



Self-Guided Spring Migratory Bird Walks

Birds to look for in April

Spring is the time of year that really gets birders excited as billions of migratory birds head north to their breeding grounds dressed in their breeding plumage. **April brings increased movement of birds.**

Loon migration begins to peak toward mid-April, and we can expect to see the return of some herons like great egrets, American bitterns and night herons. Hawk migration is in full swing and there are increases in raptors like falcons, harriers, broad-winged hawks and osprey. Shorebird migration is also in motion with shorebirds like greater and lesser yellowlegs showing up in wetlands and along shorelines. Caspian terns can be seen moving along the shoreline in search of fish.

Songbird movement continues to pick up through April with hermit thrushes, gnatcatchers, hummingbirds and sparrows increasing. Early warbler migration also begins with yellow and black-throated green warblers showing up and palm and yellow-rumped warblers continuing to move through the area.

Birds to look for in May

May is the month that most birders anxiously await. It is the month when neotropical migrants truly have the stage and the pace of songbird migration begins to reach its peak.

Warblers flit by in bright flashes of color. You can expect to see Nashville, black-and-white, Canada, bay-breasted, American redstart and many other species of warblers working their ways through the trees and shrubs in search of insects. Scarlet tanagers make their appearance with males sporting a bright red body and jet-black wings. Baltimore orioles, orchard orioles and rose-breasted grosbeaks can be seen working their ways through the trees. Vireos and flycatchers are also in abundance as they move in search of insects. If we are lucky, we can even see rare southern migrants that have overshot their usual ranges like Kentucky, prairie and worm-eating warblers.

A pair of binoculars is a great tool to have when watching birds. Binoculars help to bring birds into focus and make identification easier. A good field guide is also an excellent tool to help you learn to identify birds that can be found in your area. One of the best ways to learn more about birds is to join a birding walk with a group of other birders. Visit lakemetroparks.com to find a birding program.

Chagrin River Park

East entrance
3100 Reeves Rd.
Willoughby, Ohio 44094

West entrance
1000 Rural Dr.
Eastlake, Ohio 44095

South entrance
37699 Erie Rd.
Willoughby, Ohio 44094

- Brambleside Loop Trail
- Riverwood Trail
- Song Bird Loop Trail
- Woodland Run Trail

Lake Erie Bluffs

3301 Lane Rd.
Perry Twp., Ohio 44081

2901 Clark Rd.
Perry Twp., Ohio 44081

- Eagle View Loop Trail
- Bluff Loop Trail
- Lakeview Trail

Lakeshore Reservation

4799 Lockwood Rd.
North Perry Village, Ohio 44081

- All Peoples Loop Trail
- Meadow Edge Loop Trail
- Warbler Way

Veterans Park

5730 Hopkins Rd.
Mentor, Ohio 44060

- Cardinal Loop Trail
- Lookout Trail
- Mallard Point Trail
- Swamp Forest Trail



Common loon

Common loon migration begins to peak toward mid-April. These large, diving waterbirds have long bodies, short tails and dagger-like bills.



Great egret

Great egrets are white wading birds with long legs and s-curved necks. Look for them to return to the area in mid to late April.



Peregrine falcon

Peregrine falcon migration is in April. They are the largest falcons in the area and are about the size of crows.



Northern harrier

Northern harriers are raptors that migrate in April. They have flat, owl-like faces with small hooked bills and white rumps above their tails.



Osprey

Osprey are fairly large and overall whiter than most raptors. Look for them around bodies of water.



Lesser yellowlegs

Lesser yellowlegs are slender, grayish-brown shorebirds with dark beaks and yellow legs. Look for them in marshy areas and shorelines beginning in April.



Caspian tern

Caspian terns can be seen moving along the shoreline in search of fish in April. They are white all over with gray upper wings and black on the tops of their heads.



Hermit thrush

Hermit thrushes stand upright with a similar shape to American robins only smaller. They have reddish tails and speckles on their chests.



Yellow warbler

Yellow warblers can be found in trees and shrubs throughout the area mid-April through May.



Scarlet tanager

Scarlet tanagers are medium-sized songbirds. Males are a striking red color with black wings. Look for them in May.



Baltimore oriole

Baltimore orioles can be found in the area beginning in May. Look for their orange plumage in high, leafy forests.



Rose-breasted grosbeak

Rose-breasted grosbeak males have distinct red patches on their chests and large triangular beaks. They can be found in forest edges in many parks.



Blue-headed vireo

Blue-headed vireos can be found in May searching for insects. Look for the white circles around their eyes.



Willow flycatcher

Willow flycatchers can be seen in May looking for insects in shrubby areas. They are most easily identified by their "fitz-bew" song.



Palm warbler

Palm warblers are small songbirds with fuller-looking bellies whose tails appear to consistently wag. Look for their red-capped heads mid-April through May.