

The Hushwing **HERALD**

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Volume 59 Number 4

April, May, June 2024

Spreading the Love of Nature in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula Counties

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: Tuesday, April 16, 2024
PROGRAM: Social Songbird: The Purple Martin
SPEAKER: Ann Bugeda and Alison Huey
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Penitentiary Glen, Kirtland

Known for their chattering song and aerial acrobatics, [Purple Martins](#) (*Progne subis*) can be seen throughout Ohio during the summer months. Martins in the eastern U.S. are entirely dependent on humans to provide suitable shelter for breeding success. Learn about conservation efforts to protect this joyful songbird, both locally and internationally, with an overview of monitoring efforts at local colonies in Lake County and a look at the martin's wintering grounds in the Amazonas state of Brazil.



Purple Martin nestling
Photo by Ann Bugeda



Purple Martin colony with gourd-style houses
Photo by Alison Huey

DATE: Tuesday, May 21, 2024
ACTIVITY: Birds and Blooms
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: [Eagle Creek State Nature Preserve](#)

Instead of a speaker program meeting inside, we'll have a weekday, evening field trip!

Join us for birds and wildflowers in Portage County at 11027 Hopkins Road, Garrettsville.

A tributary of the Mahoning River, Eagle Creek meanders through a wide floodplain dotted with beaver dams and button bush swamps. Unique trees found here include Cucumber Magnolia and Yellow Birch and [eBird](#) shows 151 bird species.

We'll wander through wildflowers that flank the trail as we listen for spring migrants and watch nesting bird behaviors. We'll visit an overlook blind to check for water birds and the small boardwalk through the bog. Trails are primitive like most state nature preserves, with a natural surface and exposed roots. Restrooms are only a couple miles away in Garrettsville. Please RSVP at blackbrookaud@aol.com.



Trilliums beside the trail at Eagle Creek SNP
Photo by Becky Donaldson



Birding Opportunities!



[Please let us know you are coming to a field trip by sending an email to blackbrookaud@aol.com.](mailto:blackbrookaud@aol.com)

Pre-eclipse Bird Walks

[Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve](#)

Parking lot P1 at the east end of Headlands Beach State Park

Sunday, April 7

Morning with the birds 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Sunset with the Birds 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

[Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves](#)

Temperatures here will be cooler than inland. Dress in layers and wear sturdy footwear for walking in sand. The 1.5-mile walk includes the elevated, ADA-accessible boardwalk. Learn how birds behave prior to the astronomical event.

APRIL FIELD TRIP

DATE: Saturday, April 27, 2024
ACTIVITY: Exploring an Expanded Marsh
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: [Howard Marsh Metropark](#)

We're due for a visit to Howard Marsh since our first explorations of this Lucas County wetland were in 2019. Since then, they restored more marsh across Howard Road. Let's meet at Lakeland Community College's front parking lot along Rt. 306 at 7:00 a.m. to carpool there, or you can head straight for Howard Marsh, 611 S. Howard Road in Curtice, 43412 for the walk at 9:30 a.m. **RSVP at blackbrookaud@aol.com.**

We documented 27 species in August 2019, including Trumpeter Swans, juvenile Pied-billed Grebes and Short-billed Dowitchers. After taking the bus tour at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge that October, we stopped at Howard since we were in the neighborhood and picked up the Western Cattle Egret.

Shorebirds like Black-necked Stilt and sandpipers as well as Caspian Terns and Yellow-headed Blackbirds will be on the must-see list during our visit. The park has flush restrooms. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope if available.

[Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge](#) will be open that day for [wildlife drives](#). Participants will have the option of seeing what they can find from the comfort of their vehicle along the 7-mile route.

Everyone might want to bring a sack lunch and beverage since restaurants are not nearby.

