



Picking up where the IBA survey left off

By Tom Romito, WCAS President

So the Rocky River Important Bird Area (IBA) survey is over and the final report is out (If you want a copy, I've got 'em for a donation of \$5.00). Now what? In January, the WCAS board underwent a strategic planning workshop and decided to pursue three strategies around the subjects of leadership, education, and membership. That covers a lot of ground when you consider that education alone can mean field trips, programs, and outreach.

Ten years ago, when I became WCAS president, I felt that we needed a conservation project. My vision led to the five-year IBA breeding bird survey. This year, the board passed over a conservation strategy in lieu of the three strategies I noted above. I haven't given up, though, on the idea of another community-based, sustained, conservation project. In the meantime, I am moving into the background and empowering the board to take accountability for running the organization.

All of this begs the questions of who might succeed me as president, and who might spearhead a conservation project, should someone volunteer for either position. We would all like to see a strong leader come in as president, but it would take year or two to find and train that person. As far as a conservation leader goes, we would need to find someone in the membership who is focused and passionate. Would the president and conservation leader be the same person? Maybe so, maybe not. In any case, I won't disappear. I'll stick around and provide guidance for both functions.

It's a good time for WCAS to transition to a new president. We've just completed a major citizen science project that took ten years to conceive, initiate, conduct, and report on. We've launched new strategies to modernize our approach to volunteerism. Now all we have to do is identify the right person to take over the organization. There's no real hurry. I'm planting a seed here, hoping it will take root in someone who cares about the future of WCAS.

The fact that the Rocky River IBA survey is over doesn't mean that the Rocky River IBA itself is over. The Rocky River IBA is a place, not an event. In you agree with me, let's view the IBA survey not as an end, but a beginning. Let's agree that in the field of citizen science, we can explore other horizons, which can actually be extensions of the IBA survey. They may not necessarily be about birds, but about the environment in which we and birds co-exist. Think about the Rocky River IBA, or your own back yards, for that matter, as ecosystems that need protection. Projects related to global warming or alternative energy might serve this purpose.

Is anyone out there interested in taking a leading role in WCAS? If so, I would love to hear from you. We can brainstorm some possible projects and find out how you might be a good fit. You can reach me by e-mail at tomromito@ameritech.net or by phone at 216-741-2352.

Elections - Please Participate!

Elections will be held at the May meeting, May 7 at the Rocky River Nature Center. Nominations can be made now by calling or emailing a Board member (see page 7 for contact information), through the website (click on 'Contact Us'), or at the meeting before elections.

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FIELD TRIPS

Wednesday May 15, 6:30 PM Warblers & Late Spring Migrants Lake Erie Nature & Science Center

Trip Leaders: Bill Deininger (WCAS) and Christine Cain (LENSC)

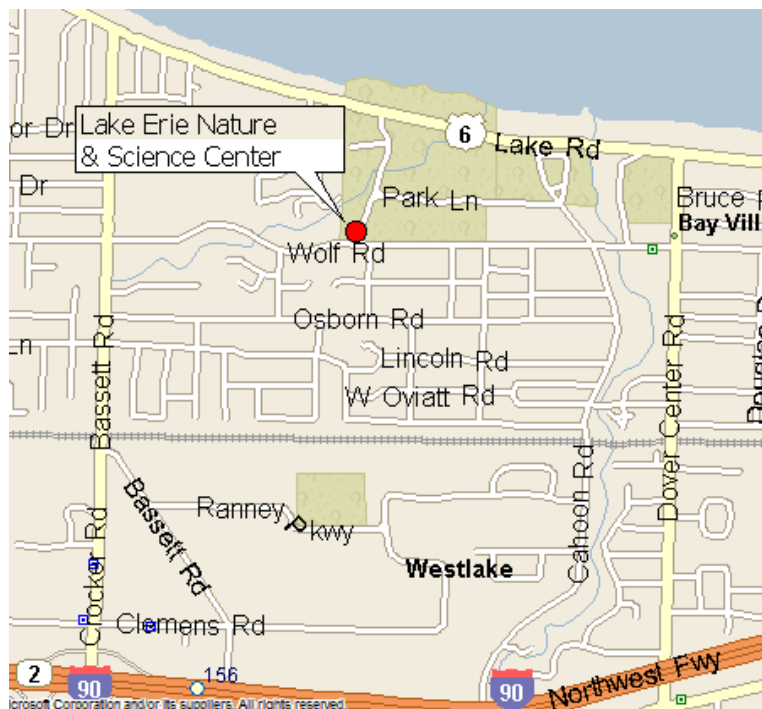
Summer residents are starting to nest, and waves of migrants are still passing through. Meet at Lake Erie Nature and Science Center, 28728 Wolf Rd, Bay Village, Ohio 44140 for an early-evening bird walk through the woods and fields of Cleveland Metroparks Huntington Reservation.

