

**HISTORY & FACTS of the MARCH CENSUS**

March	11-YEAR TOTALS of SPECIES / INDIVIDUALS							
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
47 / 1,220	46 / 1,327	47 / 1,008	44 / 689	50 / 1,871	51 / 1,466	43 / 1,078	46 / 906	47 / 744
2019	2020							
44 / 1,712	48 / 681							

Most Species seen in March : 51 on 03/06/2015.

Most Individual Birds seen in March : 1,871 on 03/07/2014.

Fewest Species seen in March : 43 on 03/04/2016.

Fewest Individual Birds seen in March : 681 on 03/03/2020.

Species Average in March : 46.6 Species.

Total Individuals Average in March : 1,154.7 Individuals.

Lowest Temperature on March Census : minus 2-degrees F on 03/06/2015.

Highest Temperature on March Census : 56-degrees F on 03/02/2012 & 03/03/2020.

Longest Time Afield on March Census : 9 hours & 55 minutes on 03/06/2015.

Shortest Time Afield on March Census : 6 hours & 50 minutes on 03/04/2011.

**LAST MARCH'S FIELD REPORT**

03/03/20	<b>TOTAL SPECIES:</b>	48	<b>START / END TIME:</b>	7:00am - 3:40pm		
	<b>TOTAL BIRDS:</b>	681	<b>TIME AFIELD:</b>	8:40	<b>FT. MI.:</b>	13.51
<b>ROUTE:</b>	Red Lock Trailhead south to Merriman Valley, with a stop at Trail Mix in Peninsula.					
<b>OBSERVERS:</b>	John Henry and Douglas W. Vogus			<b>TEMP.:</b>	45F ~ 56F ~ 46F	
<b>CONDITIONS:</b>	Heavy fog at the start, blowing off quickly to overcast skies with a front from the west; light mist from 7:30am to 8:00am, then cloudy; light sprinkles from 9:35am to 9:50am, turning partly sunny with a brief clearing; clouding back up at 11:15am with light winds shifting to the south; rain, steady at times, from 12:20pm to 2:35pm, finishing up cloudy for the rest of the hike; very windy above the western rim of the valley, a gentle roar that, thankfully, never reached the riverbottom.					
<b>TRAIL CONDITIONS:</b>	Soft, wet, and rutted turning to soaked, puddled, and sloppy as the rain increased. Towpath Trail has been re-routed just south of the Botzum Trailhead at the start of the Akron Compost Facility property. Trail has been shifted off of the Towpath Trail to the west side of the facility, parallel to Riverview Rd. This temporary detour re-connects with the Towpath Trail just south of the employee parking lot by going over the sewer trunk line. I am assuming this has something to do with Akron's ongoing sewer upgrades and many trees, including some very large sycamores along the Cuyahoga River, had been removed last month. These mature sycamores had Yellow-throated Warblers in the past.					
<b>RIVER CONDITIONS:</b>	Above normal and starting to clear, turning swift and muddy as the rain persisted.					

### TEN YEARS AGO on the TOWPATH TRAIL

On March 04, 2011 wet set a census high with 56 Wood Ducks. These beautiful ducks always leave a lasting impression with a person who sees one for the very first time, often finding it hard to believe that Ohio even has such a duck.

### MARCH 2021's BIRD SPECIES PROFILE

#### WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*)

**DESCRIPTION:** When the Wood Duck drake is at rest on the water or perched on a log, its gaudy colors are apparent. The crested head has many hues of purple and green, with two white parallel lines extending from the base of the bill and from the back of the eye to the rear of the crest. The white of the chin and throat sweeps upward in U-like prongs onto the sides of the head. The red eyes and red at the base of the bill complete the vivid head color. The burgundy chest, flecked with white, is separated from the bronze sides by "fingers" of black and white. The glossy purplish-black of the back and tail is in marked contrast to the white of the breast and belly. The resplendent nuptial plumage of the drake Wood Duck, giving it the title of the most beautiful duck in North America, if not in the world, can be truly appreciated only at close hand. Hues change constantly with changes in light refraction, adding still greater variety to the many iridescent colors.

The Wood Duck hen is more attractively colored than the mottled brown hens so typical of other dabbling ducks. Pronounced white rings surround the eyes and trail behind, like exclamation marks, on the sooty-gray, slightly crested head. The white chin and throat are discernible at considerable distances. The chest, sides, and flanks are gray-brown, with disconnected lines of white dashes. The belly is white.

On the water, Wood Ducks ride higher and more buoyantly than other ducks, as evidenced by their tails jauntily inclined an inch or more above the surface. In flight, their crested heads, broad wings, and large rectangular tails create an unusual conformation.

**LENGTH:** Males average: 20.0"; Females average: 19.5"

**WINGSPREAD:** 28" - 30"

**WEIGHT:** Males average: 1.50 pounds; Females average: 1.48 pounds.

**VOICE:** The loud, squealing "wee-e-e-k, wee-e-e-k" call by the hen is often the first indication of the presence of these birds as they beat hasty retreats through the trees. No other duck has a call as distinctive as that of the hen Wood Duck, and, once learned, it is usually remembered. The male's call is a goldfinch-like "twee, twee" uttered so softly it is rarely heard.

