

# The Hushwing **HERALD**

*Blackbrook Audubon Society*

*Volume 57 Number 2*

*November/December, 2021 and January, 2022*

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

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**DATE:** Tuesday, November 16, 2021  
**PROGRAM:** Monitoring Bird Migration:  
 Evolving Technologies and  
 Remarkable Discoveries  
**SPEAKER:** Dr. Andy Jones, CMNH  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** The West Woods Nature Center  
 Geauga Park District, Russell

**DATE:** Tuesday, January 18, 2022  
**PROGRAM:** Where Did You Get that Name?  
 Exploring the Naming  
 of North American birds  
**SPEAKER:** Mary Huey  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Penitentiary Glen Nature Center  
 Lake Metroparks, Kirtland

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

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The array of technologies available to ornithologists to study bird migration is constantly changing. Old technologies are still important - birding and banding continue to play major roles in understanding bird migration, for example. But we are also getting unprecedented insights into details of migration using both large and tiny technologies. Dr. Jones will go over some of these newer systems, including the current



Setting up a Motus station

status of [Motus](#) and other systems that monitor individual birds' migratory behaviors. He'll also highlight some of the newest patterns and discoveries. There is so much still to be revealed. For example, it was only this year that we learned where [Cuban Martins](#) go [in the winter!](#)

Dr. Andy Jones is the William A. and Nancy R. Klamm Chair of Ornithology. He came to Cleveland in 2006 after finishing his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. A native of east Tennessee, he was inspired by the rich biodiversity of the Southern Appalachians. His childhood reptile and

Sometimes weird questions pop into Mary's head and get stuck in her brain. So, when she found herself wondering why one of the most beautiful warblers is called a "[blackburnian](#)", a quest to satisfy her curiosity was launched. Join her for a look through the history of American ornithology and learn how birds get their names.



**Blackburnian Warbler**      *Setophaga fusca*  
**Photos by Gus Lanese**

Some of the answers to that question are obvious while others . . . not so much. Mary will share what she's learned about how the names of our native birds evolved and introduce you to some 19th century men who laid the groundwork for



## Let's Go Birding!

Please RSVP at [blackbrookaud@aol.com](mailto:blackbrookaud@aol.com) if you are coming. In the event of bad weather, Blackbrook will announce cancellations on the iAlert system. Check for updates on our [Facebook page](#).

### NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP

**DATE:** Saturday, November 20, 2021  
**ACTIVITY:** See What's New at LaDue  
**TIME:** 9:00 a.m.  
**PLACE:** [LaDue Reservoir](#)

Come with us on a short migration to the intersection of State Rt. 44 and U.S. Rt. 422. We haven't been to this waterfowl hotspot since 2017 so bring your spotting scope to the largest body of water in Geauga County and let's see what we can find. Recent eBird reports for LaDue show good numbers of Ruddy Duck, Gadwall, Bufflehead and Ring-necked Duck.

Meet in the parking lot of the boathouse at **17759 Valley Road in Auburn Twp.** As you head south on Rt. 44 toward 422, E. Washington St. comes off 44 and leads to the boathouse. As E. Washington curves north, it becomes Valley Road and offers [additional views of the reservoir](#) where you can pull onto the gravel shoulder. We'll check the bridges over the reservoir on Rt. 44 and Auburn Road.

The [Wendell R. LaDue Reservoir](#) was completed in 1962 and named for the Akron Water Department's former superintendent and chief engineer. The reservoir was formed by damming Black Brook and Bridge Creek. It serves as a secondary water source for Akron and as a means of flood control.

La Due Reservoir is one unit within the [Cuyahoga River - Upper Important Bird Area](#).

### Important Bird Area 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.

### JANUARY FIELD TRIP

**DATE:** Sunday, January 30, 2022  
**ACTIVITY:** Frigid Fowl at Scranton Peninsula  
**TIME:** 9:00 a.m.  
**PLACE:** [Scranton Flats, Tremont](#)

Let's round out our January birding with a visit to some popular open water habitat for good winter birding in Cleveland. We'll start at [Scranton Flats](#) on the west side of the Cuyahoga River. Meet at **1851 Scranton Road** where we'll look for white-winged gulls, ducks, Peregrine Falcons, Black-crowned Night Herons and more. If you'd like to meet the challenge of a January 100 bird list, this location could help, boasting an impressive 69 species documented in January on [eBird](#). We'll bird other close areas with open water like [Wendy Park](#) on Whiskey Island.

