

Cerulean

Winter 2016-17 Vol. 13, No. 4

Cerulean

Quarterly Newsletter of the Ohio Ornithological Society

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### From the Editor

Enjoying birds and safeguarding their habitat is inseparable.

The prospects for environmental protection and species the new federal administration. How can Ohio birders do their part to contribute to the future I think there are many things we can do. And if everyone steps up their efforts just a little bit, it will some lifestyle changes – spend more time outdoors and take your children, family, and friends with you. Have you been to all Metro Parks or State Parks in your area? Drink shade-grown coffee and recycle more. Be an advocate community and engage in an organizations in Ohio, including OOS, are active in habitat con-(see Cheryl Harner's report on page 3).

The American Bird Conservancy started the #TogetherForBirds petition to urge legislators in Washington not to dismantle the Endangered Species Act, a cornerstone environmental law that has prevented the disappearance of Bald Eagle, Whooping Crane and the California Condor. This petition can be signed until Earth Day (April 22). Both Audubon and the Sierra Club run petitions to safeguard the Environmental Protection Agency in its role to protect clean water, clean air, and a serious approach to climate change.

Please send your comments to ceruleaneditor@ohiobirds.org.

# Save the Date

and check *ohiobirds.org* for updates and online registration



### WARBLERS & WILD-FLOWERS - April 28-30

The Ohio Ornithological Society invites you to a spectacular weekend of fun, fellowship, and birding at Shawnee State Park near Portsmouth in southern Ohio. Witness the first big wave of spring migration and enjoy the Charm of Shawnee State Park Lodge. Saturday night

keynote speakers will be Laura Keene and Christian Hagenlocher, who spent 2016 in a Big Year of the American Birding Association area, breaking Neil Hayward's 2013 record of 749 species. To warm up to their report, we will have a showing of 'The Big Year' movie on Friday night.



## MARSH MADNESS – May 13 and 14

May has so many birding adventures to explore, but The Biggest Week in American Birding is an exceptional event from May 5-14 in northwest Ohio. During this Black Swamp Bird Observatory event, OOS, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, is conducting beginner bird walks

on Saturday May 13, and Sunday May 14. Groups will be led by experienced birders at the Magee Marsh boardwalk area to help identify the warblers and other songbirds that are seen migrating through the area.

## From the OOS Conservation Committee

By Cheryl Harner OOS Conservation Chair

What does a Wood Duck box, the Sunshine Corridor, Lake Erie wetlands and King Rails have in common? They all received funding from the Ohio Ornithological Society's 2016 conservation budget.

Our broad reach across the state has supported The Nature Conservancy's Morgan Swamp in north-east Ohio. We also provided \$3,000.00 matching funds support for the Gaffin Tract within the Sunshine Corridor in southern-most Adams County.

Habitat restoration and a commitment to research continue to be a mainstay of our efforts. Two successful symposiums were held with a specific conservation focus: Grassland Birds and Rally for Rails. Grassland Birds was held at The Wilds in south eastern Ohio. The Cincinnati Nature Center's Grassland Restoration project was the recipient of \$900.00 generated at this educational forum. The Rally for Rails at Lakeside on Lake Erie supported wetlands and rail research to the tune of \$2,000.00. Winous Point Conservation, Black Swamp Bird Observatory and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge were all beneficiaries.

Conservation can also be tangible "wood and nails" projects. OOS provided funding for American Kestrel boxes along



rural highways in Crawford County, and a Wood Duck box for Green Lawn Cemetery in Columbus. Providing better access for birders was accomplished by funding efforts to repair and replace boardwalks at Magee Marsh (Ottawa County) and Cedar Bog (Champaign County). We know our membership is quite fond of birds and wants access to see them!

OOS has written numerous letters and provided support for other agencies' bird conservation efforts; for instance the 'cats indoors' campaign and initiatives for the proper placement of wind turbines. Additionally, we aided National Audubon's efforts in lobbying for clean and green energy in the State of Ohio.

Educational funding included sponsorship of the Ohio Young Birders Conference and awarding funds to young birders Matt Kepler and Liz Rising. Rural Action's Environmental Education program received funding support for their first-ever Birds in the Hills Festival in southeast Ohio.

Your Ohio Ornithological Society membership is providing both funding and volunteer time for worthy conservation efforts in north, south, east and western Ohio. If you care about birds and want to empower the efforts to protect, preserve and conserve habitats for their benefit – you can feel good about the work OOS is accomplishing throughout the Buckeye State.

