



THE FEATHERED FLYER

February – April 2023

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TREES

By Nancy Howell, WCAS Board member

On a cold December morning, during a walk along the Rocky River, the sun was out and shining on a Sycamore tree. I had to stop and look as most of the trunk and all of the limbs and branches were blindingly white. What evolutionary advantage is it to have bark that smooth and white, as compared with most other trees with rough, brown, tan, or gray bark? At sunrise and sunset, the light bark of sycamores pick up the colors of the morning or evening light and seem to glow yellow and orange, simply stunning!

Every season is when we should think about TREES. With spring around the corner, the things we appreciate about them are the blooming and leaf-out ... getting us out of those winter doldrums. But how well do you know your trees? Don't just think about elementary school leaf identification, but really, how **well** do you know your trees in your yard, in your neighborhood, in nearby parks?



Icicle Tree by Kathy Murphy

If your spouse, partner or friend brought you a bouquet of Red Oak flowers, how pleased would you be? Have you tasted a Silver Maple seed? Is there a reason why certain species of trees grow in particular areas? Do you know which trees have male and female flowers on separate plants? Have you thought about what processes trees undergo to survive the winter? There is so much to see, learn, understand ... and appreciate, which we sometimes don't do.

Trees that I have planted in my yard include Black Gum or Tupelo and Shingle Oak, as well as the Pin Oaks have come up on their own from forgetful squirrels or Blue Jays. A Northern Catalpa, that had to be removed due to damage has left behind several young catalpas in the neighborhood. Sweetgum trees have come in on their own as well. The yard has a large Silver Maple that does a fabulous job of soaking up water from our soggy soil, while the Red Maple in the front yard has red flowers, however, it does not turn red in the fall. I wonder if that has to do with the soil nutrients, or is it the genetics of that tree? White Pine, Norway Spruce, Arbor Vitae are just a few of the conifers that were here as well, but I added more throughout the years. That touch of green in the winter as well as the shelter they provide for birds adds diversity.

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TREES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Tree Reflection by Penny O'Connor

Let's not forget what trees provide us and wildlife. Food, shelter, shade, to name a few. Whether the tree is living or dead, the fruits, seeds, and insects sustain birds and wildlife throughout the year. Nests built on tree branches, limbs, or in cavities are nurseries for birds and wildlife. The real estate market for tree cavities is intense. From chickadees and white-footed mice, to owls and raccoons, tree cavities are very important for survival. Consider keeping some dead trees on your property, as long as they don't endanger structures (yours or your neighbor's), wires, vehicles, etc. I had a tree company just remove the limbs from a dead tree, but left the trunk standing. They thought I was nuts, but I educated them on why, at least I hope I did.

A tree or two, will reduce the summer's heat around your home. Less air conditioning, less electricity. I know everyone has felt better moving into the shade of a tree on a hot, summer day. It's not just the shade, but also the cooling evaporation coming from vegetation that makes it feel cooler. Urban areas benefit from the cooling effects of a tree canopy, so consider supporting organizations that plant native trees especially in urban areas.

Plant the right kinds of trees in the right places and enjoy them for their shade, their beauty throughout the seasons, and what trees can do for you, for wildlife, and for the urban ecosystem. Look at trees every day to discover something new and consider making 2023 the Year of the Tree in your yard, neighborhood, or community by planting native species and watching them mature through the years.

SPRING BIRD WALKS

Celebrate one of the oldest citizen science partnerships with co-sponsoring organizations: Cleveland Metroparks, Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, Blackbrook Audubon Society, Black River Audubon Society, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Geauga Park District, Hiram College, Holden Arboretum, Lake Metroparks, Medina County Park District, The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, and Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society. Each organization hosts walks on the listed Sunday mornings. Locations are throughout the Greater Cleveland Metro area. Walks are led by experienced, friendly birders.

Dates: Sundays, April 16 through May 21, 2023, 7:30 a.m. at various locations

Walks hosted by WCAS are:

Big Creek Reservation - Lake Isaac - Lake-to-Lake parking lot off of Big Creek Parkway, 1/4 mile south of Fowles Rd., Middleburg Heights. Terrain: natural surface, uneven surfaces and potentially muddy, short boardwalks, 2 miles.

Brecksville Reservation - Parking area at Station Rd. Bridge Trailhead off Riverview Rd. south of Route 82, Brecksville. Terrain: varies, some uneven footing, 3 or more routes.

