



THE KIRTLAND WARBLER

Quarterly Newsletter of the Kirtland Bird Club, Cleveland, Ohio

www.KirtlandBirdClub.org and www.ClevelandBirdCalendar.com

2019—2020 Membership Year, No. 3.1, Spring Issue (additional)

Monthly Meetings

Guests are always welcome — Cleveland Museum of Natural History...
1st Wednesday of every month except July and August, 7:00 PM

*In light of COVID-19 we are currently holding all of our meetings via Zoom.
If you are interested in attending any of our meetings and are not already a member of our club,
please email us: info@kirtlandbirdclub.org*

MAY MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 2020, 7:00 pm

Eavesdropping on Birds: Automated Acoustic Surveys for Conservation

By Tessa Rhinehart



Global wildlife populations have declined 58% in the past 50 years. Currently, scientists study these declines using human-conducted biodiversity surveys. But the time commitment and expert knowledge required to undertake these surveys limit their scale, making them insufficient for addressing urgent, global problems. To address this gap in data collection, the Kitzes Lab at the University of Pittsburgh is developing automated methods of surveying sound-producing animals such as birds, frogs, wolves, and insects. These methods combine inexpensive autonomous recorders with artificial intelligence capable of identifying bird sounds. In this presentation, we will discuss the "why" and "how" of automated acoustic surveys.

Tessa Rhinehart is a scientist developing methods to study birds and other sound-producing animals at large scales. As a Research Programmer at the University of Pittsburgh, she uses computer programming and statistics to recognize animal sounds, collect population data, and understand and conserve ecosystems. Tessa is a native of Bradford, Pennsylvania and graduated from Swarthmore College with a dual degree in Mathematics and Biology. Outside of work, she is an avid birder and enjoys painting and drawing what she encounters in nature.

The Kirtland Warbler, the newsletter of the Kirtland Bird Club (KBC), Cleveland Ohio, is published quarterly. It contains KBC meetings and trip information, web site updates, other events and programs of interest, and issues of local concern. A subscription to The Kirtland Warbler is a benefit of club membership. Your contributions of articles, event information, photos, and drawings are welcome. Please send submissions to the Editor, Anna Kozlenko to annajulnes@yahoo.com

JUNE MEETING

Wednesday, June 3, 2020, 7:00 pm

The Trumpet in the Orchestra of Evolution: The Story of the Sandhill Crane in North America

By Anne Lacey



Sandhill cranes are the most numerous of the world's fifteen crane species. They inhabit many varied places in North America – and Asia! – in both migratory and non-migratory populations. Join us for a talk that will follow this species from tropical forests to arctic tundra, and the places they go in between.

Anne grew up in Madison, leaving to attend college in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. She received a B.A. in Psychology (1991) and returned to get a B.S. in Biology (1994). After working various jobs while taking graduate level Geographic Information Systems courses at the University of South Carolina, Anne was accepted to the graduate program in Biology at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. After finishing coursework in Duluth in 2000, Anne accepted an internship at ICF, while also finishing her thesis. After completion of her M.S.,

Anne accepted a full-time position at ICF as a research associate in the Field Ecology Department (now the North America Program), working on an ongoing long-term study of Sandhill Cranes. She began working with the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership in 2009 to study the ecology of the newly reintroduced Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin.

Intensifying my Backyard Birding

By Dr. Andy Jons

With Ohio under a Shelter in Place order, like most birders I have shifted almost all of my birding to my own yard. I'm working from the dining room table in my house, but starting and ending as many days as possible by enjoying the parade of migration in my yard. And again like most of you, I'm getting burned out from sitting at my laptop most of the day, so I'm trying to take breaks to stretch my legs or just relax in the sunroom.

Michelle and I live in Cleveland Heights, in a small home we bought ten years ago. We like the house, but we love the yard. Our sunroom, which is really just a three season porch, is the best room in the house, and it faces a wooded ravine. Dugway Brook flows through the ravine, meandering from this ravine and then disappearing under the city, emerging again behind the dam at Lakeview Cemetery. This patch of woods is small, but a small bit of habitat in northern Ohio is inevitably a great place for migratory birds to stopover. In the past decade, we've accumulated a nice list of species for the yard. Now that I'm spending more time at home, and taking breaks in the yard, I'm getting even more enjoyment out of repeatedly birding this single site.

