

EARTHSTAR

NEWSLETTER OF MACOMB AUDUBON

www.macombaudubon.net

Vol. 53, No. 2 | Mar – Apr, 2026

Programs

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

Mon., Mar. 2nd, 7:00 p.m.

Saving Sibley Prairie w/Trevor Hohenthauer

Join us for our March meeting where Trevor Hohenthauer will give a presentation about Sibley Prairie Nature Preserve. Sibley Prairie, located in Wayne County's Brownstown Township, is a vital remnant of Michigan's rare lakeplain prairie, a type of land unique to the Great Lakes, featuring diverse plant life, threatened species, and a mix of prairie and forest habitats. The Save Sibley Prairie Coalition is working to permanently protect the core 440 acres from development by raising \$6 million by the end of 2026. It's a big task, but one most deserving of our attention. Come be part of the solution and learn something new about this local slice of nature that's worth preserving.

Social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with the meeting starting at 7:00 p.m.

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

All About Loons w/Bay Noland-Armstrong



Common Loons

Mark your calendars for our April meeting led by Bay Noland-Armstrong, an instructor from the Farmington Hills Nature Center. Bay will speak to us at *our* nature center at Sterling Heights, teaching us all about loons and loon conservation. The not-so-common Common Loon is listed as a threatened species in Michigan and is protected under state and federal laws. With only about 500-700 nesting

pairs remaining in the state, these aquatic birds are threatened by human disturbance, boat wakes, shoreline development, and pollution. They are strong yet beautiful, often known best for their haunting calls. Many of you are already very familiar, but if not, look them up. You'll have very likely heard them before!

Social hour is at 6:30 p.m. with the meeting at 7:00 p.m. For updates on meetings or other Macomb Audubon news, follow us on [Facebook](#) and/or our [website](#).

Field Trips

St. Clair River

Sat., Mar. 7th, 10:00 a.m.

Leader: Wade Leonard

You're invited to our next field trip, on the Saturday of the weekend where we "spring forward" for daylight savings. Field trip leader Wade Leonard will be our guide on this multi-stop adventure along the shorelines of the St. Clair River. We'll start off from Algonac State Park and meander our way north along the coast. The plan is to stop at vantage points in Marine City, East China, St. Clair, and Marysville. Of course, this itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions. Birding targets will mostly consist of overwintering ducks and gulls which may be concentrating in the river, away from the

freezing lake. Possible species include: Long-tailed Ducks, up to three species of scoters, and Iceland, Glaucous, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. In the past, these spots have also yielded rarities such as Harlequin Ducks and King Eiders.

Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Algonac State Park lot along the river on the east side of M-29. The trip will end somewhere between noon and 1:00 p.m. Dress very warmly. If you have a spotting scope, please bring it along with binoculars. RSVP to Wade by March 5th via text/call at (586) 808-4442, or contact by email at wadeleonard1922@att.net

Guided Birding at the GM Tech Center

Mon., Apr. 6th, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

(1 hr. tours on the hour)

Leader: Paul Messing

We are fortunate that Macomb Audubon president, Paul Messing, is our "inside" connection at the GM Global Tech Center in Warren. If you're wondering what the Tech Center has to do with birding, the site doubles as an unexpected natural habitat and oasis for birds, set within the highly urbanized city surrounds. The sprawling, 710-acre facility is normally closed to the public, but Paul can get us in and show us around the grounds.

Large reflecting pools within serve as a stopover spot for a variety of waterfowl including Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, Scaups, Buffleheads, and Common Loons (learn more about Loons at our April presentation this same night, page 1). During last year's trip, we logged sightings of Bonaparte's Gulls, among others. The open areas and forest edges draw in Horned Larks and Northern Yellow Warblers. Raptors are likely to begin nesting, including Peregrine Falcons and Red-tailed Hawks.

Sign up for this trip during our March meeting (details on page 1). Alternatively, contact Paul via text at (586) 899-2157 or email at macombaudubon@gmail.com When signing up, you'll receive info about remaining available time slots. Keep in mind - all tours need to be scheduled in advance.

