed, and Queen Anne's Lace are other flowers that I regularly check.

Some butterflies (such as Mourning Cloak) have a short flight time in the summer and some (Common Buckeye, for example) are more southern and drift north only later in the season, but many of the most colorful species are around throughout the summer flower season.

Eliza Howell Park, a public park, is a great place to visit for midsummer

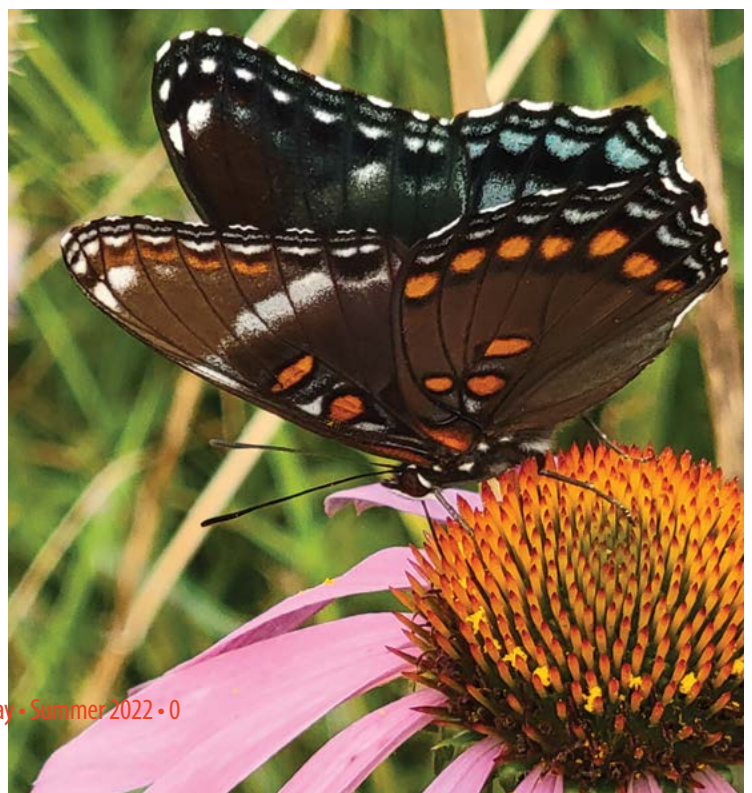
butterfly watching. My favorite flower patch is very accessible (close to the road) and hard to miss when the flowers are in bloom. Sunny afternoons are often the best times. One can just drop by; it is not necessary to come as part of a group. For those who prefer to be part of a Detroit Audubon field trip, this year's is scheduled for Saturday, July 23.

Visitors should remember that appropriate clothing is recommended for walking among plants at this time of the year. There is the possibility that chiggers and ticks might be present. For many of us, taking the effort to be prepared is a small price to pay for the rewards.


I am writing this in early May when I am enjoying the colorful warblers migrating north. Two and a half months later, I expect a similar thrill when the butterfly season peaks.




Counterclockwise from top left: Monarch on Ironweed, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail on Joe Pye Weed, Common Buckeye on Goldenrod, Red Spotted Purple on Purple Coneflower, and Great Spangled Fritillary on Bergamot



LATE SPRING–EARLY SUMMER NATURE GALLERY

A male Scarlet Tanager is perched on a thin branch, facing right. It has a vibrant red head and neck, a black wing, and a bright orange-red body. The background is a soft-focus green forest.

SCARLET TANAGER. This male “black-winged red bird” is a real standout of our avifauna. They live for eight to nine months of the year in the tropical rainforests of Central and South America. The female is greenish with darker greenish wings. They nest in deep woodlands. With forest fragmentation they are suffering from a steep rise in cowbird parasitism. Their song has been described as sounding like an American Robin with a hoarse throat. Their “chick-burr” call is also distinctive. Photo taken at Pointe Mouillee by Bruce Szczechowski.

A Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher is perched on a thick, brown branch, facing right. It has a slender, grayish-blue body with a white eye ring and a long, dark tail. The background is a soft-focus green forest.

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER. This small, slender gray bird sports a white eye ring and a long tail with white outer feathers. It often announces itself with its high-pitched buzzy song. Photo taken at Pointe Mouillee by Bruce Szczechowski.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT. The male is easily identified by its black mask and bright yellow throat, but its loud “witchity witchity witchity” song makes it more likely to be heard than seen. Photo by Bruce Szczechowski.



NORTHERN PARULA. We see these colorful warblers only in May on their way north to the Upper Peninsula or Canada. They also nest south of us and all along the East Coast but skip all of the Lower Peninsula, northwest Ohio, northern Indiana, and Illinois. Photo by Bruce Szczechowski.



BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER. In both males and females look for the “white hanky” in the back pocket—that white spot on the wings. Photo by Bruce Szczechowski

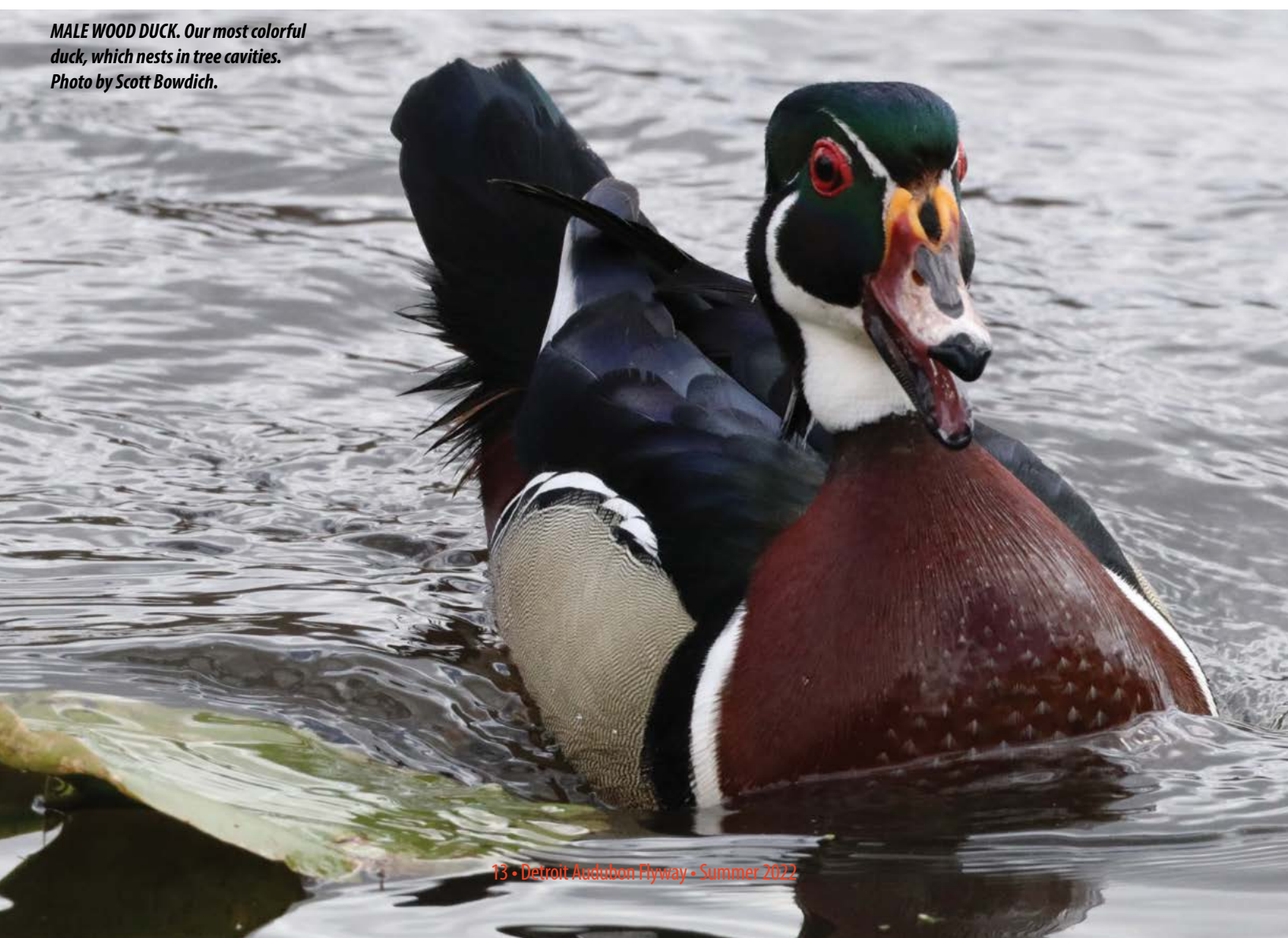


TREE SWALLOW. Iridescent blue and green above and pure white below, these are striking birds whether perched or in the air. They simply glow if the light hits them just right. Photo taken at Pointe Mouillee by Bruce Szczechowski.



GREAT BLUE HERON IN FLIGHT. Herons fly with their necks folded back in an “S” shape, unlike cranes, which fly with their necks stretched out straight. Great Blue Herons are usually seen wading in ponds, lakes, or streams looking for fish or crayfish to spear for a meal. They nest high up in trees, on small branches that do not look like they could support these heavy, gangly birds. Colonies can be huge—we’ve counted about 150 nests in the colony on Stony Island, looking east from the observation platform at the foot of Macomb Street on Grosse Ile. Photo by Chris Wlodkowski.

MALE WOOD DUCK. Our most colorful duck, which nests in tree cavities.
Photo by Scott Bowdich.





