UPCOMING EVENTS

We are happy to welcome everyone back to in-person monthly program meetings. Anyone who wishes to watch the program virtually can still register using the link provided on our website at blackbrookaudubon.org.

DATE: Tuesday, September 21, 2021
PROGRAM: Piping Plovers in PA and Beyond
SPEAKER: Mary Birdsong
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Penitentiary Glen Nature Center
Kirtland

Something magical happened at Gull Point at Presque Isle State Park in May of 2017. A male and female Piping Plover met for the first time and decided to stay and raise a family. It was the first time since the mid-1950s that this federally endangered bird nested in the park.

Dad Piping Plover (Charadrius melodus) on the left and his two chicks.

Mary Birdsong, lead shorebird monitor for Erie Bird Observatory, will present a brief history of Great Lakes Piping Plovers and their history in Erie, as well as updates from past seasons. Hear about the dramatic salvage of eggs

Continued on Page 3 . . .

DATE: Tuesday, October 19, 2021
PROGRAM: Amazing Galápagos!
SPEAKER: Alan Studt and Gale Franko
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Penitentiary Glen Nature Center
Kirtland

Join professional photographer Alan Studt and Gale Franko as they take you 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador to the place where Darwin’s theories were born. You will experience giant tortoises, prehistoric-looking iguanas, and other species found nowhere else on earth in one of the most pristine and isolated places in the world ~ the Amazing Galápagos Islands!

Alan works as a graphic designer and is a professional artist. Gale is a registered nurse. They sing professionally in a duo called “Desmond and Molly”. Explore Alan’s art, music and photos online at www.AlanStudt.com.

Since the equator runs through the Galápagos Archipelago, the Galápagos Penguin (right) is the only penguin who breeds in the northern hemisphere. Spheniscus mendiculus

Photo by Alan Studt
ACTIVITIES

As we resume our group field trips, we’ll apply a multi-layered approach to keep everyone safe. Please follow Blackbrook Audubon’s Facebook page for the latest information and call Mary Ann at 440-255-0961 to let us know that you are planning to attend. Please observe the following guidelines:

- Stay at least 6’ from others who are not in your household.
- Wear a face mask when in close proximity to others.
- Do not share binoculars or spotting scopes outside your household.

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP

DATE: Saturday, September 11, 2021
ACTIVITY: Bird Quest / Early Migration
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Chagrin River Park, Rural Road

We’ll return to one of our favorite parks in Lake County, Chagrin River Park, and add our list to the Chagrin River Bird Quest (CRBQ), which takes place this weekend. You don’t need to sign up for Bird Quest to enjoy this activity. We’ll have competitors from various teams, but we will all work together to see as many species as possible. See the CRBQ description on page 3.

Please note that we will begin our walk at the Rural Road parking lot (1000 Rural Road, Eastlake). We should see a nice variety of birds as Chagrin River Park offers several habitats: river, woods, wetland and meadow. We could possibly see a Black-billed Cuckoo or an Olive-sided Flycatcher in addition to fall warblers.

MONTHLY IBA WALK AT THE MENTOR MARSH SNP

Sunday, September 26 we’ll meet at the entrance gate to the Utility Pipeline Access Road, an otherwise restricted area, by the intersection of Woodridge Lane and Forest Road in Mentor Headlands at 8:00 a.m. This will be a closed program with group birding together, not the open-house style that’s offered by the Marsh Nature Center staff on the second Saturday morning of each month. Once we finish birding the pipeline road, we’ll explore the other path that leads to the interior of the Marsh, the Wake Robin Trail boardwalk. Parking is available along the south side of Woodridge Ln. or in the lot at 8936 Woodridge at the trailhead of Wake Robin.

This site falls within the Grand River – Lower Watershed Important Bird Area.

OCTOBER FIELD TRIP

DATE: Sunday, October 17, 2021
ACTIVITY: Fall Migration to the East
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Erie Bluffs State Park, PA

Join us as we look for migrating songbirds and raptors 12 miles west of Erie. Sections of Erie Bluffs State Park formerly used for agriculture are undergoing extensive restoration efforts to reclaim the black oak woodland/savanna and Great Lakes region sand barren ecosystems. The diversity of landforms found in the park provide habitat for plant species rare or absent in other parts of Pennsylvania -- the most unusual being the pumpkin ash and the Shumard oak.

We will meet at the Main Parking Lot, 11122 West Lake Road, Lake City, PA 16423, which is approximately one hour from Mentor. Dress for windy weather and bring a lunch. We will check with a nearby restaurant, All Aboard Dinor, in Lake City closer to our visit to Erie Bluffs.

