



# The Hushwing **HERALD**

Volume 52 Number 3  
February/March, 2018

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: Tuesday, February 20, 2018  
PROGRAM: Song Birds of Ohio  
SPEAKER: Gary Meszaros  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Penitentiary Glen Nature Center,  
Lake Metroparks

A nature photographer for over 40 years with over 5,000 published images, Gary Meszaros will present a program on Ohio's breeding songbirds. Lying adjacent to the Appalachian mountains to the east and prairie lands to the west, Ohio is home to a large number of warblers, vireos, sparrows and other breeding songbirds. Every spring visitors from across the nation converge on hot spots like Magee Marsh and Shawnee State Forest to enjoy viewing the colorful parade of spring migrants in America's fastest growing hobby. Gary will share some of his knowledge and imagery of these song birds.

See page 6 for a brief write up on Gary's co-authored new book – "The Prairie Peninsula"



DATE: Tuesday, March 20, 2018  
PROGRAM: Natural History Observations of a German prince along the Ohio Canal in 1834  
SPEAKER: Dr. Joseph Hannibal  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Penitentiary Glen Nature Center

Dr. Joseph Hannibal will regale us with tales of the explorations of a German prince's travels around the Midwest and along the Ohio Canal. Maximilian, Prince of Wied (1782–1867), stands out among the many travels written on the newly opened Ohio Canal, linking the Ohio River to Lake Erie. From Project MUSE, "Maximilian had two qualities that distinguished his observations: he was a highly knowledgeable, experienced naturalist, and he had no personal stake in the settling of the frontier and concomitant suppression of the native peoples of North America."

Joe is a geologist and Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. He is the author of *Geology Along the Towpath: Stones of the Ohio & Erie and Miami & Erie Canals* (Ohio Division of Geological Survey, 1998) and wrote the introduction and footnotes for the translated *Maximilian, Prince of Wied's Trip Along the Ohio & Erie Canal in 1834: An Annotated New Translation* (Ohio History, 2009).



## ACTIVITIES

### February Activity

DATE: Saturday, February 24, 2018  
 ACTIVITY: Winter Birds in Amish Country  
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.  
 MEET: Meet at Walter C. Best Preserve  
 (Geauga Park District), 11620 Ravenna Road  
 (Rt. 44), Chardon 44024;  
 1 mile south of Chardon Square

Winters bring Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers, Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs to the farm fields of Geauga County. We'll carpool or caravan from Best Preserve to the Hayes Road area near/Middlefield in search of these winter visitors, and travel to other nearby sites where reports of birds are favorable. We will stay close to our cars in most areas, but dress for the weather, bring your binoculars and spotting scope if you have one. After a morning of birding we'll plan to stop for lunch at Mary Yoder's Amish Kitchen in Middlefield. For more information contact Pat Morse at 440-256-1404 ext. 2101.

### MEETINGS OR HIKES CANCELED DUE TO WEATHER

How do I know if a meeting or hike is canceled? Blackbrook Audubon is now registered with the I-Alert system that is seen on WKYC-TV 3, [wkyc.com](http://wkyc.com); Newsradio WTAM 1100 AM, [wtam.com](http://wtam.com); as well as our website: [www.blackbrookaudubon.org](http://www.blackbrookaudubon.org)



### March Activity

DATE: Sunday, March 18, 2018  
 ACTIVITY: Birds of Lorain County  
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.  
 MEET: Meet at Columbia Reservation  
 (Lorain Metroparks), 25145 Royalton Rd.  
 Columbia Station, 44028;  
 about an hour from Mentor

Primarily a wetland reservation, the 409 acres of Lorain Metroparks' Columbia Reservation includes a number of man-made ponds built around waterways near the west branch of the Rocky River. Trails include paved, gravel and mowed trails. We'll be looking mainly for resident and migrating waterfowl, but keeping an eye out for resident raptors and songbirds as well. Dress for the weather, bring your binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. We'll also plan to stop for lunch at a local eatery. For more information contact Pat Morse at 440-256-1404 ext. 2101.