### 122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count

Join us for this early-winter bird census **Sunday, December 26**. You can survey in the field on foot or in a car or just count from a feeder. Dan Donaldson, our CBC compiler, will let you know what routes are available in our [15-mile diameter circle](#) centered in Painesville. We will bird following current safety guidelines. Our traditional after party will be held virtually later in the day. For details on all this, contact Dan at [danook057@yahoo.com](mailto:danook057@yahoo.com).

The Burton CBC held in Geauga County will be Sunday, January 2, 2022. [Linda Gilbert](#), the primary compiler, would like to hear from interested participants by December 1 so that territories can be assigned. Dan Best will assist with the compiling of lists for the Burton count.

The Ashtabula CBC, centered just east of Kingsville, will be Tuesday, January 4, 2022. [Marc Hanneman](#) compiles this count which covers both Ashtabula and Conneaut Harbors, as well as several [Ashtabula County Metroparks](#).

## Walnut Beach and the Ashtabula River are Healthy Once Again

Blackbrook Audubon Society along with partners and U.S. Representative (OH-14) Dave Joyce visited [Walnut Beach](#), just west of the Ashtabula Harbor to bird and view the [dune restoration work](#) accomplished by The Nature Conservancy. The classic dune-forming plants include Switchgrass and rare plants such as American Beach Grass, *Ammophila breviligulata*, Inland Beach Pea, *Lathyrus japonicus*, and Seaside Spurge, *Chamaesyce polygonifolia*. Although the dunes originally extended about 3.5 miles east to the lighthouse, the ones that remained were high quality, but were smaller, had invasive plants and an area leveled for a large parking lot. With this restoration, a portion of the mostly unused parking lot was removed and the remaining lot had improvements. The area was graded and foredune-grassland communities, interdunal wetlands, native trees and shrubs were established. Dunes are extremely unique habitats along the Lake Erie shoreline and we're excited to see more habitats for native plants, insects and birds restored!

If you haven't been there lately, Walnut Beach has [great birds](#) including a Short-eared Owl sighting in October!

This fall, we are celebrating as the Ashtabula River was [officially delisted](#) by the U.S. EPA and is no longer considered one of the "most environmentally degraded" areas in the Great Lakes

### November program continued

#### Monitoring Bird Migration from page 1

amphibian obsessions eventually morphed into a career as an ornithologist as well as a birder, a fishkeeper, a gardener, and a hiker. Andy submits at least one eBird checklist per day - after all, an ornithologist should spend a little time observing nature every day! His research includes work on genetic diversity and evolutionary history of North American birds, documentation of new hybrid combinations, and studies of migration through the [Lights Out Cleveland](#) project. His favorite bird was the Black-capped Chickadee when he was last asked, but the answer changes almost every day.

Region! It was originally designated as an "Area of Concern" in 1987 with "impairments linked to industrialization, chemical pollution in the water and sediments and loss of riverbank habitat."

From 2006-2013, cleanup measures included removal of PCB-contaminated sediment from the bottom of the river, the installation of 2,500 feet of fish habitat and improvements to riparian habitats. The Ashtabula River was one of 43 sites on the Great Lakes labeled "Area of Concern"; it's the [sixth to be delisted and the first one in Ohio](#) that has met its restoration goals. In Ohio, the Cuyahoga, Maumee and Black Rivers have teams still working toward delisting goals.

The Walnut Beach and Ashtabula River projects both received funds from the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#).



Once again, **Becky Donaldson, right, finds a balloon skittering along the water. Dave Kriska and Dave Joyce also visited Walnut Beach.**

### January program continued

#### Naming Birds from page 1

contemporary bird study in North America.

