

The Hushwing **HERALD**

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Volume 60 Number 4

April, May, June 2025

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

Upcoming Events Are Open To Everyone!

DATE: Tuesday, April 15, 2025
PROGRAM: Ohio's Buckeye Trail:
Blue Blazes and Beyond
SPEAKER: Meg "Meriwether" Sondey
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: [Penitentiary Glen, Kirtland](#)

The [Buckeye Trail's](#) history begins in 1958 and the trail - and the Buckeye Trail Association - have grown through the years. Our speaker will share how 2025 marks an exciting new chapter in BTA history, as the Buckeye Trail is in the midst of a Feasibility Study to determine whether it could become the twelfth National Scenic Trail, a designation already enjoyed by the [North Country Trail](#) and [Appalachian Trail](#). The presentation will cover the history of the Buckeye Trail as well as some of its geological and biological highlights. If you've ever wondered what that splash of blue paint on a tree meant . . . you'll find out during this presentation.

Meg is a life member of the Buckeye Trail Association, currently serving as Vice-chair/Secretary for the Crooked River Chapter. She was gifted the [trail name](#) "Meriwether" and finished section hiking the entire Buckeye Trail in March 2023.



Trailhead for Zimmerman Trail in the Mentor Marsh which overlaps with the Buckeye Trail.

DATE: Tuesday, May 20, 2025
PROGRAM: Lynds Jones,
The Birdman of Oberlin
SPEAKER: Diana Steele
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: [Penitentiary Glen, Kirtland](#)

Lynds Jones (1865-1951) was a pioneering ornithologist and ecologist from Ohio who is responsible for many of the common practices that recreational birders take for granted as "standard practice" in the field, more than a century later, including keeping lists, doing Big Days and the Christmas Bird Count.



At Oberlin College in 1892, Jones began teaching ornithology, which was the first course of its kind ever offered at an American college or university. Not only was he a professor at Oberlin for nearly four decades, Jones also had a tremendous impact on the fields of ornithology and recreational birding. He founded both an ornithological society (The [Wilson Ornithological Society](#), 1888) and a journal (now the *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, 1889); both are active today.

Jones was also an early pioneer and mentor in ecology and founded the first-ever department of animal ecology in 1915.

Diana Steele has been a science writer for more than 30 years. She is an avid birder and has birded in all 50 U.S. states and six continents. An active volunteer with Black River Audubon Society, she is a birding guide on the Lake Erie Islands and a former board member of the Ohio Ornithological Society.



**Top photo: Lynds Jones in 1892
Graduation from Oberlin College
Credit: Oberlin College Archives**

**Lynds Jones in 1926,
Credit: Wilson Bulletin**



Birding Opportunities!



[Please let us know you are coming to a field trip by sending an email to blackbrookaud@aol.com.](mailto:blackbrookaud@aol.com)

APRIL FIELD TRIP

DATE: Saturday, April 26, 2025
ACTIVITY: Mingle among the Migrating Birds
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE: [Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge](#)

[# 74 on the Lake Erie Birding Trail](#)

Use your car as a moving observation blind on the wildlife drive at [Ottawa NWR](#). Gates for this free auto tour open at sunrise and close one hour prior to sunset. We can step out of our vehicles at designated pull-off locations on the 7-mile route to take photos or set up spotting scopes. The wildlife drive allows visitors into otherwise restricted areas of the refuge.

We should be able to find a good variety of ducks, Trumpeter Swans, Sandhill Cranes and shorebirds, depending on water levels in the diked wetlands. Ottawa NWR has a nice lodge-style visitor's center with restrooms. Be sure to [notice the windows of the center](#) and the various styles of treatment to prevent bird strikes. There are closely spaced dots, stripes and bird images that can be seen from the outside but still allow light inside.

If you'd like to carpool, let us know at blackbrookaud@aol.com and we'll meet at the Rt. 306 parking lot of Lakeland Community College at 7:30 a.m. Otherwise, meet us in the visitor's center at 14000 West State Route 2 in Oak Harbor.

With a limited selection of restaurants in the area, you can bring a sack lunch or we can stop at [Blackberry Corners Tavern](#) only 4½ miles from Ottawa.

