



Upcoming Programs and Events



Please help spread the word that Ohio has a Special Proclamation designating April 2023 as Native Plant Month in Ohio, and plant native trees, pollinator gardens, and native habitats that provide food and shelter for all wildlife.



April 2023 is also National Native Plant Month!



April is

NATIONAL NATIVE
PLANT MONTH

In 2021, Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) were the founding, bipartisan, co-sponsors of a Senate Resolution to make April 2021 the first National Native Plant Month! This year, with the retirement of Senator Portman, Senator Mike Braun (R-IN) has kindly offered to co-sponsor the Senate Resolution. To learn more about this Senate Resolution and to see a list of the supporting organizations for 2023, please visit

www.NationalNativePlantMonth.org



Self-Guided Wildflower Hike (and Good Birding, too!)

4374 Broadview Rd., Richfield, OH 44286

(Open Dawn to Dusk)



Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve have prepared a guide to spring wildflowers that bloom from mid-April through mid-May at this 336-acre public park. The self-guided hiking loop is about 2 miles long and traverses several diverse habitats. Bring a picnic lunch and eat at one of the picnic shelters. Meet your virtual guide, retired plant ecologist Jennifer Windus, and use the downloadable guide (map included) to identify and learn about native spring wildflowers, invasive species, water features and the area's history as you stay on the trail. Download the guide here: [DIY Spring Wildflower Hike 2023 - Crowell Hilaka \(friendsofrhp.org\)](https://www.friendsofrhp.org)



Earth Day Bird Feeding

Saturday, April 22, 2023 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm Seneca Deck

1828 Smith Rd., Akron, OH 44313

Drop by to celebrate Earth Day by joining a naturalist with Summit Metro Parks to feed birds from your hand. Learn why our flying friends are important for a healthy ecosystem.



GAAS April Program (Live)

Jay Mager: *An Evening of Loonacy:*

The Life History & Current Status of Common Loons in North America

Tuesday, April 25, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

*****Note Location*****

Goodyear Heights Lodge - West Room

Goodyear Heights Metro Park

2077 Newton St., Akron OH 44305



The Common Loon has long been considered an iconic species of the northern wilderness. However, as an indicator species of the ecological health and integrity of aquatic ecosystems, it also can reflect some of the most pressing environmental challenges. This evening, I hope to review the basic life history of the Common Loon, identify some of the more recent concerns facing loons, and present some of the most recent developments in research and conservation by scientists and citizens to preserve and protect current populations.

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**Upcoming Fundraiser Event**

**For Richfield Heritage Preserve**

**(Proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit the Friends of RHP**

**Invasive Species Management Program)**



Every home landscape has the potential to help protect our ecosystem. This workshop will help you work with nature to support the health of you and your family in your landscape. The day will include light morning refreshments, choice of vegetarian or non-vegetarian box lunch, door prizes, informative handouts, and a native plant sale by Richfield's own Native Roots, Inc. Cost of the program is \$45 (\$35 for Friends' members). Participants are asked to bring a mug and/or reusable water bottle. For more information and to register, see [Protecting Ohio Wildflowers and Fighting Invader Plants Registration, Tue, May 2, 2023 at 9:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)

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## Bird Walks & Field Trips

**90th Annual Audubon Spring Bird Walks 2023**

**April 15 – May 21, 2023 7:30 a.m.**

**Multiple locations throughout Lorain, Medina,  
Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga Counties**

The Series of Spring Bird Walks is one of the oldest community science partnerships in Northeast Ohio. New and experienced birders can join any location on each of **six Sundays in April and May** to watch migrating birds enroute to their northern breeding grounds. The walks, led by experienced birders, begin on Sundays at 7:30 a.m. and are a great way to learn more about our resident and migrating songbirds and improve identification skills. The walks are cosponsored by Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, Blackbrook Audubon Society, Black River Audubon Society, Cleveland Metroparks, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Gates Mills Birders, Geauga Park District, Hiram College, Holden Arboretum, Lake Metroparks, Lorain County Metro Parks, Medina County Park District, Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, and Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society.

Find all the locations here: [2023-SPRING-BIRD-WALK-SERIES-ANNOUNCEMENT-2.pdf](#)

**Please note that Medina County Park District will hold their affiliated walks on Saturdays, beginning at 7:30 a.m. on April 15<sup>th</sup> at River Styx Park, 8200 River Styx Rd., Wadsworth, OH 44281 (Guilford Township) The Saturday walks will continue through May 20th. Meet in the main parking lot at River Styx Park. All ages are welcome. No registration is required.**

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### **Woodcock Watch**

**Saturday, April 15, 2023 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.**

**Cuyahoga Valley National Park**

**15610 Vaughn Road, Brecksville, OH 44141**

The American woodcock (aka timberdoodle) is an unusual shorebird that is normally cloaked in camouflage. If weather conditions are right, there is an excellent chance of seeing the unique 300-foot “sky dance” mating spectacle. Be prepared for walking and standing in wet grass and mud. Bring a flashlight.

