



# EARTHSTAR

NEWSLETTER OF MACOMB AUDUBON

[www.macombaudubon.net](http://www.macombaudubon.net)

Vol. 51, No. 4 | Jul - Aug, 2024

## Programs

Monthly programs will resume in September. Stay tuned for details about our September bonfire gathering, which is traditionally held at 7:00 p.m. the Monday after Labor Day at the Lake St. Clair Metropark Nature Center.

## Field Trips

### Pointe Mouillee by Car

Sat., Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: Jim Fowler & Tom Heatley



*Sandhill Crane, by Paul Messing*

Pointe Mouillee State Game Area provides some of the best shorebird viewing in the state,

especially during late summer and early fall. Leader Jim Fowler has been guiding field trips here for many years for various Audubon groups. He has a special permit which allows cars to enter on these trips (travel is usually limited to pedestrian or bike).

A limit of four vehicles may caravan onto the dikes. We can only accept 20 people and ride sharing is required. Reservations will be accepted starting July 1<sup>st</sup> and can be made through August 20<sup>th</sup>. Make your reservation by emailing Joanna Pease at [centhymeme@aol.com](mailto:centhymeme@aol.com). Please include your name and phone number so you can be reached regarding any changes. You will receive an email reply to let you know if you've made the list. Spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Bring water, a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and any optics you like to use (binoculars, camera, scope). Because of the vast expanse of the place, scopes are definitely an asset.

Directions: Take I-75 south to Exit 26, then take S. Huron Road east to U.S. Turnpike. Take U.S. Turnpike south to Sigler Road, then head east on

Sigler Road until you reach the parking lot at the end. You may also want to GPS to account for any construction delays. Make sure you target the Sigler Road entrance specifically.

## **Shiawassee NWR**

**Wed., Sep. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 9:00 a.m.**

**Leaders: Joanna Pease & Wade Leonard**



*Dunlin, by Andrea Rose*

Shiawassee National Wildlife Reserve is known for its fall migrants, including waterfowl and shorebirds in the wetlands and passerines along the nature trails. It has a Wildlife Drive Auto Tour with observation platforms and many opportunities for stopping. One of the great spectacles there is the large groups of American White Pelicans as they stage before migrating south. You never know what else might be there during our visit.

We will meet at 9:00 a.m. in the northwest part of the parking lot at Dodge Park, 40620 Utica Rd., Sterling Heights, to carpool to the refuge. For those who want to drive on their own, meet

at the Shiawassee refuge parking lot at the beginning of the wildlife drive at approximately 11:00 a.m., located at 6006-6050 Bishop Rd, Saginaw, MI, 48601. The coordinates are 43.32526 N, 84.03292 W.

Bring a pack lunch, a lawn chair, water, and any optics you like to use. The wildlife drive can take up to three hours to cover, depending on what is there. We will not be back to Dodge Park until around suppertime. RSVP to Joanna by text at (313) 720-9475 or email at [centhymeme@aol.com](mailto:centhymeme@aol.com).

## **Other News**

### **Eco-Friendly Mosquito Control**

**Submitted by Beth Noren,  
Conservation Chair**

Hello, I hope you are all having a wonderful summer and enjoying the great outdoors. One thing that makes that difficult right now is the abundance of mosquitoes. I know many people have their yards professionally sprayed for these annoying pests. June was even declared “Professional Pest Management Month” in Michigan by resolution HR0274, which was adopted on June 11<sup>th</sup> of this year. One of the resolution’s sponsors accepted a large (\$6,500) campaign contribution from the Michigan Pest Management Association. The resolution reads in part:

“Effective pest management in homes, businesses, and public places throughout our state is an important factor in maintaining the health and wellbeing of all Michiganders... Pest management professionals help protect Michigan’s food supply, homes, and the environment from disease and pest-related illnesses by practicing environmentally friendly pest control methods... The Michigan Pest Management Association provides networking and leadership opportunities for Michigan’s pest management professionals and is recognized for its efforts to protect our environment as well as to ensure the safe and effective use of pest management materials... Professional Pest Management Month offers all Michiganders an opportunity to understand and appreciate the important role that pest management providers play in ensuring the welfare of Michiganders...”

In light of the worldwide insect decline which we are now facing, the language and timing of this bill all seems a bit Orwellian to me. The “welfare of Michiganders” depends on the biodiversity and health of our native insect population. Some studies suggest that the earth is losing 1-2% of its insects annually. Pesticide use is just one of many factors in this loss, but it is one that we can help to mitigate. Instead of repeatedly spraying an expensive chemical fog which only kills a small portion of adult mosquitoes and indiscriminately kills many beneficial insects, let’s do better to be part of a real solution, not a bigger problem.

