

Nov. 2023-Jan 2024

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LIGHTS OUT CLEVELAND: A MONUMENTAL EFFORT TO CONSERVE MIGRATORY BIRD POPULATIONS

By Matthew B. Shumar, Program Coordinator,
Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative

The Ohio State University—School of
Environment and Natural Resources

The transition from September to October sees the diversity of migrating warblers start to wane, but a new wave of northern breeders—including thrushes, sparrows, and kinglets—begin to adorn our trees and shrubs. October brings peak numbers of migrant birds, and Lights Out Cleveland volunteers are busy. In the last six years since the grassroots effort began, volunteers have picked up 16,000 birds from downtown that had collided with buildings, including around 5,000 injured birds that were rehabilitated by the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center and released back into the wild.

A second chance at life for 5,000 birds is huge, and it's the driver for many of the program's volunteers. The 11,000 dead birds though, have provided important information for understanding the causal factors behind bird-building collisions, and they have been a powerful force in convincing building administrators and legislators to mitigate problematic building facades that contribute to high rates of collision.

I am getting ahead of myself though. Some of you may be wondering, "just what is Lights Out Cleveland?" Lights Out Cleveland is a collaborative effort to mitigate the number of bird-building collisions throughout the city. Many people may seek out the more pristine parks and preserves for birding during migration, but the most savvy birders know that migrants are everywhere, and in fact, urban areas can attract disproportionately large numbers of birds. If you are out at the right time, every single tree seems to drip with these ephemeral boreal gems.

Most songbirds are nocturnal migrants, guided in part by celestial cues. Artificial light sources in urban centers prove to be a perilous attraction for many passage migrants. Birds can collide with illuminated structures at night, but more substantial

continued on page 2



*Northern Flicker rescued by Lights Out
Cleveland Volunteers
Photo by Tiffany Vargo Mayo*

Lights Out Cleveland, continued from page 1

*Live birds rescued by volunteers
Photo by Tim Jasinski*

effects of brightly lit metropolitan areas occur through changes in stopover behavior. The skyglow of large urban centers can be perceived by migrating birds up to 300 km away, and recent research has shown that migrant stopover density increases at regional scales with proximity to the brightest areas and is subsequently lower in high-quality forested habitats even a few kilometers away from urban centers. It is in these urban landscapes that collision risk is magnified: highly reflective glass is often perceived by birds as an extension of the surrounding vegetation and sky.

Building collisions are second only to predation by free-ranging domestic cats as the largest source of human-caused mortality in birds, and it is estimated that between 365 million and nearly one billion birds are killed by collisions each year in the United States. “Lights Out” and “Safe Passage” programs across the globe have been developed in an attempt to address this problem. Each spring and fall, building managers are encouraged to reduce their lighting as much as possible. The result is that few birds are attracted to urban centers, where they encounter highly reflective and dangerous building facades.



*Lights Out Cleveland volunteers
Photo by Ali Murf*

The efforts of Lights Out Cleveland volunteers and partner organizations have started bearing fruit. Last year, Cuyahoga County officials pledged to begin treating glass at county owned and operated buildings in the city, and the facility managers at Rocket Mortgage Field House have renovated their lighting fixtures in a first step towards reducing the number of collisions at their stadium. Buildings at additional locations at Cleveland State University have also treated glass recently. The Lights Out Cleveland volunteers have a lot to be proud of, but the work is far from complete. We need more help. We are seeking more volunteers during this busiest time of the year. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, sign up here:

<https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/parks/support/volunteer>.

For more information on Ohio Lights Out and the regional programs, please visit <https://ohiolightsout.org>.

Lights Out Cleveland is an effort led by Cleveland Metroparks, the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center, the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative through The Ohio State University, and additional partners throughout the region.