From east: via Interstate 90 West: Take Exit 159, Columbia Road north. Turn right on Columbia Road. Turn left on Wolf Road. Entrance will be 1.9 miles on the right side of the road.

From west: via Interstate 90 East: Exit 156, Crocker-Bassett Roads. Turn left on Crocker Road, which becomes Bassett Rd at the railroad tracks. Turn right on Wolf Road. Entrance will be .7 miles on the left side of the road.

From the South, Interstate 480 East OR West: Take Exit 3, Stearns Road. From 480 Eastbound, turn left/ From 480 Westbound, turn right onto Stearns. Stearns will become Crocker Rd. After passing over I-90 at the railroad tracks, Crocker will become Bassett Road. Turn right on Wolf Road. Entrance will be .7 miles on the left side of the road.

An enlarged map is available at www.wcasohio.org/Lake_Erie_Nature_and_Science_Center.htm



Saturday, June 8, 7:30 AM Puritas Wetland

Trip Leaders: Liz McQuaid and Garrett Ormiston

Puritas Wetland is an 80-acre detention basin in the Big Creek watershed in Cleveland from Puritas Ave. to I-480 between W.140th and W.150th Streets. Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation has spearheaded restoration projects in this functioning wetland, along with several partners including the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. More here about Puritas Wetland: <http://bpdc.org/planningdevelopment/puritas-wetlands/>

From the west on I-480 take Exit 9 OH-17/Airport/Brookpark Rd. Stay far left on the exit and turn left onto Brookpark then left (north) onto Grayton Rd. At the end of the road, turn right (east) onto Puritas Ave. Follow Puritas Ave. past W. 150th St. then watch for McDonald's and Save-a-Lot signs on the right. Parking lot is by sign for Save-a-Lot on the right. If you get to W. 140th St. you have gone too far. (Continued on Pg 3)



FIELD TRIPS

(Puritas Wetland directions, continued from Pg 2)

From the east on I-480 take Exit 12A W. 150th St. Turn north onto W. 150th St. After almost one mile, you will reach Puritas Ave. Turn right (east) Follow Puritas Ave. and watch for McDonald's and Save-a-Lot signs on the right. Parking lot is by sign for Save-a-Lot on the right. If you get to W. 140th St. you have gone too far.

From I-71 use the W.150th St. Exit. Go south on West 150th St. a short distance to Puritas Ave. Turn east (left) on Puritas Ave. After a few blocks watch for McDonald's and Save-a-Lot signs on the right. Parking lot is by sign for Save-a-Lot on the right. If you get to W. 140th St. you have gone too far.

Saturday, July 20, 10 AM or 12:45 PM Medina Raptor Center

Leader: Laura Jordan

Target Species: Raptors at Medina Raptor Center, Sparrows and Summer Residents at Letha House