LESSER YELLOWLEGS. Note the shorter beak and smaller size than the Greater Yellowlegs. They are easiest to identify when both species are present for comparison. Photo taken by Bruce Szczechowski at Pointe Mouillee.



ABOVE, SORA. This rail, if it comes out in the open at all, is unmistakable, with its bright yellow bill and its distinctive whistle of a call. Photo taken at Pointe Mouillee by Bruce Szczechowski.



AMERICAN AVOCET. A striking western shorebird with that chestnut neck and long upturned bill, the American Avocet has been showing up quite regularly to Michigan. They often nest with Black-necked Stilts. Since that species has now nested in Michigan, will avocets start breeding here as well? We'll see. Photo taken at Pointe Mouillee by Bruce Szczechowski.



DUNLIN. An orangish brown back and black belly identify this bird in breeding plumage. Often seen in flocks of 100 or more in migration, when they seem to fly almost as one organism. Photo taken at Pointe Mouillee by Bruce Szczechowski.



BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON. Well named, they are most active while feeding, starting at dusk and on into the night. Listen for their loud "wok" calls as they feed or fly into a feeding area. They nest in shrubs, but can also nest on the ground or up to 150 feet high in trees. There is a well-known wild colony at the Detroit Zoo. It is seen feeding regularly in most marshy habitats. Photo by Emily Phillips.

GREEN HERON. This heron is about 15-20 inches long and most colorful for a heron. Like all herons it wades in the water looking for fish to stab, but it sometimes swoops down from perches in trees as well. They need much shallower water than other herons, so further north they like to frequent Beaver ponds. Photo taken at Pointe Mouillee by Bruce Szczechowski.



TENNESSEE WARBLER. The gray cap and white eyeline suggest a more greenish and more slender Red-eyed Vireo. Photo taken at Magee Marsh by Bruce Szczechowski.

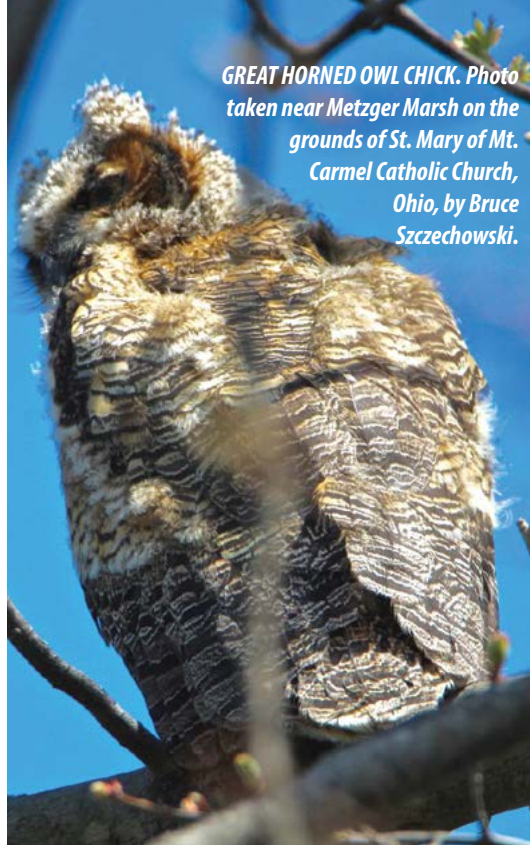


TRUMPETER SWAN. Once extirpated in the state, they are making a comeback with several reports of nesting, including Ann Arbor in a condo complex's stormwater pond. This photo was taken at Howard Marsh in northwest Ohio by Bruce Szczechowski.





GRAY CATBIRD. One of the mimic thrushes, it has an almost infinite variety of calls. It is named for its most common distinctive mewling. If you look closely, you might see its rusty under-tail coverts! Photo by Bruce Szczechowski.



GREAT HORNED OWL CHICK. Photo taken near Metzger Marsh on the grounds of St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, Ohio, by Bruce Szczechowski.



BLUE-HEADED VIREO. This bird was formerly known as the Solitary Vireo, but its newer name fits it well. Also note the white goggles. Photo taken at Pointe Mouillee by Bruce Szczechowski.



FIELD SPARROW. Its pink beak clinches the identification. It also has pink legs and a pinkish "V" on the side of its face. It is very common in grassland and shrubby areas, where one often hears its "ching ching ching" song that sounds like a coin twirled on a table or a bouncing ping pong ball. Photo by Bruce Szczechowski.

Spring Programs Bloom in 2022

By Brittany Leick



Palm Warbler by Bruce Szczechowski

Spring is crisp mornings and sunny afternoons, April showers, clear blue skies, short sleeves, budding garden blossoms, and the return of early morning bird songs. Spring marks, for most people, the time for new beginnings. We were itching to finally get back outside but never knew whether or not a second winter would surprise us. As Dorothy McLeer once said, "The week of International Migratory Bird Day is like Christmas for birders." And Christmas it was, as our woodlands and prairies erupted with the vibrant, feathered colors of spring.

