



# April 2021 Virtual Field Trip: **Lucia S. Nash Preserve**

Bird Walk Leader: Michelle Brosius  
WCAS Board Member and Field Trip Co-Coordinator

# Lucia S. Nash Preserve



*Photo: Lucia S. Nash Preserve Sign by Tom Fishburn*

Lucia S. Nash Preserve is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy and is open to the public April through November.

“The 650-acre Lucia S. Nash Preserve, located in Geauga County, includes Snow Lake—a small kettle lake surrounded by emergent marsh, sedge meadow and shrub swamp. The low hills around the lake support upland forest with scattered vernal pools and swamp forests. The preserve also protects the only remaining old-growth white pine boreal fen in Ohio.

Lucia S. Nash Preserve, formerly known as White Pine Bog, is part of a larger 20,000-acre wetland complex of boggy bottomland known as the Cuyahoga Wetlands—an area considered one of the finest remaining glacial wetlands in Ohio. The complex also includes the Geauga Park District’s Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve and The Cleveland Museum of Natural History’s Fern Lake.

The property is adjacent to a patchwork of 18,000 acres the City of Akron owns and manages to protect the city’s drinking water reservoirs downstream. The 300,000 customers who rely on Akron’s municipal water system benefit from the protection of the Lucia S. Nash Preserve and other nearby natural areas.” – [The Nature Conservancy, Lucia S. Nash Preserve](#)

Watch a [Lucia S. Nash Preserve Virtual Naturalist Hike](#) with Terry Seidel.

# Target Species



## Sandhill Crane

“Whether stepping singly across a wet meadow or filling the sky by the hundreds and thousands, Sandhill Cranes have an elegance that draws attention. These tall, gray-bodied, crimson-capped birds breed in open wetlands, fields, and prairies across North America. They group together in great numbers, filling the air with distinctive rolling cries. Mates display to each other with exuberant dances that retain a gangly grace. Sandhill Crane populations are generally strong, but isolated populations in Mississippi and Cuba are endangered.” – The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, [Sandhill Crane](#)

As you can see, Northeast Ohio is at the bottom of their breeding range, with the exception of the year-round pockets to the south.

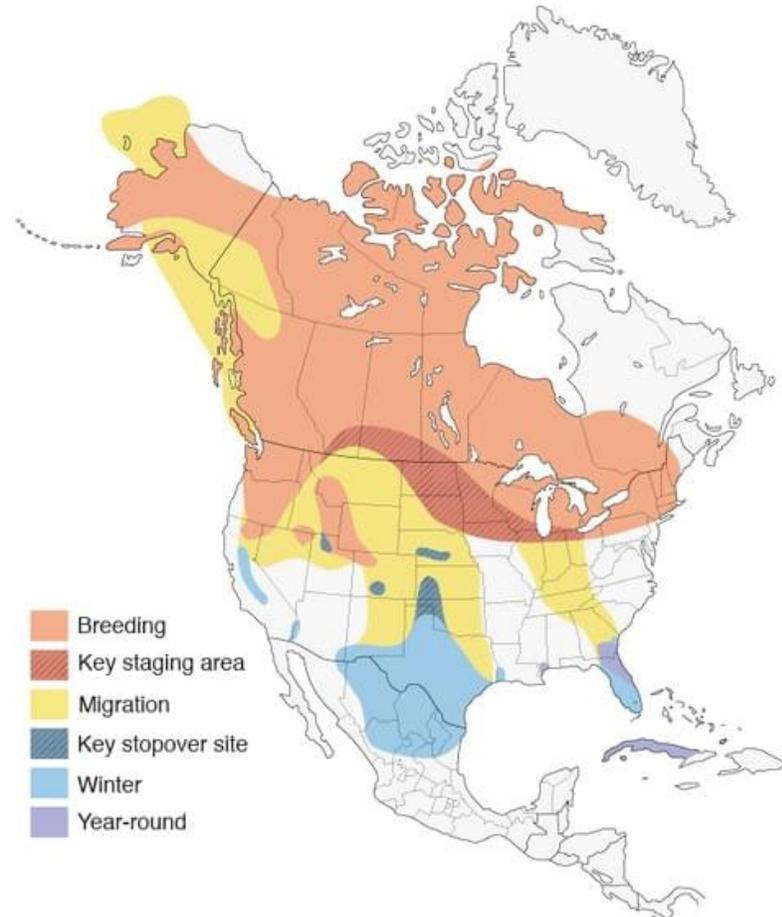


Photo: Sandhill Crane Range Map by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Photo: Sandhill Crane at Sandy Ridge Reservation by Tom Fishburn

