

**November 2025-
January 2026**

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THE IMPORTANCE OF URBAN BIRDING

By Nancy Howell, WCAS Board Member

Birders love to flock where the birds are; shorebirds along the coast, lakes and ponds for waterfowl, wooded areas for songbird migration ... and to urban areas? Well, at least some birders find urban birding fun, interesting, and more than just looking at pigeons. While there may not be “lifers” or a rarity, urban birding does provide an insight into how birds can and do use these human modified areas for breeding, wintering, as migration stopover sites, as well as for viewing interesting bird behaviors.



Photo: Red-tailed Hawk on Antenna by Shaun Missig

Many of us may recall when Peregrine Falcons were reintroduced into cities in Ohio. The birds became celebrities as they nested on buildings and bridges in urban areas. Nest cams, peregrine-watching, and the naming of each adult bird, and the young which were hatched, was “the rage”. Peregrines took to urban areas nicely. Later, Lights Out programs began to increase in larger Ohio cities thanks to the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative. Birds striking buildings and windows in cities has always been a problem, but became a greater issue as buildings had more reflective surfaces and lighting in buildings increased thus increasing bird strikes. In addition, more media attention brought the bird-strike problem to the forefront. Surprise, or perhaps no surprise, data from Lights Out Cleveland has shown that many species, not just passerines, but shorebirds, wetland species, woodpeckers, etc. migrate through our urban area. Cleveland’s location along Lake Erie seems to be an important factor. Birders who work in downtown Cleveland have known that migrants use Public Square, other downtown “pocket parks”, and Erie Street Cemetery, to name a few, as resting and feeding areas.

So why bird in urban spaces? I consider it an overlooked “habitat”. Abandoned structures, overgrown, “weedy” lots, brushy railroad right-of-ways, riparian areas along creeks and rivers all harbor birds, especially on migration. Some people may find urban areas scary, dangerous, or just not productive, I disagree. Western Cuyahoga Audubon has brought in David Lindo, the Urban Birder, a couple of times to share with us and others how enjoyable urban birding is. On his visits we took him around the city to see what could be found and had a great time. We are fortunate

continued on next page



Photo: Group on Towpath along Scranton Rd. by Shaun Missig

that there are great assets in urban Cleveland; the lakefront, the Cuyahoga River, and accessible parks. Around the U.S. urban birding has become more popular. New York city with its Central Park has always been a birder's mecca, Chicago has held an Urban Birding Festival for years. Recently, the American Birding Association held a birding weekend in Pittsburgh, PA. How can we get folks from Northeast Ohio and nearby to consider birding in urban areas, collecting data from urban areas, and just as importantly, increasing our reach so that residents in urban areas can enjoy what is nearby?

The Tremont Towpath Urban Bird Walks, done eleven months of the year by Western Cuyahoga Audubon, along Scranton Flats, are just one way to see the city, which I have

mentioned to some, "is gritty and pretty". We bird, we view insects and other invertebrates, we look at the plant life along the way. We watch people rowing on the Cuyahoga River and the ships navigating the river's curves. We have lively discussions and we also have watched as development occurs and some of the urban habitat is lost. We find surprises just about every walk and are amazed at how wildlife and plants adapt to the changes.

Let's consider increasing our reach into additional urban neighborhoods and share the wonders of nature throughout the year. For this to happen we need to head to urban areas where people are living. Families, adults, youngsters, teens, all need to be welcomed and walk the neighborhoods in which they are familiar. For some in urban areas, the plants and animals living nearby are not the first things in many minds ... "there's no birds here", "I don't like bugs", or "I don't feel safe walking around my neighborhood" (sad). Our friend, Buster Banish, takes his group, the Bird Nerds, students from inner city neighborhoods, out to view birds and enjoy nature, and does a fabulous job of introducing students to the natural world. WCAS needs to work in collaboration with organizations AND the leaders of these organizations (community groups, schools, religious organizations, clubs in the area, etc.) rather than us "leading the way". Finding people that know their neighborhoods and enjoy sharing information ... seeing that nature is everywhere, including birds. The plants and wildlife that are there are supremely adapted to urban life. Additionally, taking a walk in a green space is known to reduce stress, lowers blood pressure, and increases awareness of what's around. In the near future, join one of our Towpath walks OR suggest an area where we can go out with a group and share the beauty in and around urban Cleveland.