MEMBER PROGRAMS AND SPEAKER SERIES



Mark Wiley with Wild Turkey
Photo courtesy of DOW

November Program: "Wild Turkey Management and Monitoring in Ohio"

Presenter: Mark Wiley, ODNR Wildlife Biologist

Date & Time: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: **Zoom Only, NO in person meeting at the Library**

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89936595434?pwd=ZzdubEhqduUjvT0dUY01MaTFYSjhVUT09>

Description: The restoration of wild turkey in Ohio and across the species' range is a shining example of wildlife management success in North America. Once extirpated, wild turkeys are now considered common in the Buckeye State and can be found in all 88 counties. The Ohio Division of Wildlife intensively monitors the state's wild turkey population and frequently conducts in-depth research to ensure wild turkeys and their

habitats remain available for sustainable use and appreciation by all. Wildlife biologist Mark Wiley will discuss the history of wild turkey restoration as well as ongoing efforts to learn more about Ohio's wild turkeys through monitoring and research. Such efforts include an annual citizen science survey reliant on public participation.

December Program: "Christmas Bird Count 2023 ... it's Almost Here!"

Presenter: Nancy Howell, Christmas Bird Count Compiler

Date & Time: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Fairview Park Library, 21255 Lorain Rd, Fairview Park; also via Zoom

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87302637202?pwd=RnFOVEUxTzZTYStiamloWm52YlFwdz09>

Description: Our annual Christmas Bird Count, being held on Saturday, December 30, is a great way to do some birding, enjoy the winter season with family and friends, and have information you've collected used for research by National Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. No matter if you have participated in the Christmas Bird Count before or if this will be your first one, this program is for YOU! The Christmas Bird Count has some specific ways to collect the bird data for the day. In this presentation, Nancy Howell, CBC Compiler will review how to get involved, what areas are to be covered, how to collect your bird sightings, as well as sending in your bird lists and photos. We'll also have a short session on winter bird identification of some of the more challenging birds. Join us!

January Program: "Using MOTUS Technology to Track Rehabilitated Birds"

Presenter: Tim Krynak, Cleveland Metroparks Natural Resources Manager and Tim Jasinski, Wildlife Rehabilitation Specialist, Lake Erie Nature and Science Center

Date & Time: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Fairview Park Library, 21555 Lorain Rd, Fairview Park; also via Zoom

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87588379229?pwd=TzMzMm14ZnBBNHN4cEpJOUg2TEp0dz09>

Description: This presentation will introduce the Motus Wildlife Tracking System, an international collaborative network of researchers that use automated radio telemetry to simultaneously track hundreds of individuals of numerous species of birds, bats, and insects. The system enables a community of researchers, educators, organizations, and citizens to undertake impactful research and education on the ecology and conservation of migratory animals. We will discuss Cleveland Metroparks and Lake Erie Nature and Science Center involvement in this collaborative project and share some interesting results.

Western Cuyahoga Audubon is back in person for 2023 and 2024, with the exception of November 2023. Meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at the Fairview Park Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library.



Fairview Park Branch of CCPL
21255 Lorain Rd. Fairview Park, OH 44129

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2023: ENJOY THE HOLIDAY SEASON!

Western Cuyahoga Audubon's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in 2023 will take place on **Saturday, December 30**. Join birders and friends in our Count Circle, called the Lakewood Circle. Birding during the holiday season is a great way to involve family and friends, help to collect data for National Audubon, and simply enjoy the season. Here's what's in store for the 2023 Count:

- Christmas Bird Count Presentation on **Tuesday, December 5, 2023** at 7:00 p.m. as part of the WCAS Speaker Series. The Count Circle area will be discussed, as will the protocols for taking and submitting data. Identification of a few of the more challenging bird species will round out the program. This is an invitation to new CBC birders as well as seasoned CBC participants ... get excited about the day!
- The Christmas Bird Count itself on **Saturday December 30**, during which we go out to tally birds. It is the REAL DEAL!
- Christmas Bird Count Dinner/Wrap-Up. To be determined.

Not familiar with the Christmas Bird Count? On Count Day, **Saturday, December 30**, individuals or small groups go out part or all of the day to an assigned location/route within the Count Circle. The Circle covers much of the western lakefront (Cleveland, Lakewood, Bay Village) into Lorain Co. (Avon Lake, Avon, and North Ridgeville), south to the northern border of Strongsville (Ohio Turnpike is a good boundary reference), and east to Brooklyn and some of Parma Hts. The Christmas Bird Count-Lakewood Circle Map 2023 shows locations that are covered as well as those that need coverage <http://bit.ly/2IR3kJV>.