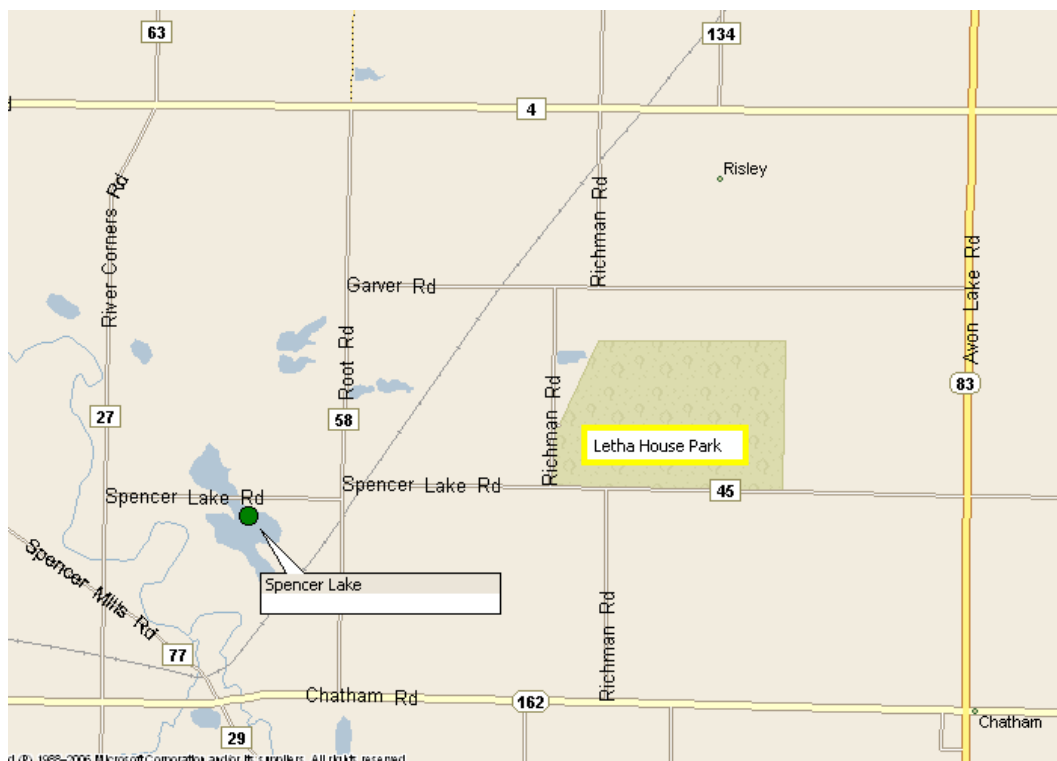
Come anytime after 10 a.m. to bird or picnic. For Medina Raptor Center visit, be certain to arrive by 12:45

Laura Jordan, Executive Director of the Medina Raptor Center, and will host WCAS for the July field trip. You may have met the dedicated staff and volunteers who bring education birds to conservation events, and now you will have an opportunity to visit behind the scenes. WCAS has reserved the shelter so we can picnic and do a bit of birding beforehand at nearby Letha House Park. Parking at MRC is limited. Please share rides if possible. We can also leave some cars at Letha House Park East.

We will meet at Letha House Park East in the Medina County Park District. The address is 5745

Richman Road, Chatham Township, OH 44256. Restrooms are at Letha House West, across Richman Rd. Directions from Cleveland area:

Take I-480 West. Continue on Ohio Rte. 10 West (Signs for Oberlin/State Hwy 10 W/US-20 Norwalk) Take Exit 3 for Rte. 83 south. Go Left at the end of the exit ramp. You will turn left at Lorain Road, looks like it dead ends. Follow signs to Rte. 83 south. Turn Right at Avon Belden Road/Ohio 83/Wooster-Avon Lake Rd. Go south about 13 miles to Litchfield. There is a traffic circle in Litchfield. Continue around the circle and stay on Rte. 83. Follow Route 83 past Magical Farms Alpacas on the right. At Spencer Lake Road, turn right. Follow Spencer Lake Road to where you can turn RIGHT on Richman Rd. (small gravel road) There is a sign for County Park. Go a few hundred feet uphill and see Letha House Park East on the right.



PROGRAMS

All WCAS programs are free & open to the public. Our monthly programs are held the first Tuesday of each month, September through May, at Rocky River Nature Center, 24000 Valley Parkway, North Olmsted, Ohio. For a map & directions see www.wcasohio.org.

