



WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Virtual Field Trip Report

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

The Virtual Field Trip series is 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.

December's virtual field trip took place at **Sandy Ridge Reservation** in which seven participants hoped to see the American Tree Sparrow and winter waterfowl; e.g., Trumpeter Swan and American Black Duck. All target species were seen. Sandy Ridge Reservation is a very popular hotspot for birders in Northeast Ohio and I encourage you to plan a visit if you have never gone before. December birding can be rough, but not at Sandy Ridge, as the birds still turned up even with the lakes frozen over near the end of the month. Mary Ann and John Henderson shared a helpful tip for birders who are inclined to bring a scope, "If you are carrying a scope, consider parking near the back entrance, in the Sandy Ridge housing development, on Songbird Lane (off Center Ridge Rd.). This will put you closer to the ponds, and you won't have to carry your scope as far." I got a lifer on the field trip, having never seen a Brown Creeper before. Tom Fishburn took many lovely photographs of the Sandhill Cranes before they left for warmer temperatures.

In January, five participants visited the **Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation** in search of the Bald Eagle as there is a nest in the area that was discovered in 2017. It is the first active Bald Eagle nest in Cleveland in a century. The reservation is an urban oasis for wildlife and provides critical wetland habitat for a variety of bird species. Several Bald Eagle, mostly juveniles, were seen by all throughout the month in addition to an American Wigeon, which was a lifer for Shaun Missig! Other notable species seen by participants were the American Black Duck, Common, Hooded, and Red-breasted Merganser, and Pied-billed Grebe. Also, Al Rand and Nancy Howell both spotted a Mallard x American Black Duck Hybrid!

Seven participants visited **Bradley Woods Reservation** in Westlake, Ohio for February's virtual field trip. The Black-capped Chickadee was our target species, and although almost everyone had at least one observation, these endearing birds proved to be shier at Bradley Woods than usual. However, the Tufted Titmouse earned an honorable mention in the scrapbook as it was overwhelmingly present during the month. Bradley Woods is a unique location as it is a swamp forest and formerly the site of an old sandstone quarry. The Quarry Loop Trail was a favorite trail, offering a nice stroll through a small meadow before leading to several forest pools and evidence of the old quarry. Other notable species include a pair of Pileated Woodpecker, and the American Robins, although quite common, were showing off their beautiful colors in the snow.

I invite you to check out our upcoming virtual field trips by visiting www.wcaudubon.org and clicking on the Virtual Field Trips 2021 tile on the home page.