### Instilling passion for conservation in youth:

# Starting a **Bluebird Trai**



Ryan Jenkins (on the right) with his brother Joev

By Darlene Sillick

Setting up a trail of bluebird boxes requires finding funding and recruiting youth to put up nestboxes for our cavity nesting birds. This past spring I was enjoying a wonderful migration day at Magee Marsh when I ran into an old friend who told me about his worldly birding travels sitting in first class flights. My wheels started turning as I listened to him and I could not help to think about a conservation project that I was planning: redoing a trail of falling-down baffle-less nest boxes at Ohio State University's Chadwick Arboretum. The world traveler was a graduate of The Ohio State University and he was a birder, so I pitched my idea to him. A few days later I received a \$200 gift card for materials in the mail. A few months later, on Saturday, October 15, about two dozen people came together to help a Boy Scout from Dublin, Ryan Jenkins, to fledge his Eagle Scout project. Here is the story in Ryan's words.

"My Eagle Scout Project was to help support the expansion of the bluebird species at Ohio State University's (OSU) Chadwick Arboretum, located on 1,600 acres on the main campus. The location of my bluebird project was at Chadwick Lake North, which has approximately 19 acres. scattered trees and a small lake. My project involved taking down 14 old bluebird boxes and to replace them with 20 new bluebird boxes.

The population of bluebirds depends in part on us humans to provide nesting sites. A bluebird trail is a series of bluebird boxes along a designated route, which is what I did in my project at Chadwick.

When taking down the old, poorly made bluebird boxes, I encountered nesting mice in some of them. Also, their locations were not conducive to bluebird nesting. The new sites were marked with flags and I bought and prepared the material to make the new bluebird boxes. We were then installing the boxes on electric metallic tube (EMT) poles and used poly-vinyl chloride (PVC) baffles to keep out predators. I determined the new box locations using Global Positioning System (GPS) and presented my project to the OSU Ornithology Club. Data will be collected by OSU students and submitted on NestWatch at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Relocating the boxes to better sites will hopefully increase the number of bluebirds that can nest at Chadwick."



The early work crew of scouts, OSU students, family and friends

'Bluebirds' – continued

I have combined my passion for bluebirds and other cavity nesters with the engagement of youth in conservaton activities. My goal is to teach young people compassion for the natural world, to get them outside, and to encourage them to be inquisitive and care about our environment. What may start as a nest box in one's backyard, can grown into something rather contagious.

Darlene Sillick is the Ohio Bluebird Society area contact for Franklin County. She is also a member of OOS' conservation committee, and is a leader in the Ohio Young Birders Club. This was the 28th Eagle Scout project that she has mentored.



Ryan and Joey put up the first nest box. Joey has set up Purple Martin rigs in his own project.

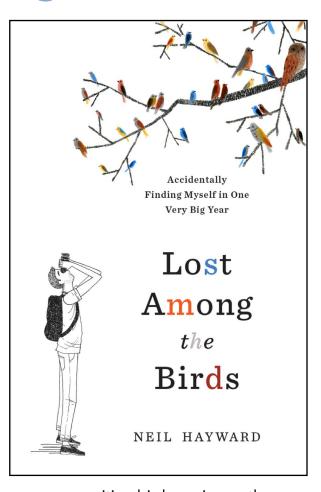
# Book REVIEW: Lost Among the Birds

Neil Hayward Bloomsbury, 2016 416 pages Hardback, \$28.00

Lost Among the Birds by Neil Hayward chronicles in poignant detail the author's record-setting "Accidental Big Year" in 2013. By finding 749 species in North America in one year, Neal Hayward successfully eclipsed the standing record of 748 species set in 1998. However, unlike most of his predecessors in this near-Olympic birding endeavor, Hayward didn't initially plan to do a Big Year until well into 2013! As the book's