Established in 1961, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge protects a network of wetlands, grasslands and forests on about 9,000 acres. The Refuge straddles both Lucas and Ottawa Counties and is managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. It's nestled between Magee Marsh Wildlife Area to the east and Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area and Howard Marsh Metropark to the northwest. All of these special areas were once part of the [Great Black Swamp](#), which stretched from Lake Erie to just over the Indiana border, about 40 miles wide and 120 miles long. [Settlement was very difficult here](#) but the Swamp was eventually drained by 1900 for farming and timber harvest. [Remnants of the former swamp](#) can be seen at [Goll Woods State Nature Preserve](#), Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, [Forrest Woods Nature Preserve](#), and East Harbor State Park.

MAY FIELD TRIP

DATE: Saturday, May 17, 2025
ACTIVITY: Sand Specialists, Lovely Lupine
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: [North Kingsville Sand Barrens](#)

[# 2 on the Lake Erie Birding Trail](#)

We'll head out to Ashtabula County to visit one of three natural areas owned by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History that are open to the public. It's the only known Ohio nesting site for the [White-throated Sparrow](#) (*Zonotrichia albicollis*). The North Kingsville Sand Barrens protects the only high-quality fossil dune ridge still preserved in Northeast Ohio. Nearly a mile long, about 300 feet wide, and 30 feet deep, the sand ridge is a remnant of an older lake shoreline that predates Lake Erie. The 182-acre preserve supports endangered plants, several rare invertebrates, and a population of Wild Lupine. [Wild or Sundial Lupine](#) is the host plant for the endangered Karner Blue butterfly. Caterpillars of the Frosted Elfin, Eastern Tailed-Blue and several moths also feed from this blue-purple legume, which prefers sandy soil.

The site features a trail that winds through open, sandy barrens, drier uplands, and lush, seep-fed wetlands and woods.

To find North Kingsville Sand Barrens, take I-90 to the Route 193 exit. Follow Route 193 north to U.S. Route 20, east to Poore Road. The preserve is on the west side of Poore Road just north of the tracks.

Monthly bird walk at Veterans Park

Come on our monthly bird walk for a mix of woods, wetland and wildlife viewing at Veterans Park. We'll meet at 8:00 a.m. on the fourth Sunday of every month in the main parking lot at 5730 Hopkins Road in Mentor. The path is level.

The list on eBird shows 206 species here. Just under a mile from Lake Erie, Granger Pond and tree cover at [Veterans Park](#) offer birds shelter from blustery lake conditions. We can lend out a couple pairs of binoculars.

Cooper's Hawk
(Astur cooperii)





American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) on a nest at Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve in 2019.

Witness the Return of Avian Migrants at Blackbrook’s Walks and Big Sit

The [Cleveland-area Spring Bird Walk Series](#), now in its 92nd year, lets us celebrate the arrival of birds who have migrated back here to nest or are stopping to refuel on their way to breeding sites north. Blackbrook invites everyone to our spring bird walk route at the north end of Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve and [Headlands Beach State Park](#). Meet in the Zimmerman trailhead parking lot at 9600 Headlands Road, west of Shipman Pond, at 7:30 a.m. on these Sundays: **April 14, 21, 28 and May 5, 12, 19.**

On the last Sunday of the Spring Bird Walk Series, May 18, you can go on the walk or perch at our “**Big Sit**” in the picnic area by the entrance to [Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve](#). Bring a chair, a cup or mug and a potluck brunch item to share, if you’d like, after 8:30 a.m. to the far eastern side of Headlands Beach State Park at parking area P-1. The state park and state nature preserve share a common entrance at the northern terminus of State Route 44 (Heisley Road) in Lake County. Blackbrook will supply coffee as we scan the nearby shrubs and trees for warblers, vireos and other migrants taking a break before they cross the lake. This is a perfect outing for less mobile folks who enjoy group birding. Public restrooms are nearby and so is the entrance to the handicapped-accessible boardwalk to the beach.



Eagles and Osprey Starting Families

During our Spring Bird Walks, we can view the Mentor Marsh Bald Eagle nest from the bridge over Shipman Pond. In their 16th year of nesting, this pair began incubation on February 8 and feeding behavior about St. Paddy’s Day. It will be a few weeks before the eyases (raptor nestlings) are mature enough to be visible over the top of the nest so we can tell how many hatched. [Nesting phenology](#) involves a lot of hard work by the parents throughout the process of [raising young eagles](#). The [Mentor Marsh Facebook](#) page has updates.

The Osprey pair returned in March to their nest on the cell phone tower at Lakeshore Blvd. Watch for updates on the same Facebook page.