2025-2026 MEMBER PROGRAMS AND SPEAKER SERIES

For the months of November through March, when weather can be iffy and night comes early, the programs will be via Zoom only. WCAS members, guests and friends are always welcome via Zoom.

November Program: "RaptorQuest: Chasing America's Raptors"

Presenter: Scott Harris, photographer and author

Date & Time: November 4, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom only

Description: Author Scott Harris will share with us his journey to find all 53 raptors that call the lower 48 states home. In his book, *RaptorQuest: Chasing's America's Raptors*, Scott found all 53 species, along with a Bat Falcon, Steller's Sea Eagle, and Eurasian Eagle Owl! Scott took 17 months and traveled more than 100,000 miles across 34 states. He'll share his adventures, misadventures, successes, and failures. From minus 36 degree days, to ones over 100 degrees, to getting stuck in the mud, to barely missing a bird, to just arriving in time. As Scott states, "It's about the raptors, of course, but it's also about the people I met, the things I learned and why I'm already in the middle of my next big birding adventure."

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81940138192?pwd=koxtOFWULmb50OguJ2FtEx0U0yG6rx.1>

Meeting ID: 819 4013 8192 and Passcode: 648667 (if needed)

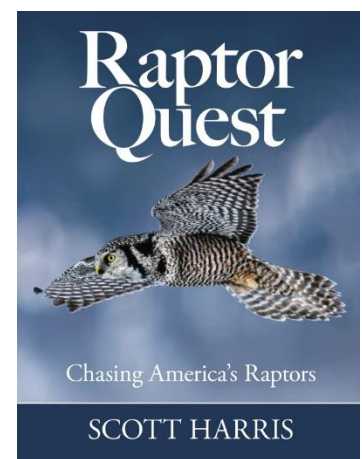




Photo: Colorado mountain scene by
Hal Mitcheltree

December Program: “View Mother Nature’s Boundless Beauty Through the Eyes of a Photographer”

Presenter: Hal Mitcheltree

Date & Time: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: **Zoom only**

Description: Delight your eyes, refresh your spirit, and nourish your brain as Hal Mitcheltree guides you on a visual tour of Mother Nature's gifts from the ground up. Learn how to view the world through the eyes of a photographer and discover a handful of simple visual tools that will help you to see much more of the beauty that is silently, patiently hiding in plain sight all around us.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86579721024?pwd=LayjFTeA3fSBFFz8S4g9UbYWmx2izU.1>

Meeting ID: 865 7972 1024 and Passcode: 576586 (if needed)

January Program: “How Birds Created the World and Other Stories from The Complete Language of Birds”

Presenter: Randi Minetor, author and freelance writer

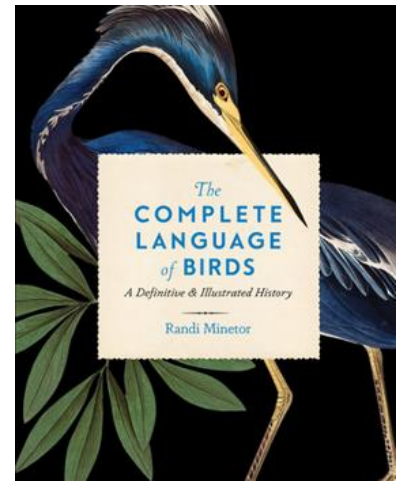
Date & Time: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: **Zoom only**