Metroparks Toledo acquired Howard Farms in 2008 and, with the help of several partners and grants, transformed over 700 acres next to Lake Erie back into wetlands. This constituted the single largest wetland restoration project completed under the federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Howard Marsh opened in April 2018. The return of this coastal wetland provides habitat for migrating and nesting birds and offers human visitors recreation activities like birding, fishing, kayaking and hiking.

The [second phase](#) of the project opened in October 2022, adding another 250 acres to the west of the first phase. Phase two expanded on the wetlands, but also added upland habitat and trails and restored four miles of deep-water channels for fish habitat and kayaking.

Howard Marsh is next to Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area and a short distance north of Magee Marsh Wildlife Area and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio's only federal refuge. This wetland complex is part of what was the [Great Black Swamp](#), which was drained by 1900.



Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*
Photo by Deb Schuster

Join Park Systems and Audubon Chapters in Celebrating Spring Bird Migration

The [Cleveland-area Spring Bird Walk Series](#), now in its 91st year, lets us celebrate the arrival of birds who have migrated back here to nest or are stopping to refuel on their way to breeding sites north. Blackbrook invites everyone to our spring bird walk route at the north end of Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve and [Headlands Beach State Park](#). Meet in the Zimmerman trailhead parking lot at 9600 Headlands Road, west of Shipman Pond, at 7:30 a.m. on these Sundays: **April 14, 21, 28 and May 5, 12, 19.**

From the bridge over Shipman Pond, we'll be able to see the three nests made by the Marsh Bald Eagle pair, including the active one by Rt. 44. **Notice** - Bald Eagle nest watchers reported the start of incubation behavior by the parents on February 10 and feeding behavior at the end of March. It will be a couple weeks before the eyases (raptor nestlings) are mature enough to be upright so we can see how many there are visible over the top of the nest. [Nesting phenology](#) involves a lot of hard work by the parents throughout the process of [raising young eagles](#). Follow the [Mentor Marsh Facebook](#) page.



and Win!

When you help us reduce waste at our events by bringing your own reusable coffee mug or water bottle, you can enter a drawing to win a \$25 gift card to either the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Willoughby or Mayfield Heights or to the Patterson Fruit Farm in Chesterland. The winning ticket will be drawn at our June 18 picnic at Beartown Lakes Reservation from the entries submitted in April and May. Winner need not be present to win.

Congratulations to Alison Huey who won a \$25 gift card to Wild Birds Unlimited. She brought her own mug to Blackbrook's Cookies & Cocoa gathering after our Christmas Eve IBA walk at Orchard Hills Park.

On the last Sunday of the Spring Bird Walk Series, May 19, you can go on the walk or perch at our "**Big Sit**" in the picnic area by the entrance to [Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve](#). Bring a chair, a cup or mug and a potluck brunch item to share, if you'd like, after 8:30 a.m. to the far eastern side of Headlands Beach State Park at parking area P-1. The state park and state nature preserve share a common entrance at the northern terminus of State Route 44 (Heisley Road) in Lake County. Blackbrook will supply coffee as we scan the nearby shrubs and trees for warblers, vireos and other migrants taking a break before they cross the lake. This is a perfect outing for less mobile folks who enjoy group birding. Public restrooms are nearby and so is the entrance to the handicapped-accessible boardwalk to the beach.

April in Ashtabula: evening birding

Let's head out to some Ashtabula birding hotspots and perhaps be the first to add new birds to the list. Join Blackbrook Audubon Volunteer Trevor Wearstler from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on these bird walks, held rain or shine. Each location has parking and primitive restrooms. Trails may be muddy. Trevor will have binoculars to loan. Beginner and experienced birders are welcome.

