



EARTHSTAR

NEWSLETTER OF MACOMB AUDUBON

www.macombaudubon.net

Vol. 52, No. 1 | Jan - Feb, 2025

Programs

Our free monthly programs are held the first Monday of the month at the Sterling Heights Nature Center, 42700 Utica Road (unless otherwise noted).

Mon., Jan. 6th, 7:00 p.m.

Peregrine Falcon Recovery



Peregrine Falcon, by Paul Messing

Join us the first Monday of January for our free monthly program featuring guest

speaker Danielle Durham. Danielle has been the southeast Michigan Peregrine Falcon nest coordinator with the DNR for the past several years and is also a falconer. She has a bird's eye view into the lives of some really cool raptors as well as into the efforts which have helped Peregrine populations recover. We can't wait to hear all about it!

The meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. with social hour at 6:30 p.m. at the Sterling Heights Nature Center building. Follow us on [Facebook](#) for further updates.

Mon., Feb. 3rd, 7:00 p.m.

Kirtland's Warbler Conservation

From the brink of extinction to a new model for endangered species conservation, the Kirtland's Warbler is an iconic species in Michigan, nesting primarily in the jack pine forests of the northern Lower Peninsula. You

may have even seen it on some recent Michigan license plates! As late as 1987 there were fewer than 400 birds in the entire population. Today, there are more than 4,000 birds.

In October 2019, the Kirtland's Warbler was removed from the endangered species list. That's a reason to celebrate, but it doesn't mean we can wash our hands and walk away. Conservation of the Kirtland's Warbler has special challenges. Unlike every other animal that has been removed from the endangered species list, the Kirtland's Warbler will require continued human intervention to ensure its survival.

Our guest speaker, William Rapai, is the author of *The Kirtland's Warbler: The Story of a Bird's Fight for Survival and the People Who Saved It*.



Kirtland's Warbler

He is also executive director of the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance, a nonprofit created to support Kirtland's Warbler conservation. Join us for social hour at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Field Trips

Stony Creek Metropark

Sat., Jan. 18th, 9:00 a.m
Leader: Joanna Pease



Pileated Woodpecker, by Paul Messing

Meet us at Stony Creek Metropark for our first field trip of 2025! The expansive park can be good for birds even during the winter. If the lake is partially open, there may be an array of ducks to view. Aside from the lake, the trails are scenic with overwintering birds

including eagles and other raptors. In some irruption years there have been winter finches such as crossbills. No matter what the severity of the weather, it is fun looking for birds and enjoying them throughout the season.

For this field trip, we'll meet at the Eastwood Beach parking lot, near the bathhouse, then determine which part of the park we'll explore, depending on snow and ice conditions.

Daily pass or yearly metroparks sticker required for entry. Please RSVP to Joanna by text at (313) 720-9475 or email at centhymeme@aol.com so you can be notified if there is a weather cancellation.



Photo by Paul Messing

Beaudette Nature Park

Sat., Feb. 15th, 10:00 a.m

Leader: Paul Messing

Our February field trip will be held at Beaudette Nature Park, a jewel of a park in Pontiac which features a small mill pond. There are often hundreds of waterfowl to spot at this pond, and sometimes so close you don't even need binoculars. It's a great place to spot several species of ducks and practice your ID skills.

Meet in the morning at the Beaudette parking lot at 786 Orchard Lake Road in Pontiac. As in years past, after birding we will go to a local restaurant for lunch. Contact Paul Messing at (586) 899-2157 or email macombaudubon@gmail.com with any questions.

Save the Date

Macomb Audubon Society
is celebrating 50 years!

Sunday, June 1, 2025
noon-2pm
Stony Creek Nature Center -
more details to come!

Contributions

These individuals have recently contributed to Macomb Audubon:

Contributor Level

Neil Donohue

Donor Level

Denis and Laura Barbour

Thank you for your generous support. It's because of people like you we are able to operate and live up to our mission.



About Us

Macomb Audubon is a subchapter of Michigan Audubon. Programs are held the first Monday of most months at **Sterling Heights Nature Center**. Our programs foster community and friendship and provide

education for all ages. Macomb Audubon events are open to the public.

Macomb Audubon is a non-profit organization with a mission to:

- Promote interest in the world of nature and to aid in the conservation of natural resources.
- Provide an outlet for nature activities via field trips.
- Provide an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and experience through lectures, films, discussions, and newsletters.
- Aid organizations that provide people of all ages with opportunities to experience these above given objectives.