Please consider creating a homemade “Mosquito Death Bucket”, as recommended by Professor Doug Tallamy, entomologist from the

University of Delaware. It will kill them cheaply and effectively at the larval stage, while leaving the rest of the insects as safe, healthy meals for birds and other wildlife. The following are instructions on making one of these buckets, as posted by Amy Jo Edwards in the [End Toxic Yards Facebook group](#). Here is a recap of those instructions, including a few links to affordable products:

1. Fill a 5-gallon, dark colored bucket about halfway full of water.
2. Throw in a few handfuls of grass clippings, leaf litter, and/or straw, then secure a wire mesh top ( $\frac{1}{4}$ " to  $\frac{1}{2}$ " mesh) or [hydroponic basket lid](#).
3. Let ferment for two days. Female mosquitoes find this CO<sub>2</sub>-generating concoction an irresistible place to lay their eggs.
4. To this fermented skeeter stew, add  $\frac{1}{4}$  of one [Mosquito Dunk](#) once a month (amount of Mosquito Dunk used is based on *surface area* of water, not *amount* of water. It is available in granules or cakes and made up of the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*, subspecies *israelensis*, a bacterium which occurs naturally in soil and is safe for humans, pets, birds, reptiles, fish, mammals).
5. Place your bucket in an out-of-the-way corner of your yard, 20-50 feet away from where you hang out. You may also want to place a thin stick in the bucket and sticking through one of the holes in the lid so other insects that may fall in can escape.

6. Keep bucket about halfway full of water, checking and topping off periodically, especially in hot weather. Adding that water will also ensure the eggs actually hatch, as they need to be submerged to hatch and for the Dunk to do its work.
7. Dump the bucket around every two months and repeat above steps.

**Note for child safety:** if small children will ever be around your bucket, you must securely cover the bucket, as it could present a drowning hazard.

Aside from this easy, homemade bucket technique, other tips to keep mosquitoes away include: remove standing water, clean gutters, remove ivy/heavy ground cover, empty/refill bird baths ever few days, spread cedar mulch under chairs and tables (add fresh on top every month or two), use an oscillating fan while sitting outside, wear light colored clothing, use essential oil-based repellent.

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## Contributions

These individuals have recently contributed to Macomb Audubon:

### Contributor Level

Tom Heatley

Thank you for your generous support!

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## 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 12<sup>th</sup> of the month before the next edition, to:** Andrea Rose at [littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com](mailto: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



I hope everyone's summer is going well! I finally finished the book "Bicycling with Butterflies". I'm sure it won't spoil the ending to say they made it... That is, both the monarchs and the bicyclist. As with every journey, the story is not necessarily in the result, but in what happened along the way. Our recent field trip to Stony Creek Metropark started off reminiscent of last year's trip, but ended up branching out and taking a different spin. Instead of following the same path to find warblers and breeding birds in the woods, meadows, and on the lake, Joanna and I set a new goal, aiming to see 60 species. I had seen reports just a day earlier of 60 species being seen at nearby Wetzel State Park. We planned out a new route to fit our goal then set off with a fresh look at the different habitats within the park. One unusual find was a Red-breasted Merganser, which I then made mention of on Discord. Another pleasant sight was a Sandhill Crane on its nest anchored in the water. By the end of the walk, we didn't quite make our 60 species goal. However, we happened upon the birders that inspired our goal in the first place. What camaraderie we can build when we meet out in the field! By the way, although we met defeat within the park with a tally of 55 species, Joanna and I didn't stop there. We continued on separate paths afterwards, each getting five more species to have that 60-bird day, a nice consolation prize. That might just be a biggest day for me!



Here are a few updates on some spring nests I have been monitoring. Along with many others, I've been observing the Peregrine Falcon nest in Warren. With a webcam pointed at the nest 24/7, the site has recorded over nine million views. Besides checking up on the webcam and accounts from others of the goings-on, I was able to join in the banding by the DNR and Dave Hogan. Dave also introduced a rehomed falcon from Detroit Metropolitan Airport to join the juveniles. All three have left the nest with varying degrees of success: one flying successfully from one high perch to the next (Chip), one coasting down from the perch and scurrying off, hopefully to eventual safety (Harvey), and last,

still on the rooftop exercising her wings and shuffling along cautiously, awaiting a more complete and hopefully successful fledge (Roxy). I've also been watching a Red-tailed Hawk at the Tech Center. I've been monitoring it since the Easter Monday Big Day that I shared at the Tech Center with more than a dozen other Macomb Audubon friends. This nest has seen some success, as there was one young observed in the nest that looked quite ready to leave when I last saw it. I've been adding this nest data and others to the NestWatch program, another Cornell Lab of Ornithology citizen science effort. The training and protocol in NestWatch are a bit different than eBird, but it's an interesting way to go about documenting more detail about the success of an individual nest. At my home, besides seeing signs of American Robin in this and past years, this year was my first Mourning Dove nest. There were two eggs in this brood. Today, the last of the two young fledged the nest. Lastly, a visit to Seven Ponds Nature Center garnered a look at Eastern Kingbird nesting near the top of a dominant tree in its habitat. While I'll still be keeping an eye out for more, these nests have made for an exciting spring!!

I wish everyone a pleasant summer, and I look forward to seeing everyone again in the fall, either on an upcoming field trip or in September at the bonfire!

