



WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Virtual Field Trip Report

By Michelle Brosius, WCAS Board Member & Field Trip Co-Coordinator

In July 2020, Western Cuyahoga Audubon kicked off the Virtual Field Trip series of bird walks, designed to be enjoyed independently or with members of your household. There are up to two ways to participate in the program. You can visit the month's designated field trip location and report back to myself regarding your experience. These reports can take the form of bird species lists, journaling, photography, etc. I will then compile your submitted items into a digital scrapbook that is published on the wcaudubon.org website and shared across our social media platforms. The second way to participate is to join me for the virtual meetup on the WCAS Virtual Conference Center during which I present the scrapbook and encourage discussion. Since the program began, we've had people participate in both events or just one or the other, depending on availability, mobility, or interest.

Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve (CLNP) was our October location in which participants searched for fall warblers, kinglets, and sparrows. The kinglets and warblers were easier to find earlier in the month, though present throughout, whereas sparrows were plentiful throughout. We had six participants visit CLNP during the month to provide content for the scrapbook that was shared on social media and at the virtual meetup for discussion. Three participants scored lifers! Al Rand saw a Sedge Wren and Purple Finch, Shaun Missig saw a Golden-crowned Kinglet and a Saw-whet Owl, and I saw a beautiful Marsh Wren for the first time. Nancy Howell was the month's overachiever for visiting the preserve seven times and tallying a total of 79 species!

In November, five virtual field trip participants visited Richfield Heritage Preserve in search of Woodpeckers and Nuthatches. Corey Ringle, President of Friends of Crowell Hilaka, was WCAS's guest speaker at a Speaker Series earlier in the year and piqued my interest in visiting the preserve. Therefore, when virtual field trip participant, Mary Ann Henderson, requested this location I was more than happy

to oblige, and November with its fall colors seemed to be the perfect month to showcase the location. The preserve has a very interesting history as most of the land was formerly owned by inventor James Kirby for many years before it was purchased by the Girl Scouts of North East Ohio. The land served as a Girl Scout Camp for 80 years before becoming a preserve managed by Richfield Joint Recreation District in 2014. We enjoyed hearing about Mary Ann's experience at the location, which was nostalgic as she camped there as a Girl Scout and as a leader! Tom Fishburn was granted an off-trail permit and took some beautiful photographs of Kirby's Mill and "Secret Falls" that he shared. Overall, the location was gorgeous and birding was what you would expect for November. Woodpeckers and Nuthatches were seen by most, and Eastern Bluebirds and a Belted Kingfisher were a joy to see.

December's location was Sandy Ridge Reservation in which participants hoped to see the American Tree Sparrow and winter waterfowl; e.g., American Black Duck. Preliminary reports from participants indicate these species were, in fact, seen; however, the submissions are still being received and the scrapbook is still in development at the time of this article.

I invite you to check out our upcoming virtual field trips by visiting www.wcaudubon.org and clicking on the appropriate tile on the home page.