Tuesday, May 7, 7:30 PM

Birding Central & Southern Florida

Florida offers much that is interesting to folks who love nature and especially birds. Over the last couple years, Tom Fishburn had the opportunity to visit several well-known birding hot-spots. As a birder and "novice" photographer Tom will share highlights from his trips to places such as: the Florida Everglades, Big Cypress, Marco Island, the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, the J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR, Fort Desoto Park and Merritt Island in his presentation, "***Birding Central and Southern Florida***".



A number of Tom's pictures can be seen at the Ohio Birding Forum's website, www.ohiobirds.org/. Pictures (taken in Ohio) by Tom Fishburn.



Tuesday, June 4, 6 PM

WCAS Picnic & Plant Exchange (no rain will fall this evening!)

**NOTE - We will meet at
Lagoon Picnic Area, 6PM**

Our annual Audubon picnic and plant exchange. Bring your dinner (grill will be available for cooking), your family or friends AND bring any plants, seeds, bulbs that need homes. They can be houseplants or outdoor plants. If you don't have any plants to bring that is OK, but adopt an "orphan" plant. We also have a bird walk after dinner. Lagoon Picnic Area usually has Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Lagoon Picnic Area is located on Valley Parkway between Cedar Point Road and Spafford Road in North Olmsted.

A larger map and directions can be found at www.wcasohio.org/lagoon_picnic_area__rocky_river.htm



July and August

No Programs - Go Birding!!!

VOLUNTEER SECTION

Buzzard Day at Hinckley

Kit Birch and her 10 year old granddaughter Sophia Birch, Nancy Howell, Stan Searles and Barry Wolfe came out on Sunday, March 17 to staff the WCAS display on Buzzard Day at the Hinckley Elementary School. WCAS had coloring sheets for the youngsters (and young at heart), buzzard headbands, our information board and a matching game to see how well people could identify large birds in flight. All informational ... all fun. Oh yes, WCAS shared the room with the live turkey vulture which always attracts lots of attention and visitors.

Top Student Scientists Honored at NEOSEF

Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society made six special awards at the 60th Annual Northeastern Ohio Science and Engineering Fair, held March 4-7, 2013 at John Carroll University. Rachel Yurchisin and Conor Bush each took WCAS top honors including a \$50. prize. Rachel assessed stream bank erosion in the Cuyahoga river watershed, in Cleveland Metroparks territory. Rachel is a repeat winner; her project on the Rocky River watershed earned a first place from WCAS in 2012. Conor Bush took water samples to research the massive fish kill in the Rocky River east branch.

Honorable mentions went to Tevin McDowell, Halle Miller, Justin Runel and Ava Thomas. Tevin studied concentrations of aflatoxin contaminating stale bird seed. Halle's project assessed the effect of pollutants on Daphnia Magna (a freshwater water flea) and Elodea (a pond plant). Justin used e-Bird to link shorebird migration patterns to climate change in Ohio over several decades. Ava sought to find a way for bird rehabilitators to restore buoyancy to oil-soaked birds.

The Northeastern Ohio Science Engineering Fair has been held annually since 1954. This year more than 600 high-school and middle-school students from 80 schools competed for honors, cash and a chance to advance to the Broadcomm Masters Program or the International Science and Engineering Fair. Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society is one of 90 companies, organizations and professional societies making special awards. WCAS recognizes excellent projects relating to birds or conservation, with emphasis on the local watersheds. Science fair judges for 2013 are: Debra Jesionowski, Michelle Manzo and Penny O'Connor.



Debra Jesionowski stands by the project by Ava Thomas

Metroparks Monthly Morning with the Birds at Rocky River Nature Center

Want to learn more about birds in the Rocky River Valley? Attend Rocky River Nature Center's Monthly Morning with the Birds. See the WCAS calendar [<http://www.wcasohio.org>] or check the Emerald Necklace [<http://www.clemetparks.com/aboutus/info/EmeraldNecklace.asp>]

May 11, 8-11 a.m.

June 15, 8-11 a.m.

July 13, 8-11 a.m.