OCTOBER BIG DAY

Get an eBird account, watch birds on Saturday, October 9 and enter what you see and hear on eBird. This year’s October Big Day is happening during the 2nd Global Bird Weekend. The goal of Global Bird Weekend is to make October 8-10 the biggest ever birding weekend and support BirdLife International’s appeal to conserve coastal wetlands. Keep everyone’s safety in mind – the birds’ and your own. Share checklists, not scopes or binoculars.
in 2017 that went on to be transported to Michigan for captive rearing and release on Lake Superior; learn about familial drama in 2019 as Dad and son plover compete for the wing of the same female. And the story from 2021 is so full of twists and surprises that we’ve titled it “All My Plovers.”

She will also give us an overview of shorebirds that often visit Gull Point.

Mary is a freelance writer and artist. She holds no special degrees that make her a likely candidate to monitor shorebirds, but she earned a BA in History from Penn State and an MA in Art History from the University of Delaware. She came to shorebirds as a birder who fell in love with them in Kenai, Alaska, and volunteered as a shorebird monitor helper at Presque Isle. She moved into the lead position when the full-time monitor left early for other employment.

Friends group wants to partner with our state park staff

A collection of lake lovers and beach enthusiasts have drifted together to form the non-profit Friends of Headlands Beach State Park. They welcomed fellow devotees to their first public meeting August 10 at the park pavilion.

They’re looking for more beach admirers to join as members or even just to help during the Wednesday morning park trash pickups. Until their website is up, contact them on their Facebook page.

FRIENDS OF HEADLANDS BEACH STATE PARK

WHO: A group of people dedicated to the enhancement and beautification of Mentor Headlands State Park
WHEN: Starting now and going for future generations
WHY: Friends of Headlands State Park is an organization of diverse, passionate, dedicated people pledged to assist in the support of park preservation, programs, projects and promotion through fundraising, volunteering and by in-kind considerations.

Photo by Debbi Schuster

White-throated Sparrow Zonotrichia albicollis

Chagrin River Bird Quest: Back to the Watershed

Looking for something that’s back to normal? Give Chagrin River Bird Quest a try. The 7th annual CRBQ will have teams return to finding birds in the Chagrin River Corridor Important Bird Area and once again gather at Geauga Park District’s The West Woods for team check-ins and the Quest celebration, where awards and refreshments await participants.

Bird alone or in teams and record species in one 24-hour period from 4 p.m. Friday, September 10 to 4 p.m. Saturday, September 11. We’re co-sponsoring this with Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC) and it includes parts of Lake, Geauga, Cuyahoga and Portage counties.

Team check-in will be 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. September 10 at The West Woods Nature Center, 9465 Kinsman Road in Russell Township. Each check-in packet will have a map, checklist, a list of scheduled walks and t-shirts. Teams must turn in their checklists for judging by 4 p.m. Saturday.

This year's Quest Celebration will be 4:00 - 6:30 p.m. September 11 at The West Woods Nature Center. They’ll award prizes for the most species overall, most warblers seen, most habitats visited and most creative team name. For more details, visit ASGC at clevelandaudubon.org and click the Chagrin River Bird Quest logo or email birdquest@clevelandaudubon.org.
FROM the DESK of the PRESIDENT

by Trevor Wearstler

Greetings Fellow Birders,

I’ve written before that we are the ambassadors of our birding hobby. We are always learning, teaching, and hopefully inspiring others to start birding. I love birding shop talk with other birders, especially when it comes to bird songs. However, birding has been a little strange the last 18 months or so, at least for me anyway. It is very likely many of us had to bird with far fewer of our fellow birders than expected. How have your birding behaviors changed? Did you start birding more or less? Maybe you spent more time birding locally or needed to get out and did a bit more chasing than usual. With fewer eyes around did you try listening more? How did you adapt to some of these challenges? Did you download any birding apps on your phone for a little help?

Now, there’s no need to replace our birding buddies with phone applications, but some have been updated and might be worth a look . . . I mean listen. There are many bird apps out there, but we’ll look at three of them that just might make birding by ear a bit easier.

**Merlin Bird ID** by Cornell Labs is a great app designed for beginner birding, but they recently added a sound ID feature for over 400 birds. Just record what you hear and results will guide you to a correct identification.

There is also **Song Sleuth** Bird Song Analyzer with David Sibley. Developed by Wildlife Acoustics, this app allows you to compare 200 of North America’s most common birds.