Happy Birding! -Paul Messing,  
Macomb Audubon President



*(Red-tailed Hawks & Mourning Doves, by Paul Messing)*

## Editor's Note



Happy summer, everyone! As usual, the birding has died down, but for me, the insect-ing (?) has definitely picked up. I've always loved bugs, and summer is a great time to observe them. I raise Black Swallowtails and Monarchs in my yard each year. They're drawn in by our parsley and dill, then milkweed, respectively. So far this season, I've released a few Black Swallowtails, have a handful in chrysalises, and have another batch of eggs about to hatch. I haven't located any Monarch eggs just yet, but they'll be more abundant as we get later into the summer. If you're interested in trying this little hobby, learn which host plants attract which species. Even if you don't want to keep them in an enclosure and spend time on that, just having the host plants is helpful, as they'll still go through their life cycles outside. The main reason I like to do the enclosure thing is to protect them from predators during those vulnerable early stages, helping them along the way.

At my house, we keep portions of our yard wild, adding different native plants as the years go by. We also don't spray chemicals. I've never minded a lawn with dandelions and clovers and other little flowers. In fact, I think they're beautiful, and so so beneficial for the ecosystem. You can still cut your grass and keep things neat without completely decimating the ecosystem with chemicals. On that note, after compiling Beth's article on eco-friendly mosquito control (pg. 2-3), I'm inspired to start my own "mosquito death bucket". I ordered my Mosquito Dunk and hydroponic lid and am excited to set things up soon. I love when environmentally-conscious people come up with and share amazing solutions to problems previously solved in not-so-environmentally-friendly ways. I just hope we can all be the voices for Nature and continue to spread the word about things like this.

I'm excited about another insect that's been visiting the yard lately, a Nessus Sphinx moth. It's probably been the highlight of my yard observations recently. With two bee-like yellow stripes, a cute little fan tail, rusty reddish body color, and behavior reminiscent of a hummingbird, this is one cool bug! I've seen it three times in the last week or so, hovering from one milkweed plant to another. I've been able to creep up slowly and observe it for decent periods of time as it sucks nectar with its long, straw-like tongue. Then, of course, not so rare but still fascinating are the twinkling clouds of fireflies that sparkle around the house each night. In the daylight, their orangish heads remind me of a cyclops, their wings, black sunflower seeds. What else? Oh, we've had a pretty huge House Centipede on the loose somewhere inside, popping up here and there in its sudden, alien type of way. While I admit they can be a little creepy, I respect them and know they feed on other insects. When they do appear, it's usually only briefly before they scurry off to the shadows to do their work in peace.



I know bugs aren't everybody's "thing", but I wish they were. If that's not possible though, I wish for a world where people at least respect them and stop killing them indiscriminately. Just because something is small or foreign-looking or "ugly", it doesn't give us the right to end it. We need to understand how they fit into the food chain, and realize their roles here are important. They're the reason plants pollinate and thrive, they help with decomposition, keep other insects in balance, create healthy soils and waterways, feed other animals, and so much more. Let's keep the world weird and beautiful, and leave our little bug friends alone! 😊

Happy Birding! -Andrea Rose, Earthstar Editor and ["Little Bird Nerd"](#)

*(Nessus Sphinx by Andrea Rose)*

## 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](mailto:macombaudubon@gmail.com) with questions, suggestions, or to join our mailing list.

### Board Members & Committee Chairs

President: Paul Messing - [macombaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:macombaudubon@gmail.com)  
1<sup>st</sup> VP (Programs): Mike Champine - [mikechampine02@gmail.com](mailto:mikechampine02@gmail.com)  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP (Membership): Beverlee Babcock - [beverleebabcock4@gmail.com](mailto:beverleebabcock4@gmail.com)  
3<sup>rd</sup> VPs (Field Trips): Joanna Pease & Wade Leonard - [centhymeme@aol.com](mailto:centhymeme@aol.com) & [wadeleonard1922@att.net](mailto:wadeleonard1922@att.net)  
Recording Secretary: Laura Barbour - [denilaur@sbcglobal.net](mailto:denilaur@sbcglobal.net)  
Corresponding Secretary: **Vacant**  
Treasurer: Brandy Ciaciuch - [mamachach38@gmail.com](mailto:mamachach38@gmail.com)  
Facebook Rep: Barbara Baldinger - [bbwren@yahoo.com](mailto:bbwren@yahoo.com)

### Committees

Car Pool Coordinator: **Vacant**  
Christmas Bird Count: Brian McGee - [brianmcgee@wowway.com](mailto:brianmcgee@wowway.com)  
Conservation/Legislation: Beth Noren - [maxgoodbird@gmail.com](mailto:maxgoodbird@gmail.com)  
Historian: **Vacant**  
Hospitality (Refreshments): Michael Ciaciuch  
Hospitality (Door Prizes): Denis & Laura Barbour  
Newsletter Editor: Andrea Rose - [littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com](mailto:littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com)  
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:

Beverlee Babcock, Macomb Audubon Membership, 50229 Pepper Tree Dr., Macomb, MI, 48044

Your name and the names of family members (please print)

Family membership applies to family members living at the same address

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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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