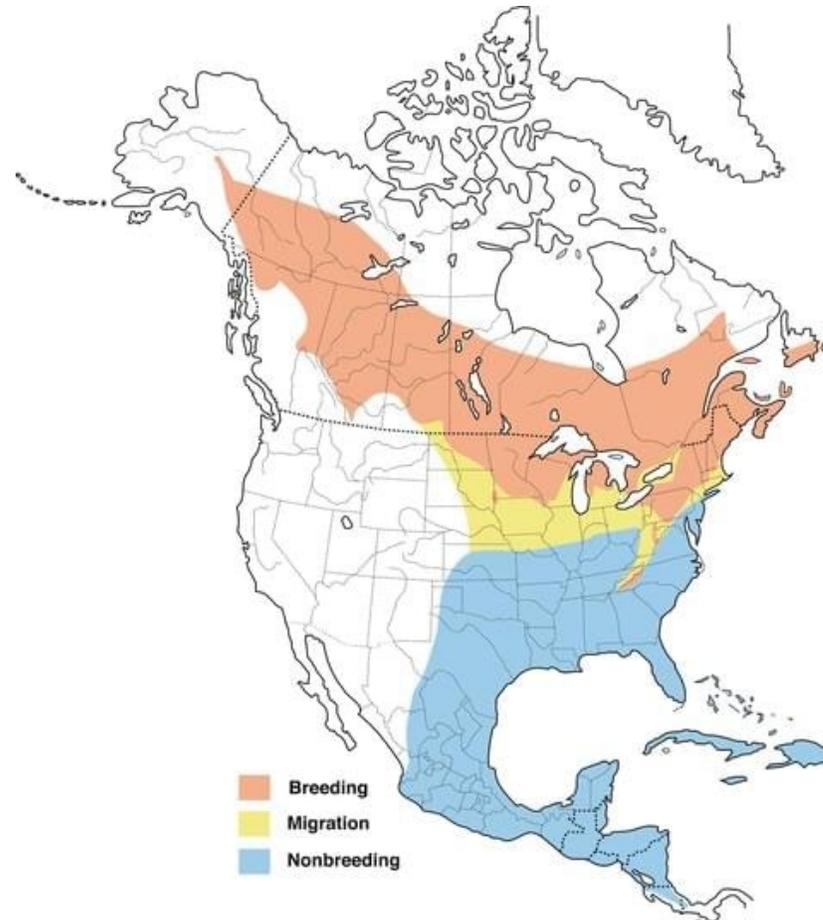
# Target Species (cont.)



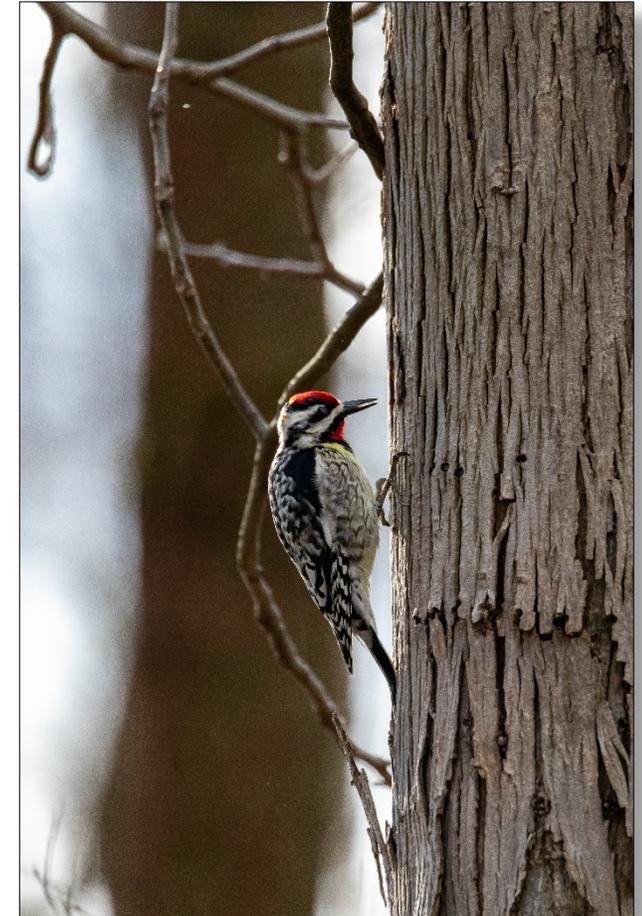
## Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

“On a walk through the forest you might spot rows of shallow holes in tree bark. In the East, this is the work of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, an enterprising woodpecker that laps up the leaking sap and any trapped insects with its specialized, brush-tipped tongue. Attired sharply in barred black-and-white, with a red cap and (in males) throat, they sit still on tree trunks for long intervals while feeding. To find one, listen for their loud mewling calls or stuttered drumming.” – The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, [Yellow-bellied Sapsucker](#)

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker’s pre-breeding migratory season is mid-March through mid-May and passes through Northeast Ohio for spring migration as it continues north to breeding grounds.