As many of you know, Mary has birded for a long time. She says most of what she knows is from osmosis and personal study and 40 years of being a volunteer bird walk leader. After a career as a professional quilter (shop owner and teacher), she had a chance to work as an interpretive naturalist for Lake Metroparks leading bird walks and trips and curating an antique collection of bird eggs that was donated to the Nature Center in 2005. Mary's favorite type of birding is surveying an under-birded area through the seasons and making cool discoveries about what is really there!!



## If We Enhance It, Will They Come and Stay a While?

Each spring, a Piping Plover tends to stop at the Headlands Dunes beach and leave in a day or two. Another one of these petite shorebirds may skim the sand for insects and depart as quietly as she appeared. Ohio's Division of Natural Areas & Preserves (DNAP) would like to make the beach of [Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve](#) more welcoming so a Piping Plover pair will want to set up housekeeping and have a family here.

After all, a pair known as Nish and Nellie raised a brood at [Maumee Bay State Park](#) this summer, the first documented nest for this species in Ohio in about 80 years! After long-term management to improve the dune habitat, our beach could be inviting enough to host a nest here too. To prepare the space and have it free of human activity prior to any plover's arrival in the spring, DNAP closed about 900' of beach at the Headlands Dunes SNP [starting November 1 until further notice](#). Just to the west of the Dunes SNP, Headlands Beach State Park will remain open, as will the fisherman's trail along the breakwall to the east of the Dunes.

The [Piping Plover](#), *Charadrius melodus*, blends in well to its shoreline home with a gray, sandy back, white underside and a tendency to lean forward in a horizontal stance. At only seven inches long, this plover's breeding plumage includes a black bar across the forehead, one black collar (not two as in Killdeer), and a black tip on their orange beak.



**Chicks can walk and forage hours after hatching but seek warmth and protection from their parents for about a month, as this chick is doing.**

Photo from American Bird Conservancy

They scurry over the sand on orange legs in quick bursts, stopping to pick up invertebrates like worms, crustaceans, beetles, snails, etc. They sometimes hold a foot in front of their bodies and vibrate it in wet sand. This behavior was confirmed by Sarah Sargent, the Executive Director of the Erie Bird Observatory in Erie, PA. She said they don't do the foot trembling in dry sand, where they forage most often.

EBO monitors Piping Plover nests at Gull Point on Presque Isle State Park, which has contributed 16 fledged chicks to the Great Lakes population as of 2020. [Nellie](#), the female at the Maumee Bay nest, was hatched at Presque Isle in 2020 and is named for the first child born to the Presque Isle lighthouse keeper's family in 1875. Nish is the offspring of Monty and Rose at the [Montrose Beach nest in Chicago](#).

The Piping Plover nests in three distinct populations. The Atlantic Coast and Northern Great Plains populations are federally listed as threatened and the [Great Lakes population](#) is endangered. All were listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1986. The goal for the Great Lakes population is to have 150 breeding pairs. They're not quite halfway there.

We can contribute to restoring this species to its former numbers, but it will take a team effort among several partners. [DNAP](#) will continue to manage the vegetation by promoting native plants and eliminating invasive species. [Black Swamp Bird Observatory](#) coordinated volunteer monitors at the Maumee Bay nest and is providing valuable suggestions on how to establish a volunteer group here. [Erie Bird Observatory](#) has consulted on what Piping Plovers need in a preferred nesting area, such as a clear horizon and few perches or hiding spots for aerial predators. USDA Wildlife Services has managed mammalian predators at Maumee Bay and is standing by to assist here if needed. Ohio's [Division of Wildlife](#) works closely with [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) since they have extensive experience with this federally endangered bird.

Should a pair of plovers exhibit courtship behavior and start nesting, volunteers will be needed to [monitor the nest](#) and chicks and

Continued on page 5 . . .

## Piping Plovers continued from page 4

educate beachgoers on the growing family, if we're lucky enough to get one. Anyone interested in monitoring or sharing the birds' story with the community can contact [Becky Donaldson](mailto:Becky.Donaldson@dnr.ohio.gov) at [Rebecca.Donaldson@dnr.ohio.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Donaldson@dnr.ohio.gov).