Description: In conjunction with the release of her latest book, “*The Complete Language of Birds*”, this presentation delves into mythologies from around the globe, in which people attempted to explain the world around them by casting birds as creatures even more wondrous than they are in real life. Ancient Egyptians believed that the Earth itself was an egg laid by Gengen-Wer, what we know today as the Egyptian Goose. This remarkable bird earned the moniker “Great Shrieker” when its honk became the first sound ever heard on Earth. The Ojibwa people of the northern plains tell of a Great Flood that swept away the world’s evils, and one man who built a raft to save his bird friends. To restart the world after this destruction, the birds needed to bring a bit of soil up from the bottom of the now-deep sea. He recruited a Loon to attempt the dive, but the Loon came back up with no soil. A Dove tried, but he failed as well. Finally, a lone Coot named Aajigade dove to the bottom—and while the effort nearly killed him, he managed to bring back a bill’s worth of mud. The Earth began anew. Athabaskan stories from the southwest portray American Bitterns as heroes that helped end the Great Flood, swallowing large amounts of floodwater and regurgitating it to form rivers where they were needed most.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85061842083?pwd=T7Ox5XyUKK5b2uXieDen8EdPLAIUmc.1>

Meeting ID: 850 6184 2083 and Passcode: 913360 (if needed)



SECOND SATURDAY BIRD WALKS

Please join us for this fun bird walk the second Saturday of every month as we head into late fall and winter. Last year in November we had a surprise Pine Siskin at the nature center’s feeders in addition to 34 other bird species. Then, we had a Barred Owl in December. And then in January we had a Barred Owl again, and the group was also treated to good looks at a Northern Flicker feeding on Poison Ivy berries. You never know what you’re going to find on this walk!

Dates: November 8 and December 13, 2025 and January 10, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Location: Rocky River Nature Center, located at [2400 Valley Pkwy, North Olmsted, OH 44070](#). We meet between the upper and lower parking areas.

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



Photo: Pine Siskin at RRNC feeders by Michelle Brosius

URBAN BIRD WALKS

Our Tremont Towpath Urban Bird Walk is getting a makeover in 2026! We now have an Urban Bird Walk series that still takes place on the fourth Saturday of every month (except December); however, now each walk will have a focus. We will still be visiting the Tremont area for some of these walks, but others will take place at other urban locations, especially in the summer months when the Tremont Towpath gets uncomfortable to traverse in open sun. The Tremont walk stays the same in November, there is no walk in December (please join us for the Christmas Bird Count instead!), and then in January we will focus our birding efforts on gulls and waterfowl along the Cuyahoga River in Tremont. See below for details!

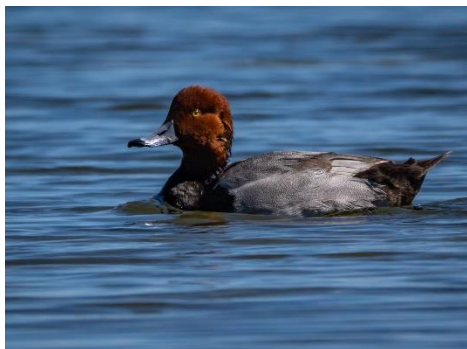


Photo: Redhead by Michelle Brosius

Tremont Towpath Urban Bird Walk

Date: November 22, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Location: Meet at the Towpath Public Parking Lot on Abbey Ave. just west of the former Sokolowski's University Inn:

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

Leaders: Nancy Howell and Al Rand

Urban Birding: Gulls and Waterfowl

Dates: January 24, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Location: Meet at the Towpath Public Parking Lot on Abbey Ave. just west of the former Sokolowski's University Inn:

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

Leaders: Nancy Howell and Al Rand

WCAS FIELD TRIP: LITCHFIELD WETLANDS NATURE PRESERVE

Al Rand is taking us back to Litchfield Wetlands Nature Preserve this November! He led a bird walk here last fall and it was quite productive with 41 bird species, including three American Kestrels patrolling the farmland across the street, as well as Blue- and Green-winged Teal, Wilson's Snipe, Greater Yellowlegs, and Belted Kingfisher at the preserve's pond. The group was also treated to looks at a Northern Harrier, and had a few other nice-to-see species such as Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, as well as American Tree, Swamp, and Savannah Sparrow. The preserve is managed by the Medina County Park District and comprises 145 acres of ponds, wetlands, fields, and woodland edges. 1.7 miles of crushed limestone trail and a 200-foot-long boardwalk make these habitats accessible. There is also a restroom on location. RSVP encouraged to receive event updates at the WCAudubon.org calendar:

<https://tockify.com/wcaudubon/detail/179/1762002000000>

Date: Saturday, November 1, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Location: Litchfield Wetlands Nature Preserve, 3005 Avon Lake Rd, Litchfield, OH 44253

Leader: Al Rand



Photo: Savannah Sparrow at the preserve in 2024 by Michelle Brosius

WCAS BIRD WALK: WEST CREEK RESERVATION



Photo: Group Photo at West Creek in Jan 2025 by Michelle Brosius

Michelle Brosius would like to explore West Creek Reservation in the snow once again this season! Join us on January 3rd to make some progress toward your January 100 and see what the reservation has to show us this year. We had 22 species last year, including a Merlin that gave us good, long looks, six Common Loons flying overhead, and juvenile Red-headed Woodpeckers! We also had Belted Kingfisher, Red-tailed Hawk, and lots of activity at the feeders at the Watershed Stewardship Center. RSVP encouraged to receive event updates at the [WCAudubon.org calendar](https://wcaudubon.org/calendar).

Date: Saturday, January 3, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Location: Watershed Stewardship Center, 2277 W Ridgewood Dr, Parma, OH 44134

Leaders: Michelle Brosius, Nancy Howell, and Al Rand

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2025: WINTER IS GOOD FOR SURPRISES

By Nancy Howell, WCAS CBC Coordinator

Western Cuyahoga Audubon's 2025 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) takes place on Sunday, December 28. 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 Audubon, and simply enjoy the season.

Here's what's in store for the 2025 Count:

- **YouTube Christmas Bird Count Presentation from 2023.** Review the 2023 video if you would like, BUT remember that this year the Count takes place on Sunday, December 28. The CBC portion begins at 26:12 here: https://youtu.be/-r6C13NLD_Y?si=ONQaWttq6WTK6dKo. In the video the Count Circle area is discussed, as well as the protocols for taking and submitting data. Identification of a few of the more challenging bird species rounds 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 Sunday, December 28, 2025. It is the REAL DEAL!
- **Christmas Bird Count Wrap-Up and Luncheon** -To Be Determined. Participants will be notified.

Not familiar with the Christmas Bird Count? On Count Day, Sunday, December 28, 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 2025 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.

Novice birders or experts, families and friends, individuals or groups, everyone's participation is appreciated.

Here are some tips and things that may help get you involved:

- 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 while watching your 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. Please contact me for areas needing coverage or areas you are interested in, see contact information below.
- Drive-around birding is good too. Drive, stop, look, and tally along a route. I will provide information on driving routes, please contact me.
- Keep track of hours birding (walking or driving) and feeder-watching, as well as distance walked and/or driven.

Contact Nancy Howell, Lakewood Circle compiler, to take part in or if you have questions about the Christmas Bird Count at nancyhowell@wcaudubon.org or call 440-891-1710 through Wednesday, December 24.



*Photo: Western Cuyahoga Audubon's Christmas Bird Count 2024
by Anna Kozlenko*

WCAS BOOK DISCUSSION SERIES

By Drina Nemes, Book Discussion Host

Hello birders and readers! Coming up on January 20, 2026 is our WCAS discussion of *Wild America*, by Roger Tory Peterson (one of my nature heroes) and his English counterpart James Fisher. Published in 1955, this travelogue can be considered the first “Big Year” book in the now popular “Big Year” genre. Isn’t it fitting to look at this influential work in its 70th anniversary year?

In April we will further our discussion of *Wild America* with Scott Weidensaul’s *Return to Wild America*. Weidensaul wrote his book for the fiftieth anniversary of *Wild America*.