Spring 2022 continued the stream of Detroit Audubon events launched at the first of the year. We ran to keep up with the birds as Detroit Audubon representatives offered, partnered on, or attended 40 different programs from April through June, with a total of 72 events to date. By the end of May, Detroit Audubon programs were able to connect with 1,131 people, bringing us to a total of 2,671 people we've reached since the start of the year.

We offered programs at Magee Marsh, the Wayne State campus, Gallup Park, Belle Isle, and Kensington Metropark as well as at many other locations in the southeast Michigan area. At Circle Forest, various partner organizations and individuals from the community gathered to talk about common birds and how to identify them before taking a leisurely walk to search for local species. During a Wayne State campus walk we saw a Cooper's Hawk catch a bird mid-flight, zigzagging after it barely a foot above the ground. We also talked about common examples of what folks can do to help birds in their areas.

We again offered events to showcase our local woodcocks and pheasants in the metro Detroit area. Woodcocks are known for their beautiful aerial mating display, while pheasants can often be seen trotting along near

small patches of trees and prairies and, more rarely, flying overhead.

As temperatures warmed up in May, we started exploring birding hotspots for a chance to see warblers as they migrate through. Whether it was seeing a flash of the bright flame-colored throat of the Blackburnian Warbler at Elmwood Cemetery, the subtle beauty of the brown-capped Palm Warbler at Belle Isle, or the rare Kirtland's Warbler at Magee Marsh, spring never failed to surprise us with beautiful birds.

Outside of our usual field trips, we were invited to an Earth Day event at Nankin Mills and to Nature Fest at Crosswinds Marsh. We also partnered on a new BIPOC Birders of Michigan field trip and a tabling event at Palmer Park for Blacks, Browns and Birds (a Black Birders Week event). We're excited to be collaborating with local libraries on kids' book readings and native planting events. We are also expanding our local Wayne Campus walks. As our programs continue to grow, we are able to reach a broader range of individuals in the community and to provide outreach opportunities to more families. We could not have offered all these programs without our volunteer field trip leaders, partners, and community members.

We value each and every opportunity we have to connect people to nature, from the twinkle of excitement one gets when seeing a new bird for the first time to a child's getting to use binoculars to see a majestic hawk nearby. It is important for us to build a bridge of knowledge from the environmental world around us to those living in southeast Michigan and beyond. Nature is a constantly changing, always amazing opportunity for us to step outside our comfort zone. We invite you to take advantage of our many offerings to experience the wondrous world of nature around you.

The Joy of Bird Feeding

Story and photos by Rosann Kovalcik, Board Member and Owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Grosse Pointe Woods

Who could have imagined when I started feeding the birds that I would wake to the sounds of a cardinal's sweet song, watch the male feed the female as part of their courtship ritual, and later witness the fledged cardinals quivering their wings as they begged their parents for sunflower seeds? Or that a feeder with nyjer and sunflower chips would attract a dozen brightly colored goldfinches waiting for their turns at the feast? Or that my ground feeder with white proso millet would feed juncos in the winter and towhees in the spring? Or that I would be listening to the drumming of a woodpecker who finds my yard to be part of its territory and then visits the suet feeder multiple times a day to supplement his diet of natural insects?

The choice of bird food that you offer makes a huge difference in the types of birds that you will attract to your feeders. Black oil sunflower and shelled peanuts are high in fat and protein and the seeds of choice for cardinals, chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches as well as many other birds. White proso millet is the preferred seed of Mourning Doves, Northern Juncos, and Eastern Towhees as well as many sparrow species.

No-mess blends, pre-shelled seed blends, have a huge benefit to you and to birds. With a no-mess blend you are paying for only the seed itself and not the shell, an economical advantage. When birds land under the feeders to search through the shells for seeds, they are sitting in areas that also have an accumulation of bird droppings that can pass salmonella. With no-mess blends, there is no clean-up of shells beneath the feeders.

Avoid blends that include ingredients such as wheat, red millet, sorghum, and other filler seeds, as many birds will toss those seeds to the ground because they are not preferred foods. This can lead to a congregation of birds under your feeding station, increasing the chance of the birds becoming ill.

An alternative to shell-free seeds is to lay down landscape fabric under the feeding stations as a catch cloth for the seed shells. Rolling the cloth up and taking the shells to the garbage is easy, and the cloth can be used repeatedly. Trays on feeders can also help with catching seed shells.

Suet and bark butter are very clean ways to feed the many species of woodpeckers that we have in Michigan as well as chickadees, nuthatches, and even titmice. Suet that has nuts as an added ingredient contains more protein and fat for these birds. One of the benefits for you in choosing to feed with suet is that there is no cleanup under the feeders, only feeder cleaning.



