

# EARTHSTAR

NEWSLETTER OF MACOMB AUDUBON

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

Vol. 51, No. 2 | Mar-Apr, 2024

## 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., Mar. 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.**

**Birding Belle Isle**

**Speaker: Ryan Vance**



*Long-eared Owl on Belle Isle, by Andrea Rose*

At our March meeting, Ryan Vance from the Belle Isle Nature Center will give a presentation on birding Belle Isle. If you've never been, this Detroit area birding hotspot

offers a great mix of bird watching opportunities, hosting everything from songbirds to water-loving species like grebes, geese, and herons, to birds of prey such as Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and owls. There are a few trails, places to drive and stop, and, of course, the nature center itself. Find out more from Ryan himself, who will also talk about upcoming programs and events at the park.

**Mon., Apr. 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.**

**Nature Photography Techniques**

**Speaker: Todd Sam**

Do you love taking photos of birds and other wildlife? Are you looking for ways to improve your photography skills? If you answered yes or are considering getting into the hobby, come to our April program, featuring Todd Sam, a member of the Troy photo club. Todd's photography passion has taken him across the globe, including to South Africa. Todd will share some of his photos and nature photography tips with us. Come

check it out, and, as always, feel free to bring a friend!

Social hour for each meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Sterling Heights Nature Center with presentations starting at 7:00 p.m. Always check our [Facebook page](#) for more frequent updates on meetings and other happenings.

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## Field Trips

### Kensington Metropark

**Wed., Mar. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 10:00 a.m.**

**Leader: Wade Leonard**



*Cardinal at Kensington, by Andrea Rose*

Come enjoy the Kensington Metropark nature trails and continue our annual tradition of hand-feeding the birds, including chickadees, nuthatches, titmice, and others! Everybody loves to hold the birds and see them so close. Bring seed for the birds and lunch for yourself. Insider tip: they seem to

love shelled peanuts and sunflower seeds the most.

Meet at the nature center parking lot. Entrance fee or annual sticker required. RSVP to Wade by emailing him at [wadeleanoard1922@att.net](mailto:wadeleanoard1922@att.net). If the weather is inclement, the make-up date will be Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to RSVP so you can be notified if the date changes.

## Stony Creek Inwood Eagle Walk

**Sat., Mar. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 3:00 p.m.**

**Leader: Joan Bonin**

Stony Creek Metropark's Inwood section has an active eagle's nest that is well seen from an observation platform. We are privileged to have Joan Bonin lead this walk, as she has been monitoring and advocating for the eagles for years and can tell us all about their history and habits. At this time of year, the eagles are on their nest and we may be able to observe them changing guard. In addition, there could be a few early spring migrants along the trail, so we will also do a little birding as we go.

We will meet at the parking lot on Inwood Road right next to the cell tower (lot is on the north side of the road, west of Mound). The walk to the observation platform is approximately one quarter mile. A scope will be provided, but bring your own too if you

have one. Sometimes ticks are already starting to emerge this time of year, so bring repellent. Please RSVP to Joanna Pease by email at [centhymeme@aol.com](mailto:centhymeme@aol.com) or by text at (313) 720-9475.

