



WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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WCAS International Ambassador to Birding in Japan

By Kaoru Tsubone, WCAS Board Member and International Ambassador to Japan

I'm extremely honored and pleased that WCAS had made me a 'WCAS International Ambassador to Japan' with them.

Those are the roles that I can consider.

- To provide pictures of Asian and Japanese birds.
- To become a bridge between WCAS and the birding communities in Japan.
- To have opportunities to communicate with the birding communities.
- To share how people in Japan face and struggle with environmental conservation issues with examples.
- To share how people in the U.S. face and struggle with environmental conservation issues with examples with people in Japan.

Please let me look back, I can't believe it has been more than three years since I came to the U.S. and started birding. Unquestionably, I have been into birding and have been loving people I met at birding activities.

In February of 2017, I was fascinated with birds in Cleveland soon after coming to the U.S. and decided to jump into one of Spring Bird Walks. At the parking lot, Rocky River Nature Center, I was a bit nervous because birding was the first time in my life, and also I didn't know anyone

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out there, didn't understand what I was listening to and didn't speak English so much. To be honest, I can say even participating in bird walking was a little challenge for me at that time.

Then one of the participants came closer to us and spoke to me with her gentle smile. She noticed that we didn't have binoculars and offered to lend her binoculars to us. Yes! I even didn't know we needed binoculars to watch birds. I appreciate that she kept talking to us and explained how I can start birding while taking a walk. To borrow David Lindo's phrase, this lady opened my door to birding.

As you can easily imagine, I wasn't able to use her binoculars well with my lack of experience and couldn't catch up with the quick movement of the birds that leaders pointed out. Fortunately, the leaders and participants took my hands and led me through the door to the excitement. They struggled with having us see the birds many times, and tried to instruct which birds we were watching with pictures. Although I could only see a few birds, so much joy flowed into me like water thanks to their passion.

What I would like to tell you is this excitement can be shared with anyone on this planet beyond race, color, religion, sex, age, disability and ethnicity. It's not only about birding, but also everything you are interested in and what you are doing. We should understand and be proud of that each person has different ways to approach and enjoy something, but I believe that our delight can't be different. As one of Japanese loves birding, I hope my mission can help you to open your doors to birding, environmental conservative activities and connecting with people all over the world. And last but not least, I'd like to thank you for always supporting WCAS and me.