

More to Explore

BIRDING HOT SPOTS

Anytime from mid-April through May is great for birding, but typically the peak migration occurs during the first two weeks of May. This is when you are most likely to see the greatest numbers and species. As the leaves bloom it is more of a challenge to spot the warblers.

The key to spectacular bird watching is weather! When we have good southwest winds with a sharp increase in temperature as a front moves in, one is most likely to witness the heaviest migration. For the latest birding information, including current hotspots and predictions for the migration, visit www.bsbobird.org.

Please note, this year The Biggest Week in American Birding will be taking place virtually, May 6-10, 2021. Please visit biggestweekinamericanbirding.com for details!

(Northwest Ohio, from west to east):

1. OAK OPENINGS | 4139 Girdham Rd., Swanton, OH (entrances of Wilkins Rd., SR 64 and SR 2).

One of the best kept birding secrets in Northwest Ohio with a truly unique habitat sand dunes and wet swales. Oak Openings is a birder's paradise. It is the nesting place of bluebirds, indigo buntings, whippoorwills and many other species, as well as an excellent location to see migrating songbirds in the spring.

Contact: 419-407-9700, www.metroparkstoleado.com

2. WOODLAWN CEMETERY & ARBORETUM | 1502 W. Central Ave., Toledo, OH

With its winding paths, gentle hills, serene lakes and towering trees, historic Woodlawn Cemetery & Arboretum is a perfect place for birders. Nearly 300 spectacular species of trees and over 200 migratory and stationary birds nest here.

Contact: 419-472-2186, www.historic-woodlawn.com

3. CULLEN PARK | 4526 N Summit St., Toledo, OH

Cullen Park has many birding opportunities. A mile-long causeway trail begins at the northeast corner of the park. Birders will find shorebirds on both sides of the trail, as well as warblers and other perching birds in the trees along the path. Check the website for birding events that coincide with the Biggest Week in American Birding.

Contact: 419-726-2491, <http://cullenpark.org>

4. PEARSON METROPARK | 761 Lallendorf Rd., Oregon, OH

Pearson is one of the last remaining stands of the Great Black Swamp, a notorious forest that once blanketed much of Northwest Ohio. The thick woods and location close to Lake Erie make Pearson a favorite stopover for a wide variety of migrating birds.

Contact: 419-407-9700, www.metroparkstoleado.com

5. MAUMEE BAY STATE PARK | 1400 State Park Rd., Oregon, OH

From Route 2, go 2.5 miles north on N. Curtice Road to the park entrance. Good birding all year, with gulls and waterfowl at beach, wintering raptors in open fields, migrant songbirds along boardwalk through forest. Campground and lodge.

Contact: Nature center: 419-836-9117, <http://parks.ohiodnr.gov/maumeebay>

6. MALLARD CLUB MARSH WILDLIFE AREA | 8763 Cedar Point Rd, Curtice, OH

From Route 2, go 2.5 miles north on Cousino Road and then 0.2 miles east on Cedar Point Road to the parking area on the north side of the road. Trails lead out into the marsh, a good habitat for bitterns and rails in the warmer months, many water birds all year.

Contact: <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/mallardclub>

7. METZGER MARSH WILDLIFE AREA | Curtice, OH

Just east of the village of Bono, Route 2 makes a major curve to run south. The well-marked turnoff to Metzger is on the curve. The marsh is outstanding for waterfowl in migration and for nesting marsh birds in summer, while the woodlot at the end of the road is excellent for migrating songbirds.

Contact: <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/metzgermarsh>

8. KRAUSE / STANGE ROADS | From the Metzger Marsh turnoff, Route 2 runs south for more than 2 miles. A short distance before it bends eastward again, Krause Road runs to the east for a mile, intersecting with Stange Road, which runs south to meet Route 2. Fields along these two roads have hosted many interesting migrants, including shorebirds and hawks. A viewing platform near the junction of Krause and Stange gives a distant view of one impoundment of the Ottawa Refuge next door.

9. OTTAWA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE | 14000 OH-2, Oak Harbor, OH

The main entrance is on Route 2, about 18 miles east of Toledo/Oregon and about 17 miles west of Port Clinton, or about one mile east of the junction with Route 590 or two miles west of the junction with Route 19. Walking trails give access to woods, marsh, and mudflats, providing excellent birding all year. An auto tour route is open one or two days per month, and the visitors' center has fine educational displays.

Contact: Phone 419-898-0014, <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/ottawa/>

10. MAGEE MARSH WILDLIFE AREA & CRANE CREEK BEACH RIDGE | Oak Harbor, OH

The entrance road leaves the north side of Route 2, about 18 miles east of Toledo/Oregon and about 16 miles west of Port Clinton, or about half a mile east of the entrance to Ottawa NWR. The Black Swamp Bird Observatory nature center is located just north of Route 2 on the entrance road. The boardwalk through the woods at the end of the road is famous as one of the best places in the world to see warblers up close in May, but the whole area is excellent for birding all year.

Contact: <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/mageemarsh> and http://www.stateparks.com/crane_creek.html

11. PICKEREL CREEK WILDLIFE AREA | 3451 Co Rd 256, Vickery, OH

On the north side of U.S. Highway 6, about 7 miles east of Fremont. A little more than half a mile east of County Road 256 is a parking area with an observation tower giving an overview of part of the area, and trails along the dikes provide access. Often an excellent area for shorebirds and waterfowl during migration.

Contact: <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/pickerelcreek>

12. EAST HARBOR STATE PARK | *1169 N Buck Rd, Lakeside Marblehead, OH*

From Port Clinton, go east on Route 163 about four miles to Route 269 and then north about a mile to the park entrance on the right. The park's campground and beach are popular in summer but the area is outstanding for birding all year, with marshes, woods, and big concentrations of migrant songbirds in season. Park office: 419 734-4424.

Contact: <http://parks.ohiodnr.gov/eastharbor>

13. KELLEYS ISLAND | *920 Division St, Kelleys Island, OH*

This beautiful island (accessible by auto ferry from Marblehead, on Route 163 east of Port Clinton) is a popular vacation spot, but also a fine birding area, especially during migration.

Contact: <http://parks.ohiodnr.gov/kelleysisland>

14. PIPE CREEK WILDLIFE AREA | *F St, Sandusky, OH 44870*

From U.S. Highway 6 on the east side of Sandusky, turn north on Cedar Point Drive, then turn right at River Avenue (just after the McDonald's). The small parking lot for Pipe Creek is at the end of River Avenue. Impoundments are good for shorebirds, waterfowl, and wading birds, while the woods hold fallouts of songbirds during migration. Note that traffic going to Cedar Point Amusement Park can be very heavy on warm weekends.

Contact: 419-424-5000, <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/pipecreek>

15. SHELDON MARSH STATE NATURE RESERVE | *2715 Cleveland Rd W, Huron, OH*

Entrance is on the north side of U.S. Highway 6, about six miles east of Sandusky and about two miles west of Huron. Trails lead out to Lake Erie shoreline. Good for marsh birds most of year; woodlots host big concentrations of migrant songbirds in spring and fall.

Contact: 614-265-6561, <http://naturepreserves.ohiodnr.gov/sheldonmarsh>

HELPFUL BIRDING WEBSITES

- bsbobird.org
- biggestweekinamericanbirding.com
- metroparkstoledo.com
- friendsofmageemarsh.org
- fws.gov/midwest/Ottawa