*Photo: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Range Map by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology*



*Photo: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# AI Rand

27 Species



## AI visited the preserve **twice!**

What a wonderful location. I'm so glad to have been introduced to it as part of the Virtual Field Trip series. The history is interesting as is the path taken to turn it into the public park it is today. The diverse habitats are bound to hold many secrets just waiting to be uncovered. I visited on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 18<sup>th</sup>. Was able to hit all the trails on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, but got rained out on the 18<sup>th</sup> in less than an hour. However, I was lucky enough to encounter both of the target species. The **cranes** there are magnificent; way more natural than those at the Sandy Ridge Reservation (sorry Kevin). I'm looking forward to visiting this summer when birding is slow to see how many dragonfly species I can find. People that go oding are just as passionate as birders. "Oding" is the slang term for looking for dragonflies because they are in the Odonata order in the tree of life. Most dragonfly observations added to iNaturalist are added to the Ohio Dragonfly Survey (Ohio Odonata Survey) group. There are certain dragonfly species that create the same buzz like the Kirtland's Warbler does in the birding world. What a thrill it would be if one or more were found to be at the Nash Preserve. As for the birds, I identified 27 different species.



*Photo: Barbara A. Lipscomb Trail at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

# AI Rand (cont.)



*Photo: Wood Duck at Lucia S. Nash Preserve  
by Tom Fishburn*

## Bird List

1. Canada Goose
2. Trumpeter Swan
3. Wood Duck
4. Mallard
5. Mourning Dove
6. Sandhill Crane
7. Great Blue Heron
8. Turkey Vulture
9. Red-tailed Hawk
10. Bald Eagle
11. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
12. Downy Woodpecker
13. Northern Flicker
14. Blue Jay
15. Black-capped Chickadee
16. Tufted Titmouse
17. Tree Swallow
18. Golden-crowned Kinglet
19. White-breasted Nuthatch
20. Brown Creeper
21. American Robin
22. American Goldfinch
23. Song Sparrow
24. Swamp Sparrow
25. Red-winged Blackbird
26. Pine Warbler
27. Northern Cardinal

# Michelle Brosius

18 Species



## Michelle visited the preserve **twice!**

I visited Lucia S. Nash Preserve on April 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> was very dull and overcast, which didn't help my photography abilities, but I otherwise enjoyed my time at the preserve. My bird highlights for the trip include a **Pileated Woodpecker**, four **Turkey Vulture**, two of which came in to land on a nearby tree, and a pair of **Sandhill Crane**, which were a joy to see as they glided down to Snow Lake.



*Photos: Pileated Woodpecker (left) and Turkey Vulture (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



As I explored the preserve, I stopped along the trails to admire a few plants. iNaturalist places one of the plants that I found near the boardwalk to Snow Lake in the genus *Angelica*, which contains about 60 species. I have inquired about the species in a Plant Identification Facebook group, but have not received any responses to help me narrow down the identification, nor have I received a confirmation or suggestion from a fellow iNaturalist user. The species remains a mystery for now, but I did pause to appreciate its bright green leaves in a teardrop cluster. The second, and perhaps my most favorite of the plants I admired that day, were the fiddleheads that I found along the Woodland Loop trail. Fiddleheads are the furled fronds of a young fern and remind me of something out of a fairytale. Lastly, the Marsh Marigold was a lovely sight in the forest near a vernal pool.



*Photos: Angelica (according to iNaturalist) (left), Fiddleheads (center), and Marsh Marigold (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



Spring is the time of year to find and appreciate vernal pools and the forest at Lucia S. Nash Preserve contained quite a few areas. Vernal pools are a really interesting habitat and are special because they are temporary. Vernal pools form every spring due to rain, rising ground water, and runoff, but then are completely dry in the summer. A vernal pool's temporary nature prohibits fish from getting established in the area, making this a great breeding ground for amphibians and invertebrates as there are no fish to prey on their eggs. Vernal pools are also a sensitive habitat so be sure to stay on the designated trails. I am very appreciative that The Nature Conservancy planned their Woodland Loop trail to pass by a few of these precious pools for observation.



*Photo: Vernal Pool at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



The large leafy plants in the photos below are skunk cabbage, which is a perennial wildflower that grows in the swampy and wet areas of forests. This plant sprouts in early spring and has the ability to create its own heat, which serves to melt any early spring snow around itself.