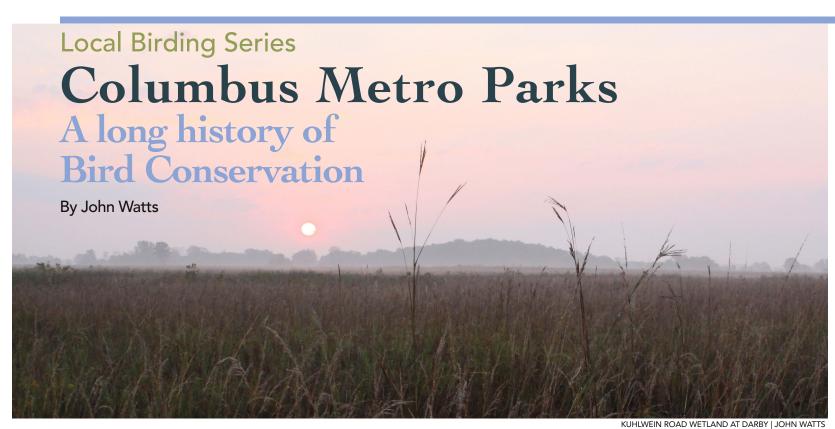
subtitle suggests, the author recounts "Accidentally Finding Myself in One Very Big Year."

Unlike similar Big Year-type accounts, this beautifully and sensitively written volume is not just about chasing birds - rather it's an autobiographical journey describing self-discovery, personal love, and a passion for birds seldom folded into one story. Readers get to know and feel both the pathos of Hayward's inner journey, as well as the enjoyment of finding and pursuing some of the most



exciting bird species on the continent. His descriptions of exotic and often remote regions (many no doubt familiar to some readers) and the spectacular birds that inhabit them are worthy in their own right, but when Hayward's personal story is intimately bound with these avian pursuits, the end result is a thoroughly enjoyable read.

From: The Birding Community E-Bulletin Paul J. Baicich and Wayne R. Petersen



When the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks were created in 1945, Walter Tucker, the first Director, received criticism for "going way out in the country and buying a swamp that people wouldn't visit". That first park was Blacklick Woods, which today has 825,000 visitors annually. From those humble beginnings Metro Parks has grown to 20 park areas, nearly 27,500 acres, and reached 10 million visitors in 2016.

From its early days, a key focus of the Metro Parks has been to protect high quality natural areas in central Ohio. This is evident in the older parks such as Blendon Woods, Sharon Woods, Highbanks, and Battelle Darby Creek where visitors hike the trails through a variety of mature woodlands. As high quality natural areas were protected, park expansion during the 1990s began

to focus on protecting open green space that contained smaller natural areas but also possessed high potential for habitat restoration. Many of these areas were in row crop agriculture at the time of acquisition, so soils and topography could be evaluated for conversion into wetlands, prairies and grassland, and forests. These 1990s acquisitions are already being used by a variety of wildlife and can be visited at Battelle Darby Creek, Glacier Ridge, Prairie Oaks, and Pickerington Ponds.

Beginning around 2000, Metro Park's expansion led to the acquisition of over 60 miles of greenway corridors along streams such as Big Walnut Creek, Alum Creek, Blacklick Creek, the Olentangy River, and more recently the Scioto River. Separate from these areas was the continued expansion along Big and Little

Darby Creeks at Battelle Darby Creek and Prairie Oaks Metro Parks, now totaling over 9,200 acres and 20 miles along these Federal and State Scenic Rivers. All of these areas serve as not only important natural areas for protection, conservation, education and passive recreation but important migratory corridors for a variety of wildlife, including birds.

While nearly 2,400 species of plants and animals have been documented for the Metro Parks, no group of species may draw broader attention from visitors than birds. The Metro Park's bird list currently stands at 297 species that includes seven central Ohio counties. Some of the Metro Park records are of birds that actually occurred prior to the areas becoming Metro Parks. Bewick's Wren and Bachman's Sparrow were breeding in the

TS

1930s at Clear Creek, and a Snowy Owl was observed at Highbanks in the early 1950s. It is likely that Ohio's first Redcockaded Woodpecker record, a bird collected in 1872 "between the canal and the Scioto River", was near or at the present-day location of Scioto Audubon Metro Park. Here, other rarities were recorded from the mid to late 1800s, including Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits, Northern Shrike, Red Knot, and Golden Eagle (pers. comm. W. Whan). Of all the Metro Parks, Pickerington Ponds boasts the highest number of total species at 263. Clear Creek supports more than 100 breeding birds, including 20 species of wood warblers.

Beginning in the late 1990s, Metro Parks began a very active restoration program and to date has restored or initiated restoration of nearly 8,000 acres of grassland, native prairies, wetlands, and forests. Grasslands at Glacier Ridge, Slate Run and Prairie Oaks support Bobolinks, Henslow's Sparrows, Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, and an occasional Savannah Sparrow.