## Nominating Committee Report

Every spring, the members of the Blackbrook Audubon Society hold an election for the four elected offices on our Board of Directors. The nominees will be announced at our March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. If you would like to nominate someone as an officer or perhaps join a committee yourself, now is the ideal time. The election will be held at our April 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. The following people have been suggested by the Nominating Committee:

President:	Becky Donaldson
Vice President:	Debbi Schuster
Secretary:	Trevor Wearstler
Treasurer:	Mary Ann Wagner

## Trevor's Tips

Now that it's winter, many birders head south to warmer weather. But if they stick around during an irruptive year, there is the potential to see several bird species from the far North. These species are called irruptive for their sporadic explosion in numbers much farther south than their usual geographic range. The reason for these irruptions can vary from lack of food sources, over competition, or extreme weather forcing the birds southward. Typical irruptive birds are: grosbeaks, crossbills, siskins, and redpolls. Oh, and of course, Snowy Owls.

Let's focus on some confusing aspects of the Pine Siskin. Commonly seen feeding with American Goldfinches, these two birds can be confused with a quick glance. Both display prominent wing bars and have a yellow tint. However, the siskin is slightly smaller and has a pointed bill much like a freshly sharpened pencil. The siskin is heavily streaked, giving it an appearance similar to a female House Finch and the Common Redpoll, another irruptive species.

Good luck and remember to scan those winter finch flocks.

Picture by Andy Avram: Top two birds are Pine Siskins and the lower bird is an American Goldfinch.



## Share those pictures!

Blackbrook Audubon needs your help with new pages on our website. Soon we'll have reports and sightings from our bird walks and field trips. But we would also like you to submit your photos and help people see what birds have been observed in our area. A gentle reminder, though, that only a limited number of photos can be accepted.

Please email your submissions to [blackbrookaud@aol.com](mailto:blackbrookaud@aol.com).

Thank you.



## FROM the DESK of the PRESIDENT

By Becky Donaldson

Happy New Year! I am excited and hope you will be, too, to take action for the Year of the Bird in 2018. This year, the National Audubon Society, National Geographic, BirdLife and Cornell formed an alliance as 2018 is the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Audubon chapters were instrumental in helping the bill get passed in Congress and today, 100 years later, we can take steps to keep these rules strong.

At [www.audubon.org/yearofthebird](http://www.audubon.org/yearofthebird), sign up to take the pledge for Year of the Bird and get monthly calls to action. These monthly challenges are simple, but will raise awareness of the threats birds face today. February's challenge is one you might already participate in, but if not, it'll be a fun, new adventure—Join in the Great Backyard Bird Count for February. Be sure to share your experiences and photos with us via email at [blackbrookaud@aol.com](mailto:blackbrookaud@aol.com) or on our Blackbrook Audubon Facebook page.

Cheers and Happy Year of the Bird!

### **Ticket Auction Results**

Thank you to everyone who participated in our November Ticket Auction and 50/50 Raffle. We were able to raise \$200 toward the purchase of Audubon Adventures for school classrooms!

### **Electronic Hushwing Newsletter**

Just a reminder to sign up on the Blackbrook Audubon website at [www.blackbrookaudubon.org](http://www.blackbrookaudubon.org) to receive your copy of the *Hushwing Herald* newsletter via email. We publish four newsletters per year, but in an effort to cut postage expenses and save some trees, only the September/October edition is mailed via US mail to all the members of the Blackbrook Audubon Society. We do not sell or share your email address, nor will spam be sent. You have the freedom to unsubscribe at any time.