*Photos: Vernal Pools and Skunk Cabbage at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



After Lucia S. Nash Preserve I swung by nearby LaDue Reservoir as I had some time before I needed to head into Mayfield for my second COVID-19 vaccine. Here, I saw a Common Loon. Although not my spark bird (the bird that “ignites” ones enthusiasm for birding), this bird is the one that made me want to get into photography. I chased this bird and first saw it in spring 2020 and wished I had the right tools to take an image. This bird only passes through Northeast Ohio during migration. Now, a year later, I happen upon this bird in less than ideal photography conditions and hope I did it justice.



*Photo: Common Loon at LaDue Reservoir by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)

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*Photos: Common Loon at LaDue Reservoir by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



The morning of April 24<sup>th</sup> was a much sunnier morning than my last visit. I didn't happen to see either target species on this visit, but I had a fantastic experience with an **Eastern Phoebe**. On the Barbara A. Lipscomb Trail, close to Snow Lake, there is an old fishing/hunting lodge, and this Eastern Phoebe has chosen the eaves of this lodge for her nesting site.

Phoebes tend to reuse nests from previous years so she may have just been conducting some repairs as the nest looked complete to me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what she has in her beak. Looks like it could be a grub, but it's covered in mud and I do know that phoebes use mud, along with other materials, in building their nests. I'm calling this bird a "she" as this one was building the nest and only the female phoebes do this task. There was another phoebe that hung way back at a distance, presumably the male. Phoebes prefer solitude even during the breeding season.

*Photo: Eastern Phoebe at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



I have included a photo of the nest here, but it was in the shadow of the eaves and turned out really grainy due to high ISO. I applied noise reduction, which affected the sharpness of the image. As it is spring it is likely that birders will come across a nest or two, therefore, please remember your nest etiquette and keep your distance. This phoebe flew to the nest with building materials several times while I observed, and therefore, I knew I was at a comfortable distance for her.

*“The phoebe-bird is a wise architect and perhaps enjoys as great an immunity from danger, both in its person and its nest, as any other bird. Its modest ashen-gray suit is the color of the rocks where it builds, and the moss of which it makes such free use gives to its nest the look of a natural growth or accretion.”*

- John Burroughs, American naturalist and author



*Photo: Eastern Phoebe and Nest at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



*Photos: Eastern Phoebe (left) and Fishing/Hunting Lodge (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



*Photos: Eastern Phoebe at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



*Photos: Eastern Phoebe at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



*Photo: Chipmunk at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

After spending some time with the phoebe I said goodbye and headed toward the Snow Lake observation deck. I had just made it to the deck from the long walk down the boardwalk when a flock of seven **Blue-winged Teal** flew right over me, heading toward the far side of the lake. Nothing else was really happening at the lake other than **Canada Goose** activity and a **Great Blue Heron** in the distance so I decided to check out the Woodland Loop trail. I stopped briefly at the lodge again, but the phoebe must have been out collecting more materials so I continued on my way.

On the Woodland Loop trail I found a cute chipmunk that almost seemed to hover at attention on a log. The Woodland Loop trail also seemed to be full of **Wood Duck** perched high up in the trees. They are one of the few duck species that have strong claws for gripping branches. I never saw them until they were startled from their perches and flew off making their loud "[wooo-eeek](#)" call. Also along the trail I was followed briefly by a couple **Black-capped Chickadees** and then witnessed a **Red-bellied Woodpecker** employing an interesting neck-twisting strategy to get at a meal. I once saw a Downy doing the exact same thing at another location. Woodpeckers must have flexible necks!

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



*Photos: Black-capped Chickadee at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



*Photos: Red-bellied Woodpecker at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Michelle Brosius*

# Michelle Brosius (cont.)



*Photo: Eastern Phoebe at Lucia S. Nash Preserve  
by Michelle Brosius*

## Bird List

1. Canada Goose
2. Wood Duck
3. Blue-winged Teal
4. Sandhill Crane
5. Great Blue Heron
6. Turkey Vulture
7. Red-bellied Woodpecker
8. Pileated Woodpecker
9. Northern Flicker
10. Eastern Phoebe
11. Blue Jay
12. Black-capped Chickadee
13. Tufted Titmouse
14. White-breasted Nuthatch
15. American Robin
16. Eastern Towhee
17. Red-winged Blackbird
18. Northern Cardinal

# Shaun Missig

20 Species



## Shaun visited the preserve **three** times!

I visited on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup>. From my first visit to Lucia S. Nash Preserve, I was in awe! When I first arrived to the parking area, it felt like I was tucked away from civilization even though I really hadn't driven very far from the road. Stepping out of the truck proved that to be correct. It was quiet, and very serene. The only sound you heard was the animals nearby or the various birds from the lake. In the parking area I was greeted by the sounds of **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** as they were playing high in the trees above. I also heard a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, and on my second trip, it made an appearance very close to the parking area. Thankfully it did not appear to be bothered by me and I was able to take many shots before heading to the path. I do not get many of these by me, so they are always a pleasant sight to see when I'm out.