Blackbrook Audubon Wraps Up Another Year with a Potluck Picnic

This winter, several of us really appreciated the fireplace in the picnic shelter during our 4th Sunday bird walks at [Veterans Park](#), the one Lake Metroparks manages for the City of Mentor. Now, we invite you to use the same shelter to celebrate summer at our annual potluck picnic Tuesday, June 17. Come to 5730 Hopkins Road, Mentor about 6:00 p.m. with your place setting, beverage and a dish to share. Feel free to bring a guest! Blackbrook will bring the hot dogs so we can eat about 6:30 p.m. Veterans Park has plenty of parking and flush restrooms.

After we enjoy some summer fare and catching up with fellow nature lovers, we’ll take a bird walk and see what we can find in Granger Pond and the woods surrounding it. Granger Pond’s wide expanse attracts both fishermen and birds such as herons, kingfishers and the occasional egret. The [list on eBird.org](#) shows 206 species for this location.

Blackbrook’s Board is in the planning phase for next year’s events. If you’d like to suggest a location for a field trip or a topic for a program, let us know.



Bring Your Own Cup and Everyone Wins



When you help us reduce waste at our events by bringing your own reusable coffee mug or water bottle, you can enter a drawing to win a \$25 gift card to a feed store, plant nursery or other fun spot. The winning ticket will be drawn at our June 17 picnic at Veterans Park from the entries submitted in April and May. The winner need not be present to win.

Blackbrook Audubon Society
publishes
The Hushwing HERALD
newsletter four times each
program year:

Sept/Oct Nov/Dec/Jan
Feb/Mar April/May/June

The Sept/Oct issue is mailed to
all members of the National
Audubon Society residing in
Blackbrook Audubon's
coverage area of
Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake
counties and to the
Friends of Blackbrook Audubon.
National members can sign up
at blackbrookaudubon.org
to receive the other three
editions via email.

The Friends of Blackbrook
Audubon pay for a chapter-only
membership and can choose
to have all Hushwings sent
via U.S. mail.

The electronic version of the
Hushwing Herald is free,
in color and has active links
to trusted and verified nature-
related sites and pdfs.

Board Members:

President and Mentor Marsh

Liaison: Becky Donaldson

Vice President: Alison Huey

Treasurer, Friends

Membership: Marian Williams

Secretary, Program Chair:

Mary Ann Wagner

Field Trip Coordinators:

Pat Morse and Deb Schuster

Hospitality: Tammy O'Neil

and John Diemert

Webmaster, Education Chair,

Gauga Park District Liaison:

Trevor Wearstler

Lake Metroparks Liaison:

Tony Gazso

Holden Arboretum Liaison:

Becky Thompson

Write to us at

blackbrookaud@aol.com.

If you ever wanted your own spotting scope . . .

Blackbrook Audubon has been given two spotting scopes with tripods, plus an additional tripod, by a very generous anonymous donor. We will begin selling raffle tickets in April with drawings to be held at our June 17th picnic at Veterans Park in Mentor. Winners need not be present to win. Proceeds from the raffles will be used to help equip the new quarantine wing at the Lake Metroparks Wildlife Center.

A ticket will cost \$5 for the chance to win a never used photography tripod still sealed in its original wrapping. It is a Sunpak Platinum Plus 7500 Pro Heavy Duty tripod for still, digital, or video cameras up to 11 pounds. It extends to 74.8 inches. The approximate value is \$100.

A separate raffle ticket to win either of the spotting scope sets will cost \$15. The winner will choose between

A used Carl Zeiss Diascope 85T*F with 20-60x zoom lens, Zeiss fitted cover, and mounting plate. It attaches to a Carl Zeiss telescoping tripod with mounting head. This is a top-of-the-line scope in terms of optical quality. The estimated value of the used scope is about \$1,500 plus \$125 for the tripod.

Or

A used Kowa TSN-2 77mm spotting scope with 20-60x zoom lens, fitted Kowa cover, and mounting plate. It attaches to a Bogen model 3130 tripod with mounting head. Estimated value for the used scope is about \$450 and \$150 for the tripod.

Another drawing will be held at a later date to determine the winner of the second spotting scope. Tickets will be available for purchase at our April 15 speaker program and at City of Mentor's Earth Day celebration at Springbrook Gardens. Please talk to a Blackbrook Audubon board member if you're interested in purchasing a ticket and helping get the Wildlife Center's quarantine space ready to admit and treat wildlife.



