



# THE PLAIN DEALER

**AERIAL VIEW**

## **Migrating songbirds make Magee Marsh magical Aerial View**

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**Plain Dealer Reporter**

Playing a hunch, I drove west on Saturday. With Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, it's hard to go wrong.

Despite a cold front that stopped the migration in its tracks and dowsed us in showers, this spectacular birding destination an hour and a half away in Ottawa County delivered its usual bounty of birds.

Birders on the boardwalk and around the periphery tallied an unexpected 27 species of warblers, highlighted by prairie, cerulean, Cape May, Blackburnian, Northern parula, prothonotary and blackpoll.

Hooded, Northern waterthrush, ovenbird, Wilson's, American redstart and magnolia warblers caused birder gridlock as observers crowded around for the best views.

Black-throated blue, black-throated green and black-and-white warblers perched at eye level, offering perfect photo ops.

Normally secretive birds, such as thrushes - veery, wood, hermit, Swainson's and a few gray-cheeked - seemed unbothered by our presence.

The abundance of migrating songbirds, enhanced by their proximity, combine to make Magee a magical place and one of the top birding locations in North America.

Even the morning downpours failed to put a damper on the day, as naturalists from the Black Swamp Bird Observatory presented a fascinating demonstration of bird banding outside its nature center at the entrance to Crane Creek State Park.

More than 30 of us crowded under a tent to watch as Kim Kaufman and Mark Shieldcastle attached leg bands and obtained valuable scientific data from warblers, thrush, sparrows, finches, rails and a couple of bonus birds - a sharp-shinned hawk and yellow-breasted chat.

The skies had cleared by Sunday, but the Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve in Mentor was remarkably quiet. A handful of palm warblers, a single black-throated blue, Baltimore orioles and flyover common loons comprised the best sightings of the morning.

But a flash of excitement brightened an otherwise slow day when a special bird showed up at Veterans Park in Mentor. While walking around the pond, Jeff Wert spotted a raptor cruising overhead. Jerry Talkington nailed the identification - a Northern goshawk on a beeline to its nesting grounds in the boreal forests of Canada.

Note: The Black Swamp Bird Observatory will continue to present banding demonstrations every Saturday through May, from 10-11:30 a.m., at its nature center, located at the entrance to Crane Creek State Park, Ohio 2 west of Port Clinton.

Also, BSBO naturalists will lead Sunday bird walks every week in May. Meet at 8 a.m. at the nature center.

And for the best way to find out what's being seen at Magee Marsh and the nearby Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, check out Kenn Kaufman's blog, "Best Bets for Birding," [www.bsbobird.org](http://www.bsbobird.org).

### Sightings

Bobolinks are returning to Northeast Ohio. Gabe Leidy saw these bold blackbirds at the West Creek Reservation in Parma, plus 16 warbler species, including cerulean. Lisa Rainsong had bobolinks at the Squire Valleevue Farm in Hunting Valley and Liberty Park in Twinsburg, plus warblers at her Cleveland Heights yard: blue-winged, Nashville, Northern parula, magnolia, black-throated green and black-and-white.

John Pogacnik had clay-colored and Lincoln's sparrows, plus several indigo buntings, at his Perry Township feeders. He found a Wilson's phalarope at a private wetland in Lake County.

Robert Reynard saw Nashville warbler and scarlet tanager at West Creek and an osprey from his school window.

At Firestone Metro Park in Akron, Brad Wilkinson's sightings included blue-winged, chestnut-sided, magnolia, black-throated blue, black-throated green, black-and-white, hooded, ovenbird, and redstart warblers, rose-breasted grosbeak, indigo bunting and blue-headed vireo.

An American bittern was at Wildwood Park in Cleveland, Nancy Anderson reported, and at Sharon Riccio's pond in Jefferson, Ashtabula County.

A summer tanager has been visiting Kathy Mock's feeders in Barberton.

Rose-breasted grosbeaks are feeding at Jeff Wert's home in Granger Township and at Jack Sedlak's in Hiram.

A ruby-throated hummingbird returned to Margie DeLong's feeder in LeRoy Township.

Shorebirds at Frohring Meadows in Geauga County include lesser yellowlegs, Wilson's snipe and solitary, per Linda Gilbert. American pipits were also there.

A walk around Kendall Lake in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park turned up orchard oriole, rose-breasted grosbeak, pine warbler, blue-headed vireo, Louisiana waterthrush and barred owl for Patrick Coy.

Kathy Meneely saw a sora under her shrubs in Bay Village.

A future Geauga County park held scarlet tanagers, great crested flycatchers, rose-breasted grosbeak, blue-headed and red-eyed vireos, Inga Schmidt reported.

Add wood thrush to the birds spotted at Progressive Field. Joe Rothbrust took a photo of a bird along the third base line during the Indians-Royals game Sunday.

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