**BirdNET** is a prototype featuring 984 of the common species of North America and Europe.

All these apps have limitations. However, they are free and worth a try. Find them in the app store. I’m thinking of testing them out on those pesky Tufted Titmice that throw me off from time to time. *Happy Birding (by ear)*

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**Geauga Park District’s Diamond Jubilee**

It all began as early as 1959 when members of Geauga County’s League of Women Voters and local garden clubs became concerned about the increasing rate of new construction in the area. The time had come to conserve the region’s natural areas and provide protected habitat for its native plants and animals. Encouraged by the success of nearby Cleveland Metroparks, League members created a park committee to study the needs of the county and the possibility of forming a park district of their own.

**Geauga Park District** was established in August 1961. The first interpretive programs, a series of bird walks at Punderson State Park, were held in 1962. The 4-acre Woodin Road Park became the first park operated by the fledgling district in 1964.

Throughout its 60-year history, Geauga Park District has remained committed to preserving the natural beauty of this corner of the Western Reserve and providing opportunities for its citizens to enjoy and appreciate these outstanding resources. The system has grown to over 70 miles of trail and 27 unique parks. With the combined efforts of Geauga County residents and conservationists, these lands will remain as natural treasures for generations to come!

**Unknown bird disease update in Ohio**

As of August 20th, the **Ohio Division of Wildlife** still recommends we not put out our bird feeders. “We are still receiving reports of finches and a few other species with conjunctivitis symptoms throughout the state. Please be aware of these other diseases commonly seen in songbirds. We will continue to monitor reports and provide an update at the beginning of Sept.”

**Celebrate the Cleveland Museum of Natural History’s Centennial**

For details on centennial programming, from soirees and speakers to a curated book list on the natural world and a centennial exhibit opening in November, check out [cmnh100.org](http://cmnh100.org).
In Memory of Beulah R. Shanks

Work will soon be underway by students on a small habitat for butterflies, pollinators and birds at St. John School in Ashtabula in memory of our dear friend, Beulah R. Shanks. Through the generous memorial donations received from Beulah’s friends and family, Blackbrook Audubon was able to fund this garden. Beulah had a special fondness for birds, butterflies and children. With an emphasis on native plants, the garden will include milkweed, which will help teach the children about host plants and the Monarch butterfly life cycle.

We wish the students at St. John School great success with their butterfly/pollinator/bird garden and look forward to seeing pictures of their finished project. Located on Depot Road in the city of Ashtabula, St. John School serves Pre-K to 12th grade students.

Befitting Beulah’s love of butterflies and prairies, it was appropriate that her family chose late July and her favorite prairie, Guy Denny’s prairie in Fredericktown, Ohio, as the location for her memorial service. Beulah first visited Guy’s prairie in 2005 on a Blackbrook Audubon field trip and visited at least once every summer since. Beulah’s family put together a lovely tribute, including some of her favorite music, with poems and readings by friends and family members, including a treasured memory by each attendee. Light refreshments were served after a butterfly release by her great-grandsons.

Giant Swallowtail (Papilio cresphontes) on Purple Coneflower at Guy Denny’s Prairie

Guy Denny Receives Ohio’s Highest Conservation Honor

Beginning his career as a naturalist in 1969 at Metroparks Toledo, Guy served at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) in multiple positions including as their Chief of Natural Areas and Preserves. After retiring from ODNR in 1999, he co-founded the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association. He is co-author of The Prairie Peninsula and Peatlands of Ohio and the Southern Great Lakes Region, due out in December. In August, Guy was inducted into the Ohio Natural Resources Hall of Fame. Congrats!
Birdathon Fun in 2021

Despite social distancing guidelines and less than ideal weather (does anyone remember the snow and/or heavy rain on Mother’s Day weekend?), Birdathon 2021 raised $357, plus Blackbrook Audubon received additional donations of $96 designated toward Audubon Adventures, which brought us to a grand total of $453. Thank you for your monetary support and your efforts and enthusiasm.

One team was in southern Ohio (where the weather was MUCH nicer!) and they birded while butterflying, where they saw Zebra and Pipevine Swallowtails and Juniper Hairstreak butterflies. They saw a total of 37 bird species within their 24-hour Birdathon timeframe. Indigo Bunting, Black Vulture and Eastern Whip-poor-will narrowly missed the list by being outside the 24-hour window. But they did see Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Carolina Chickadee. Also on the bird species list were Scarlet Tanager, White-eyed Vireo, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Cerulean, Yellow-throated, and Black-and-White Warblers in addition to Blue Jays, American Crows, Canada Goose, American Robin and Northern Cardinal.