**HABITS:** Wood Ducks are inhabitants of creeks, rivers, floodplain lakes, swamps, and beaver ponds. Over much of the year, Wood Ducks occur in pairs or in flocks of 4 to 15, but hundreds may gather at fall and winter roost sites. Their flight is only moderately swift, but they are adept at twisting and turning as they adroitly thread their way through the branches of trees. Perhaps they have this ability because their wings are proportionately broader than those of other ducks.

On land walks or runs with greater ease than most ducks, and frequently perches in trees; on water it is quick to flush when approached.

*Feeds in wild rice marshes, in sluggish streams and ponds filled with aquatic plants and insects or along wooded banks; about 90% of food is plant life; is especially fond of tiny floating duckweeds, water lentils, and seed "moss"; also eats bald cypress cones and galls, seeds and tubers of sedges, grasses, smartweeds, water chinquapin, pondweeds and their seeds, wild rice, seeds of water lilies, water elm, sometimes wanders deep into woods for acorns, hickory nuts, beech-nuts, grapes, and berries; in fall sometimes visits fields at dusk and dawn to eat kernels of corn scattered during harvest; also eats many aquatic insects, some minnows, frogs, tadpoles, snails, and small salamanders.*

**HABITAT:** *Lives in open woodlands, around forested lakes, in swamps, wooded river bottoms, along banks of wooded ponds and streams, backwaters and wooded shores of large lakes, and sometimes within city and town parks.*

**NESTING:** **NEST:** *Usually in the natural hollow of the trunk or cavity in large branch of tree; sometimes near water but may be in hollow of tree a mile or more from water if necessary, but has also been found near occupied houses or in shade trees of parks, villages, cemeteries, or boat docks, also in abandoned roosting or nesting cavities of Pileated Woodpecker, sometimes, and usually fatally, in the chimney of a house. But usually nests in swamps or along wooded streams, most frequently in cavities of bald cypress, sycamore, silver and red maples, sour gum, oaks, apple, basswood, elms, and sweet gum; may be in cavity 5 to 50 feet above ground, although hens seem to prefer cavities 30 feet up or more with an average depth of 22-inches. The hen never modifies the cavity and uses only her own down feathers for a nest after she begins laying eggs. Will also use manmade nesting boxes partially filled with wood chips. **EGGS:** *In the south February to May, elsewhere, usually April to June. Sometimes a second set of eggs in the southern states. Eggs resemble chicken eggs, dull white to brown-white, 9 to 14 eggs, but 20 to 40 have been reported from laying of more than one female in same nest. **INCUBATION:** *By female, 27 to 33 days; about half hatch in 30 days. At hatching, young have sharp claws and climb to opening of nesting cavity, then leap to ground, regardless of height, in response to calls of female on ground below. She then leads them to the nearest water and does not return to nest cavity. Young first fly about 63 days after hatching.***

**RANGE:** **SPRING MIGRATION:** *Begins moving north in February; peaking in New England in late March and in the Great Lakes by mid-April. Nests from southern British Columbia across southern Canada to Nova Scotia. The Pacific coast south through California, northern Idaho east through the Plains States south to Texas to Florida. **FALL MIGRATION:** *Many Wood Ducks disperse widely after breeding and prior to fall migration. Most begin moving south in late September; peak in the Midwest in early October; numbers in southern states increase steadily through December. **WINTER:** *Northern migrants and local breeders gather in bottomland forests, swamps, and marshes. Uncommon to rare over much of the Southwest in winter and migration; into central to eastern Mexico and Cuba and casually to Jamaica and Bernuda.***

**STATUS:** *Widespread and common, generally in low densities. Currently fairly stable, expanding range across northern plains in the last 50 years.*

**DID YOU KNOW?:** *The Wood Duck was once threatened with extinction in the early 1900's from overshooting, cutting off of forests, and drainage of swamps? In 1918, governments of Canada and the U.S. closed the hunting season for 23 years to get the numbers up.*

**Abundance Codes on the graphs below indicate the best time of year to find the Wood Duck in Northeast Ohio.**

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
rrrrrrrrrr	rrrrrrrrrr	uuuCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC
Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCuuuu	rrrrrrrrrr

- CCCCCCCC = Common to Abundant. Frequently encountered in this region during this time of year.
- UUUUUUUU = Uncommon. Occurs regularly during this time of year but not frequently detected.
- rrrrrrrrrr = Rare. These birds can occur more or less annually but are easily missed in their scant presence in the region.
- OOOOOOOO = Occasional. Limited history in this region and are not to be expected.
- \*\*\*\*\* = Accidental. Few records in the past 60 years. Not expected in this region during this time of year.
- ||||||||||| = Fluctuating Abundance. May occur some years yet absent other years. Irruptive or overwintering birds.

