

The Hushwing **HERALD**

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Volume 57 Number 4

April, May, June 2022

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: Tuesday, April 19, 2022
PROGRAM: How I Became Addicted to Birding and Travel
SPEAKER: Gustino Lanese
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Penitentiary Glen Reservation

If you prefer to see the program online, register [here](#) or on [Blackbrook's website](#) for a link.

During his 42 years at GE Lighting at Nela Park, Gustino Lanese travelled quite a bit within the United States and around the world. He was always intrigued by the people, places and things he saw. Although curious about the different birds he would see, Gus says he was not a birder as he was too into work to spend time on them.



Papyrus Gonolek (*Laniarius mufumbiri*)
from Uganda Photo by Gus Lanese

DATE: Tuesday, May 17, 2022
PROGRAM: Restoring Geauga County's Streams and Wetlands for Wildlife
SPEAKER: Paul Pira, Biologist GPD
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Big Creek Park, Geauga Park District, Chardon

If you prefer to see the program online, register [here](#) or on [Blackbrook's website](#) for a link.

Over the last few years, Geauga Park District has restored and greatly improved wildlife habitat on over 3,000 feet of stream and 11 acres of wetlands. [Sunnybrook Preserve](#) and [Bass Lake Preserve](#) have been the focus because both parks have unique cold-water stream habitats, harbor important aquatic species, and have had long-standing stream problems. Come learn about innovative techniques and approaches used to restore the health of these waterways and how Geauga Park District fulfills its commitment to improving the quality of water and wildlife habitat in Geauga County for future generations.

Born under the sign of Pisces and growing up the son of an avid fisherman, it's no wonder that Paul was drawn to aquatic studies. Paul is currently employed by Geauga Park District as their Supervisor of Natural Resource Management and Park Biologist. He has been with the District for 18 years and brings to the park 25+ years of field biology experience, working for both governmental agencies and private consultants. He received a Master's degree in biological sciences from John Carroll University where his research focused on Lake Erie ecology. Paul manages natural resources for over 10,000

Walk, Sit and Eat While We Watch and Listen for Birds, Near and Far

DATE: Saturday, April 2, 2022
ACTIVITY: Early Spring Migration
 at Cuyahoga Valley National Park
TIME: 8:30 a.m.
PLACE: Beautiful Beaver Marsh

In the last few years, we've explored Beaver Marsh in the fall. Now we'll visit as spring emerges in this renewed wetland. What's now [Beaver Marsh](#) was a wetland that was drained and converted into the Ohio & Erie Canal, used as a dairy farm, and later became the site of an auto repair shop and junkyard. Extensive cleanup improved the area in the 1980's. Beavers returned to the valley after a 150-year absence and their dams reclaimed what humans had taken by restoring former water levels. Wetland plant species sprouted from the seed bank and the habitat once more supports wildlife.

Parking for Beaver Marsh is at the Ira Trail-head parking lot, **3801 Riverview Road**, about four miles south of Peninsula. Restrooms are available. Please RSVP blackbrookaud@aol.com.

From here, we'll take the Towpath Trail for a quarter mile north to the Marsh. Songbirds should be abundant along this wooded section. A boardwalk crosses Beaver Marsh and will allow us to observe Wood Ducks, Pied-billed Grebes, rails, American Coots, Wilson's Snipe, herons and Belted Kingfishers, according to [eBird](#).

We plan to visit the heron rookery as well.

The Pandemic Pause Ends for the Spring Bird Walk Series

As birds arrive back from their winter break to set up housekeeping here or continue north to their summer homes, we can once again welcome them in the group-birding tradition of the [Cleveland-area Spring Bird Walk Series](#). Blackbrook Audubon's sponsored hotspot is the north end of Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve and [Headlands Beach State Park](#). Meet at the parking lot west of Shipman Pond at 9600 Headlands Road at 7:30 a.m. on these dates:

Sundays, April 10, 17, 24 and May 1, 8, 15
 See the old and new Bald Eagle nests from the bridge over Shipman Pond during these walks.

DATE: Saturday, May 7, 2022
ACTIVITY: Explore Erie County for eagles, egrets and Eastern Wood-Pewee
TIME: 8:30 a.m.
PLACE: [Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve](#)

Yes, this trip is during the [Biggest Week in American Birding](#), the annual birding festival put on by Black Swamp Bird Observatory at and near Magee Marsh. However, we'll be 40 miles east of this hubbub at Sheldon Marsh SNP, 470 acres of old field, hardwood forest, woodland swamp, cattail marsh and barrier sand beach. These habitats welcome close to [300 bird species](#) and we should catch the arrival of many neotropical migrants and shorebirds.