American Redstart

Setophaga ruticilla
Photo by Debbi Schuster

Blackbrook Audubon spent about $1,200 this year to purchase Audubon Adventures, a publication focused on animals and their habitats as well as conservation for 3rd through 5th grade students. We distribute the magazine to Geauga Park District for their Nature Scopes program. This year’s Birdathon was May 8 – 16.

New Specialty License Plate leaps to new heights

This summer the Ohio Division of Wildlife started offering a Bullfrog license plate to raise funds for wetland conservation in the Wildlife Habitat Fund. Fifteen dollars of the extra $25 fee goes toward habitat work. To keep the plate available, 25 of them must hop onto cars each year. The bullfrog (Lithobates catesbeianus) is Ohio’s official state frog.

The new plate is the culmination of years of letter-writing and promotion by students at Grizzell Middle School in Dublin, Ohio.

Get to know the Wildlife Officer for your county

Each county in Ohio has a Division of Wildlife Officer assigned to it. One county in Blackbrook’s territory and one nearby have new officers.

This spring, Wildlife Officer Matt Madgar took over enforcement and conservation duties in Geauga County while Officer Zach Hillman was assigned to Cuyahoga County in June.

Ashtabula’s Wildlife Officer is Jason Warren and Ryan Pawlus handles wildlife-related issues for Lake County. Contact info for each officer is available here.

To report a wildlife violation or suspicious activity involving wildlife, call or text 1-800-POACHER (1-800-762-2437).

We are sad to report the recent passing of long-time Blackbrook Audubon member Sandie Gilson.

Her husband, Paul, expressed their appreciation for “years of friendship and adventure at all the programs and special events.”
Blackbrook offers a birding course at Willowick Public Library

Already one of the fastest growing hobbies in North America, birding or just bird appreciation really picked up during the Covid lockdowns and slowdowns. People took more notice of what's outside their windows, so Willowick Public Library contacted Blackbrook to request a basic birding class for their patrons. Our own Mary Ann Wagner will show fledgling birders how to identify birds, learn their names and welcome feathered visitors to their yards. While attendees won't be ready for a "Big Year" after this talk, she hopes they'll take off with some useful tips to get started in their new hobby. Registration is open.

Backyard Birdwatching for Beginners
Wednesday, October 27  6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Willowick Public Library
263 East 305th St. Willowick, OH
Registrations are taken up to program time. Please call the library at 440-943-4151 ext. 2 or register online at we247.org. Walk-ups are permitted as space allows.

Mary Ann and Laurie built this display for the Ohio Lepidopterists at the Mentor Public Library for the months of August and September. The Monarch adult and caterpillar were made by Josh Sebrasky, manager of the Headlands Branch.

Vote November 2!
Local Conservation Issues:

Issue 2  Lake Metroparks
0.8 Mill Renewal Levy and 0.4 Mill increase - operating, maintaining, protecting, land acquisition and park development - 10 years - commencing in tax year 2021, first due in 2022

Issue 3  Willowick City
0.5 Mill Renewal Levy - parks and recreational - 5 years, commencing tax year '21, first due in '22

Issue 3  Jefferson (Ashtabula Co.)
1 Mill Renewal Levy - parks & recreational, 5 yrs.

Issue 33  Windsor Twp. (Ashtabula Co.)
1 Mill Additional - parks and recreational, 5 yrs.

Issue 35  Conneaut Twp. Park District
1.25 Mill Repl. & Incr. current operating, 5 yrs.

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!
SEPTEMBER

Saturday, 18th  8:30 am
Bird Walk
Penitentiary Glen Reservation
Ages 12 and older
Registration Required

Sunday, 19th  12 – 4 pm
Snakes, Turtles & More
Penitentiary Glen Reservation
Live reptiles and amphibians
No registration necessary

OCTOBER

Sunday, 3rd  12 – 4 pm
Autumn Open House
Penitentiary Glen Reservation
Family activities,
Train rides 1 – 3 pm
Weather permitting

Sat. – Sun.  9th – 10th
Ashtabula County
Covered Bridge Festival
Jefferson, Ohio  10 am – 5 pm

NOVEMBER

Tues., 2nd  Election Day
Mon – Wed  8th – 10th
Ohio Community
Wildlife Cooperative
VIRTUAL Conference
bobcats, ticks, squirrels,
invasive species, deer
diseases, non-native birds
by OSU Extension, DOW,
USDA, LEAP, etc.

Join us for this year’s Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 26!