My eBird account, as of April 22nd, tells me that I've submitted over 600 checklists from the yard. Let me tell you, a lot of these are really uninteresting counts of birds at the feeders, particularly the lean days in January and February. But from ten years of submitting checklists, eBird now provides me with a bar graph that tracks the seasonality of every species that has occurred in the yard. It is really gratifying to see the blips in May and September when warblers pass through, and to see the one warbler drag on into October - a Black-throated Blue Warbler male that became very fond of our hummingbird feeder.

Paying this much attention to the yard has turned up some great records. Several times in March, when I stepped outside to take in some sunshine, Fish Crows' nasal calls drifted down from overhead; one flock had eight birds. In early April, when we had the first real warm southern winds and temperatures made it above 60 degrees, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher appeared on the 7th, and a surprising Black-throated Green Warbler appeared on the 12th. We finally picked up the species that was our most expected next new bird - Wild Turkey! They've colonized the inner ring suburbs over the last 20 years, and I've seen them close to the house, but this was the first one to finally make it to the yard. The most exciting new bird, though, was not on my list of expected species. A fast, dark raptor flying through the woods took up a perch on a dead limb. I grabbed the camera and ran to the door, and opened it as quietly as possible. Small raptor, black line under the eye, dark back - a Merlin! I see them most winters in Lakeview Cemetery, but an April bird in the yard was a total surprise. These two new yard birds were welcome additions;

we had not added a new species to the yard since a flock of Tundra Swans flew over in November 2017. I am certain that we will pick up more yard birds in the next few weeks.

I'm looking forward to May just as much as I would in a typical year. Rather than driving back and forth to northwestern Ohio, I'll be focusing on trying to pick up Blue-winged and Mourning warblers in the yard, two gaps in our yard's warbler list that feel like plausible additions. And soon after that it will be nesting season; woodpeckers and a pair of Red-tailed Hawks are already in-progress in the ravine, and I'll be watching and listening for other species that might take up territory in our little but heavily birded woodlot.



Rare finding at Erie St. Cemetery

by Tom Romito



This story begins on March 1 when I fell on black ice on the towpath in Tremont. As consultation with our chiropractor and orthopedic surgeon revealed, I tore my right rotator cuff and bicep. I had surgery on April 3, just as everything was shutting down in response to the COVID19 crisis. Now the healing process begins.

Mary Anne started going out alone in mid-April to see the early neotropical migrants, but I decided to forgo that pleasure in favor of resting. On April 21, however, Mary Anne asked me to consider going with her to Erie St. Cemetery. I resisted at first, but soon caved in, thinking, "How hard can it be to carry a pair of binoculars?"

So, we were walking around the cemetery all by ourselves, not having to worry about social distancing from anyone, when we saw an American Woodcock flying across the lawn.

Jen Brumfield drove passed and we thought, "If she only knew what she was missing." We went after the Woodcock, studied it, and stared wandering around a bit more. Then I spotted some small songbirds in a deciduous tree not quite in blossom, but partially obscured by a Magnolia adjacent to the Harrs mausoleum, right on the road through the center of the cemetery. I walked around the Magnolia to get a better look at the birds in the deciduous, and lo, to my surprise, was a Barn Owl in plain view half-way up the tree!

After pinching each other to make sure we were really experiencing this sighting, a lifer for us, we set up our scope and Mary Anne digiscoped the rarity. She texted Jen, who responded that she would be there in six minutes. Jen was as astounded as we were to see this bird. Jen reckoned that it was migrating from southern Ohio and stopped off at this green space before continuing its journey north for the summer. She put out the word on her Facebook page and within minutes, five more birders arrived, all practicing social distancing. Word has it that birders were still seeing the owl at the end of the day.



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