Rocky River Reservation - Rocky River Nature Center parking lot, 24000 Valley Parkway, North Olmsted. Terrain: Some all-purpose trail, some crushed stone surfaces which could be uneven, 2 miles.

Questions? Please contact info@wcaudubon.org



Yellow Warbler by Michelle Brosius

Sundays don't work for you? The Medina County Park District is hosting walks at River Styx Park on Saturdays: April 15, 22 & 29 and May 7, 14 & 21 at 7:30 a.m.

MEMBER PROGRAMS

February Program: *"Loons and Lakes Stewardship: Building a National Loon Center"*

Presenter: Natasha Bartolotta, Communications and Outreach Coordinator

Date & Time: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom. Register on Eventbrite: <https://WCAS-Loons.eventbrite.com>

Description: The Common Loon is an iconic symbol of northern wilderness breeding on freshwater lakes of our northernmost states and Canada and migrating to coastal waters during the winter. Protecting this beloved species requires national and international efforts. In the Midwest, a new center to celebrate loons, and the groups working to protect them, will open in 2024 in Crosslake, Minnesota. With the largest population of Common Loons in the lower 48 states, Minnesota is the Land of 10,000 Lakes and 12,000 loons. The National Loon Center, a proposed state-of-the-art facility, will connect loon and freshwater research, education, and conservation to a wide audience. Learn more about the behavior and biology of the Common Loon, as well as the four other species of loons.



Common Loon by Tom Fishburn



The Many Faces of Conservation by Judy Semroc

March Program: *"The Many Faces of Conservation"*

Presenter: Judy Semroc, naturalist, educator, photographer

Date & Time: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom. Register on Eventbrite: <https://WCAS-Semroc.eventbrite.com>

Description: This unique program illustrates the connection between people, land usage and the creatures that share our world. Learn how our actions impact the natural history around us – from the use of pesticides & herbicides to land development and gardening techniques – these practices are addressed and connections are made as to how our actions can harm the "Faces of Nature." In addition, ideas are discussed outlining positive changes we can make to help our natural world.

April Program: *"The Magic of Merlins"*

Presenter: Kathy Mock, birder, gardener and birding volunteer

Date & Time: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom. Register on Eventbrite:

<https://WCAS-Merlins.eventbrite.com>

Description: What began as a serendipitous observation of a Merlin through Kathy L. Mock's window, during the 2017 Great Backyard Bird Count, has turned into a 5-years-and-counting obsession with these fascinating falcons. One overwintering bird has grown to eight through the years, and in April 2022 this led to the first documented nesting attempt by Merlins in Summit County. Kathy described her discovery in an article published in the Spring 2022 issue of *The Ohio Cardinal*, the quarterly publication of the Ohio Ornithological Society. North of Knox County, they have so far only been confirmed Ohio breeders in Lake County. Join us as Kathy shares photos taken during these 5+ years and countless hours of observation, culminating in this nesting attempt. Due to abandonment, most likely due to harassment by crows and the probable subsequent selection of an unknown site, she was not able to confirm fledging in 2022. But she hopes to explain why she finds these birds so remarkable, and why she will remain a willing victim of their magical spell as she tries again to document nesting in 2023.



Merlin by Tom Fishburn

TREMONT TOWPATH TRAIL URBAN BIRD WALKS



*American Coots on the Tremont Bird Walk
February 2022 by Michelle Brosius*

Western Cuyahoga Audubon has a series of bird walks to encourage an appreciation for the birds and wildlife in urban settings. We'll discover a variety of birds, plants, and other interesting bits of nature along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and Cuyahoga River. New to birdwatching? Bring binoculars if you have them, dress for the weather conditions and have extra layers just in case, a water bottle, comfortable footwear, and curiosity about the natural world. Walking is relatively easy along the paved Towpath and urban streets. Join us and learn with this friendly group!

Dates: Saturdays, February 25, March 25, and April 22, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Leaders: Nancy Howell and Al Rand

Location: Meet at the Cleveland Metroparks Towpath Parking Lot on Abbey Ave. just west of the former Sokolowski's University Inn. Google Maps link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/rRJW6HNy3xpB6r5J8>

SECOND SATURDAY BIRD WALKS

The Second Saturday Bird Walk is our very popular bird walk during which we explore the beautiful Rocky River Nature Center trails. Join us the second Saturday of every month at 9:00 a.m. at the Rocky River Nature Center to enjoy the beautiful landscape, thrilling birds, and good company. New to birding? Winter is a great time of the year to start as the leafless trees make it easier to see the birds!