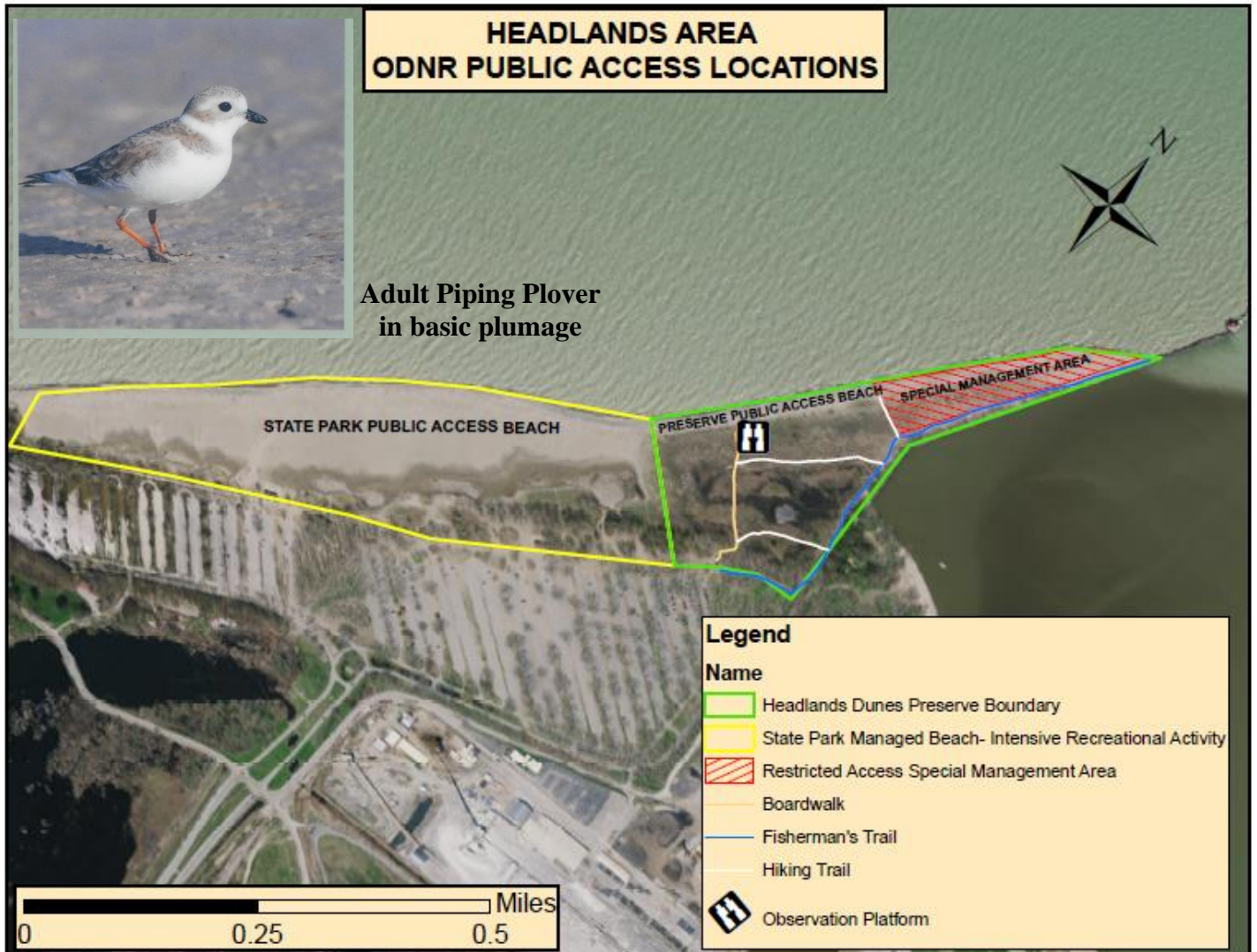
**Everyone** can help if they

- ✦ stay on open trails and observe posted signs to stay out of closed areas
- ✦ keep their dogs off the beach, walk leashed dogs at Headlands Beach State Park only
- ✦ refrain from collecting stones or shells since the adults use them to camouflage the nest and don't take or burn driftwood as natural material provides hiding places for chicks.

We can share the beach with a bird species who was once very plentiful along Lake Erie and welcome them back to a state nature preserve meant for them to raise the next generation.