To join, complete the form included on the inside back cover and bring it to our next meeting or follow the instructions on where to send it.

The Earthstar newsletter is published bi-monthly (January, March, July, September, and November). **If you wish to submit content to be included in the Earthstar, please send by the 12th of the month before the next edition,** to: Andrea Rose at littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com

Members may receive this newsletter by mail, electronically, or both, though we encourage electronic to save paper! Finally, a friendly reminder to stay current with your dues, as it helps support our group.

President's Letter



Happy 2025, everyone! This year we celebrate Macomb Audubon's 50th anniversary. What a special time to look back at how we've evolved since the beginning, reflecting upon those we've met along the way and how the organization has helped us grow as individuals, learn from one another, and come together as a group. I'm impressed when I think about the people that started it all and then about what it took to keep things going with the help of so many passionate volunteers. One of those volunteers, Beverlee Babcock, now steps down as 2nd Vice President in charge of membership. She's been handling membership since I joined the organization in 2012. When you see her at an upcoming meeting or field trip, join me in thanking her for dedicating her time for so many years. There are still vacancies on the board if anyone is feeling the urge and having the free time to dedicate to our cause. We'll find something just right for you.

Aside from the board, general membership continues to evolve as well. While there are a good number of new faces that have joined alongside me in the membership, there are a handful that have been involved since the 20th anniversary and earlier. It makes me feel like I am still a new member when I think of how those members took me under their wing, encouraging me to join the field trips and learn more about what I was seeing and hearing out there. It wasn't always about the birds we saw. On spring field trips there were also spring ephemerals in bloom to learn about. It's nice to share experiences from one generation to the next, offering what inspires you and listening to what inspires them. Whether you plan to participate in our meetings, join some of the field trips, or come to Macomb Audubon's 50th Anniversary Celebration, there are plenty of reasons 2025 is going to be an exciting year. Mark your calendars now for our 50th jubilee on June 1st, 2025, from noon to 2:00 p.m. More details will be available in future newsletters.



If you have recently enrolled or renewed your membership, thank you very much! I'm confident you will be delighted with the year ahead. If you haven't renewed your membership and want to be part of this landmark year, send in your funds today. A form is included on page seven, or you can bring your dues to membership meetings.

Looking back at the year, we finished 2024 in fine fashion with our member slideshow and the Christmas Bird Count. There was much engagement to be had with these two big events. I can't remember ever coordinating a dozen different slide shows at the December member meeting. A highlight for me during the CBC was Pileated Woodpecker. While I usually think of that species occurring so much more frequently two hours north, I'm delighted to think of what its presence here indicates about the health of the environment around us to support such a sight. Lastly, I was able to log my first Brown Creeper of the season. What a way to end the year and to look forward to more excitement in 2025!

Happy Birding, Paul Messing, Macomb Audubon President

(Merlin photo by Paul Messing)

Editor's Note



Happy end-of-the-year, bird nerds!

As we close out 2024, I reflect back on another year of birding and being a member of this ever-growing birding community. Especially since 2020, it seems Macomb birding has expanded both in size and in the ability to communicate sightings and tips in new ways. There are birders I've known for most of the decade I've been involved in this passion and many more who are new to the scene. It's always fun to surround yourself with a variety of skill levels in whatever you're doing, whether it's birding, music, speaking a new language, or something else. To spend time with those who know less than you gives you opportunities to be a teacher and mentor and to see things newly again through others' eyes. It also helps refresh you on what you know and how or why you know it. On the other hand, being exposed to more advanced birders flips you into the student role and helps develop your skills in ways that are difficult to learn from books or online alone. I know this translates to other areas of my life such as in my symphony orchestra. Whether I'm playing violin or birding, I'm glad I get to be on both sides of the learning coin. I've always been hungry for knowledge of all kinds, and birding offers such a vast array of things to soak in! Maybe one day I'll really drill down on some of the very difficult topics I haven't quite tackled, like gull ID (maybe... we shall see). One thing I know for sure, I'll never know it all and I'll never stop being curious.