To date, Metro Parks has restored approximately 1,600 acres of native Darby Plains Prairies at Battelle Darby Creek and Prairie Oaks. In 2010, Metro Parks began restoration of a 650-acre area at Battelle Darby Creek referred to as the "Kuhlwein Wetland." This area was designed to represent what the original Darby Plains prairies may have been; a combination of native grasslands, wet prairies, open water prairie potholes, cattail marshes

and oak savannas. All of these components continue through succession as the area completes its fifth full growing season. During that first year, 35 new species of birds were added to the park bird list. As the habitat matures, some of these species may not be observed in the future; however, breeding species are becoming established that include: American Bittern, Least Bittern, Sora, Virginia Rail, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Dickcissel, Henslow's Sparrow, Sedge Wren and Marsh Wren. This area has also become a good area to

observe Nelson's Sparrow and LeConte's Sparrow in the fall as well as Short-eared Owl and Northern Harrier during the winter.

Wetland restoration areas at Pickerington Ponds, Walnut Woods and Glacier Ridge have supported notable breeding species such as Osprey, Sandhill Crane, King Rail, and Least Bittern. Spring and fall migration have produced Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis, and American White Pelican. Shorebird migration, especially during the fall, can be very productive. Metro Parks has



PRAIRIE RESTORATION AT DARBY | JOHN WATTS



LOUISIANA WATERTRHUSH | JOHN WATTS

made efforts to provide mudflats for fall shorebird migration with wetland design and water level management; however, seasonal drying patterns generally produce more productive feeding flats. Pickerington Ponds typically attracts numerous sandpipers including Pectoral, Least, Semipalmated, and Baird's, all being observed annually. Hudsonian Godwit, American Avocet, Black-bellied Plover and American Golden Plover have also been observed.

Clear Creek Metro Park is certainly one of Ohio's finest natural areas and represents Ohio's largest dedicated State Nature Preserve. The Clear Creek Valley has long been known as significant for breeding birds. Breeding bird surveys began in the Clear Creek Valley in 1923 when Ed Thomas

initiated studies in Neotoma Valley. From 1971-1997, Tom Thomson surveyed the valley annually during June, documenting breeding species he encountered. During the most recent Breeding Bird Atlas surveys, over 100 species of birds were recorded for the Clear Creek Valley. The Hemlock forest harbors specialty species such as Black-throated Green Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Blueheaded Vireo, Canada Warbler, and an occasional Winter Wren. Along Clear Creek Road west of Camp Wyandot, one may annually find 4-5 pairs of Veeries that often forage on the road. Each year beginning in late March, the arrival of breeding warblers begins with the return of Pine Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. By mid-May, 20 species

have returned to the valley to begin breeding. Clear Creek Metro Park is a very reliable nesting ground for Cerulean Warblers, a species that has declined dramatically across much of its Ohio range. Ceruleans seem to continue to be found in good numbers throughout the park, with 10-15 singing males annually along Clear Creek Road.

Beginning in 2012, Metro Parks initiated efforts to reestablish Northern Bobwhite at Slate Run Metro Park. Using an outdoor incubator cage known as a Surrogator, the day-old chicks are raised outdoors in the security of the cage with heat, food, water, and away from people. This allows them to imprint themselves on the natural habitat, which increases survival. After about five weeks, the Surrogator

is opened and they are released. The door is left open as the young chicks may come and go for a few days before heading out into the park. In 2014, the first group of birds successfully bred on their own. Surrogation efforts continue with the idea of building the population as high as possible before considering moving to another park. It requires about 2 years of management to prepare the area for a release program of this type. Annual habitat manipulation, including mowing and discing, ensures the habitat is there to support Bobwhite coveys.

All Metro Parks have their own bird specialties. Highbanks is known for its annual Summer Tanagers, Walnut Woods for nesting Blue Grosbeak, Clear Creek for summer warblers and Pickerington Ponds for waterfowl and shorebirds. With some effort it is possible to see over 200 species in a single year in the Metro Parks.

A few notable bird records: Rufous Hummingbird: Ohio's first Rufous Hummingbird in 1985 was found visiting a feeder adjacent to Sharon Woods. Since then this species has been observed at Blendon Woods.

Mississippi Kite: A 1987 bird discovered by Bob Conlon spent 2-3 days in the Big Meadows Picnic Area chasing and eating 17-year cicadas and accounted for Ohio's 3rd confirmed record of this species.

Bachman's Sparrow: A bird that summered along the entrance road to Highbanks Metro Park during the summer of 1974 is generally accepted as the last



BROWN THRASHER | JOHN WATTS

widely observed Bachman's Sparrow in Ohio.