### **Chagrin River Park Important Bird Area Walks**

Blackbrook Audubon's long-term monitoring project in the Chagrin River Corridor Important Bird Area continues through March 2019. Please meet at 8 AM at the Reeves Road main parking lot at Lake Metroparks Chagrin River Park in Willoughby on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month. FREE! Beginners are welcome, bring binoculars if you have them. This is an easy one-mile walk on level ground. Fox Sparrow, Field Sparrow and Brown Thrasher have been spotted recently as well as Bald Eagle flyovers and Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks.

### **AmazonSmile**

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the Blackbrook Audubon Society every time you shop online. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to your favorite charitable organization with no additional cost to you.

You will use the same account login on AmazonSmile that you use on Amazon.com. Your shopping cart, wish list, gift registries and other account settings are also the same. On your first visit to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), you will need to select a charitable organization to receive donations before you begin shopping. The Blackbrook Audubon Society is registered as one of the almost one million eligible 501(c)3 public charitable organizations. Then go ahead and shop as you normally do. AmazonSmile will remember your selection for future visits.

Thank you!

## How to Join Blackbrook Audubon Society

Many of you reading this are already members, but if you know someone who would like to join, here are the particulars.

Blackbrook is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

### Friends of Blackbrook Audubon

Please check one:

New Member

Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$30 Individual Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ \$45 Household Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ Additional Donation

Hushwing via Snail Mail

Hushwing via email

I do not wish to be a Member, but would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check payable to: Blackbrook Audubon Society

Mail to: Friends Of Blackbrook  
PO Box 1306  
Mentor, OH 44061-1306

## Bald Eagles at the Mentor Marsh Nature Center



Mentor Marsh Volunteer Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring training is ongoing in these early months of the nesting season. Join our fun group to record details on the phenology of the Marsh eagle nest. Training and equipment will be provided. Contact Becky Donaldson at [rdonaldson@cmnh.org](mailto:rdonaldson@cmnh.org) for more details or to sign up as an Eagle Monitor.

## Upcoming Lake Metroparks Events

Programs require pre-registration. Call (440) 358-7275 or visit [lakemetroparks.com](http://lakemetroparks.com).

### Bird Walk

Ages 12 and older, FREE

Bring your binoculars for a morning of birding in one of the Lake Metroparks.

- Saturday, February 10, 8:30-10:30 am at Lake Erie Bluffs (Lane Rd. entrance)
- Saturday, March 3, 8-10 am at Lake Erie Bluffs (Lane Rd. entrance)
- Saturday, March 24, 8-10 am at Penitentiary Glen Reservation

### 24-hour Team Birding Challenge

All ages (younger than 18 with adult), FREE

Team up with family & friends for an exciting birding challenge! Teams have 24 hours to find as many birds as possible in Lake Metroparks before the awards ceremony. Details emailed at registration.

Awards Ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 24, 7-9 pm at Penitentiary Glen Nature Center



## Geauga Park District Events

### Beech Leaf Disease Update

Wednesday, March 7, 7-8:30 PM  
The West Woods, Nature Center

What's happening with our beech trees? Constance Hausman, PhD, Cleveland Metroparks Plant and Restoration Ecologist, will provide an update on Beech Leaf Disease and how it is affecting Northeast Ohio woodlands. Presented in conjunction with the Native Plant Society of Northeast Ohio. Wheelchair/stroller accessible.

### Coffee with the Birds

Saturday, March 10, 8-10:30 AM  
The West Woods, Nature Center

Relax in a seat in front of the big windows at The West Woods Nature Center and enjoy watching the feeder birds while sipping a cup of shade-grown coffee. A naturalist will be on hand to discuss the benefits of this environmental product and help with bird identification. Truly a great way to start your day! Wheelchair/stroller accessible.

### March of the Salamanders

Saturday, March 24, 9-10:30 AM  
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove Shelter

Accompany Field Naturalist Tami Gingrich as she visits several vernal pools to check preset traps in search of giant mole salamanders and other aquatic critters. Learn about the amazing amphibian migration into these important woodland “puddles.” Not wheelchair/stroller accessible. Nature's Not to Be Missed.