As I made my way down the trail, I arrived at the first opening where some smaller birds were bouncing around in the brush and would not sit still. After watching them for quite some time and only getting a few shots, I decided to move on. I later identified these as **Golden-crowned Kinglets** but do not have any good shots to show for it. On 4/18 this area also provided a **Virginia Rail** that was pointed out to me by other birders who were watching it from the path. I did see it and get to hear its call but I was unable to get pictures before it found its way into cover.



*Photo: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)



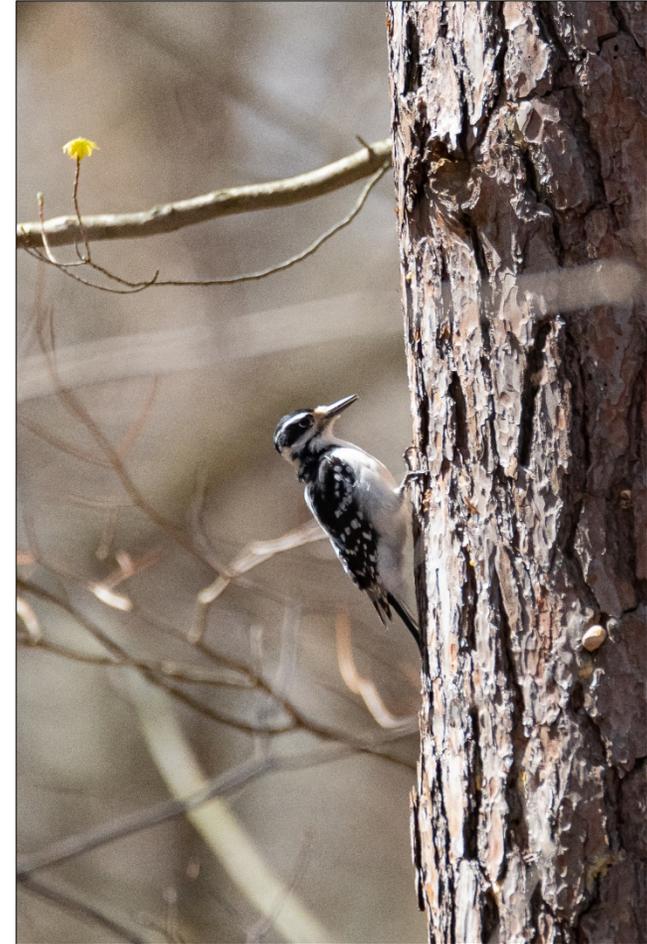
*Photo: Osprey at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

Continuing up the path I saw **Robins**, **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, and **Cardinals** flying in and out of the area. I also saw a few **Downy Woodpeckers** looking for a meal in some trees. A **Hairy Woodpecker** was also mixed in with the Downies.

As I walked further I started to hear the calls of **Sandhill Crane** in the distance. I was hoping to see a few of these since the only ones I've seen are at Sandy Ridge and they have no problem with people. I wanted to see more of a natural setting for these animals, and the preserve did NOT disappoint.

I made it to the end of the path and it lead me onto a floating dock that went out into the lake a little ways. This spot was the highlight of each trip for me! It was very peaceful and each time I went I spent the majority of my time just sitting on the dock capturing the wildlife and a sunburn! I found a lot of wildlife here...on the other side of the lake! At this point, I was very happy that I had recently picked up my 150-600mm lens. The first bird I photographed here was an **Osprey** in the distance flying over the lake. I was hoping it would stick around and attempt to catch a meal, but it appeared to have other plans. It was a nice way to start the trip though, and my good luck would continue.

# Shaun Missig (cont.)



*Photo: American Robin (left) and Hairy Woodpecker (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)



The Sandhill Cranes were beginning to get agitated and being very noisy again. I was able to see 2 pairs and their locations on the other shore across the lake. They would occasionally fly to another area with water behind the lake and fly back again. It wasn't until my 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> visits that I really got to see why people were frequenting this location for the Sandhill Crane. During these visits, the Crane were very prominent and there were pairs flying in and out of the area. I estimated the most I knew of in the area was around 15.