With the bird-feeding hobby comes the responsibility of keeping feeders, as well as feeding stations, clean in order to maintain the health of the birds you love. All feeders and trays need to be cleaned regularly in order to prevent disease, including conjunctivitis that causes blindness and can lead to death, or salmonella, a deadly disease for birds. Take feeders apart completely, soak them in warm soapy water, and then clean with dedicated brushes. Soy-based cleaning solutions will break down the oils from seeds that may accumulate on the feeders. Sanitizing your feeders with a 10 percent bleach solution is also recommended in order to prevent disease. The rewards of watching birds makes the effort of cleaning your feeders well worth your time.



Yes, who could have imagined that someone like me, a birder who travelled extensively with binoculars in hand to see the world of birds, would be content to sit and watch these birds from the comfort of my home? It is a rewarding hobby that allows me close views of the long tongue of a Red-bellied Woodpecker

as it feeds on suet and the amazing configuration of the toes of all woodpeckers as they cling to feeders. It is a rewarding hobby that allows me to see all of the shades of blue in a Blue Jay.

It is also a hobby that makes me feel good about providing for birds, helping them through harsh weather conditions, and supplementing natural food sources that may be scarce at times.

Enjoy Your Birds!

From top: Male Cardinal feeding the female, Red-bellied Woodpecker on a modern rustic tray feeder, and American Goldfinches

2020-2022 Volunteer Recognition List

Black Tern Research

Detroit Audubon has partnered with Audubon Great Lakes and the St. Clair Flats Department of Natural Resources to monitor the St. Clair Flats Black Tern colony since 2013. Black Terns have a unique lifestyle, but they are not well understood and their populations are decreasing. Only with continued research can we determine the causes of Black Tern population decline in Michigan and across North America.

Volunteers and partners for 2020-2022 include:

Danielle Durham
David Fuller
Rachel Gumpfer
Leen Heemsker
Audubon Great Lakes
Indiana University, Alex Jahn
SCF Dept. of Natural Resources
UM SEAS Program, Jenni Fuller

Great Lakes Safe Passage

Each year, 600 million to 1 billion birds die due to city lights and window collisions in North America. Each migration season, Safe Passage volunteers survey specific buildings around Southeast Michigan in order to determine which buildings are most problematic and most critical for remediation.

Volunteers and partners for 2020-2022 include:

Erica Briggs
Diane Cheklich
Gabrielle Grobbel
Gerald Hasspacher
Melissa McLeod
Rory Nিকে
Sally Oey
Mary Rogers

Kyle Schanta
Michelle Serreyn
Heidi Trudell
Bird Center of Washtenaw County
Detroit Zoological Society
Wayne State University, Kami Pothukuchi

Volunteer Events: Detroit Bird City & Bird Watcher's Garden

During the summer of 2020, we were approached by a Jefferson Chalmers community in Detroit with a dream to create a Bird Watcher's Garden. Led by Tammy Black, this neighborhood already boasts many gardens, including a Healing Garden and a greenhouse and also has plans for a Community Treehouse Center. Preparations for this garden began in October 2020 and continue today with volunteers from the neighborhood and beyond.

Detroit Bird City is a program that Detroit Audubon's Conservation Committee started in partnership with the City of Detroit, local community members, and others to restore native bird habitat in disused city parks. Volunteers and partners for both of these in 2020-2022 include:

Michael Allen
Tom Allenson
Deborah Stewart Anderson
Marwa Bazzi
Esha Biswas
Fatima Boussi
Clarisa Bova
Scott Bowdich
Shaequon Brown
Rose Burke

Josef Canaria
Nicole Castro
Theresa Dearhamer
Princess Dennis
Evan Deutsch
Monica Dubray
Chris Dykstra
Lynn Edgar
Susan Evans
Jaclyn Frederick
Sharon Gadoth-Goodman
Sudha Ganesh
Sabrina Good
Ruth Hart
Gerald Hasspacher
Judith Hudson
Kathryn Humphrey
Jordan Huyser
Jamica Ingram
Taylor James
Robyn Keough
Christine Klein
Brendin Krozier
Tracy Laird
Carolyn Leadley
Alexander Leon
Mafe Lezama
Amy Lambert
Kurt Manuel
Erin Martinez
Angela Miley
Lori Miley
Erica Mixon
Kaiva Newville
Tiana Ogletree
Alex Preisser
Megan Sajewski
Berenice Sanchez
Melissa Sargent
Zohaib Sayyed
Kyle Schanta
Jessica Soulliere
Shane Soulliere
Kaje Strange
Briana Tarver
Alison Uzieblo