Dates: Saturdays, February 11, March 11, and April 8, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Leaders: Bill Deininger, Dave Graskemper, Ken Gober, and Al Rand

Location: Cleveland Metroparks, Rocky River Reservation. Meet at the Rocky River Nature Center parking lot at 24000 Valley Pkwy, North Olmsted, OH 44070



Second Saturday Bird Walk February 2022 by Michelle Brosius

WCAS & KCB JOINT FIELD TRIP: FROHRING MEADOWS

Frohring Meadows is a 298-acre park that offers trails through prairie, wet sedge meadow, and woodland habitats. Michelle Brosius, Field Trip Coordinator for Western Cuyahoga Audubon, birded this location last April with her uncle and experienced birder, Robert Oppen, and was amazed at the variety of species they found. Last year, they had 36 species, including the Savannah Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Brown Thrasher, Killdeer, Virginia Rail, Wilson's Snipe, and Sora. Please join us for this joint field trip with Western Cuyahoga Audubon and Kirtland Bird Club!

Date: Saturday, April 22, 2023 at 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: Michelle Brosius and Robert Oppen

Location: 16780 Savage Rd, Chagrin Falls, OH 44023; We will meet at the end of the driveway in the second parking area by Katydid Lodge.



*Savannah Sparrow at Frohring Meadows
April 2022 by Michelle Brosius*

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2022

By Nancy Howell, Compiler for the Lakewood Circle Christmas Bird Count



Happy Birders, CBC 2022 courtesy Patty Kellner

Each year, as compiler for the Lakewood Circle Christmas Bird Count, I always fret about the weather on or leading up to Count Day, as well as hope a variety of birds are around for the day. The 2022 Christmas Bird Count held on Friday, December 30, was no exception. Exactly a week before our count we experienced a “bomb cyclone” with below zero temperatures and extreme wind chills. A week later, mid 50 to 60 degree weather. Wow! The storm actually helped as birds, primarily waterbirds and waterfowl, were pushed to Lake Erie. The mild weather on count day helped our participants enjoy being outdoors, but a lot of the songbirds were scattered and sometimes hard to find.

The 2022 Count was a great day no matter what

with a tally of **89 species**, which, as far as I can see, is a record for the Lakewood Circle. An additional species needs to be verified by the regional editor so is not added to the count number above. Due to the deadline of this newsletter, a more complete count narrative and numbers of each species will be completed later and posted to the WCAS website. Notable species for 2022: Harlequin Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Killdeer, Iceland Gull, a fallout of Red-throated Loons, Short-eared Owl, Eastern Towhee, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and Rusty Blackbird.

As always, the participants ARE the most important part of the Christmas Bird Count. Whether as part of a walking or driving route, or as a feeder watcher, their skills and effort are appreciated. The 2022 Count had **85 participants**. Again, the number of groups that were out and feeder watcher efforts will be part of the more complete narrative to be published a bit later. I am always humbled by the dedication and skills of every participant. Thank you.

The list of species is below:

Canada Goose	Common Merganser	Double-crested	Northern Flicker	House Sparrow
Tundra Swan	Red-breasted	Cormorant	Pileated Woodpecker	House Finch
Northern Shoveler	Merganser	Great Blue Heron	American Kestrel	Purple Finch
Gadwall	Wild Turkey	Turkey Vulture	Merlin	American Goldfinch
American Black Duck	Pied-billed Grebe	Bald Eagle	Peregrine Falcon	Eastern Towhee
American Wigeon	Horned Grebe	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Blue Jay	American Tree Sparrow
Mallard	Red-necked Grebe	Cooper's Hawk	American Crow	Fox Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Rock Pigeon	Red-shouldered Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Song Sparrow
Canvasback	Mourning Dove	Red-tailed Hawk	Tufted Titmouse	White-throated Sparrow
Redhead	American Coot	Great Horned Owl	Red-breasted Nuthatch	White-crowned Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Killdeer	Barred Owl	White-breasted	Dark-eyed Junco
Greater Scaup	Bonaparte's Gull	Short-eared Owl	Nuthatch	Eastern Meadowlark
Lesser Scaup	Ring-billed Gull	Belted Kingfisher	Brown Creeper	Red-winged Blackbird
Surf Scoter	Herring Gull	Red-headed	Carolina Wren	Common Grackle
White-winged Scoter	Great Black-backed Gull	Woodpecker	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Rusty Blackbird
Harlequin Duck	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Red-bellied	Eastern Bluebird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Bufflehead	Iceland Gull	Woodpecker	American Robin	Northern Cardinal
Common Goldeneye	Red-throated Loon	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird	
Hooded Merganser	Common Loon	Hairy Woodpecker	European Starling	