*Photo: Sandhill Crane at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)

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*Photos: Sandhill Cranes at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)

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*Photos: Sandhill Cranes at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)

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*Photos: Sandhill Cranes at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)



*Photo: Trumpeter Swans at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> visits also brought **Trumpeter Swans!** There was 1 pair on 4/11 and a 3<sup>rd</sup> swan joined on 4/18. The 3<sup>rd</sup> swan was not welcomed by the other 2 and it was left to fend for itself. There were many **geese** around here as well. They all seemed to be rather aggressive towards one another and were making a lot of noise while putting on quite a show! They were also chasing each other throughout the lake to claim their territory.

After the display from the geese had calmed down, I saw something sticking out of the water a little ways out from the dock. At first I thought it was a branch of some sort that happened to fall in and be floating with the current. When I looked again, it had changed direction and this time more of it was sticking out of the water! I decided I needed to get a picture to try and identify what this actually was. Once I was able to put it on a larger screen, it appeared to be a snapping turtle! I was glad that I got that shot, even if it was only the snout of this creature! The habitat there is very suitable for snapping turtles, and I'm glad it decided to say hi while it was looking for food!

# Shaun Missig (cont.)

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*Photos: Trumpeter Swans at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)

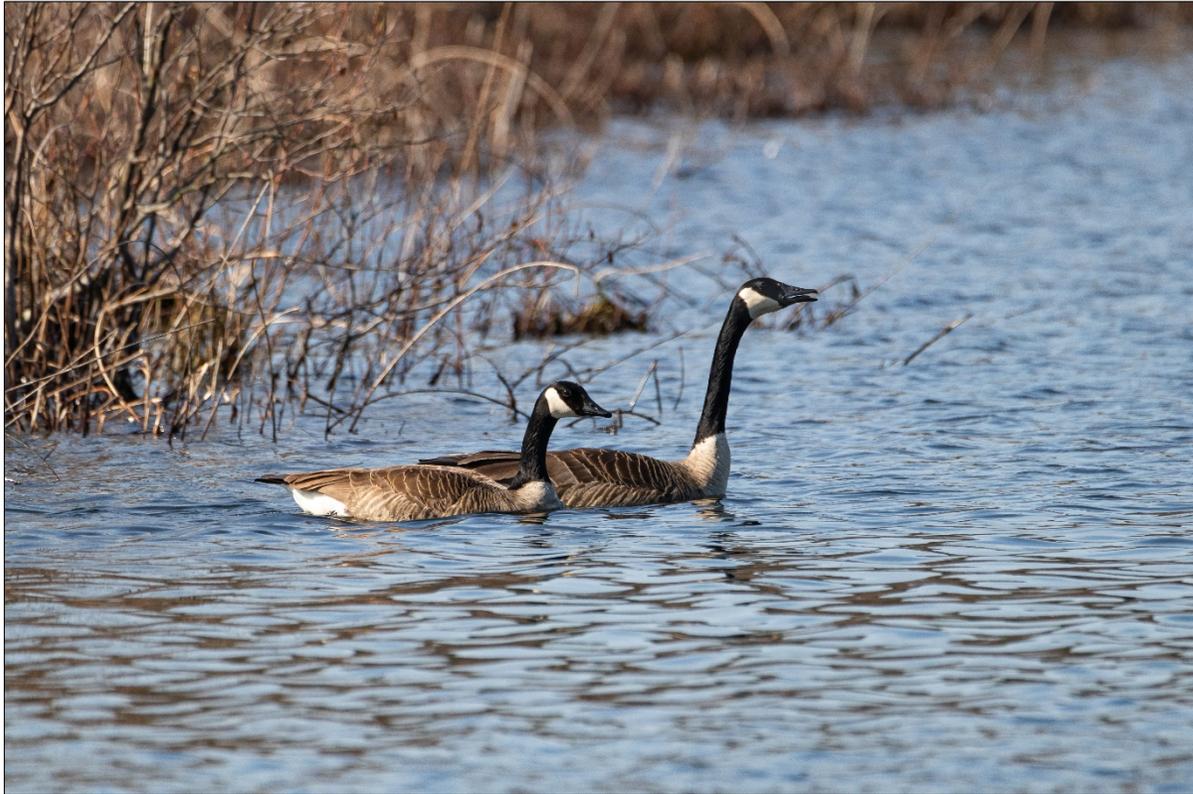
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*Photos: Trumpeter Swans at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)

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*Photos: Canada Geese at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)

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*Photos: Canada Geese (left) and Snapping Turtle (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)



While on the dock I also saw many **Turkey Vultures** and **Great Blue Herons** flying over the area. There was also a pair of **Pied-billed Grebes** that were fishing for a meal on 4/11. The walk back to the truck was just as peaceful as the walk out and not much had changed in the hours I spent on the dock. On 4/18 I spotted an ultra rare species known as the “Al Rand”! While talking with Al we heard the call of a **Pine Warbler**, but it did not want to show itself and I did not get a shot of it. All of my trips were nothing short of amazing and I look forward to visiting this location many times in the future!