Annual Election of Board Officers

Every spring, the members of Blackbrook Audubon Society vote for the four officers on our Board of Directors. In the last issue of the Hushwing Herald, we called for nominations. At the March 18 meeting, we announced these officer nominees:

President: **Becky Donaldson** Vice President: **Alison Huey**
Secretary: **Mary Ann Wagner** Treasurer: **Marian Williams**

The election will take place before our speaker program on the Buckeye Trail at Penitentiary Glen on April 15.

The Board meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

The officers and committee chairs all volunteer their time to fulfill Blackbrook's mission to "promote conservation and restoration of ecosystems with emphasis on birds and habitat through education and advocacy within Ohio's Ashtabula, Lake and Geauga counties and adjacent communities."



April is Ohio Native Plant Month

In the summer of 2019, House Bill 59 made Ohio the first state in the country to have a law recognizing the importance of native plants for an entire month! The Great White Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) is Ohio's State Wildflower.

You can learn how Ohio's native plants can make your yard more inviting to pollinators at [Ohio's Native Plant Month](http://ohiosnativeplantmonth.com) website.

Local Sources of Native Plants and Seeds



440-622-7225
12511 Fowlers Mill Rd.
Chardon, OH

<https://avonleagardensandinn.com>

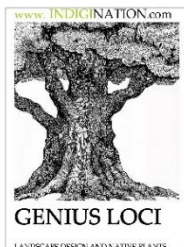
Genius Loci, inc.

Elyria, OH

<http://www.indignation.com/>

440.324.3465

~ by appointment only ~



Meadow City **216-282-6911**

15006 Westropp Ave. Cleveland

<https://meadowcitynursery.com>



866-569-3380

Hiram, OH

<https://www.opnseed.com>

Prairie On!



Text preferred
440-201-9204

<https://plantitnativeohio.com/>

Pick up at the Heart of Willoughby Outdoor Market.



Blackbrook Will Be at these Earth Day Events

City of Mentor
Earth Day

Sunday, April 27
10 am - 2 pm

Springbrook Gardens Park
6726 Heisley Road, Mentor

Free. Local, eco-friendly vendors including Rabbit Food, Avonlea Gardens, Pirnat Garlic Farm, Meadow City Nursery, The Limonada Bar. Learn how to identify and remove invasive plants on a hike. Presentations on reptiles & amphibians and moths & butterflies. Food for purchase.

Lake Metroparks
Earth Day

Sunday, April 27
Noon - 4 pm

Penitentiary Glen Reservation, Kirtland
Free tree seedling for each family, wildlife programs, miniature train rides 1 - 3 pm.



Responsible Landscaping Resources

Cleveland Metroparks put together this set of resources in one location which includes:

Tree Selector - information on 90 tree species
Plant Communities - CMP trails for each community
Landscape Mapping - visualize project location
Nurseries - help in finding native plant nurseries
<https://treeselector-clevelandmetroparks.com/>

Arbor Day

Friday, April 25

[Arbor Day Foundation](http://arbor-day.org)



The Gateway to Birding Ohio's Lake Erie Shoreline



The Ohio Division of Wildlife and Ohio Sea Grant have released the updated edition of the [Ohio Lake Erie Birding Trail Guidebook](#). More compact than the original of 10 years ago, this book is a 115-page compilation of 90 popular and lesser-known birding spots all along Ohio's 316 miles of Lake Erie coast, from Conneaut to Swanton near the Indiana border.



They added Howard Marsh Metropark and Chagrin River Park to the birding trail. The 5.5" x 8.5" guidebook includes a pull-out trail map and current birding checklist. The book

and separate map/checklist can be ordered from [Ohio State's Stone Lab store](#). The guidebook is \$15.

The Division will turn their attention to Ohio's southern shore to create the **Ohio River Birding Trail**, with a guidebook to come. These publications are financed with grants and proceeds from sales of cardinal and Bald Eagle license plates, the [Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp](#) and donations to the state income tax checkoff program.

Commemorate Cuyahoga Valley National Park's 50th with Set of Stickers

One way Ohio's only national park is celebrating their [50th anniversary](#) is with a set of [15 stickers](#) that represent a cultural, historical, and recreational aspect of the Cuyahoga Valley. You can collect the stickers by attending National Park Service programs and the Lyceum Series by Conservancy for CVNP. Stickers will be distributed for free while supplies last. A collectible poster and stickers are sold at [Trail Mix Peninsula](#) and Boston Mill Visitor Center.