Meet in the parking lot at the front of the preserve, **2715 Cleveland Road West in Huron**. The flat walking trail we'll take was the original entrance to Cedar Point Amusement Park. This path will lead us past spring wildflowers and observation decks to a nice view of Lake Erie. The beach-dune habitat is the preferred nesting area for [Common Tern](#) and [Piping Plover](#) so park managers will probably block human access to the beach. A pair of Piping Plover nested only 50 miles away at Maumee Bay State Park [last summer](#), for the first time in 80 years!

On our visit three years ago, we even saw a [Blandings Turtle](#) (*Emydoidea blandingii*) basking on a log. They're listed as threatened in Ohio.



To Sit or Not to Sit

On the last Sunday of the Spring Bird Walk Series, May 15, you can 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 the Headlands Beach State Park. Blackbrook will supply coffee and doughnuts as we scan the nearby shrubs and trees for warblers and other migrants taking a break before they cross the lake. This is a perfect outing for less mobile folks. The boardwalk to the beach is nearby, as are public restrooms.

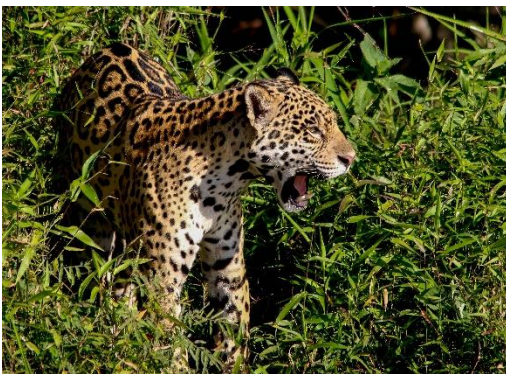


Scarlet Macaws (*Ara macao*) in Panama
Photo by Gus Lanese

April program continued **Birding Travels from page 1**

But after retiring at the end of 2012, he finally had time to devote to a hobby. As Gus got more into birds, he decided to take his first fling and set off to [Kearney, NE](#) to see the spring fly-in of Sandhill Cranes. After that visit, he was ready for more. In his talk, Gus will present some of his recollections of the Nebraska trip as well as his first four out-of-country birding expeditions: Panama, Ecuador, Brazil (Pantanal) and Uganda.

Gus was born in Italy and attended St. Joseph High School in Cleveland/Euclid. After attending the Case Institute of Technology (Physics), he earned his MBA degree from John Carroll University. He lives in Chesterland in Geauga County.



Jaguar,
Panthera
onca,
in Brazil

Photos
by Gus
Lanese

Mountain
Gorilla,
Gorilla
beringei
beringei,
in
Uganda



May program continued **Restoring Streams from page 1**

acres and 28 open parks in Geauga County. He's an Ohio certified prescribed fire manager and commercial pesticide applicator. He has been involved in multiple ecological restoration and reforestation projects since 2008. Among his current professional interests are the protection and research of native cold-water fishes (like the [Endangered](#) Ohio [brook trout](#)) and rare reptiles (Ohio's Threatened [spotted turtles](#)).

On weekends, you will often find Paul on stage performing with his "Swamp Rattlers" band. Paul has shared his talent as a blues/rock vocalist and guitarist in a variety of venues throughout Northeast Ohio.



Paul Pira in his element during the Bioblitz
at Big Creek in 2010.

From the Desk of the President

by Trevor Wearstler



Everyone has a handful of favorite birds they love to see. However, a few birds seem to have fallen to the bottom of the list and acquired a bad reputation. Some birds just cannot catch a break. They can be misunderstood and seen as too loud, too messy, too dull, or too common. One of these birds, the Rock Pigeon, I found, is sort of a hot topic in bird news.

A while back, I was recording an eBird list and it told me [Rock Pigeon](#) was uncommon. The location was Beaty Landing, our old IBA walk spot in Painesville. It seemed a bit surprising. I thought pigeons were synonymous with both urban and rural environments. Are pigeons being underreported for being undesirable birds? Historically, pigeons have been highly valued for several reasons, ranging from their meat, fertilizing excrement, to wayfinding abilities. However, nowadays these birds are seen as nuisance and vermin in urban areas. In 1966, New Yorkers started branding them as “[rats with wings.](#)”

However, it seems the problem is not with birds but the spaces we perceive them in. In 2008 Colin Jerolmack wrote a paper called [How Pigeons Became Rats: The Cultural-Spatial Logic of Problem Animals](#). It boils down to what is called “imaginative geography.” Culturally, we have blocked out in our minds what a specific environment should look like, smell like, etc. Collectively, cities can be imagined with clean concrete lines and orderly plants in well-defined spaces, whereas pigeons are seen as disrupting this ideal version of an urban landscape devoid of nature. Thus, making them public bird enemy number one. But pigeons are not alone.