These signs are posted at both ends of the Restricted Access Special Management Area, which takes up a portion of the Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve. The binoculars on the map below represent the point where the boardwalk ends at the pergola.





## But wait – don't forget the Piping Plovers' wintering grounds

Ensuring that migratory birds have the fundamentals - food, water, shelter, space - at one end of their range is only half the story. Piping Plovers seem to be returning to historic nesting locations on their breeding grounds, but a relatively new threat is growing worse at one wintering site.

SpaceX, founded by Elon Musk, has a rocket testing and launch facility in [Boca Chica, Texas](#), about 20 miles east of Brownsville. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) published an environmental impact statement (EIS) in 2014 but SpaceX has built more infrastructure without approval from the FAA, including a natural gas facility. According to an analysis by [Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program](#), the Piping Plover population in the Boca Chica region has decreased by 54 percent over the past three years. [The American Bird Conservancy](#) would like the FAA to complete another EIS rather than the draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) that they released, which is a faster, less comprehensive environmental review. SpaceX operations also damage habitat for the federally threatened Red Knot, endangered Northern Aplomado Falcon, five species of sea turtle, Ocelots and Jaguarundis.

Over 14,000 acres of federal and state public lands, e. g., state parks, wildlife management areas, have been affected by SpaceX construction, fires and explosions. In the words of ABC, "Space exploration should not come at great cost to the environment and wildlife here on Earth."

## Count and track birds for FeederWatch

Project FeederWatch is an annual winter survey of birds at your choice of location and schedule. The 2021–2022 [FeederWatch](#) season begins on November 13 and ends on April 30. You only need a feeder(s) with seed, a bird bath, or plantings that attract birds.

Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by the annual participant fee of \$18 for U.S. residents. The survey is run by the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) and [Bird Studies Canada](#), both non-profits. Submit data with the mobile app.

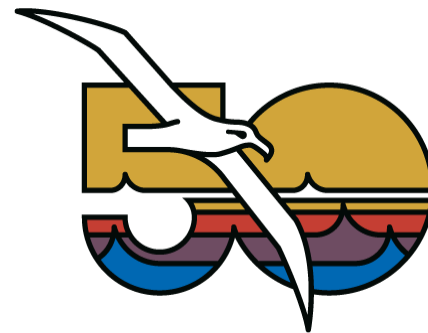


## [Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve](#)

became Ohio's **FIRST** state nature preserve in 1971. It also had been designated as a **National Natural Landmark** in 1966 by the National Park Service.



In 1973, 619 acres of the Marsh was dedicated as an interpretive nature preserve by the [Cleveland Museum of Natural History](#), the first property owner to dedicate its property under Ohio's Natural Areas Act.



## INTERNATIONAL BIRD RESCUE

– SINCE 1971 –

[IBR rehabs aquatic birds in crisis](#) at two year-round wildlife care centers in California and an as-needed response center in Alaska.



[Save the Manatee Club](#) is a national nonprofit established in 1981 whose objective is the recovery & protection of manatees and their aquatic ecosystems throughout the world.

## Howard Marsh is expanding

Metroparks Toledo started [Phase 2](#) of their project to convert Howard Farms into Howard Marsh this summer. They're restoring 243 more acres of coastal wetland to the west of Howard Road, across from the park's entrance and to the north. [Phase 2](#) will provide more habitat for migratory birds, add another four miles of channels for paddling and 2.3 miles of trails, and reduce flooding by connecting new dikes with the existing flood-control levies. The new section is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year and should open to the public next spring.

Howard Marsh opened in 2018 with about 750 acres. Over [240 species of birds](#) have been recorded at this birding hotspot.

## CVNP is growing from within

The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park [has purchased](#) the 207-acre Brandywine Golf Course in the village of Peninsula. After they restore the property, the Conservancy plans to sell 192 acres to the National Park Service and keep 15 acres. The Department of the Interior (DOI) will use \$3.8 million from the [Great American Outdoors Act](#) to acquire the land from the conservancy.

Opened in the 1960's, the [golf course closed in 2018](#). It sits on both sides of Akron-Peninsula Road adjacent to the Cuyahoga River. Two scout camps, the Virginia Kendall section of CVNP and a Summit County Metropark also border it.