Maja Uzieblo
Kathleen Varano
Peter Varano
Sharon Varano
Catherine Vargas
Maria Vince
Eric Wilson
Central Detroit Christian
Chadsey Condon Community Organization
City of Detroit
Detroit Arboretum
Detroit Future City
Detroit Public Library, Douglass Branch
East Ferry Warren Community Center
Green Thumb Property Maintenance
Greening of Detroit
LaSalle Gardens Block Club
Life Changing Ministries
Manistique Community Treehouse Center, Tammy Black
Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
Michigan State University
National Fish and Wildlife Service
National Geographic Society
North Corktown Neighborhood Association
Sidewalk Detroit
Spread Art
Urban Neighborhood Initiative
Woodbridge Neighborhood Development

Educational Programming

Detroit Audubon's Building Informed and Resourceful Detroit Stewards (BIRDS) program was implemented between 2019 and 2021. It was designed to connect young people with birds and

local habitats while opening their eyes, minds, and hearts to the importance of diverse natural areas within the city of Detroit. While we wait to reapply for funding, we have been implementing other children's educational programs to continue our goal.

Partners for 2020-2022 include:

Ann Arbor Trail Magnet School, Detroit
Barack Obama Leadership Academy
Belle Isle Nature Center
Boggs School
Detroit Achievement Academy
Detroit Boxing Gym Youth Program
Detroit Prep
Detroit Zoological Society
James and Grace Lee Boggs School
Manistique Community Treehouse Center, Tammy Black
River Raisin Institute

Outreach at Community Events

Most years, there are numerous opportunities for Detroit Audubon to attend festivals and events in order to introduce the organization and resources to the metro Detroit community. We rely on volunteers to staff the Detroit Audubon tables at these events with knowledge and activities. This year, we have attended the Belle Isle Winterfest, Palmer Park Winterfest, Nankin Mills Earth Day, Crosswinds Naturefest, Owl Prowl at Sugarbush, Blacks, Browns & Birds (Black Birders Day) Event, Bugging Out and the Lake St. Clair

2020-2022 Volunteer Recognition List

Science Fair coming up in July, but we couldn't have done it without:

Anne Cao
Evan Deutsch
Deborah Hardison-Hill
Rosemary Morbitzer
Ella Smith
Sara Srinivasan
Lauren Stinson
Catherine Vargas
Candace Zann
Belle Isle Nature Center
Black to the Land Coalition
Detroit Outdoors
Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Rouge Park
Outdoor Afro
Palmer Park
UM Dearborn Environmental Interpretive Center
Wayne County Parks
Wild Indigo Nature Explorations

Field Trips

Detroit Audubon birding field trips offer fantastic year-round birding opportunities! Almost all of our field trips have been led by our fantastic volunteer leaders, or they are offered through local partners who keep our participants coming back to learn more from these birding experts.

Volunteers and partners for 2020-2022 include:

Tom Allenson
Kevin Arnold (Huron-Clinton Metroparks)
Amy Beaulac-Harris
Jazmyn Bernard (Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge)
Esha Bishwas
Peter Blank
Jim Bull

April Campbell (BIPOC Birding Group of MI)

Joannie Capuano (Elmwood Cemetery)
Diane Cheklich
Peggy Dankert
Jessica Decker
Julie Decker
Evan Deutsch
Frank Ford (Detroit Riverfront Conservancy)
Kathy Garrett
Brant Georgia
Luke Grange (Belle Isle Nature Center)
George Harris
Ruth Hart
Travis Kaye
Karen Kessler
Bailey Lininger
Dorothy McLeer (UM Environmental Interpretive Center)
Kevin Murphy
Jill Noll
Tim Nowicki
Joanna Pease
Jack Smiley
Bruce Szczechowski
Larry Urbanski
Leonard Weber
Todd Weston (Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge)
27th Letter Books
Arboretum Detroit
Detroit Public Library
Friends of Rouge Park
Holliday Nature Preserve Association
MI Department of Natural Resources
Nesting Birds Publishing
SEMBA (Southeast MI Butterfly Association)
The Nature Conservancy
Washtenaw Audubon Society

Webinars

Lecture-style presentations by Detroit Audubon have not been as popular in recent years, but COVID brought a new opportunity that has proven to be extremely popular, engaging and fun... webinars! Since April 2020, we have offered webinars with a variety of topics. Many of our most popular webinars have been presented by volunteers and partners for which we are truly grateful.

