



photo credit_ Brad Bolton



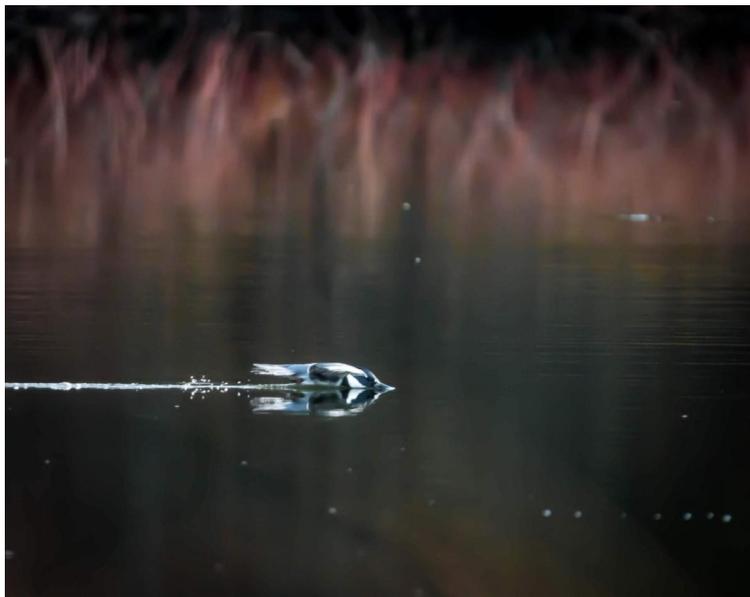
Portage Park District

December 2020 Newsletter

In the parks

Meet a Royal Fisher

Author: **Jennifer White**, education program coordinator



Belted Kingfisher - photo credit Donna Beery

If you have paddled the Upper Cuyahoga River or walked along the path at [Trail Lake Park](#), you are likely already familiar with the impressive Belted Kingfisher. Personally, this charismatic predator is on my list of favorite birds to watch. You'll likely hear its loud, rattling call before you see it, but that glimpse is unforgettable.

This Issue

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Winter Activity Ideas

We've created a calendar with 31 awesome winter activities for you to enjoy!

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| For more information and instructions on activities visit portageparkdistrict.org (things to do page) | Make a snowman | Go ice skating at Lake Park | Go ice skating at Lake Park | Go ice skating at Lake Park | Go ice skating at Lake Park | Go ice skating at Lake Park |
| March 6 Identify animal tracks | March 7 Make a pine cone bird feeder | March 8 Check out the new information center | March 9 Enjoy a hot chocolate trail | March 10 Go play on the playground | March 11 Go cross-country skiing | March 12 Go cross-country skiing |
| March 13 Take a winter photo walk | March 14 Create a hot chili pepper trail | March 15 Make snowflake ornaments | March 16 Make snowflake ornaments | March 17 Make snowflake ornaments | March 18 Make snowflake ornaments | March 19 Make snowflake ornaments |
| March 20 Celebrate the Winter Solstice | March 21 Make a winter snow globe | March 22 Build an animal cone sculpture | March 23 Make snowflake ornaments | March 24 Enjoy a hot chocolate trail | March 25 Enjoy a hot chocolate trail | March 26 Enjoy a hot chocolate trail |
| Go out to see the Belted Kingfisher | Make a snowman | Go ice skating at Lake Park | Go ice skating at Lake Park | Go ice skating at Lake Park | Go ice skating at Lake Park | Go ice skating at Lake Park |

Click to visit our website and download

Check out our [remote education page](#) to download a calendar and get additional activity information.

Kingfishers have a large head and impressive sharp bill that seems out of proportion to its robin-sized body. The Belted Kingfisher is one of a few bird species in which the female is more brightly colored than the male. The female has a bright chestnut-colored band across the chest that the males lacks. [Read more here.](#)

Park staff

Happy 5-year Anniversary

Congratulations to Natural Areas Steward Bob Lange, who completed five years of service with Portage Park District this fall. We are fortunate to have Bob's wide range of skills, from GIS mapping and natural resources assessments to on-the ground resource management, including killing non-native invasive species, controlled burns and planting native meadows and forest, while mentoring his staff of Natural Area Technicians. Bob is a park professional who always get the job done well, with good humor and dedication to the park district mission-thanks Bob!

Changing of the Guard

When our Chief Ranger Doug Shepard decided to cut back to just one full time job (as Chief Ranger for Summit Metro Parks), we were fortunate to attract back our former part-time ranger Zachary Steele to serve as our new full time Chief Ranger. Zach is a wonderful addition to our team, with a degree in Fish Management and experience as a ranger for Sum mit



Metro Parks and a police officer for Bedford Heights Police Department. Zach will be patrolling all of our parks, enforcing the laws of the State and Park District rules, while also assisting with fish

management and programming.

Many thanks to former Chief Shepard for his invaluable support in establishing the Park District's Ranger Department while building rapport with the public, and a big welcome back to Chief Steele to carry on the work of ensuring our parks are safe, secure and enjoyed by all.

Portage Park District Foundation

New items to promote our beautiful parks!

Things to Do

Park Pop-Ups

Stop by our table for a socially distanced visit with park staff. Registration is preferred.

Trail Lake Park

Dec. 2, 3-5 p.m.

Register [here](#)

Turn in your Wild Hikes forms at this pop up! We will have medallions and hiking staffs on hand.

Bring exact cash or check for your donation.

Christmas Bird Count

Dec. 19 All Day

The Portage Park District is again partnering with Hiram College for the annual bird count. For more information and to sign up, [click here.](#)

Need help finding one of our parks? [Click here.](#)

Like us on Facebook



Follow on Twitter



Check out the Portage Park District Foundation's new posters, postcards and magnets to support your parks! These items all make great gifts for your park friends. What a beautiful way to always remember your favorite parks in Portage County.

An order form for items can be found [here](#).



Wild Hikes Challenge 2020 - Year of the Owl

2020 ushers in the Year of the Owl for the Portage Park District Wild Hikes Challenge. Our trusty mascot, Owlbert, is particularly excited about this year's theme. Owls are fascinating, mysterious creatures that are abundant in our county.



To participate complete 8 of the following trails before December 31st to earn a hiking staff (1st year) and/or a 2020 Wild Hikes medallion. Forms can be downloaded [here](#).

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Visit our website | portageparkdistrict.org

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