Explore our Audubon Christmas Bird Count Lakewood Circle reports at our Scribd library at <https://goo.gl/APBzat> to learn more. We always need participants to bird some of the greenspaces in neighborhoods. Take a walk in a nearby park, cemetery, or around your neighborhood as long as it is within the Count Circle. Don't want to walk? Driving routes, stopping and counting species at various points, may be done OR keeping track of species coming to your feeder! Novice birders or experts, families and friends, individuals or groups, everyone's participation is appreciated. Don't forget, we at WCAS want all participants to be safe and practice COVID-19 precautions.

Here are some tips and things to consider:

- Owling in the early morning or the evening of count day! (Not mandatory, but a way to get those nocturnal species).
- List all species AND the number of individual birds of each species while out in the field or watching feeders and yard.
- Cover neighborhoods, cemeteries, parks, or greenspaces in the Count Circle as long as they are not being covered by another person or team
- Drive-around birding is good too. Drive, stop, look, and tally along a route.
- Keep track of hours birding (walking or driving) and feeder-watching, as well as distance walked and/or driven.
- Please contact Nancy Howell, Lakewood Circle compiler, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count at nancyhowell@wcaudubon.org or call 440-891-1710 through Wednesday, December 27. Don't forget to attend the Tuesday, December 5th Western Cuyahoga Members Meeting and Speaker Series for all of the information!



Christmas Bird Count 2022 Participants at the Rocky River Nature Center

SECOND SATURDAY BIRD WALKS



Second Saturday Bird Walk November 2022
by Michelle Brosius

Please join us for our very popular bird walk the second Saturday of every month at the Rocky River Nature Center. We meet at 9 a.m. between the upper and lower parking lots of the nature center and then take a few hours to explore the surrounding trails. This is a beautiful walk through a few different habitats—woodland, marsh, and field—which yields a variety of birds. What a perfect time of year to see them now that the trees have dropped their leaves!

Dates: November 11 and December 9, 2023 and January 13, 2024 at 9 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

TREMONT TOWPATH TRAIL URBAN BIRD WALKS

Please join us on the fourth Saturday (not necessarily last Saturday) of the month for our Tremont Towpath Trail Urban Bird Walk. During this walk, leaders Nancy Howell and Al Rand will guide participants in exploring the birds, wildlife, and even plants of the Scranton Peninsula. This area is an urban birder's dream! We are canceling our Tremont walk in December due to the holiday, but it will return in January 2024!

Dates: November 25, 2023 and January 27, 2024 at 9 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>



Northern Mockingbird at the Tremont Towpath Trail by Michelle Brosius

WCAS BOOK DISCUSSION SERIES

By Drina Nemes, Book Discussion Host

We have just finished our first book of the 4th season of our book club, surveying Jon Dunn's quest to see as many hummingbirds as possible, *The Glitter in the Green*. Watch that discussion and our past presentations: <https://www.wcaudubon.org/book-discussions>.

The next selection is *Vesper Flights* (2020) by Helen Macdonald, scheduled for **Tuesday January 16, 2024, 7 p.m.** on Zoom. Register on Eventbrite to receive the Zoom link: <https://WCAS-Vesper.eventbrite.com> Hear Helen Macdonald introduce *Vesper Flights* to readers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LLFg3NPk2U>.

Check out *Vesper Flights* from your local library or buy a copy at your local bookshop.

Then on **April 23, 2024, at 7 p.m.**, join us to discuss the bestselling *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest* by Suzanne Simard.

Other Book Club and Book Review Resources

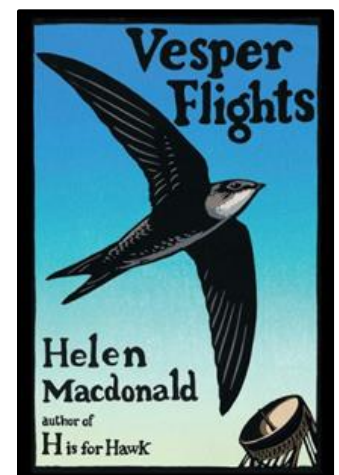
The Environment of Americas Book Club features authors monthly: <https://www.migratorybirdday.org/bird-book-club>.