I think this “imaginative geography” may be translated to natural areas and parks. These places can be seen as idyllic spaces that are peaceful and refreshing. So, when a Blue Jay starts dive-bombing our heads because we happen to be on a trail a bit too close to his nest, the Blue Jays are seen as jerks with a bad attitude. We may also think a scenic view near

the water's edge should be goose poop-free. I've heard once or twice that a Killdeer has disturbed someone's quiet evening. These bird behaviors can sometimes affect how people view nature.

In large part, this mindset is not of birders, but it may belong to people we meet out and about while birding. Remember we always have the opportunity to set the record straight on some of our more misunderstood feathered friends. And if you need one more bird for the list, maybe we forgot a Rock Pigeon.

Gather together at the Potluck Picnic

We did get to enjoy a picnic in 2021 at The Rookery and the hike afterwards led by Trevor. This year, we'll go back to cooking hot dogs too!

Our annual potluck picnic will be at the newly improved [Blair Ridge Park](#), located at 5360 Blair Road in Leroy Township on **Tuesday, June 21**. We'll gather at 6 p.m. at the picnic shelter and plan to eat around 6:30 p.m. Bring a dish to share, or if you are not comfortable sharing food, bring your own meal and enjoy the comradery. Remember to bring your own place setting (plate, utensils, cup, and napkins), your beverage and insect repellent. After we eat, we'll explore.

Blair Ridge Park overlooks the Grand River and [Blair Landing](#) below. The 63-acre park has a picnic shelter with electricity and pit restrooms. A two-acre, stocked pond has a fishing dock and offers catch-and-release fishing.

The property was once owned by conservationist James Storer. He named it “Walden II” after naturalist Henry David Thoreau's home on Walden Pond in Massachusetts. Many of the features of Storer's home remain, including stone walls that enclose the final resting place of his beloved guide dogs and a bell tower featuring bells inscribed to honor his late wife, Ann.

Important **B**ird **A**rea Walks [Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve](#)

4th Sunday of each month, 8:00 a.m.
Gate at Woodridge Lane and Forest Road
Bird the restricted utility pipeline access
and then the Wake Robin boardwalk.
Contact Becky at rdonaldson@cmnh.org.

Blackbrook Audubon Society Has Some Conservation Projects in the Works

In the last issue of the Hushwing Herald, we described some of the tasks our officers and other members of the Board complete to keep the chapter "in flight." While we enjoy hosting speakers on nature topics and leading birding walkabouts in the field, we are trying to engage in efforts that more directly provide birds the essentials they need - plentiful food, clean water, safe and varied space to migrate, multiply and manage their way around human obstacles.

One of these obstacles is how we pepper the landscape with structures without viewing them from an avian perspective. We tend to erect buildings of glass on all sides in the midst of green space, which seems the right thing to do, but actually creates a hazard. Last fall, the [Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative](#) (OBCI) asked local Audubon chapters and other nature advocates to write to the Cleveland Planning Commission regarding the proposed headquarters for Sherwin-Williams near Public Square. OBCI had been "enlightening" Sherwin-Williams about the dangers posed to birds by reflective glass and lights in and around buildings, especially during migration. Blackbrook Audubon was one of several conservation organizations to write a letter to the Planning Commission just before they held their final meeting on the plan's approval in November. At their meeting posted on [YouTube](#), members of the Commission seemed to get the urgency expressed in some two dozen letters sent by these organizations. They approved the Sherwin-Williams project but also wanted the company to explain how they would address these building issues. We expect to hear final details on what bird-friendly construction techniques Sherwin-Williams will utilize on their tower, pavilion and skywalks.

Helping a garden grow

Our chapter received many memorial donations in the name of Beulah Shanks after she passed away in January 2021. Beulah was a long-time member of Blackbrook, a former Board member and strong advocate for conservation in other local groups. Our Education Chair, Becky Thompson, told the Board about a request from Saint John School in Ashtabula for funds to create

a butterfly/pollinator garden. We donated money for plants, bird feeding supplies and a shed to hold gardening tools. Lesson plans include using the garden to teach the Monarch life cycle and concepts on biodiversity, the food chain, etc. We plan to dedicate the garden to Beulah and erect a sign with her name on it. Once the pollinators move in, we'll visit the school and take photos of the garden. Saint John School serves PreK - 12th grade students.