## **Pine Tree Acres Landfill**

**Sat., Apr. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 9:00 a.m.**

**Leaders: Joanna Pease & Kathleen Klein**

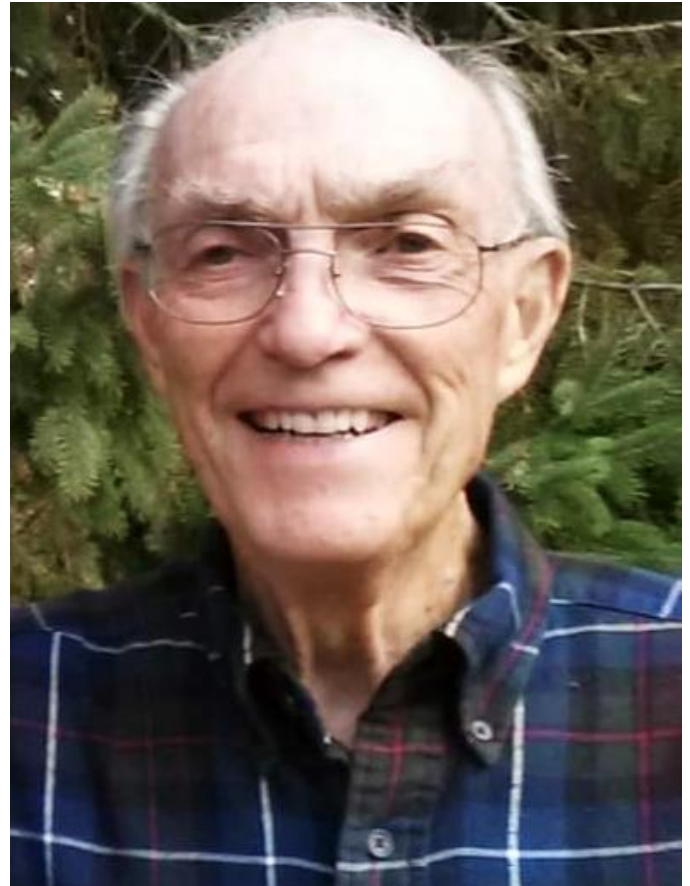
The Pine Tree Acres staff has graciously agreed to allow us into the landfill property again this year to see the many species of migrants that use the site as a stopover area. The site is certified by the [Wildlife Habitat Council](#) and has wetlands, woods, and open fields. Because of this habitat diversity, there is potential to see many different types of birds including shorebirds, hawks, warblers, gulls, and birds of open meadows. It is also fascinating to see how the landfill operates and the efforts that have been made to make it into a wildlife area.

RSVP to Joanna by April 25<sup>th</sup> by text at (313)720-9475 or by email at [centhymeme@aol.com](mailto:centhymeme@aol.com). We will meet at the main office of the landfill at 36600 29 Mile Rd in Lenox Township. This time of year, the roads at the landfill can be muddy, so we will carpool using those cars that are SUVs. The trip should end by noon.

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## **Other Bird News**

### **In Memoriam – Bill Clark**



*Bill Clark, photo from his FB page*

We would like to remember Macomb Audubon member and former board member, Bill Clark, who recently passed away. May he rest in peace. It's always sad to say goodbye, though we cherish the time we had together, connected through our love of birds and nature. In his honor, and as a team, may we continue to support these worthy causes. May the family and friends of Bill find comfort and peace during this time.

A quote from Barb Baldinger, "One of my special memories is that each year, our Christmas Bird Count team used to stop at his house. Bill always had hot chocolate and homemade cookies in the corner of the screened-in back porch for us to enjoy as we counted the birds at his feeders. He will be missed by all."

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## Contributions

These individuals have recently contributed to Macomb Audubon:

### Contributor Level

Jenny Emerick  
Elena Kish  
Sonja Sauter  
Micki Smith  
Micki Special

### Supporter Level

John Bieganowski  
Ward Randol

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



As many of you may know, Macomb Audubon is nearly 50 years old! As we approach this anniversary, the Macomb Audubon board will be assembling a committee to help work out the details of what we will do to celebrate this milestone. If you are interested in joining this committee, please let me know at a member meeting, by email, or phone (see page 7 for contact info). We'd love to include you in the planning and hear all your great ideas.



With the year off to quite a start already, winter is barely holding a frost over the area. I'm enjoying the return of waterfowl on the now open water of the reflecting pools at the GM Tech Center. There is sure to be another increase in species come April. You are welcome to join me as I tour the center on one of my rare opportunities to share this expansive corporate campus. This year, I am signing people up for April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, where there are openings each hour from 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. As was successful last year, I'll take names of volunteers that would like to help survey birds throughout the day. If you are interested, let me know at the March

meeting, by email, or phone. While you cannot take pictures on site, you can carry binoculars and I'll keep a tally on eBird for each group. Last year, amongst each of the one-hour long survey group, we saw, at most, 28 species. Our total for the day was 37 species across the 710 acre site. I look forward to what I hope will be an annual event for a very long time.