Here is what Kenn Kaufman writes about this work: “Peterson and Fisher’s *Wild America* was one of the all-time great nature books. On the golden anniversary of its publication (2005), Scott Weidensaul, one of the greatest living nature writers, proves himself a worthy successor to the original authors as he examines what has been lost and celebrates what remains of America’s wild nature. Part investigative reporting, part lyrical celebration, this is one of the most important books of the decade, and it should be required reading for all who love the outdoors.”

Join us on Zoom, on selected Tuesdays, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Links will be provided in upcoming WCAS notices.

Here is the 2026 schedule:

January 20, 2026 – *Wild America* (1955) by Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher*

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86509106782?pwd=ZH4dulEHfebJcfMlBlqcvQb5edjb7.1>

Meeting ID: 865 0910 6782 and Passcode: 714509 (if needed)

April 28, 2026 – *Return to Wild America* (2006) by Scott Weidensaul

*Note: *Wild America* is out of print. It can be purchased from online booksellers such as [thriftbooks.com](https://www.thriftbooks.com), [betterworldbooks.com](https://www.betterworldbooks.com), [ebay.com](https://www.ebay.com), or [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

For WCAS’s previous Book Discussion seasons, go to: Western Cuyahoga Audubon - Book Discussions: <https://www.wcaudubon.org/book-discussions>

More Birding Book Resources:

The Environment of Americas Book Club has a monthly Zoom program, featuring authors and their books! Participants can ask questions of the author at the live sessions. <https://www.migratorybirdday.org/bird-book-club/>

David Lindo’s The Urban Birder recordings have a wide assortment of topics related to birding and natural history. <https://www.theurbanbirderworld.com/past-meetings/>

The American Birding Association’s book review webpage is excellent! <https://www.aba.org/book-reviews/>

Another outstanding site with the latest book reviews: <https://www.10000birds.com/category/reviews>

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

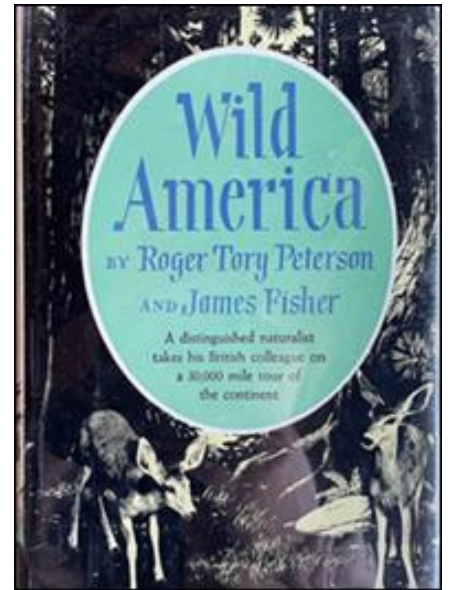
BIRD-FRIENDLY COFFEE

By Amanda Sebrosky, WCAS Coffee Coordinator

Drinking Smithsonian-certified Bird-Friendly Coffee does a LOT for so little effort on your part. Shade grown coffee keeps the rainforest intact because this coffee is grown beneath the forest canopy which supports many different kinds of wildlife, including migratory birds!

Purchasing Bird-Friendly coffee from WCAS not only helps birds, but also the farmers that raise this fair-market coffee. In addition, you help support our mission and have the convenience of your coffee being delivered right to your door! Orders are placed 4 times per year: January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10. It might take a bit of planning as to how much you’ll need between the times orders go in, but the rewards are many and far-reaching! Order coffee [at our online store](#).

Have your orders in by midnight January 9, as we will place the bulk order first thing in the morning on January 10.



CLIMATE WATCH WINTER SESSION

By **Mary Anne Romito, Northeast Ohio Climate Watch Coordinator**

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, 2026. 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 17**.

For those of you who need a refresher on how to do a survey, please refer to my presentation from the fall of 2022. Fast forward to my portion of the program, about 17 minutes in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odMMa6GGAOo>

Want to participate in Climate Watch with Western Cuyahoga Audubon? Contact me at maryanneromito@gmail.com or 216-990-2632.

HELP BIRDS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

The American Bird Conservancy suggests ideas to help birds throughout the year. Here's what can be done from November through January ... and don't forget to go birding throughout the fall and winter seasons. Send those lists to eBird as noted in the December suggestion!