Tracking birds in motion

We enlisted Dr. Andy Jones for presentations on migration in February 2020 and November 2021. In the first talk, he shared some trends in the data gathered to that point from monitoring bird-building collisions by [Lights Out Cleveland](#). His second program focused more on technology used to track bird migration, including the [Motus Wildlife Tracking System](#). Using automated radio telemetry, Motus antennas receive signals emitted by transmitters placed on birds, bats and large insects to help scientists collaborate on international research. A [map of Motus receiving stations](#) shows a large gap between Cleveland, where the Cleveland Museum of Natural History has a tower, and the Pennsylvania border. Andy Jones and Blackbrook Audubon have been discussing with researchers where to set up antennas along our shoreline to pick up birds as they cross Lake Erie.

Dan Donaldson helped a professor at Ohio State University, Dr. Chris Tonra, and his grad student ground truth sites in our corner of the state for suitable locations to put up a Motus tower(s) for their research. Blackbrook will assist Dr. Tonra's efforts by keeping watch on their equipment and in any other way we can. We're keeping the option of fundraising for another tower open to supplement an efficient row, or fence, of towers along the shoreline.

Blackbrook's Board is also shopping for binoculars to give a couple pairs to libraries in Ashtabula County to loan out to their patrons, much the way [Mentor Public Library](#) does. We'd also like to purchase a pair each for our field trip and IBA walk leaders to lend to participants at these birding activities.

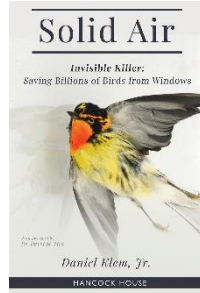
Egg-citing news!

Incubation began at the **new** Bald Eagle nest at the Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve on March 12. This should put hatch around Easter.

What Can YOU Do about Bird-glass Collisions?

Find out why birds crash into windows and how to apply solutions, whether at home or around city skyscrapers.

Solid Air, Invisible Killer: Saving Billions of Birds from Windows by Dr. Daniel Klem, Jr. can be ordered at your [local library](#) with a CLEVNET card.



Count Bird Species at the Lagoons

The City of Mentor Banding Station (COMBS) is seeking volunteers to conduct 5-minute avian point counts. Last fall, the banding station at Mentor Lagoons began a project to monitor avian diversity and migration trends throughout Northeast Ohio. This spring, to go with the banding data, morning point counts will be performed to record all bird species by sight and sound.

[Point counts](#) help record overall diversity within the area, not just what flies into the banding nets.

Volunteers are needed each morning at sunrise from April 15th - May 31st (Monday - Friday) for at least 45 minutes to assist with the counts. Observers need to be familiar with most migratory passerines by both sight and sound. After point counts are completed, new volunteers are welcome to join the banding crew for the morning banding session and see breeding plumage warblers up close! Contact Joel Throckmorton at throckmorton@cityofmentor.com if you are interested.



Wildlife Diversity Conference

Get the scoop on [New Critters on the Block](#) at the largest single-day wildlife diversity conference in the country! Hosted by the Ohio Division of Wildlife, the conference will be at Ohio State University's Ohio Union in Columbus on Wednesday, May 11, 8:00 – 3:30. Registration is \$25 before April 27, \$35 later. Order the Wildlife Legacy Stamp for only \$12 when you [register](#).



Earth Day Events

Blackbrook will be at Lake Metroparks' [Earth Day celebration](#) Sunday, April 24 from noon to 4:00 p.m. Look for our table at the Eco-Fair near the Mentor Marsh table inside Forest Hall in the Nature Center at [Penitentiary Glen Reservation](#). The theme is Protect Our Species.

- Earth Day Marketplace with locally made and fair-trade merchandise
- FREE [Tupelo \(Black Gum\)](#) tree seedling for each family. (The fruit [attracts birds](#).)
- Scavenger hunt and crafts, live animal shows
- Miniature train rides 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., weather permitting

[Geauga Park District](#) will observe Earth Day Saturday, April 23 at [Veteran's Legacy Woods](#) noon – 2:00 p.m. with a drive-through program. Wildlife and conservation experts will hand out free native trees, wildflowers, children's activities, and information to educate everyone on caring for the Earth. Registration is required for 15-minute sessions by vehicle, not the number of occupants driving through.