Osprey: In 2005, the first pair of Osprey recorded breeding in Franklin County began nesting at Pickerington Ponds. Two additional pairs now breed at Scioto Audubon and Walnut Woods Metro Parks.

Bald Eagles: In 2011, Bald Eagles began nesting at Highbanks and Walnut Woods.

Sandhill Crane: A pair began breeding at the Slate Run Wetland in 2009 constituting Ohio's most southern breeding pair at that time. Two pairs also breed annually at Pickerington Ponds.

Bells' Vireo: A pair of Bell's Vireos has regularly nested along the Heritage Bike Trail in Hilliard since the early to mid 2000s. Pairs have also bred at Walnut Woods in recent years and during 1986 a male summered at Blendon Woods.

Ross' Goose: A 1997 bird in the company of several "blue phase" snow geese on the Buzzard's

Roost Lake at Slate Run was Ohio's only 3rd confirmed record of this now regular visitor.

Red Phalarope: A spring breeding-plumage female found by Jeff Pontius in 2013 at the Battelle Darby Creek Wetland was Ohio's fifth spring record of this spectacularly plumaged bird.

Clay-colored Sparrow: The first Ohio nesting attempt was confirmed in 1996 at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park. A second pair possibly bred at Prairie Oaks in 2013.

John Watts is the Resource Manager for the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks. He has recently co-authored 'The Birds of Hocking County, Ohio' with Paul Knoop Jr. and Gary Coovert.

### **Ohio Birding** Resources

Check out these organizations for up-to-date field trip and event info! If you want your local bird club listed here, contact ceruleaneditor@ohiobirds.org

**American Avian Conservation and** Research Institute

tuckercasev.wixsite.com/aacri-birds

**Athens Area Birders** groups.io/g/athensbirders

Audubon Ohio, Cincinnati Chapter cincinnatiaudubon.org

Blackbrook Audubon blackbrookaudubon.org

Black River Audubon blackriveraudubon.org

**Black Swamp Bird Observatory** bsbo.org

**Canton Audubon** cantonaudubon.org

**Columbus Audubon** columbusaudubon.org

**Greater Cleveland Audubon** clevelandaudubon.org

**Greater Mohican Audubon** gmasohio.org

**Kirtland Bird Club** kirtlandbirdclub.org

**Mountwood Bird Club** brooksbirdclub.org

**Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative** obcinet.org

**Ohio Bluebird Society** ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Ohio Young Birders Club ohioyoungbirders.org

**Tri-Moraine Audubon** tri-moraineaudubon.org

Western Cuyahoga Audubon WCAudubon.org

### **Birding Calendar** around Ohio

Please confirm event details and registration needs using the links provided.

Saturday, 28 January Bird Walk at Byers Woods Greater Mohican Audubon gmasohio.org

Saturday, 28 January Gulls at Edgewater Park Kirtland Bird Club kirtlandbirdclub.org

Wednesday, 1 February '40 years of Bird Research in Central Siberia' with Anna Kozlenko Kirtland Bird Club kirtlandbirdclub.org

1-3 February Field Trip to Killdeer Plains **Brooks Bird Club** brooksbirdclub.org

Tuesday, 7 February 'Bird Listening' with Kyle Carlson Athens Area Birders groups.io/g/athensbirders

Tuesday, 7 February 'Peregrines in Cleveland' with **Chris and Chad Saladin** Black River Audubon blackriveraudubon.org

11-12 February **Birds of Prey Weekend** Rock River Nature Center clevelandmetroparks.com

Sunday, 12 February **Feeding Winter Birds** North Chagrin Reservation Kirtland Bird Club kirtlandbirdclub.org

17-20 February **Great Backyard Bird Count** abbc.birdcount.org

Sunday, 19 February **Great Backyard Bird Count** The Ridges, Athens SE Ohio Young Naturalist Club ruralaction.org

Monday, 20 February 'Birding in the Pits' with Jay Stenger Audubon, Cincinnati Chapter cincinnatiaudubon.org

Thursday, 23 February Sunday Creek Owl Prowl Burr Oak Lodge, Glouster Rural Action ruralaction.org

Saturday, 25 February **Spring Waterfowl Migration** Oxbow, Inc. Audubon, Cincinnati Chapter cincinnatiaudubon.org

Saturday, 25 February Lake Erie Shoreline Blackbrook Audubon blackbrookaudubon.org