David Lindo's The Urban Birder website offers live webinars: <https://theurbanbirderworld.com/live-webinars/>.

The American Birding Association's collection of book reviews is excellent! <https://www.aba.org/book-reviews/>.

10000 Birds is filled with the latest book suggestions: <https://www.10000birds.com/category/reviews>.

For an excellent resource about Ohio's natural history, visit Jim McCormac's site: <https://jimmccormac.blogspot.com/>.



BLUEBIRD BOX 2023 SEASON WRAP-UP

By Kurt Miske, Bluebird Project Coordinator

The days have grown cooler, the leaves are starting to change hue and birds are losing their breeding plumage. Our Lewis Road Riding Ring area bluebirds and tree swallows have left the grounds for their winter territory, declaring an end to the 2023 breeding season. All in all, it was a successful year with 14 bluebirds and 14 tree swallows fledging from 7 different broods.

We were gifted with 4 additional boxes this season, thanks to an agreement between the Metroparks (owner of the property) and a Boy Scout seeking to become an Eagle Scout. After the 4 boxes were installed, WCAS was asked to monitor them with the original 5 boxes. They became Box 6, 7, 8 and 9.

For the first time in our short history, we had boxes that were used twice in a season. Boxes 5 and 8 each had 2 broods of bluebirds. In both cases the first brood fledged in June and the second in August.

Boxes 2, 4 and 7 each had a brood of tree swallows. 2 broods fledged in late June and 1 in early August.

Happily, we had minimal issues with house sparrows this year. We hope this holds for next year!

All 9 boxes have been cleaned out and will winter in place. We will check them in March to be certain they are ready for the 2024 nesting season.

Thank you to our trail monitors – George Coleman and Lisa Gerbec – and our financial contributors. Hope to see you in 2024!



Bluebird exiting Box 7. Photo by Lisa Gerbec

CLIMATE WATCH WINTER SESSION

Grab your binoculars—Birds need your help! What's even better than watching birds? Knowing you've done something meaningful to protect them. Sign up now for Climate Watch and you'll be doing both!

As the impacts of climate change continue to unfold, nearly two-thirds of all North American bird species could struggle to adapt. When you participate in Audubon's newest community science project, you'll give Audubon scientists vital data on how birds are faring now—which guides our most effective conservation work to help them adapt.

Join the winter survey, January 15 – February 15, 2024. Get ready to count the bluebirds, nuthatches, goldfinches, and towhees you see. And know that you're an important part of protecting birds and the places they need. Our big day will be **Saturday, January 20**.

For those of you who need a refresher on how to do a survey. Please refer to my presentation that I gave to WCAS in the fall of 2022. My portion of the program starts about 17 minutes in. So, fast forward to that section.

<https://youtu.be/odMMa6GGAOo?feature=shared&t=1014>.

Contact me for more information on how to participate in Climate Watch with Western Cuyahoga Audubon. My contact info is maryanneromito@gmail.com or cell: 216-990-2632.

BENEFITS OF COFFEE GROUNDS

By Amanda Sebrosky, WCAS Coffee Coordinator

I've talked about the benefits of coffee for birds and you, but what to do with all those grounds!? It turns out coffee grounds are very useful in a number of ways. According to an article in [healthline](https://www.healthline.com), coffee grounds have practical uses including:

- a fertilizer and compost supplement because they contain several key nutrients required for plant growth. They can also help attract worms and decrease the concentrations of heavy metals in the soil.
- an insect repellent by setting out the grounds
- help absorbing and eliminating odors from your refrigerator, gym bag or smelly shoes and hands
- an abrasive cleaner
- an exfoliating scrub for your face and body
- a natural dye for cloth and paper
- a meat tenderizer and flavor enhancer due to the natural acids and enzymes they contain
- a medium to grow mushrooms



You might be tempted to discard the grounds but, as you can see, they are very valuable. If you don't have a compost bin, you can sprinkle small amounts around your acid-loving shrubs and flowers. You can also compost by getting a subscription to Rust Belt Riders food-waste pick-up or drop-bins. Rust Belt Riders (<https://www.rustbeltriders.com/>) creates soil, keeping food-waste out of the landfills AND making a product WCAS sells as a fund-raiser. Talk about a WIN-WIN! https://www.wcaudubon.org/store/c36/Bird_Friendly_Soil.html