Contributions

The following individuals have recently contributed to Macomb Audubon:

Contributor Level

Kay Collins

Sonja Sauter

Supporter Level

John Bacal

Donor Level

Denis & Laura Barbour

Sharon Salamon

Thank you for your generous support!

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.

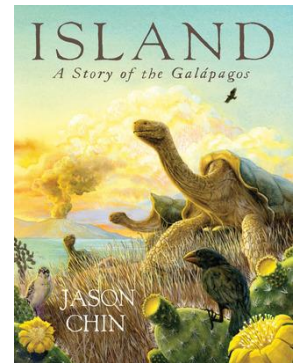
The Earthstar newsletter is published bi-monthly (January, March, July, September, and November). **If you wish to submit content to be included in the Earthstar, please send by the 12th of the month before the next edition, to Andrea Rose at littlebirdnerd37@gmail.com.** Members may receive this newsletter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



President's Letter

Does anyone else hear that?! I can just faintly make out the calls of robins over the sounds of ice breaking and snow melting. We've certainly had our fair share of cold weather this winter, haven't we? I hope, like me, you're looking for those sounds and signs of spring, and that you are as excited as I am to witness the upcoming change in seasons. There are already reports of Great Horned Owls nesting. Another bonus of the warm-up is improved range on my electric vehicle. Pretty soon, I'll be able to make it Up North again on a single charge. I'm looking forward to Macomb Audubon spring things too. We have a great line-up of programs and field trips in the coming months, along with partnerships and outreach events like hosting a library program for the residents of Rochester, and running a Macomb Audubon table at Lake St. Clair Metropark's Owl Fest/Raptor Festival on April 11th.

I'm writing this in February, but by the time you read this, I may just have my 20 photos already chosen for the end of the year's photo sharing party. I know it's early, but during the third week of February, I'll be in the Galápagos where I expect many photo opportunities to present themselves! It's been a long and steady process of preparing for this trip, and definitely on my wife Jill's part. As for me, I've been doing some reading recommended by the tour group I'm traveling with. I've read up with plenty of nonfiction and added in a novel too. These resources have prepared me well for the journey. If you'd like to get a better sense of the Galápagos, check out the following books from the cruise's recommended reading list: *Island: A Story of the Galápagos*, by Jason Chin (our children, Lucy and Henry, took to this primer well), *Galápagos: The Islands That Changed the World*, by Paul D. Stewart, and *Galápagos*, a novel by Kurt Vonnegut (an interesting read with colorful characters). As we speak, I know it won't be long before I'll be getting on the plane to Miami.



In fact, my departure to Florida coincides with this year's Great Backyard Bird Count – an exciting tradition I first participated in via eBird 12 years ago. Funnily enough, that first one also happened around the start of a previous trip to Florida! As this year's count has likely passed by the time you're reading this, save the date for next year's count during President's Day weekend. The event is promoted by eBird annually and entails getting out and birding from wherever you can, even from your own backyard. The idea is to find as many birds as possible during that four-day weekend, reporting them using eBird checklists.

Speaking of eBird, one more thing to mention before I go... I recently came across a feature of eBird I've never seen, the "iconic birds" tool located within eBird hotspots. When you search a hotspot on the website, the logic in the database will highlight birds that represent standout sightings for that location (compared to what would usually be expected there). Of course, the first hotspot I looked at was the GM Tech Center, where I'll hopefully see you for our April field trip (details on page 2). Check out eBird's "iconic bird" feature for yourself to see a set of hotspot highlights for any location of your choosing. You can further refine your search by current month or for the whole year. With that, I wish you happy birding and happy spring!

Paul Messing,
Macomb Audubon President

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): Wade Leonard - wadeleonard1922@att.net

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Corresponding Secretary: **Vacant**

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Facebook Rep: Barbara Baldinger - bbwren@yahoo.com

Committees

Car Pool Coordinator: **Vacant**

Christmas Bird Count: Brian McGee - brianmcgee@wowway.com

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Historian: Michael Ciaciuch

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: Henry 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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