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### **Spring Bird Stroll**

**Friday, April 21, 2023 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.**

**Cascade Valley Metro Park, Valley View Area**

**1212 Cuyahoga St., Akron, OH 44313**

For some folks, spring means birds. The naturalists at Summit Metro Parks are those folks! Join a naturalist on a guided hike to see which bird species are present at Valley View. Bring binoculars and a field guide.

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### **Returning Songbirds**

**Saturday, April 22, 2023 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.**

**Cuyahoga Valley National Park**

**Station Road Bridge Trailhead**

**9141 Riverview Road, Brecksville, OH 44141**

Volunteer Naturalist Dwight Chasar leads a birding expedition along the firm, flat Towpath Trail in search of early spring migrants, like the yellow-throated warbler. Be sure to keep an eye out for eaglets. Bring binoculars.

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Earth Day Bird Walk
Saturday, April 22, 2023 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Deep Lock Quarry Metro Park
5779 Riverview Rd., Peninsula, OH 44264

New and experienced birdwatchers are invited to celebrate Earth Day with a walk through Deep Lock Quarry with a naturalist from Summit Metro Parks. What feathered friends are visiting this park, designated an Audubon Important Bird Area. Binoculars and field guides are recommended.

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**Early Spring Migrant Bird Walk**  
**Sunday, April 23, 2023 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.**  
**Cascade Valley Metro Park, Valley View Area**  
**1212 Cuyahoga St., Akron, OH 44313**

Hike the river corridor in search of early migrating songbirds and discover why we should be listening to the "canaries in the coal mine." Please bring binoculars and a bird guide.

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News You Can Use

Leave those Bird Feeders Up!

March and April are the toughest times for birds in the North and parts of the Midwest. Natural food is not available to birds until the low temps stay at 50+ degrees. Berries are usually all eaten by March. Please feed birds until caterpillars are on the leaves and insects are flying. Tip from March 2023 *Nature Scoop*, by Toni Stahl, National Wildlife Federation Habitat Ambassador.

And Resist that Urge to Clean Up Garden Beds

Keep plant stems full height in your garden until after all the overwintering insects have left (which is after the latest freeze date, or late May in Ohio). As one example, swallowtails (butterflies) overwinter as a chrysalis attached to the stem of a perennial. They are adapted to look like the plant, so they are almost impossible to spot. Source: March 2023 *Nature Scoop*, by Toni Stahl.

Ancient Eggshells Unlock Discovery of Extinct Elephant Bird Species (From *Birdwatching Daily.com* and University of Colorado Boulder)



An elephant bird egg reconstructed from fragments in a market in southwest Madagascar.

Photo by Gifford Miller, CU Boulder

New research from the University of Colorado Boulder and Curtin University in Australia reveals that eggshell remnants hold valuable clues about a large flightless bird that lived on Madagascar over 1,200 years ago. Scientists have known that they belonged to the ratite family, genetically akin to the New Zealand Kiwi, the world's smallest living ratite. "The largest of the elephant birds, *Aepyornis*, was a feathery terror to behold: at more than

9 feet tall, weighing more than 1,500 pounds each, and outfitted with a pointy beak and deadly foot talons, it was Madagascar's largest land animal" that terrorized the early Polynesian peoples there. Read about how a team of scientists used satellite imagery, field work and DNA analysis for over 20 years to uncover separate lineages of the elephant birds without any skeletal remains: [Ancient eggshells unlock discovery of extinct elephant bird species - BirdWatching \(birdwatchingdaily.com\)](#). NPR also had a 2-Minute Listen about the research last month: [Giant eggshells reveal the secrets of Madagascar's elephant birds : NPR](#)

Introducing: Nature's Best Hope (Young Readers' Edition)!

(News from Homegrown National Park)



Doug Tallamy's groundbreaking book on planting native and removing invasive species in your backyard has been adapted for middle grade readers (ages 8 – 12) by Sarah L. Thomson! Let young minds be inspired to save the planet and reach out to others to do the same! All Tallamy books are available for **20% off** (per a recent HNP email; *note* this is a better discount than the 15% off shown on the Workman Publishing, workman.com, website) April 4th – 18th with the code: **HOMEGROWN** For more information and to order, see [Nature's Best Hope \(Young Readers' Edition\) - Workman Publishing](#) Thomas Christopher of *Growing Greener* podcast interviewed Doug about the new young readers' edition of Nature's Best Hope! Hear the 30-minute interview here: [Finding New Allies in the Campaign to Save Our Ecosystems — Growing Greener \(thomaschristophergardens.com\)](#)

Conflict of Interest at Muskingum Water Conservancy District?