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSIONS FOR 2023

Host Drina Nemes, Western Cuyahoga Audubon member, leads us in our third online season as we explore contemporary nature books. There is no charge for the programs, so members, friends, and the public are encouraged to join us in lively discussions! Registration is encouraged so we can give you a warm welcome.

All books are available at [Amazon](#) and [Cuyahoga Public Library](#) as well as other book venues for purchase or borrowing.

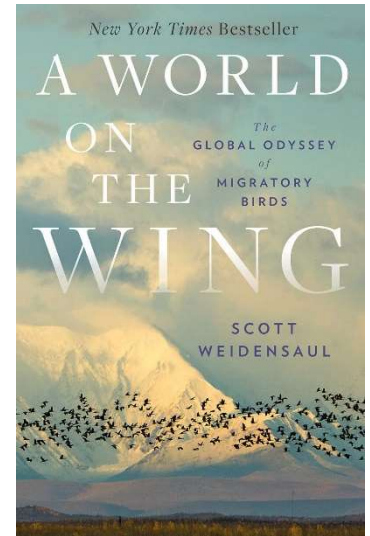
"A World on the Wing – The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds" by Scott Weidensaul. Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Register: <https://WCAS-Book-Weidensaul.eventbrite.com>

"In vivid prose that conjures up the rich spell of each landscape, Scott Weidensaul takes us on exhilarating expeditions that crisscross the globe and travel deep into the heart of nature." Diane Ackerman, author of "The Zookeeper's Wife."

Environment of the Americas hosts a monthly series, <https://www.migratorybirdday.org/bird-book-club/> Usually on the 4th Thursday of the month.

David Lindo's live webinar series **In Conservation With** has several programs scheduled during 2023. See the schedule at <https://theurbanbirderworld.com/live-webinars/>. There is a large and fascinating archive of past interviews at <https://theurbanbirderworld.com/past-meetings/>



BLUEBIRD BOX 2022 SEASON WRAP-UP

By Kurt Miske, WCAS Board Member

Bluebirds and Tree Swallows have migrated away from Lewis Road Riding Ring Bluebird Trail and the 2022 nesting season is over. As you may know, a typical nesting season runs from mid-spring well into August. 3 of our 5 nest boxes were used by native birds to procreate, as follows:

Box 1 - Although well-positioned, the box was unproductive. The box may have been used as a 'decoy' site by House Sparrows. There are several explanations for birds making decoy nests; one likely one for Box 1 is they do it to reduce competition. Here is a link to learn more on decoy nest sites -<https://www.sialis.org/dummy.htm>

Box 2 - In May and into June this box was used by a pair of Tree Swallows to raise 5 young. We believe all fledged!

Box 3 - A pair of bluebirds was responsible for 3 eggs which were laid in June. All 3 hatched and, in July, fledged.

Box 4 - A pair of Tree Swallows found this box suitable to raise 5 young. Eggs were laid in late May. The new Tree Swallows fledged in late June.

Box 5 - This box was dominated by various pairs of House Sparrows throughout the nesting season. This was a bigger problem this year than last, and may cause us to move the box if it continues. We allowed no young House Sparrows to be produced!

These results have been recorded with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at the NestWatch site.

All 5 boxes have been cleaned out and will winter in place. We will check them in March to be certain they are ready for the 2023 nesting season.

Thank you to our trail monitors: George Coleman, Lisa Gerbec, Jess Kowalski, Carol Miske.

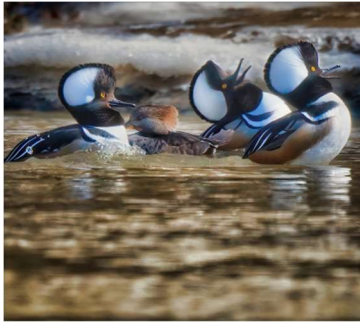
Thank you to our financial contributors.