November – Sow seeds for next year.

In the Northern Hemisphere, fall tends to be the optimal time for getting native plants started. This month, look ahead to next spring and plan your garden. You can start small with a single bed or make your yard a native plant meadow. Learn about the native plant species that do well in your area and explore the bounty of resources available for selecting the perfect plants for your climate. If you lack a lawn or simply can't manage a full garden, never fear: Even a single native plant in a pot on your porch or apartment balcony can be a food source for birds or a nice place to nest!

December – Commit to joining and growing the bird conservation community.

Bird conservation works because of the people involved at every level, from backyard bird feeder aficionados to ecologists and biologists. Cap off a year of resolutions for the birds by connecting with the community of people who love them! Join birding outings near you, share your bird observations on eBird, introduce someone to the wonders of birds, or learn about the organizations striving to make bird conservation more inclusive, expansive, and effective for birds.



*Photo: Cat birding safely in a purple stroller
by Heather Risher*

January – Pledge to keep your cat indoors, or safely contained outdoors.

Every year in the United States, an estimated 2.4 billion birds lose their lives to cat attacks. Cats are non-native predators that people have placed on the landscape, and they take a heavy toll on native wildlife. Keeping cats indoors is one effective way to make the habitat around you safer for birds, and it's a resolution you can carry out all year. It could also be a lifesaver for your beloved pet: Cats that live inside or have supervised and contained adventures outdoors live longer than those that are left to roam on their own. Your cat companion can still have enriching experiences outdoors. Explore options for catios, screened-in structures where cats can independently explore outside without coming into contact with wildlife. Adventurous felines often take to leash and harness training, and backpacks and strollers keep kitty close while you both enjoy the outdoors.

IN THE NEWS

Listers: A Glimpse Into Extreme Birding? It's a free, YouTube documentary of two brothers who learn about competitive birding by becoming birdwatchers — spending a year living in a used minivan, traveling the country to compete in a 'Big Year'. Approximately 2 hours in length. NOTE: For Mature audiences. Careful who is watching it with you. [LISTERS: A Glimpse Into Extreme Birdwatching](#)

Winter Finches in 2025-2026. According to the Finch Research Network. It looks as though the winter of 2025-2026 may be an irruptive flight year for many species, such as finches, nuthatches, and waxwings throughout Eastern Canada and down into the northern U.S. states. Very poor conifer and some deciduous tree seed crops in the boreal forests of eastern Canada and westward to Manitoba could cause seed and fruit eaters to move southward in search of food. Watch your feeders, be prepared during the Christmas Bird Count, and view eBird lists or Rare Bird Alerts for your area. <https://finchnetwork.org/winter-finch-forecast-2025-2026>



Photo: Redpoll by Michelle Brosius

NEW MEMBERS

Kelly Ammon
Nigel Purnell

Ron Bozek
Judy Stempien

Cindy and Gregg Craft
Cynthia Strieter

Garrett Konet
Tim Walsh & Mark Miller

Ryan Pulis

THANK YOU

Thanks to these volunteers who were able to give time and assist the organization.

Bird Walk Leaders - Michelle Brosius, Bill Deininger, Ken Gober, Dave Graskemper, Nancy Howell, and Al Rand

Photographers - Michelle Brosius, Lenore Charnigo, Lilly Derflinger, Tom Fishburn, Anna Kozlenko, Paula Lozano, Tyler McClain, Shaun Missig, Heather Risher, and Mary Anne Romito.

Photo Exhibit Set-up - Nancy Howell, Drina Nemes, and Mary Anne Romito

Programs for the Photo Exhibit - Michelle Brosius, Tom Fishburn, Nancy Howell, Ciara Olive, and Aimee Pierson

Speaker Series Set-up/Tear-down - Michelle, Scott, Leto, and Sagan Brosius, Nancy Howell, and early arriving WCAS members

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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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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Recording Secretary
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Bird Walk Coordinator
Michelle Brosius

Ambassadors
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.