Conservancy districts were originally established to protect our natural resources. But since 2011 the Muskingum Water Conservancy District (MWCD) has been leasing its land holdings to oil and gas companies that plan to drill and frack below reservoirs such as Tappan Lake (also known as Tappan Reservoir) in Harrison County, Ohio. According to some reports, MWCD has earned over \$275 million in leases and royalty payments over the last 12 years. And, reportedly, the district has sold over one billion gallons of water from its surficial water sources that have been used in the fracking process thousands of feet below. The MWCD justifies its actions by asserting that the revenues from the leases allow it to upgrade watershed facilities and campgrounds. Southern Medina and Summit Counties are in the Muskingum Watershed and are part of the 18-county region served by MWCD. Read a recent article from Cleveland Scene here: [Scientists Sound Alarm on Fracking Near Muskingum, Ohio Watershed \(clevescene.com\)](https://www.clevescene.com/fracking-near-muskingum-ohio-watershed/)

Yes, Birding Does Change Your Brain

Neuroscientists puzzling over how human memory and learning function often turn to birdwatchers to connect the dots.

[From Spring 2023 *Audubon Magazine* article, *The Birding Brain Boost* by Contributor Joanna Thompson.] Neuroscientists have used birders as test subjects in cognitive research for a long time. Now, studies with functional MRIs are finding that, with practice, “people can fine-tune their ability to distinguish among any similar-looking objects, from faces and cars to skin conditions and birds. All it takes is exposure and practice. Gaining deep expertise in a subject area can change your mental scaffolding, literally rewiring your brain.” The skillsets involved in birding – perception, observation and memory – could also be helpful to doctors and medical students in refining clinical diagnostic skills. The article is available here: [Yes, Birding Does Change Your Brain | Audubon](https://www.audubon.org/yes-birding-does-change-your-brain/)

Make Plans for National Park Week



The National Park Service is offering free admission to national parks, monuments and sites that typically charge entry fees on Saturday, April 22, 2023, the first day of National Park Week. The entrance fee waiver for fee-free days does not cover amenity or user fees for activities such as camping, boat launches, transportation, or special tours. National Park Week runs through April 30th and National Park Service parks, programs, and partners will host events and activities during this time. This year's theme is "Your Park Story". What park place is very special to you? [National Park Week - NPS Commemorations and Celebrations \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)



**“And Now, (as Paul Harvey would have said)
For the Rest of the Story...on Audubon Name”**

The previous issue of *For the Birds* brought the news that the National Board of Directors at National Audubon Society had voted to retain the name of the organization. As a follow-up to that news, there were several stories that attempted to capture the mood of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) population after hearing the decision. In a recent Science Friday piece on March 31, 2023, guest host Kathleen Davis speaks with Stuart Wells, executive director of Portland Audubon and conservation scientist Corina Newsome about their reactions to the National Audubon Society keeping its name, and how changes are happening locally, including in places like Portland. Read the transcript or listen to the 17-minute exchange here: [National Audubon Society Sticks With Its Name, Despite Founder's Racism \(sciencefriday.com\)](#)



In the Spring 2021 issue of **Audubon** Magazine, Contributor J. Drew Lanham penned this piece as a Black birder and conservation ornithologist and endowed faculty at Clemson University, where his work focuses on the intersections among race, place, and nature. He is the author of ***The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature*** and ***Sparrow Envy: Field Guide to Birds and Lesser Beasts***. In light of the recent decision, perhaps his thoughts, expressed so well two years ago, should be revisited: <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2021/what-do-we-do-about-john-james-audubon>

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As always, please visit our website regularly: <https://www.akronaudubon.org> If you've missed or deleted these **For the Birds** emails, they are also posted in the **Archives** under the **News** tab on the Home Page. For more northeast Ohio bird-related programs, events (including some bird walks), please visit the **Northeast Ohio Regional Bird Calendar**, hosted by Kirtland Bird Club of Northeast Ohio: [CALENDAR \(kirtlandbirdclub.org\)](https://www.kirtlandbirdclub.org)

Note: A chronologic listing of past GAAS program pages with speaker bios and topics can be found by going to the GAAS website *Meeting Archives* page: [Meeting Archives - Greater Akron Audubon Society](#) If a virtual meeting was recorded and is available for watching, there will be a <recording> button that can be selected to link to the recording on YouTube.

Please direct questions or comments to [info@akronaudubon.org](mailto:info@akronaudubon.org)

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