Thursday, April 4 [131 species on eBird](#)
[Morgan Swamp Preserve](#), Bissell Nature Center
3973 Callender Road, Rock Creek, Ohio

Wednesday, April 10 [75 species on eBird](#)
The [Upper Grand River Metropark](#)
3199 Cork Cold Springs Road, Austinburg, Ohio

Tuesday, April 23 [147 species on eBird](#)
[Red Brook Metropark](#)
4338 Lake Rd W., Saybrook Twp, Ohio

Important **B**ird **A**rea Walks

[Orchard Hills Park](#), Gauga Park District
April 28, May 26, June 23 at 8:00 a.m.
11340 Caves Road, Chester Township

This restored golf course
is next to Patterson Fruit Farm.

We'll stay at this IBA through August.



Pull up a Bench at the Potluck Picnic

Three lakes, three trails and lots of friends to bird with at our annual potluck picnic Tuesday, June 18. Make your way to Geauga Park District's [Beartown Lakes Reservation](#) about 6:00 p.m. with your place setting, beverage and a dish to share, if you'd like. After you enter the park at 18870 Quinn Road, Auburn Twp., take a left to find the Minnow Pond Shelter. Blackbrook will bring the hot dogs so we can eat about 6:30 p.m.

We'll bird the 22 acres of open water, mature beech-maple forest and meadow abundant with wildflowers and grasses. Maybe we can add to the 139 species of birds on eBird.

Wildlife Center carefully accepts birds

The [Lake Metroparks Wildlife Center](#) has established a quarantine space and procedures to accept injured birds once again for rehabilitation. Due to the presence of [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza](#) (HPAI) in wild birds and commercial flocks, the Center will only accept birds on a case-by-case basis by appointment. The special Avian Influenza Susceptible Species room and separate personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff are necessary to manage patients and to protect the resident ambassador birds from HPAI.

Lower staffing levels than previous years preclude the Center from taking nestling birds. Sick and injured animals may also be taken to other [wildlife rehabilitators with permits](#) in Ohio.

The Center accepts animals by appointment ONLY between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. seven days a week. Call **440-256-1404**, option 2 to describe the animal you found and determine if an appointment is necessary.

Inviting Piping Plovers to Headlands

The 2023 nesting season for the [Great Lakes Piping Plover](#) had 80 pairs of this shorebird, the most since [they were listed](#) under the Endangered Species Act in 1984. Let's help encourage them to nest at Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve by respecting the signs posted at either end of the Special Management Area, keeping dogs off the beach and leaving stones and shells in place.

Blackbrook Audubon Society publishes

The Hushwing **HERALD**

newsletter four times each fiscal year:

Sept/Oct Nov/Dec/Jan
Feb/Mar April/May/June

The Sept/Oct issue is mailed to all members of the National Audubon Society residing in Blackbrook Audubon's coverage area of Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake counties and to the Friends of Blackbrook Audubon.

Sign up at blackbrookaudubon.org to receive the other three editions via email. The Friends of Blackbrook Audubon pay for a chapter-only membership and can choose to have all Hushwings sent via U.S. mail.

The electronic version of the Hushwing Herald is free, in color and has active links leading you to trusted and verified nature-related sites and pdfs.

Board Members:

President: Becky Donaldson

Vice President: Alison Huey

Treasurer, Membership: Marian Williams

Secretary, Program Chair: Mary Ann Wagner

Interim Field Trip Coordinator: Deb Schuster

Special Projects: Pat Morse

Hospitality: Tammy O'Neil

Webmaster, YouTube Admin: Trevor Wearstler

Education Chair: Trevor Wearstler

Publicity: Laurie White

We welcome comments and suggestions at blackbrookaud@aol.com.

2024 marks the 5th year that

April is Ohio Native Plant Month

In the summer of 2019, House Bill 59 made Ohio the first state in the country to have a law recognizing the importance of native plants for an entire month! The Great White Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) is Ohio's State Wildflower.

You can learn more about Ohio's native plants and how to replace a sunny area of your lawn with a wildlife-friendly pollinator garden at [Ohio's Native Plant Month](http://Ohio's Native Plant Month website) website.