**History of the Wood Duck on the Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census 2010 - present.**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
JAN.				4		3		
FEB.								
MAR.		56*	6		5	2		7
APR.	5	14	15	4	18	7	16	34
MAY	6	2	3	12	1	7	5	6
JUN.	8	4	<b>28</b>	<b>38</b>	8	<b>29</b>	24	16
JUL.	22	13	19	21	21	5	22	26
AUG.	14	11	9	22	13	16	34	<b>38</b>
SEP.	<b>25</b>	10	2	34	9	23	<b>38</b>	20
OCT.	9	37	3	10	<b>24</b>	6	15	5
NOV.	12	2	2	6	2	4	9	5
DEC.				1		22		1

	2018	2019	2020	2021
JAN.		1		
FEB.	1			
MAR.	2	5	31	
APR.	<b>23</b>	10	11	
MAY	3	11	19	
JUN.	18	9	<b>32</b>	
JUL.	9	13	11	
AUG.	11	12	4	
SEP.	18	<b>28</b>	15	
OCT.	4	7	10	
NOV.		8	2	
DEC.				

**DID YOU KNOW?:** The Wood Duck eats more fruits and nuts than any North American duck? A hunter shot a male Wood Duck near Henning, in Otter Tail County, Minnesota in October of 1959, that had the unusual number of 56 acorns of bur oak in its throat and crop!

- = HIGHEST COUNT TOTAL ON CENSUS.
- BOLD #** = HIGHEST COUNT FOR THAT YEAR.



*Beauty only scratches the surface! At home in trees or water, a gorgeous Wood Duck pair rests on a tree limb.*

*(photo courtesy of Cornell Lab of Ornithology)*

### **MARCH'S DID YOU KNOW?**

**DID YOU KNOW?:** Last month I wrote about early ornithologist Alexander Wilson and the five bird species named in his honor. But, did you know that Wilson also named two species in honor of two of our most famous early American Explorers?

**DID YOU KNOW?:** President Thomas Jefferson groomed Meriwether Lewis in all aspects of the natural world and eventually appointed him to "The President's Secretary" for what would become his sole mission, the quest for the Northwest Passage. Lewis needed someone he could trust to help lead his men in the Corps of Discovery, and that man was Captain William Clark.

**DID YOU KNOW?:** On June 29, 1803, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn ordered the Army paymaster to give Lewis \$554, "being six Months pay for one Lieutenant, one Sergeant, one corporal, and ten Privates." That amounted to Lewis's official authorization to add an officer. Lewis had already acted on it, because Jefferson had agreed within a day or so of Lewis's arrival in Washington that it had to be done. On June 19, Lewis had written to William Clark. The letter contained what Donald Jackson described as "one of the most famous invitations to greatness the nation's archives can provide." It is also revealing. Lewis and Clark have become so entwined by history that for many Americans the name is "Lewisandclark", but in 1803 they were not intimate friends. Although Clark was born in Virginia four years earlier than Lewis, he had moved to Kentucky as a small boy. They knew each other only in the Army, for six months, when Lewis had served under Clark. No anecdotes survive, or any correspondence between them in the next decade except for a business letter from Lewis to Clark, asking him to make inquiries about land in Ohio.

**DID YOU KNOW?:**

*But in that six month's together they had taken each other's measure. That they liked what they saw is obvious from Lewis's letter to Clark, and Clark's response. They complemented each other. Clark was a tough woodsman accustomed to command; he had been a company commander and had led a party down the Mississippi as far as Natchez. He had a way with enlisted men, without ever getting familiar. He was a better terrestrial surveyor than Lewis, and a better waterman. Lewis had apparently knew of his mapmaking ability. In general, in areas in which Lewis was shaky, Clark was strong, and vice versa.*

**DID YOU KNOW?:**

*The bird species named by Alexander Wilson for Captain William Clark was originally named the Clark's Crow? Its current name is the Clark's Nutcracker. The original specimens and descriptions of this bird were from along the banks of the Clearwater River in Idaho, which Wilson obtained from members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1803-1806).*

**DID YOU KNOW?:**

*The Clark's Nutcracker is a corvid - related to jays and crows. While generally found far from most human habitations, nutcrackers are very adaptable and are commonly seen at scenic overlooks and picnic grounds in the West. During summer and fall, they store thousands of pine cone seeds, which they eat during winter and feed to their offspring during the very early nesting season (most having laid eggs by March or early April).*

**DID YOU KNOW?:**

*William Clark played an essential role in the development of the Missouri Territory, was superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis, and was Governor of Missouri from 1813 to 1821? He died in St. Louis at the age of 68.*



*Just one of many species described by the Lewis & Clark Expedition, the Clark's Nutcracker is never far from pine cones.*

*(photo by: Eivor Kuchta)*

See You on the Trail! ~ Doug



An 1810 oil painting of early adventurer Captain William Clark by Charles Willson Peale.

(Courtesy of Independence National Historical Park)

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