*Photo: Sun from Behind a Cloud at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)

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*Photos: American Robin (left) and Red-winged Blackbird (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

# Shaun Missig (cont.)



*Photo: Blue Jay at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Shaun Missig*

## Species List

1. Red-bellied Woodpecker
2. Canadian Goose
3. Red-winged Blackbird
4. Wood Duck
5. American Robin
6. Northern Cardinal
7. Great Blue Heron
8. Osprey
9. Turkey Vulture
10. Red-breasted Nuthatch
11. Golden-crowned Kinglet
12. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
13. Blue Jay
14. Trumpeter Swan
15. Downy Woodpecker
16. Hairy Woodpecker
17. Pied-billed Grebe
18. Virginia Rail
19. Pine Warbler
20. Snapping Turtle

# Tom Fishburn



## Tom visited the preserve on **April 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

I visited the Nash Preserve on the morning of Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. One of the first sounds heard were from the **Sandhill Cranes** but I only saw them at a distance from the Snow Lake observation platform much later. As I started my walk up the Barbara A. Lipscomb Trail, I admired the pine trees along the way. I imagined how such an environment looked possible to see one of my nemesis birds, the Pine Warbler, which I remember seeing only twice before and never well. Then I heard a bird behind me that sounded like it and I reversed my direction to check. Here's what I heard: "[Pine Warbler Singing](#)." (YouTube, uploaded by Bill McDonald April 23, 2017.)

I checked my app for the song and was convinced. Looking up I eventually spotted the **Pine Warbler** very active at the top of the pines. A little later, I played my app briefly and it responded quickly and came lower. This brightly colored singer would jump from branch to branch between its songs. But before long it flew back up higher. I fired off my camera hoping to get a few focused images with the Pine Warbler clear of branches and in an appealing pose.



*Photos: Pine Warbler at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

# Tom Fishburn (cont.)



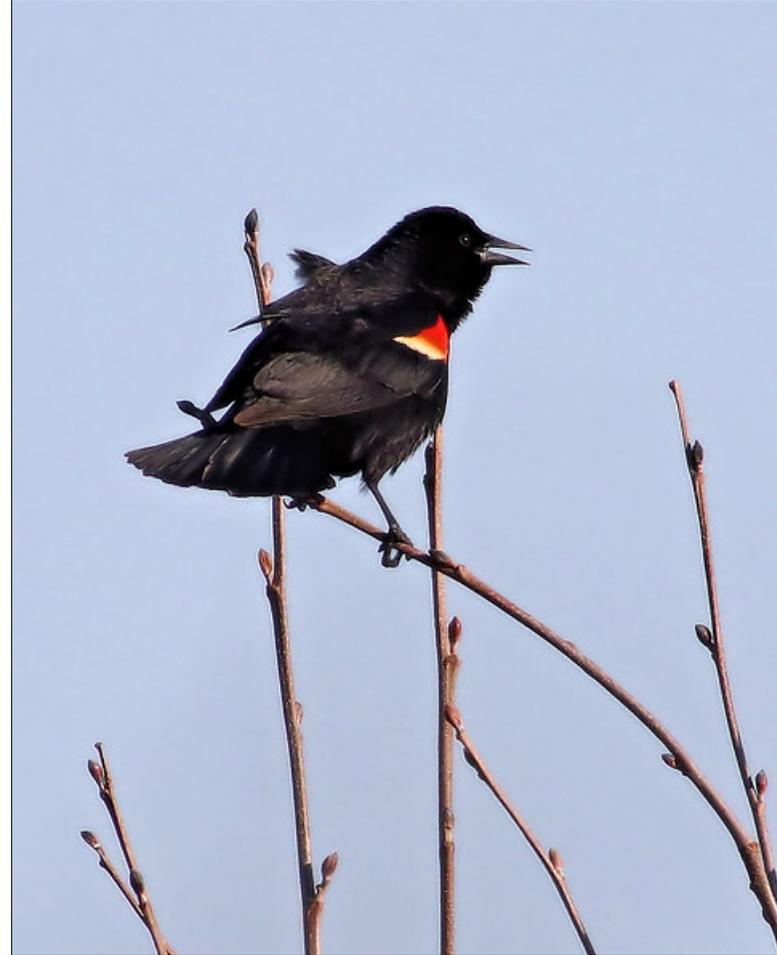
Further along the trail I heard **Wood Ducks** above me and spotted several in the trees. And again, later walking back after spending time by Snow Lake, I came across a group of about ten in the marsh by the Wetland Overlook. April had been amazing for Wood Ducks as I have seen many in several locations.