Local Sources of Native Plants and Seeds



440-622-7225
12511 Fowlers Mill Rd.
Chardon, OH

<https://avonleagardensandinn.com>

Meadow City 216-282-6911

15006 Westropp Ave. Cleveland

<https://meadowcitynursery.com>



Text preferred
440-201-9204

<https://plantitnativeohio.com/>

Pick up at the Heart of Willoughby Outdoor Market.

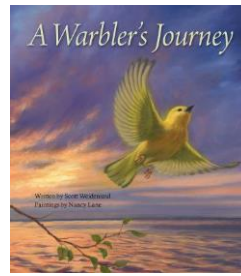


866-569-3380
Hiram, OH

<https://www.opnseed.com>

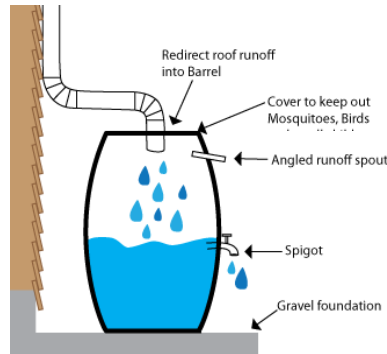
Prairie On!

[National Audubon Society](#)
[Native Plant Database](#)



In this children's picture book, [Scott Weidensaul](#) tells the story of a Yellow Warbler as she leaves a shade-grown coffee farm, her winter home, and begins her nocturnal migration north to Canada. Along the way, she finds

shelter to rest and food to refuel. Readers will find out what obstacles she overcomes to reach her breeding destination in the Northwest Territories. [A Warbler's Journey](#) is available at the Bainbridge, Middlefield and Mentor libraries.



**If you
install
a rain
barrel**

or a rain garden,

**you can
apply
for a
rebate!**



Homeowners in eight counties, including Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake, who become Stormwater Stewards by installing rain barrels or rain gardens that meet all program criteria are eligible for the rebate under the [Lake Erie Stormwater Stewards Rebate Program](#). Rain garden rebates are awarded at a rate of \$5 per square foot of rain garden installed, with a maximum rebate of \$1,300. The maximum rain barrel rebate is \$100, not to exceed the costs of the rain barrel installation.

A rain barrel and kits are available through [Lake Soil and Water Conservation District](#), 440-350 - 2730 and through [Gauga Soil and Water Conservation District](#), 440-834-1122.

Election of Board Officers

Every spring, the members of Blackbrook Audubon Society vote for the four elected officers on our Board of Directors. In the last issue of the Hushwing, we called for nominations. At the March 19 meeting, we announced these officer nominees:

President: **Becky Donaldson**
 Vice President: **Alison Huey**
 Secretary: **Mary Ann Wagner**
 Treasurer: **Marian Williams**

The election will take place at our April 16 meeting on Purple Martins at Penitentiary Glen.

The officers and committee chairs all volunteer their time to fulfill Blackbrook's mission to "promote conservation and restoration of ecosystems with emphasis on birds and habitat through education and advocacy within Ohio's Ashtabula, Lake and Geauga counties and adjacent communities."



**Help us reach out
to the community
at these local events**

Blackbrook will be staffing tables at:

City of Mentor Saturday, April 20
Earth Day 10 am - 2 pm

Wildwood Park, 7645 Little Mtn. Rd.
 Free. Wildflower hike, bird walk
 Our own Mary Ann Wagner will give a program on Monarch butterflies at 11 am.

Lake Metroparks Sunday, April 21
Earth Day Noon - 4 pm

Penitentiary Glen Reservation, Kirtland
Free. Theme: Take Action
 Free tree seedling for each family.

Eastlake Saturday, May 18
Plant Swap 10:30 am - 1 pm

behind Eastlake City Hall, 35150 Lakeshore Blvd.