The next order of WCAS Bird-Friendly Coffee will be placed on **January 10**. Plan your order to get you through those winter months! https://www.wcaudubon.org/store/c35/Bird_Friendly_Coffee.html

THANK YOU

WCAS sends "thank you" to the following people for their assistance with events:

Speaker Series Set-Up: A shout out to the entire Brosius Family - Michelle, Scott, Leto, and Sagan - who all helped to set up and run the A/V equipment and Zoom connection as well setting up the table display for the September and October Speaker Series at the Fairview Park Library. It was a lot of work!

Bird Walk Leaders: Bill Deininger, Dave Graskemper, Allen Rand, Nancy Howell, and Michelle Brosius

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members to the Western Cuyahoga Audubon flock. We look forward to seeing you at many of our events!

Lexi Anderson

Ben & Missy Blalock

Kathryn Clark

Kathryn Hack

Sandra Hardy

Jeffrey Hoskin

Lucy McKernan

Shandra Parks

Carol Rivchun

Hanna Said

Michael Sandman

Andrew & Becky Steinmann

Kathleen Uhler

Anna Uthe

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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

These are just a few of the Volunteer Opportunities that are available with WCAS. Contact Nancy Howell, Nancyhowell@wcaudubon.org for more information or if you have questions.

- Writers for the WCAS Newsletter and website
- Revive and Coordinate the Education Committee
- Fund-raising and Friend-raising Committee
- Assist with Special Events
- Collaborate with West Creek Conservancy on Bird Surveys

OTHER NEWSWORTHY ITEMS

One of our members has backcopies of the publication, ***Bird Watcher's Digest***, from 1983 to the present. Bird Watcher's Digest has great stories, bird identification, bird feeding tips and so much more! If you would like to have them OR if you know of an organization (think Scout troops, 4-H, homeschool groups) or perhaps an assisted living facility that might enjoy them, please contact Dwight Chasar at ascdwc43@yahoo.com.

Audubon Alert from Audubon Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are the largest freshwater ecosystem on the planet. Their waters and coastal habitats serve as a global resource for **more than 350 bird species** and countless other wildlife. Additionally, the Great Lakes provide clean drinking water to 40 million people while supporting the region's recreation, tourism, and fisheries. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was developed by the EPA to support and fund efforts that address the biggest threats to the Lakes, guiding billions of dollars to coastal wetland restoration and conservation. Birds that rely on the Great Lakes, such as **endangered Great Lakes Piping Plover, threatened and endangered Black Tern, and vulnerable marsh birds like the Pied-billed Grebe**, all benefit from the GLRI. We have an opportunity to make the Great Lakes region more resilient in the face of climate change, promote equity across impacted communities, and accelerate the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem. Act now and submit a comment to the EPA to prioritize birds and people when shaping the GLRI Action Plan IV: <https://act.audubon.org/a/great-lakes-restoration-initiative>. The birds will thank you for your input.

American Bird Conservancy highly recommends taking the time to thank members of Congress for recognizing their leadership in supporting bird and habitat conservation efforts. A "thank you" is a powerful way to encourage members of Congress to take action on issues. To send a note:

- Click on this link, scroll down to see those in the House and Senate who have made a difference. <https://abcbirdsactionfund.org/conservation-champions-1>
- Scroll to find Representative David Joyce (R. - OH), click on the box that says "Thank Senator or Representative," then write your note.
- Take a look at what others have done as well. Now we need to thank YOU!

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. <https://www.wcaudubon.org/donate.html>

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Web: www.wcaudubon.org

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Follow us on Twitter!
twitter.com/WCAudubon

Interested in Volunteering? Send an email to info@wcaudubon.org

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

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WCAS is currently Board run.

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Bird Walk Coordinator
Michelle Brosius

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

Web & Marketing
Heather Risher

MISSION STATEMENT

To connect the public with birds and the natural world through education, conservation, and advocacy opportunities for the benefit of the present and future generations.