August 10, 8-11 a.m.



Enjoy a walk with Naturalist Ken Gober along wetlands & through forest. Rocky River Nature Center is located at 24000 Valley Parkway in Rocky River Reservation, north of Cedar Point Road in North Olmsted.

Reports of Past Field Trips

Reports with pictures of recent (and not so recent) field trips and other activities are on the website. From the home page, click on the 'Pictures and Reports' icon in the list on the left. Field trip reports include bird lists as well as trip highlights and more!

Welcome New Members

Joy Coleman
Greg Coleman
Nora Ebie
Jim Marsey
Ellen Palmer Marsey
Sandy Schurdell



UltraBird/UltraWalk 2013

Purpose, Overview & How YOU can help!

As most of WCAS members know, Important Bird Areas (IBA) are tracts of land that the National Audubon Society determined in 2000 to be critical to the existence of birds and other wildlife because of their habitat. WCAS has been and continues to be very supportive of East Branch of the Rocky River IBA, which extends from Hinckley to North Olmsted, and north to the mouth of the river in Lake Erie. This watershed contains valuable forests and wetlands, such as the Rocky River Reservation, Mill Stream Run Reservation, and Hinckley Reservation. To this end, WCAS will hold its seventh annual UltraWalk and UltraBird events.

Birders and other members may get pledges from sponsors for the number of birds spotted during the event or get a flat-rate donation. Walkers and other members may get pledges from sponsors for the number of miles walked or get a flat-rate donation.

Other volunteers are also needed. Possibilities include (but are not limited to) banner carriers, set-up people for the finish line and area, volunteers to man the registration tables for the 5 mile walkers and a political representative coordinator.

Registration forms and donations forms can be found on our website at www.wcasohio.org.

UltraBird Details

3-days of birding May 23, 24 and 25, 2013 in the Rocky River Important Bird Area

Thursday, May 23, 2013 Hinckley Reservation

Friday, May 24, 2013 Mill Stream Reservation

Saturday, May 25, 2013 Rocky River Reservation

Target species: Warblers, summer residents, late migrants

Leader: Mary Anne Romito

The annual **UltraBird** Field Trip will once again be a chance for birders to see or hear 90-plus species in the Rocky River Important Bird Area. Mary Anne Romito will lead as we bird from Hinckley to Emerald Necklace Marina, over the course of three days. Beginners, intermediate and advanced birders are all welcome. Come out on Thursday, Friday, Saturday or all three. Meet at 6 a.m. or at 8 a.m., your choice. The 8 a.m. group will join the 6 a.m. group as we move from place to place to see and hear as many species as possible. Last year: 95 species. Bring water and snacks. Dress for the weather. Don't forget insect repellent, sunscreen, hat, rain slicker or boots if muddy! Below are each day's meeting spots.

UltraBird is one of our annual FUNdraisers. Sponsors and donations are most welcome.

Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 6 a.m.

Meet at **Johnson Picnic area**, off West Dr. by the equestrian area, on the west side of Hinckley Lake. Take I-71 to Rt. 303. Go East on Rt. 303. Turn right, or south on Hinckley Hills Rd. (606) Go East (left) on Bellus Rd, then south (right) on West Dr.

Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 8 a.m.

Meet at **Whipp's Ledges**, Hinckley Reservation

From I-71 take Rt. 303 east to State Road (south). Go past Bellus Rd. Whipps Ledges is on the left (east) side. Map for both locations at: <http://www.wcasohio.org/UltraBird-Hinckey.htm>

Friday, May 24, 2013 at 6 a.m.

Meet at **PawPaw Picnic Area**, Mill Stream Reservation.

PawPaw Picnic Area is off Valley Parkway, just east of W. 130th St. in North Royalton. Exit I-71 at Route 82 (Royalton Rd.) Go east on Rte. 82 and turn right at Valley Parkway. Follow Valley Parkway just past W. 130th St.

Friday, May 24, 2013 at 8 a.m.