Lake Metroparks Sunday, June 2
Best of the Bluffs 1 - 4 pm

3301 Lane Road, Perry Twp.
 Theme: History, both natural and anecdotal, of Lake Erie and The Bluffs.

Monarch Sunday, August 25
Mania 2 - 3:30 pm

Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve
 5185 Corduroy Road, Mentor

Backyard Mon., Aug. 19, 6 pm
Birdwatching Kirtland Public Library
for Beginners 440-256-7323

Mary Ann will offer this program full of tips.

Friends of Blackbrook Audubon

New Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Blackbrook Audubon does not share or sell its mailing list.

____ \$30 Individual ____ \$45 Household

Hushwing Herald newsletter via email

Hushwing Herald via snail mail
 (for Friends of Blackbrook only)

I do **not** wish to be a Friend of Blackbrook, but would like to donate \$ _____.

Make checks payable to **Blackbrook Audubon Society**

Mail to: **Friends of Blackbrook Audubon**
P. O. Box 1306 Mentor, OH 44061-1306



Thank You!

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2024

Protect Insects Protect Birds



World Migratory Bird Day is Saturday, May 11 in the northern hemisphere and Saturday, October 12 in the southern hemisphere.

Insects = Energy for migration and for raising baby birds

Match up the bird species below, and their paired insect species, to the WMBD 2024 poster.

Cliff Swallow

Vivid dancer

Bobolink

Willow sawfly

Nacunda Nighthawk

Giant cicada

Semipalmated Sandpiper

Buzzer midge

Broad-tailed Hummingbird

Mayfly

American Kestrel

Red-legged grasshopper

Wood Duck

Giant water scavenger beetle

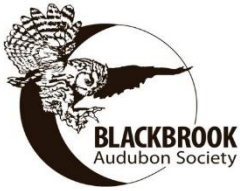
To celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, Blackbrook will host a conservation project and we need your help!

Thursday, May 9 6:00 p.m.

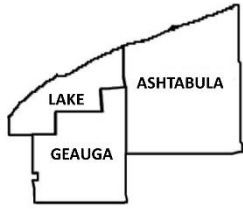
We'll pull [garlic mustard, an invasive plant](#), and pick up trash along our Spring Bird Walk route, starting at the Zimmerman trailhead parking lot at 9600 Headlands Road.

Wear sturdy footwear and work gloves. We'll supply the trash bags and litter grabbers.





BLACKBROOK AUDUBON SOCIETY
P. O. Box 1306
Mentor, OH 44061-1306



www.blackbrookaudubon.org

Follow us on Facebook.

View programs on our YouTube channel.

Becky Donaldson - President

Laurie White - Editor



Saturday, April 13
[Annual Midwest Crane Count](#)
[Crane Count in OH](#)
International Crane Fdn.

Friday, April 19, 7 pm
[Burroughs Nature Club](#)
Willoughby UM Church
Living History: John Muir
John Kolar, Geauga Park D.

April 26-28
[Warblers & Wildflowers](#)
Shawnee State Park
Speakers, Field Trips
Ohio Ornithological Society

[City Nature Challenge](#)

April 26 - 29
Take photos of wild animals &
plants. Upload to iNaturalist.
April 30 - May 5
ID what you found.

Mentor Marsh SNP
April 13, May 11, June 8
[Second Saturday Science](#)
8 am, Woodridge Ln & Forest Rd

Lake Metroparks
[100 Bird Quest](#)
Sat., May 11 8 am - noon
Registration required.

NEO Pollinator Society
[Talk and book signing](#)
Friday, June 7, 7:00 pm
Dr. Douglas Tallamy,
Author of bestseller
Nature's Best Hope:
A New Approach to Conservation
that Starts in your Yard
Lakeside High School,
6600 Sanborn Rd., Ashtabula
Free for residents of
Ashtabula County
Call Suzanne at **440-576-4946**
NEO Pollinator Society
[Summer Festival](#) **June 8**
Gateway Elementary School
Conneaut
\$15 for am speakers, free pm

10th annual Chagrin River Bird Quest Friday, September 6 and Saturday, Sept. 7