Hope to see you in 2023!



Eastern Bluebird by Michelle Brosius

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT



Hooded Mergansers by Roger Friedman at Rocky River Reservation February 2022

Connect to Birds, to Nature, and with Each Other by participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count

February 17-20, 2023

Birds are everywhere, all the time, doing fascinating things. Join National Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Birds Canada coming together for the love of birds. Spend time in your **favorite places watching birds**—then tell us about them! In as little as **15 minutes** notice the birds around you. **Identify** them, **count** them, and **submit** them to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world. Learn about the Great Backyard Bird Count and how to participate at this link:

<https://www.birdcount.org/>

ORDER BIRD-FRIENDLY COFFEE

WCAS places a group order of coffee from Bird & Beans Coffee every quarter and Coffee Coordinator Amanda Sebrosky delivers to addresses in the greater Cleveland area. This helps support the mission of WCAS while saving the habitat of birds we love in Central and South America. Smithsonian certified bird friendly coffee also provides a living-wage to farmers in those areas. **Coffee orders will be submitted on April 10, 2023!**

Please go to Bird Friendly Coffee (https://www.wcaudubon.org/store/c35/Bird_Friendly_Coffee.html) and order online or by downloading the form and mailing it with your check. **The next orders will be placed in July 2023.**

NEW MEMBERS

Thank you and welcome to these new members to Western Cuyahoga Audubon:

Suboth and Maya Patel
Judy Schuster

The Western Cuyahoga Audubon Feathered Flyer is published 4 times per year in Feb, May, Aug and Nov.

Western Cuyahoga Audubon programs are open to the public. Donations are appreciated.

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Visit the Store to become a member and renew your membership; order coffee, soil, and/or art; and donate at <http://bit.ly/2taLgnk>

President

WCAS is currently Board run.

Treasurer

Nancy Howell

Recording Secretary

Michelle Brosius

Directors-at-Large

Michelle Brosius, Bruce Missig, Kurt Miske, Mary Anne Romito, and Tom Romito, President Emeritus.

Field Trip Coordinator

Michelle Brosius

Ambassadors

Global Ambassador: David Lindo; Ambassador to Japan: Kaoru Tsubone.

Web & Marketing

Heather Risher

UNUSUAL SIGHTING

An article about an unusual bird sighting during the WCAS July 2022 Tremont Urban Bird Walk, appears in the most recent edition of The Ohio Cardinal (Vol. 45 No. 4, Summer 2022). The Ohio Cardinal is a publication of the Ohio Ornithological Society. The article features photographs by WCAS Board Member, Michelle Brosius, and was written by WCAS Board Member, Nancy Howell. The current issue is available to Ohio Ornithological Society members only, but archived issues may be found at, <https://ohiobirds.org/oos-publications/the-ohio-cardinal/>

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Subscribe to our WCAS e-blasts. Electronic information comes out once a week with reminders and updates on events, programs and things that might be of interest.

Here's the link to sign up:

<https://www.wcaudubon.org/newsletter-sign-up.html>

Visit the [WCAudubon Store](#) to become a member, renew membership, or make a donation. The Store offers a selection of nature oriented books, maps, articles, reports, event tickets, gift cards, native plants, bird friendly coffee, and organic soils. Items include **Birds & Beans® Coffee**, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center Bird Friendly®-certified beans, 100 percent shade-grown, USDA Organic, and Fair-Trade certified, order by the 10th of the first month in each quarter. **Mitchell's Homemade Ice Cream Gift Cards** for delicious frozen yogurt, sorbet, vegan ice cream. A partnership with **Tilth Soil** at WCAS offers bird friendly gardeners a selection of 4 custom compost soil mixes for indoor and outdoor plantings, and **Artwork by Shaun Missig** features poetry and seasonal photography at conserved natural areas. Proceeds benefit WCAS.

Visit the Store here: https://www.wcaudubon.org/store/c1/Featured_Products.html



Shop today at AmazonSmile and designate Western Cuyahoga Audubon as your charitable organization of choice. When you shop at smile.amazon.com the AmazonSmile Foundation donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to Western Cuyahoga Audubon.

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