For registration or more information call 440-286-9516 or [www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org)



## “The Prairie Peninsula” A new book recommendation.

The prairie grassland covers the heartland of North America with an eastward extension called the Prairie Peninsula. Primarily composed of tallgrass prairie, this biome lies between the shortgrass prairies of the west and the eastern deciduous forest region and includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, southeastern Wisconsin, and Ohio. With text by coauthors Gary Meszaros and Guy L. Denny and photographs by Meszaros, *The Prairie Peninsula* (2017) examines the prairie types and animals that are part of this ecosystem. It took only 50 years for 150 million acres of tallgrass prairie to disappear under the steel plow, transforming the Prairie Peninsula into fields of corn and wheat. Only a few thousand acres of this endangered ecosystem remain in small parcels.

The *Prairie Peninsula* also tells the story of the early settlers and the hardships they endured. Thousands died of milk sickness and malaria, with prairie fires sending flames across the horizon, destroying everything in their path. Today, many of these pioneers lie buried in cemeteries comprising prairie remnants, fragments of the primeval land they tried to tame. The authors investigate these and other surviving prairie remnants and current efforts to save these traces of original North American grassland.

A photographer for more than 40 years, Gary Meszaros' images have appeared in numerous nature magazines and textbooks. He is the coauthor of and has contributed photographs to five books published by The Kent State University Press, including *Native Fishes of Ohio* (2014) and *Wild Ohio* (2008). He is also the featured speaker for our February 20<sup>th</sup> program, “Song Birds of Ohio”. Guy Denny is a retired chief of the ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. He is the current president of the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association.

# Get Geared Up For the Great Backyard Bird Count!

February 16-19, 2018

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

We invite you to participate! For at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, February 16-19, 2018, simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see. If you're new to the count, or have not participated since before the 2013 merger with eBird, you must create a free online account to enter your checklists. If you already have an account, just use the same login name and password.

In 2017, Great Backyard Bird Count participants in more than 100 countries counted more than 6,200 species of birds on more than 180,000 checklists! Your help is needed every year to make the GBBC successful!

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time. Scientists use information from the Great Backyard Bird Count, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to get the "big picture" about what is happening to bird populations.

For more information, please visit the official website at [gbbc.birdcount.org](http://gbbc.birdcount.org).



Northern Cardinals by Michele Black, Ohio, 2015 GBBC



## Upcoming Events

### EARLY MORNING BIRD WALKS

Date	Sundays, Feb. 11 and March 4
Time	7:30 - 10:30am
Instructor	Stanley Plante
Cost	Free for members, with admission for nonmembers

Explore our gardens and natural areas on these informative walks with an expert guide to identify birds by sight, sound and behavior. All levels of birders welcome.



### BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS

Date	Saturday, Feb. 24
Time	9 - 11:30am
Instructor	Lisa Rainsong, Music Theory Professor & Naturalist
Cost	\$15 members, \$30 nonmember

This program is ideal for beginning birders since winter is a good time to learn the basics of birdwatching before the flurry of spring migration begins. The first part of the class will be held indoors where we will learn how to look at birds, what equipment is needed and then begin to identify some of the common year-round and winter resident species. We will put our new found skills to the test outside during the second part of the class as we explore a few nearby forests and garden areas. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. Register at [www.holdenarb.org](http://www.holdenarb.org) or call 440-602-3833.

BLACKBROOK AUDUBON SOCIETY  
PO Box 1306  
Mentor, OH 44061-1306

**LOOK FOR BLACKBROOK ON THE WEB!**  
**AT [www.blackbrookaudubon.org](http://www.blackbrookaudubon.org)**

Becky Donaldson - President  
Bruce Roberts - Editor  
Mary Ann Wagner – Assistant Editor

Something to ponder:

"If you take care of the birds, you take care of most of the big problems in the world."  
Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy,  
George Mason University