Because it wouldn't be a birder's review of the year without some stats, here are some highlights from my year of birding:

- **Lifers:** 20 birds, all seen on the March/April southwest van trip we took, with some of my favorites including: California Condor, American Dipper, Clark's Nutcracker, Rock Wren, Lucy's Warbler, and Pyrrhuloxia.
- **Total species seen in Macomb County for the year:** 200, which is my minimum goal I like to get each year, just for fun. The 200th bird was a Snowy Owl seen at Harley Ensign. As of this writing, there are a few days left in the year so we'll see if the number shifts.
- **New yard birds:** #92, Northern Parula and #93, Wood Thrush. We also had some Great Horned Owls hooting back and forth on multiple nights this last month or so. I have heard Great Horneds from my house before but it never gets old!
- **Total births of nieces-who-might-potentially-hopefully-one-day-grow-up-to-love-birding:** 1 😊

I'm hoping 2025 brings some exciting new birds for my county and life lists as well as continued opportunities to develop my birding skills and share them with others in interesting and helpful ways. I want to continue developing the discernment to expect unexpected sightings at all times and to scan every bird in a group, even if I am tempted to write them all off as the same species. It's those little things that can always be tweaked, and I'm grateful I get to enjoy nature in the detailed and captivating way birding offers. I hope more people in this world continue to look to the natural world for lessons, wisdom, and the beauty it offers every day, in every season.

I'll end with a little New Year's birding intention, for a few birds that'd be awesome to find in the county this year: Yellow-headed Blackbird, Worm-eating Warbler, and/or LeConte's Sparrow. We shall see!!!

Happy New Year and, as always, happy birding.

-Andrea Rose, editor-in-chief (aka [Little Bird Nerd](#))

Partners, Contacts, Support

Organizations We Support:

Burgess Shadbush Nature Center,
Lake St. Clair Metropark Nature Center,
Michigan Nature Association,
Seven Ponds Nature Center,
Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy,
Sterling Heights Nature Center,
Stony Creek Nature Center,
Tomlinson Arboretum,
Wildlife Recovery Association

Visit your local backyard bird feeding experts at Wild Birds Unlimited in Macomb or Grosse Pte. Woods

Contact Macomb Audubon at: macombaudubon@gmail.com with questions, suggestions, or to join our mailing list.

Board Members & Committee Chairs

President: Paul Messing - macombaudubon@gmail.com
1st VP (Programs): Mike Champine - mikechampine02@gmail.com
2nd VP (Membership): Brenda Suchenek – bks171@comcast.net
3rd VPs (Field Trips): Joanna Pease & Wade Leonard - centhymeme@aol.com & wadeleonard1922@att.net
Recording Secretary: Laura Barbour - denilaur@sbcglobal.net
Corresponding Secretary: **Vacant**
Treasurer: Brandy Ciaciuch - mamachach38@gmail.com
Facebook Rep: Barbara Baldinger - bbwren@yahoo.com

Committees

Car Pool Coordinator: **Vacant**
Christmas Bird Count: Brian McGee - brianmcgee@wowway.com
Conservation/Legislation: Beth Noren - maxgoodbird@gmail.com
Historian: **Vacant**
Hospitality (Refreshments): Michael Ciaciuch
Hospitality (Door Prizes): Denis & Laura Barbour
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Michigan Audubon Rep: **Vacant**
Newsletter Production, Mailing: Denis & Laura Barbour
Publicity Chairperson: Holly Vaughn Joswick
Seven Ponds Representative: Paul Messing
Web Editor: Paul Messing
Volunteer Coordinator: **Vacant**

Macomb Audubon Society Dues

Please make checks payable to **Macomb Audubon Society** and send to:

Brenda Suchenek, Macomb Audubon Membership, 48143 Lincoln Drive, Macomb Township, MI, 48044

Your name and the names of family members (please print)
Family membership applies to family members living at the same address

Name _____
Address _____ City _____
State _____ ZIP _____ Phone _____

New Member _____ Renewal _____ (check one) _____ Family membership \$20.00
Total amount enclosed \$ _____ _____ Individual membership \$15.00
Amount of donation over membership \$ _____ (optional) _____ Student membership \$10.00
Contributor - up to \$49.99 Supporter - \$50-\$99 Donor - \$100 and up _____ Senior (60+) single membership \$12.00
_____ Senior couple membership \$15.00

Macomb Audubon shares its membership list with members. Check if you want your phone number **left off** the list _____

Email address _____ (optional)

Check here to receive the Earthstar by email _____ hard copy _____ both versions _____

Check here if a Michigan Audubon member _____ Check here if a National Audubon member _____

I (we) are interested in becoming a Macomb Audubon volunteer. Please contact me _____

Macomb Audubon Society

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