For those who may not have made it to the February meeting/presentation, Joan Bonin shared her extensive history on the Stony Creek Metropark Bald Eagles. The presentation was recorded using Zoom. [Click here](#) to view it. If you didn't get a chance to see the presentation, or even if you did, listen as Joan goes through the trials and tribulations of the observations and some extensive research to paint the full picture of these majestic birds. I guarantee you'll walk away having learned something new about this nesting pair. Also, mark your calendars for a field trip with Joan in March (details on page 2). It still baffles me how



common Bald Eagle sightings have become. Just a few short years ago, I could hardly believe when someone would report an eagle sighting in Sterling Heights or even Warren. Already this year, I've made two sightings in Warren. Upon sharing this information at work, you wouldn't believe all the similar sightings, some with pictures!

If you have your own stories to share about nature, I hope to see you again at the next meeting or out on the trails. There's always something to see out in the wild, and things are ever-changing. There's always the possibility for a surprise around every corner.

Happy Birding! -Paul Messing, Macomb Audubon President

*(Northern Cardinal & Joan Bonin presenting, by Paul Messing)*

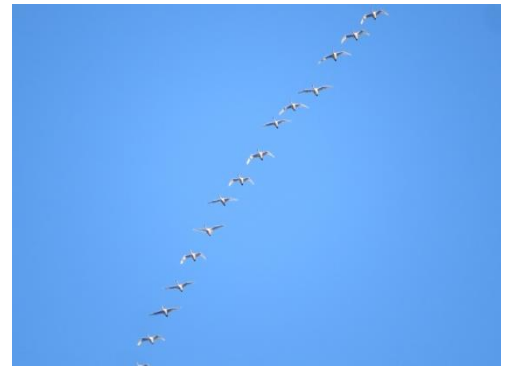
# Editor's Note

Hello, bird nerds!



I hope you're well. In all reality, some of you probably are, while some are not, as this is the nature of life – all those ups and downs. I talk about this sort of thing quite often, how life and nature move in cycles. It fascinates me, and I find comfort in studying these patterns and understanding the ups and downs a little better. Truly, it's one of the main reasons I Love the act of birding, the seasonal repetition of it, interspersed with changes both inherent and sometimes unexpected. While some people are out of touch with nature's timings, their moods and mindsets tied into just that day's weather, we birders know the greater undulations, when to expect them, and when the birds tend to move with them.

All this talk about predictability does come with a caveat. For one, birds can be unpredictable, especially if they're young and inexperienced, or blown off course by extreme weather. Alternatively, what was predicted decades ago, in terms of migration, is not set in stone, especially with climate-wide weather changes. Sometimes it scares me to see migration happening earlier than usual or with fewer birds, for one, just because change is scary, and for two, the implications of what it might mean for the birds and for us. I didn't come on here to set a dark tone though, only to contemplate for a moment on how lucky I feel to be a birder, to be in tune, to be noticing. It's like with the Christmas Bird Counts we do each December, where groups of us go to the same few-mile section we've surveyed year after year, counting all the birds we see. By doing this every year, you start to see what's the same, what's changed, and which of these changes seem to be one-off anomalies versus which seem more lasting or consequential. I'm amazed at how each year I've done the count, especially within the last couple of years, housing development and shrinking habitats have totally transformed our territory and our bird populations, and sadly not for the better.



Fast forward to now, where we have this unseasonably warm weather after a winter of barely any snow. We Macomb birders missed out on our usually-annual Snowy Owl sightings, but luckily, many of us still spotted some snowy species, including Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Snow Geese, and Northern Shrikes. One day earlier this week, it was particularly warm and sunny, and like magic, came my first-of-the-year sighting of Turkey Vultures, floating on that warming air. Killdeer are also popping up. If you hear one, check to see if it's truly a Killdeer or if it's a Starling, as they like to mimic them sometimes. I haven't seen any life birds yet this year, but I'm looking forward to an upcoming road trip

back out to the Southwest where I hope to add at least a couple new species and get some good photos too. I hope wherever you go, wherever you bird, you stop to soak it all in and to notice too.

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

*(Tundra Swans in migration & Bald Eagle, 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*

C/O 1156 Avon Manor Rd.

Rochester Hills Mi. 48307-5415

<http://www.macombaudubon.org>