At Snow Lake I spent about an hour on the observation deck. I heard the distant **Sandhill Cranes** most of that time and saw them pop up a few times but too quick. Then when I was considering heading back, I saw two flying around enough to get a distant photo. In the meantime, there were other birds to watch which I have included in my album.



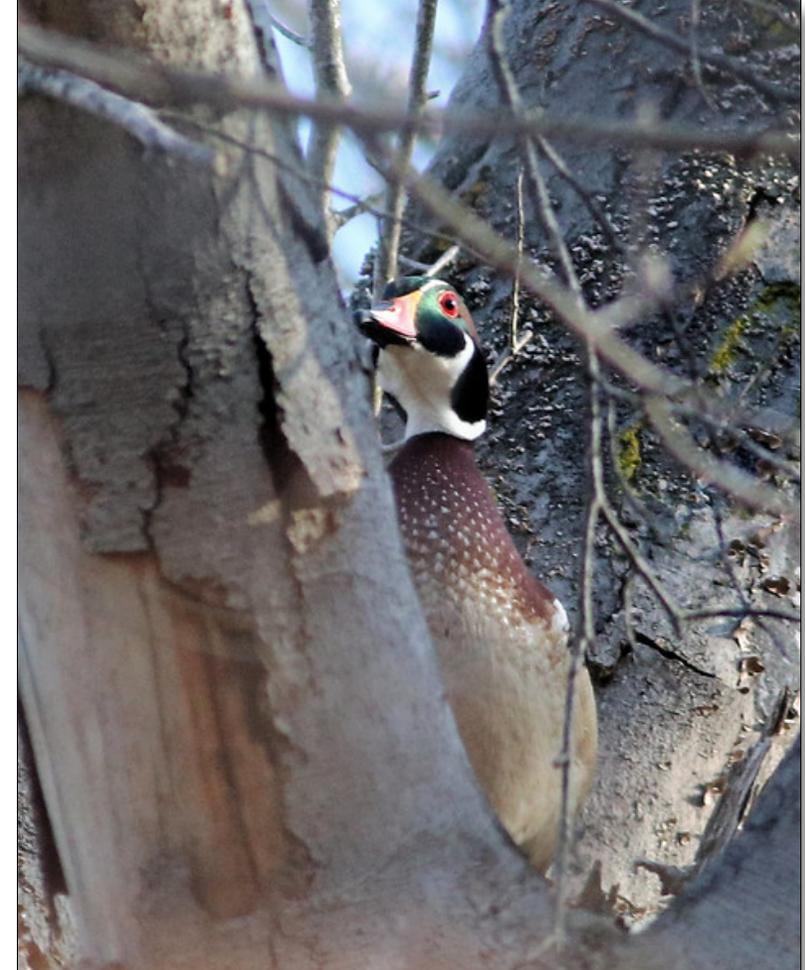
*Photo: Sandhill Cranes Flying on the Other Side of Snow Lake by Tom Fishburn*

# Tom Fishburn (cont.)



*Photos: Rusty Blackbird (left) and Red-winged Blackbird (Right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

# Tom Fishburn (cont.)



*Photos: Wood Ducks, male (left), female (center), male (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

# Tom Fishburn (cont.)



*Photos: Blue-winged Teal at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

# Tom Fishburn (cont.)

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*Photos: Pied-billed Grebe (left) and Great Blue Heron (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

# Tom Fishburn (cont.)



*Photos: Wood Duck in Flight at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

# Tom Fishburn (cont.)



*Photos: Blue Jay (left) and Northern Cardinal (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

# Tom Fishburn (cont.)



*Photos: Red-winged Blackbird (left) and Black-capped Chickadee (right) at Lucia S. Nash Preserve  
by Tom Fishburn*

# Thank you!



*Photo: Wood Duck, female, at Lucia S. Nash Preserve by Tom Fishburn*

Al Rand  
Shaun Missig  
Tom Fishburn

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**The Nature Conservancy for  
Lucia S. Nash Preserve!**

Lucia S. Nash Preserve is located at 16429 Snow Rd.,  
Burton, OH 44021.

Visit [wcaudubon.org](https://wcaudubon.org) for more virtual field trip  
opportunities!



@WCAudubon #WCAudubon