The [Cuyahoga Valley Trails Council](#) is celebrating 40 years of trail building and maintenance. The 4th edition of their [Trail Guide](#) came out last summer. It's available at Trail Mix stores with royalties funding CVTC trail projects. It's also in some libraries.

Missed January 100 by a Feather, But Still Something to Chirp about

Blackbrook's second January 100 for Fun attempt earlier this year fell a bit short at 97 species, but that just shows how challenging it can be to find that many birds when a *real* Ohio winter comes blowin' through and we decide to stay in. We endured a couple weeks of subfreezing high temperatures with negative wind chills, plus a few days of subzero temps. The birds used every adaptation they had to get through the cold and we did our best to find them.

Trevor Wearstler came up with the idea for Blackbrook to try a January 100 as a chapter and he compiled all the lists you turned in. You had the option of sharing your ebird list to our FriendsOfBlackbrook account or sending lists via email. Trevor "cached" 66 checklists from 19 birders at 95 different sites in 11 counties. Whew!

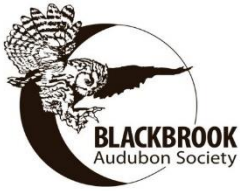
The longest checklist had 33 species on January 5 from Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve. This is only one week before Blackbrook's field trip to the same spot where we saw 28 species. Our later stop at Canalway Center in the Ohio and Erie Canal Reservation yielded 20 species. Two species at CanalWay, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Great Egret, were new to the January 100 list, not recorded for the 2024 inaugural 100. In fact, Blackbrook had 14 new species this January over last. The other 12 were: Wood Duck, Horned Grebe, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, American Barn Owl, Eastern Screech-Owl, Snowy Owl, Merlin, Cedar Waxwing and White-winged Crossbill.

If you braved the elements, or at least checked your feeders, and sent in a list, we thank you.

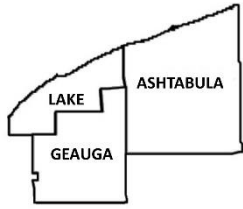
November Raffle Results

Thank you to everyone who participated in our November ticket and 50/50 raffles either by donating items to Blackbrook or by buying tickets. We raised \$158 in the ticket raffle. We had Christmas items, field guides, bird seed every month for a year donated by Wild Birds Unlimited of Mayfield Hts/Willoughby, plus much more. We raised \$61 in the 50/50 raffle.

Thank you to Mary Beth R., who donated half of her winnings back to Blackbrook. We appreciate the Holden Arboretum for giving us the opportunity to raise a total of \$219 toward the purchase of [Audubon Adventures](#), an environmental education magazine created by the National Audubon Society. We buy them for fifth graders in the [Nature Scopes](#) program, which is supported by the Foundation for Geauga Parks. The raffles came after the program on turkeys!



BLACKBROOK AUDUBON SOCIETY
P. O. Box 1306
Mentor, OH 44061-1306



www.blackbrookaudubon.org

Follow us on Facebook.

View programs on our YouTube channel.

Becky Donaldson - President

Laurie White - Editor

Saturday, April 12

[Annual Midwest Crane Count](#)
[Crane Count in OH](#)
International Crane Fdn.

Friday, April 25, 7 pm

[Burroughs Nature Club](#)
Willoughby UM Church
[David G. Leach Research](#)
[Station](#), NEO's Hidden Gem

Fri. – Sun., April 25-27

[Warblers & Wildflowers](#)
Shawnee State Park
Speakers, Field Trips
Ohio Ornithological Society

[City Nature Challenge](#)

April 25 - 28

Take photos of wild animals & plants. Upload to iNaturalist.

April 29 - May 4

ID what you found.

[Mentor Marsh SNP](#)

April 12, May 10, June 14

[Second Saturday Science](#)

Open House 8 am - noon
Woodridge Lane and Forest Road

Saturday, May 10

[World Migratory Bird Day](#)

Theme: Shared Spaces

[Global Big Day](#)

[Lake Metroparks](#)

[100 Bird Quest](#)

Sat., May 10 8 am - noon
Chagrin River Pk Registration req'd.

[Lake Metroparks](#)

[Accessible Birding](#)

Friday, May 23 6 - 7 pm
Lakeshore Res. Registration req'd

Fri. – Sun., May 23 - 25

[Big Birding Weekend](#)

Mosquito Lake State Park

Sunday, June 1 1 - 4 pm

[LMP - Best of the Parks](#)
Painesville Township Park

Chagrin River Bird Quest Friday, September 5 and Saturday, Sept. 6