Sunday, 26 February **Great Miami Waterfowl** Audubon, Cincinnati Chapter cincinnatiaudubon.org

Monday, 27 February 'Alexander Wilson' with Bryan Sharp Delaware County Bird Club columbusaudubon.org

Monday, 27 February 'Home on the range with Prarie-Chickens' with Jackie Augustine Delaware County Bird Club columbusaudubon.org

Tuesday, 28 February 'Teeth, jaws and claws: Why are birds really carnivorous dinosaurs?' with Dale Gnidovec Columbus Audubon columbusaudubon.org





3-5 March
Early Spring Meeting
North Bend State Park Lodge, WV
Brooks Bird Club
brooksbirdclub.org

Saturday, 4 March Amish Birding Symposium Adams County adamscountytravel.org

Saturday, 4 March
Ohio Bluebird Society Conference
Ashland University
ohiobluebirdsociety.org

Tuesday, 7 March
Ohio Wildlife Diversity Conference
'From Dusk to Dawn - Nocturnal
Revelations'
Ohio Union, Columbus
apps.ohiodnr.gov

Tuesday, 7 March
'Birds of Jamaica' with Stefan
Gleissberg
Athens Area Birders
groups.io/q/athensbirders

9-10 March Funk/Killbuck Field Trip Brooks Bird Club brooksbirdclub.org

Wednesday, 15 March
'Birding Hotspots' with Kent Miller
Canton Audubon
cantonaudubon.org

Saturday, 18 March **Nightfall on the Ridges** Athens Area Birders groups.io/g/athensbirders

Saturday, 18 March Shreve Migration Sensation happypages.com/migration

Tuesday, 28 March 'The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Ohio' with Matt Shumar Columbus Audubon columbusaudubon.org Thursday, 30 March
Ohio River Island NWR
Brooks Bird Club
brooksbirdclub.org

Thursday, 6 April
McDonough Wildlife Refuge
Parkersburg, WV
Brooks Bird Club
brooksbirdclub.org

Saturday, 22 April **Earth Day Bird Walk**The Ridges, Athens
Athens Area Birders
groups.io/g/athensbirders

Monday, 24 April
'Birds of the Hocking Hills' with
John Watts
Delaware County Bird Club
columbusaudubon.org

Tuesday, 25 April
'The Birding Project: An epic Big
Year' with Christian Hagenlocher
Columbus Audubon
columbusaudubon.org

28-30 April
Warblers & Wildflowers
Shawnee State Park Lodge
Ohio Ornithological Society
ohiobirds.org

Saturday, 29 April
Songbird Migration Banding
Black Swamp Bird Observatory
bsbo.org

5-14 May Biggest Week in American Birding Maumee Bay Lodge bwiab.com

13-14 May Marsh Madness Ohio Ornithological Society ohiobirds.org

The Cerulean | Newsletter of the Ohio Ornithological Society Dr. Stefan Gleissberg: Editor, Photo Editor, Layout



### **Ohio Ornithological Society Membership Application**

Join us online! ohiobirds.org

Name:\_\_

We provide a statewide birding network welcoming bird watchers of all interests and abilities to unite for the enjoyment, study and conservation of Ohio's birds.

\$15 Student/Limited income	\$100 Patron/Business
\$35 Individual	<b>\$250</b> Sustaining
<b>\$50</b> Family/NonProfit	\$500 Benefactor
\$20 Print publications*	<b>\$1,000</b> Lifetime

<sup>\*</sup>All members will receive the Cerulean and the Ohio Cardinal electronically. For Print Publications, please add \$20 to the membership fee. Membership is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

#### **JOIN US TODAY!**

The Cerulean is our quarterly newsletter featuring articles and birding news around the state.

The Ohio Cardinal is our quarterly periodical that includes the current season's bird sightings and scientific articles.

HELP US HELP THE BIRDS!				
Conservation Fund	\$			
Development Fund	\$			

Total enclosed:	\$

Organization:

Address:			

City, State,	Zip:		

Email:	

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## Please check your membership renewal date, IN RED, above your address!





DIFFERENCE FOR BIRDS & CONSERVATION!

NOHIO CAN MAKE A HUGE

CONSERVATION!

BIKDING NETWORKI BENEW OK JOIN OHIO, 2 FEYSE TAKE TIME TO

To provide an Ohio Birding Network welcoming bird watchers of all levels of interest and ability to unite for the enjoyment, study, and conservation of Ohio's wild birds.

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