Peninsula and the Woodridge Local School District [opposed the sale](#) and wanted the land to remain privately owned. They claimed it was the last sizable property that could be developed in their [four-square-mile village](#). Peninsula is considered the gateway to the park, but it has no central water or sewer systems. Two restaurants [receive water deliveries](#) and store their water. The village had said the property "must be developed in an environmentally sensitive and recreation-themed manner."

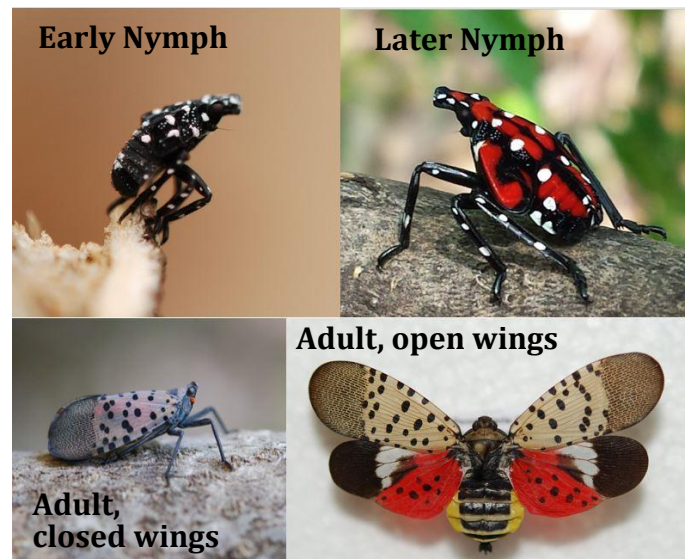
DOI said the development of this property would lead to "the loss of approximately 80 acres of forested hills and riparian areas, along with the potential for degraded downstream water resources." Stacey Rusher, project manager for

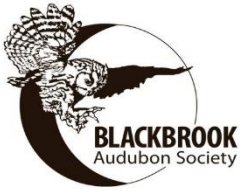
the Conservancy, said "Ritchie and Haskell Streams have been channeled and, in some places, buried. Those will eventually be restored to their natural state." Cerulean and Prairie Warblers were documented here in a 2019 breeding survey. Northern Long-eared Bats are likely here and a bat survey is planned, she said.

## Be on the lookout for the Spots!

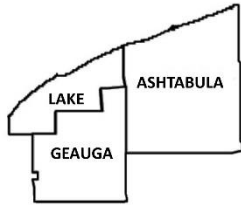
The Ohio Department of Agriculture has [issued a quarantine](#) for Cuyahoga and Jefferson counties to help stop the spread of the [spotted lanternfly](#), an invasive insect from Asia. Outdoor items like grills, nursery stock, firewood, etc. must be checked for the insect and egg masses.

[This insect](#), which is not a fly and resembles a moth, but isn't, feeds on the sap of grapevines, fruit trees, hops, blueberry, oak, pine, poplar, and walnut. Report sightings at (614) 728-6400 or [plantpest@agri.ohio.gov](mailto:plantpest@agri.ohio.gov). Learn more about this planthopper at our program on **February 15!**





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## NOVEMBER

Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm  
The Writings of C. M. Shipman  
by Mary Huey

[Burrough's Nature Club](#)

Nov. 29, 30 Dec. 1, 2, 3

Pollinators in the City

OSU Bee Lab Webinar

10:00 am each day

[Register Here](#)

Sessions will be recorded.

## DECEMBER

Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am

Lake Metropark Bird Walk  
Penitentiary Glen Reservation  
Ages 12 and older

[Registration Required](#)

Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> 2:30 pm

Research in Geauga  
Parks: Survey Results  
Butterfly, dragonfly, bird surveys

[Virtual program registration](#)

## JANUARY 2022

Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am

Lake Metropark Bird Walk  
Penitentiary Glen Reservation  
Ages 12 and older

[Registration Required](#)

Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am

Lake Metropark Bird Walk  
Chagrin River Park - East  
Ages 12 and older

[Registration Required](#)

***Bird wherever you want February 18 – 21 for the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#).***