Spring Cleaning in Mentor



The Headlands Branch of the Mentor Public Library is celebrating [Earth Day](#) and the national [Keep America Beautiful](#) campaign for the whole month of April by challenging patrons to help [keep Mentor clean](#). Safely dispose of any litter you find along the sidewalks in your neighborhood, in a park or other public space. Library patrons are encouraged to register in person at the Headlands Branch since the staff can provide trash grabbers, garbage bags and gloves. The grabbers must be checked out for one week as they are the property of the City of Mentor. Participants will be entered into a raffle for a \$25 Barnes and Noble gift card.

Avian Flu Arrives in Ohio, Leads to Precautions at Wildlife Rehab Center

Three cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) were [confirmed in Ohio](#) in March. A Herring Gull in Erie County and two Bald Eagles in Ottawa County tested positive for this viral disease, which is classified as low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) or highly pathogenic based on the severity of infection caused in domestic poultry. Avian flu last occurred in North America in 2015.

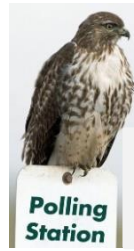
The [Lake Metroparks Wildlife Center](#) in Kirtland accepts injured and orphaned native wildlife by appointment only between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Anyone finding an animal they believe needs help must call the Wildlife Hotline at **440-256-1404 ext. 2131** first to see if an appointment is necessary and to schedule the appointment.

With the confirmation of HPAI, the Wildlife Center will NOT ACCEPT waterfowl (adult or young), shorebirds/gulls, American Crows or vultures even by appointment until further notice. Everyone is encouraged to report any sick or dead birds with suspected avian flu to:
 ✓ 800-WILDLIFE (945-3543)
 ✓ on [this form](#) for wildlife sightings (select "Bird – diseased or dead" under Species)
 ✓ to the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health at 614-728-6220.
 Get more info at the [Ohio Division of Wildlife](#).

Additional cleaning supplies were needed to prevent exposure between the rehab patients and resident birds who live at the Center. If you'd like to help with the extra biosecurity, gift cards are always appreciated from **Pet Supplies Plus, Marc's, Tractor Supply Co. and Lowe's**. Their [Amazon Wish List](#) includes cozy bedding, enrichment items, mirrors and formula.



[Find out what native plants you can grow!](#)



Election of Board Officers

Every spring, the members of the Blackbrook Audubon Society vote for the four elected officers on our Board of Directors. We listed these nominees at the March 15 virtual meeting:

- President: **Trevor Wearstler**
- Vice President: **Mary Ann Wagner**
- Secretary: **Becky Donaldson**
- Treasurer: **Marian Williams**

The election will take place during our hybrid meeting on April 19. Please let us know if you have questions, want to attend a board meeting, join a committee, or suggest a speaker or topic.



for the 2022 Chagrin River Bird Quest

Friday, Sept. 9 to Saturday, Sept. 10

Friends of Blackbrook Audubon

- New Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Blackbrook Audubon does not share or sell its mailing list.

_____ \$30 Individual _____ \$45 Household

- Hushwing Herald newsletter via email
- Hushwing Herald via snail mail (for Friends of Blackbrook only)

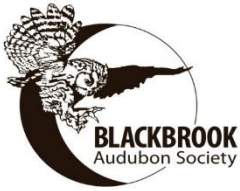
I do **not** wish to be a Friend of Blackbrook, but would like to donate \$ _____.

Make checks payable to **Blackbrook Audubon Society**

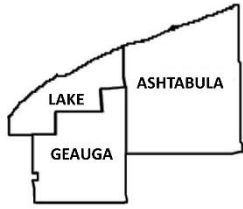
Mail to: **Friends of Blackbrook Audubon**
P. O. Box 1306 Mentor, OH 44061-1306



Thank You!



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



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Trevor Wearstler - President
 Laurie White - Editor

City
 Nature
 Challenge
 2022

April 29 – May 2
 Take photos of wild plants and animals.
 Upload to [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org). Use [Seek](#) too!
 May 3 – 8
 Identify what's in photos, [collaborate](#).
 Get **Vitamin N**, document biodiversity.



Send your checklist to eBird for [Global Big Day](#).

- Baltimore Oriole
- Black-crowned Night-Heron
- Burrowing Owl
- Dark-billed Cuckoo
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Magnolia Warbler
- Markham's Storm-Petrel
- Ruddy Duck
- Swainson's Thrush
- Western Tanager
- Wilson's Warbler

May 14, 2022