Meet at **Royalview Picnic Area**, Mill Stream Reservation

Royalview is off Valley Parkway between Royalton Rd. (Rte. 82) and W. 130th St. in Strongsville. At Royalview, do not drive all the way in by the shelter. Instead just go over the small bridge and park in the lot on the left. Map to both locations at: <http://www.wcasohio.org/UltraBird-MillStream.htm>

Saturday, May 25, 2013 at 6 a.m. Meet by the shelter at **Lagoon Picnic Area**, Rocky River Reservation. Lagoon Picnic Area is on Valley Parkway between Cedar Point and Spafford Roads.

Map at: <http://www.wcasohio.org/lagoonpicnicarearockyriver.htm>

Saturday, May 25, 2013 at 8 a.m. Meet at **Rocky River Nature Center**. Rocky River Nature Center is at 24000 Valley Parkway, N. Olmsted. Map at: <http://www.wcasohio.org/ockyRiverNatureCenter.htm>

UltraWalk Details

Volunteers Needed!

This year, we will conduct our seventh annual UltraWalk on Saturday, May 25. Stan Searles will lead the 31-mile trek through the IBA. As in previous years, the group will begin at 6:00 a.m. at Buzzards Roost in Hinckley Reservation. Walkers may join (or leave) the core group anywhere along the way, as they deem necessary. Back-up support is provided! A popular option is to join the walkers as they pass by Cleveland Metroparks Ranger Headquarters and Park Operations on the Valley Parkway in Fairview Park, about 3:30 p.m. to walk the last five miles to Emerald Necklace Marina. The walk will conclude about 5:30 p.m. WCAS asks walkers to register for the event using forms on our website. WCAS will benefit if walkers seek pledges from sponsors for the miles they walk or obtain a flat-rate donation from each sponsor. Details on how to submit pledges are on the forms. You may contact Stan at ssearles@roadrunner.com or Tom Romito at 216-741-2352 with questions or for additional information.

Carbon Offset Project Update

Modeled after the Carbon Offset Bird Project launched at the 2011 Midwest Birding Symposium, Western Cuyahoga Audubon has begun a project to offset the carbon impact of some of the driving done during our field trips. The process involves participants voluntarily contributing toward the fund based on mileage & the size of vehicle driven. The WCAS website has more information & a handy form to calculate the amount you wish to donate. Click on Field Trip then Carbon Offset Project. Money generated will go toward habitat preservation & restoration in the Rocky River Important Bird Area or other area within the range of the Western Cuyahoga Chapter. Consider contributing to the Carbon Offset Project when you take a birding trip. The birds say, "Thank you".

Total collected to date - \$665.48



Bald Eagle © John Sims

Audubon Spring Bird Walks

See the spring migrants during the Audubon spring bird walks. The walks will be held each Sunday from April 14 to May 19, 2013, at 7:30 a.m. A full list of locations can be found on our web site:

www.wcasohio.org/spring_bird_walks.htm

Following is a partial list of local walks:

- *Lake Isaac in Middleburg Hts.
- *Hinckley Reservation at bridge on State Rd.
- *Canal Way Center in Cuyahoga Hts.
- *Rocky River Nature Center, North Olmsted,
- *Station Rd. Bridge Trailhead, Brecksville.

This is a wonderful opportunity to sample the waves of birds moving through northeast Ohio. New birders, be sure to be out on each of these six Sundays. It is a great way to start birding. The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland conducts these walks in cooperation with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, local park districts & the Holden Arboretum. Walks are led by expert volunteers and are free to all.

Contact Us

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Visit our website
www.wcasohio.org

WCAS Chapter Newsletter

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Audubon Society
www.wcasohio.org is the official
Chapter Web Site

WCAS Board Meetings are open
to all members. Consult the
WCAS calendar or contact any
board member for dates

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WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter Supporter Application

Why wait! Join WCAS as a chapter supporter.

Chapter Membership year: September 1 through August 31

Chapter Dues give you our newsletter, a nametag & a window cling.

Check one:

1 or 2 people

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\$20

\$35

\$55

Additional Donation (**Check one**)

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19340 Fowles Rd., Middleburg Hts. Ohio, 44130**

