

Birds are everywhere, everyday. Since the beginning of time, birds have represented freedom and joy. They are immortalized in paintings and literature by every culture in every century of man's history.

It is easy to become fascinated with birds. Seeing an unusual bird at a park could spur your interest. Watching birds build a nest, incubate their eggs and raise their hungry brood outside your bedroom window could also be exciting. These close encounters may make you curious about birds. Soon you may even learn to differentiate these birds by their songs.

Birding is a healthy activity. It challenges our minds as we learn to identify the birds. It exercises our memories as we train ourselves to recognize their songs. It encourages us to be outside at all times of the year and relieves the stress of our day-to-day routines as we pursue the bird that flew past or a song that catches our ears.

Birding is a fascinating hobby that can be indulged everywhere you go and at all stages of life. There are always new birds and behaviors to see and new bird songs to learn. For example, on one of our regular bird walks in June at Girdled Road Reservation in Concord Township, birders saw two firsts

Backyard Birding

By Mary Huey,
Interpretive Naturalist



Chipping Sparrow



American Goldfinch



Eastern Towhee



Mourning Dove

Bird photos by John Pogacnik

– a pair of cedar waxwings building a nest and a pair of green herons courting. While many experienced birders travel to exotic locations to see beautiful and rare birds, we can enjoy birding close to home.

Birding is an affordable activity. At the most basic level, it requires a bird friendly yard – you can have birds nesting in the trees, eating plant seeds and garden insects and enjoying the bird bath. Feeders can be added to attract birds in greater numbers.

Binoculars for a closer look and field guides for identification are one time expenses that serve you for many years. Species lists and journals allow you to record all your memorable birding experiences.

Lake Metroparks provides excellent opportunities for you to begin and pursue an interest in birding. We offer regular bird walks and other bird programs throughout the year. Turn to page 5 for a listing of our fall birding programs. Birding supplies such as bird feeders, binoculars and field guides can be purchased at the Nature Store at Penitentiary Glen Nature Center.



Photo by Ann Bugeda

Watching and learning about birds are great ways to stay connected to our natural world. Lake Metroparks encourages the growing pastime of birdwatching through bird walks, birdwatching classes, day trips and eco-trips. Three of our parks - Chagrin River Park, Girdled Road Reservation and Hell Hollow Wilderness Area - have been designated Important Bird Areas by Audubon Ohio for their role as breeding areas and places of rest and feeding during migration.

A sample of birds that can be seen at specific parks includes:

- ◆ Eastern bluebirds, dark-eyed juncos and American goldfinches year-round at Penitentiary Glen Reservation
- ◆ Magnolia warblers, black-throated blue warblers, chestnut-sided warblers and yellow warblers at Chagrin River Park during spring and fall migration
- ◆ Bufflehead ducks, ring-necked ducks and ruddy ducks at Veterans Park during winter months