



WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Virtual Field Trip Report, June – August 2021

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

The Virtual Field Trip series is an option for engaging with nature and community while adhering to social distancing guidelines necessitated by COVID-19. Participants in the program independently visit a pre-selected location throughout a given month and then report back to me with bird lists, journaling, and photographs regarding the visit. These items are then compiled into a scrapbook that is shared during a virtual meetup the second Wednesday following the field trip month.

In June, the designated virtual field trip location was the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Over the course of the month, seven participants searched the park for Scarlet Tanager, Orioles (both Baltimore and Orchard), and Wood Duck. Many sites were visited and the top recommendations from participants include Beaver Marsh, Station Road Railroad, Station Road Towpath Trail, and Virginia Kendall Lake. Mary Ann and John Henderson visited Kendall Lake and provided a tip for eBirders that Kendall Lake has two hotspots, one for the lake and one for the meadow behind the lake. Also, congratulations to Shaun Missig on his Cerulean Warbler lifer and to Al Rand for seeing his first Yellow-breasted Chat in county!

July's virtual field trip took place at Kopf Family Reservation in Avon Lake, which is comprised of 170 acres of woodlands, in search of Eastern Wood-Pewee and Red-headed Woodpecker. We had five participants visit the reservation. The connector trail from the public library to the reservation takes you right past the high school's football stadium, which is where I personally had the best luck finding a variety of birds. Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Red-headed Woodpecker, American Robin, House Finch, and even a Chipping Sparrow at one point perched on the chain link fence surrounding the stadium. Also, I spotted a Red-tailed Hawk nest with two adults tending the nest in the vicinity. It seemed a little late for nesting and yet there they were, bringing in twigs. The Eastern Wood-Pewee was seen or heard by almost everyone, as well as was the Red-eyed Vireo. Eastern Wood-Pewees have a distinctive call that is unmistakable out in the field once you know it; they say their name: *pee-a-wee*.

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In August, three participants visited The Rookery in Chesterland in search of the Eastern Phoebe, which was sighted by all. The Rookery has an interesting history as it was once the site of the old Interurban Railroad Junction which connected Cleveland to Chardon and Middlefield. I snapped a photo of a juvenile Belted Kingfisher. You can ID a juvenile by the brown or rusty breast band which will become bluish-gray as the bird matures. Tom Fishburn snapped some photos of a Green Heron and also focused his camera on a variety of wildflowers in the area. The Ironweed, Wingstem, and Great Blue Lobelia were all showing their lovely colors in August.

Thank you to Nancy Howell, Al Rand, Mary Ann and John Henderson, Lisa Gerbec, Shaun Missig, and Tom Fishburn for participating and contributing gorgeous photos and interesting stories. I invite you to watch the recordings or check out the scrapbooks of any of these virtual field trips, and to check out our upcoming virtual field trips, by visiting wcaudubon.org and clicking on the Field Trips tile on the home page.