Volunteers and partners in 2020-2022 include:

Ben Beaman (Pheasants Forever)
Jim Bull
Joannie Capuano (Elmwood Cemetery)
Diane Cheklich
Paul Cypher (Huron-Clinton Metroparks)
Jessica Egerer (Detroit Zoological Society)
Susan Evans
Omar Gates (University of Michigan)
Amy Greene (Belle Isle Nature Center)
John Hartig
Rosann Kovalcik (Wild Birds Unlimited)
Tim Nowicki
Sally Oey (University of Michigan)
Erin Parker (Detroit Zoological Society)
Erin Rowan (Audubon Great Lakes/MI Birds)
Linnea Rowse (Michigan Audubon)
Keith Salowich (City of Novi Forester)
Chris Sebastian (Ducks Unlimited)
Michelle Serreyn

Steve Sharp (National Wild Turkey Federation)

Bonnie Van Dam (Detroit Zoological Society)
Holly Vaughn Joswick (MDNR)
Stephen Vrla (Detroit Zoological Society)
River Raisin Institute

Flyway Magazine

While staff do contribute articles, we could not put out this beautiful publication without the talents of our partners, volunteer layout person, editor, writers, photographers, and proofreaders!

Volunteers and partners in 2020-2022 include:

Jocelyn Anderson
Julie Baker
Kelli Barrett
Rochelle Breitenbach
Jim Bull
Wilbur T. Bull
Doug Burton
Diane Cheklich
Dongfan Chen
Jessica Decker
Evan Deutsch
Jennifer Fuller
Kevin Gerhart
Gerald Hasspacher
Robert Irwin
Jamie Jacob
Travis Kaye
Ted Kinsman
Sharon Korte
Becky Matsubara
Rebecca Minardi
Emily Phillips
Caleb Putnam
Emily Simon
Jack Smiley
Paul Stenquist
Bruce Szczechowski
Heidi Trudell

Leonard Weber
Margaret Weber
Tracy Wyman
Belle Isle Nature Center
Wild Birds Unlimited

Citizen Science Bird Surveys (Christmas Bird Counts, Birds Canada Waterfowl Survey)

2020-2022 Detroit River Important Bird Area Waterfowl Counters

(assisting with Birds Studies Canada count)

Scott Bowdich
Jim Bull
Rachel Darling
Evan Deutsch
Nikki Diroff
Amber Garrison
Reece Garrison
Rachel Gumpfer
Brittany Leick
Emily Simon
Bruce Szczechowski
Larry Urbanski

Christmas Bird Count 2021 Detroit Audubon Christmas Bird Count (Oakland County)

Sean Bachman
Amy Beaulac
Roger Becker
Lee Burton
Brian Colon
Jeff Colon
Amy Fedyk
Anthony Fedyk
John Fedyk
Theo Fedyk
Dan Frohardt-Lane
Jean Gramlich
Kathleen Hansen
George Harris
Bob Hoffman
Chris Hull
Donald Kessler

2020-2022 Volunteer Recognition List

Christopher Klimchalk
Duane Lanyon
Justin Lanyon
Gisela Lendle-King
Edward Mikols
Elijah Mikols
Jairus Mikols
Jordan Mikols
Ken Mikols
Susan Norton
Timothy Nowicki
Manny Salas
Elizabeth Stewart
Robert Stewart
Sam Stewart
Chris Summers
Holly Vaughn Joswick
Leonard Weber
Mike Wells
Jeff Wilhite
Wayne Wilson

2021 Rockwood Christmas

Bird Count:

Brandon Aho
Kevin Arnold
Therese Barraco
Pete Blank

Jim Bull
Adam Byrne
Phil Chu
Mara Crawford
Reid Crawford
Natalie Cypher
Evan Deutsch
Jim Fowler
Lyle Hamilton
Gerald Hasspacher
Tracey Henkel
Joel Hill
Robert Irwin
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Vikki Jones
Jerry Jourdan
Paula Kulchar
Erin Martinez
Lynn McNamee
Mike Mencotti
Jennifer Minier
Anne Muir
Ron Muir
Karl Overman
Erin Rowan
Don Sherwood
Emily Simon

Andrew Sturgess
Bruce Szczechowski
Mary Trombley
Larry Urbanski
Rachel Gumper

Member Database Management, Fundraising & Website Assistance

Becky Mattson
Jim Bull

Board Members

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President
Rebecca Minardi,
Vice-President
Sharon Crockett, Secretary
Tom McKarns, Treasurer and
Finance Chair
Jim Bull
Diane Cheklich, Chair of
Conservation Committee
Sara Cole Srinivasan
Amy Greene
Rosann Kovalcik
Gisela Lendle-King
Jill Noll

Jack Smiley
Eric Stempien, Legal Counsel
Heidi Trudell

Have you never volunteered
with Detroit Audubon in
the past but are interested
in getting more involved?
Do you feel comfortable
with your birding skills or
have other knowledge you

enjoy sharing with others?
Or maybe you want to
co-lead a program with
one of the staff? Reach out
to Brittany at programs@detroitaudubon.org if you're
interested in becoming a
field trip leader!



YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD. Mostly a western bird, a few venture into Michigan to breed in marshes on Saginaw Bay. A few have been known to breed at Pointe Mouillee. This one was just walking around in the grass very close to huge group of people at Howard Marsh, which is near the Lake Erie shore west of Magee Marsh. Photo by Bruce Szczechowski.



MYSTERY BIRD REVEALED

If you guessed Bay-breasted Warbler, you are right! This species may have been the most abundant warbler migrant this spring; we saw hundreds some days.

It nests in the spruce-fir forests in the Upper Peninsula and throughout eastern Canada. They specialize in eating Spruce Budworms, so their population soars when there is an outbreak of that pest. That is also good news for the coniferous forests they inhabit. While this species is easy to identify in spring, when it changes to a drab brownish green plumage in fall, identification can be a real challenge.

Photo by Bruce Szczechowski

The Lovely, Likable Lotus

By Emily Phillips

Traipsing around the marshes of southeastern Michigan it's easy to spot the American Lotus, its large, dark-green, umbrella-like leaves covering almost the entire surface of the water. In addition to its stunning appearance and remarkable adaptations, it has played an important role in Michigan's cultural history and has survived despite many challenges.

The genus *Nelumbo* contains two species: the Asian pink colored Sacred Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*), and our native American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*), which can be found from southern Canada and south into Central America. In Michigan, American Lotus beds are found in coastal or river wetland habitats with clean, slow moving water with muddy bottoms—only in Barry, Genesee, Kalamazoo, Monroe, Ottawa, and Wayne counties. In 2004, the state legislature passed Public Act 78 designating the blossoms of this plant as the Michigan's "official symbol of clean water."

It is Michigan's largest flower, blooming from late June well into September. Six-to-ten-inch diameter rosettes of yellow-white petals surround the yellow cone-like structure called the pistil. The rosettes rise on long stalks two to three feet above the water. The flowers open early in the morning and close by early evening. After a few days, the petals drop off, while the pod with nutlike seeds contained inside matures, turning from green to brown. Once ripe, the seed head breaks off and floats upside down in the water as winds and the currents carry it away. Eventually, the seed head decays, allowing the seeds to sink to the marsh bottom. Due to their thick shell, the seeds can take over seven to ten years to germinate.

American Lotus spreads more quickly another way: through rhizomes, modified stems that grow horizontally in the marsh's mucky bottom. They sprout new shoots and create an interconnected colony that can take over a large expanse of wetland in a very short time. Regularly spaced, banana-shaped tubers store starch for energy.

Their round blue-green leaves, up to two to three feet in diameter, have hollow stems, which allow air into the network of rhizomes. Unlike the smaller water lilies, lotus leaves have a central stem, and do not have the characteristic wedge-shaped notch found on lilies. First leaves of the season float while later leaves rise about three feet above the waterline.

Muskrats, frogs, fish, and shorebirds use the leaves to hide from predators and as a source of food, since almost all of the plant is edible. Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, including in the Great Lakes region, gathered its seeds and tubers for food. Archaeological evidence from western Michigan documents Late Prehistoric natives creating deep roasting pits for baking lotus tubers at their spring encampments.

There were still vast lotus beds in the Monroe County marshes into the late 1800s. People would come for lotus viewing parties and pick the blooms. The Monroe Piers, near the City of Monroe, became a popular place to swim and enjoy the fragrant flower beds. According to an August 1891 article in the *Monroe Democrat*, boys peddled lotus buds for five cents apiece. By the early 1900s, the lotus beds were impacted by dredging and pollution,



American Lotus by Emily Phillips

which destroyed marsh habitats and degraded water quality. As pollution worsened, the lotus population dwindled to the point that the plant was placed on Michigan's endangered species list in 1976.

It took many years to reestablish the colonies. Environmental protections were passed that improved water quality, and starting in 1953, the Monroe Garden Club even began to plant lotus seeds. Gradually, this aquatic plant began to rebound. By 1983, the American Lotus was downgraded from endangered to threatened. Today, the lotus is now a consistent feature of our coastal marshes in southeastern Michigan. As of 2022, state experts have proposed downgraded its status to a Species of Special Concern, indicating that the lotus is not currently in any danger. Continued monitoring of this plant will alert conservationists to any future threats.

Locations of American Lotus beds in southeastern Michigan include Sterling State Park, Lake Erie Metropark, and Pointe Mouillee State Game Area. So put on your hiking shoes, or jump into a kayak, and take time this summer to ramble around our local coastal marshes and delight at the sight of our beautiful American Lotus, an aquatic plant that was once on the brink of extinction but is now making a comeback.

KROGER'S COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM: Link your Kroger shopper's card to a nonprofit organization (we hope you choose Detroit Audubon). Once that is done, just swipe your card when you shop at Kroger, and a portion of your purchase price will be donated to us. It will not cost you a penny more! Sign up at

<https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards>



Flyway

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Common Grackle by Paul Stenquist

