



COMMON BIRDS OF OHIO **cd guidebook**

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



INTRODUCTION

COMMON BIRDS OF OHIO BORROR/ODOW BIRD SONGS

Knowing the sounds of our birds is important to becoming a better birder, as many birds are quite secretive and hard to see, but their calls are easily heard. The birder with knowledge of songs and calls will find more birds, including many that would otherwise go undetected. In some cases the best way to confirm identification is by the song or call. Finally, learning the sounds of Ohio's songsters can greatly increase one's enjoyment of the natural world.

This CD contains 103 of Ohio's most common breeding birds that are found primarily in upland habitats. Most of these sounds were recorded in Ohio, and each species includes songs and calls that are most typically heard. Habitat can be a clue to a bird's identity, and many birders also use mnemonics - memory devices - to help learn and remember songs. Refer to the text in the booklet that accompanies this CD for helpful information regarding habitats and tips that might aid in learning these sounds.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Family Name →

Quick Info: Range, Habitat, and Best Spots →

Common Name → **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Species Photo →

Description →

Photo Credit →

Page → 27

Track Number corresponds with accompanying audio CD →

Best Spots: Abbreviations

- MP = Metropark (county)
- NP = National Park
- NWR = National Wildlife Refuge
- SF = State Forest
- SNP = State Nature Preserve
- SP = State Park
- TNC = The Nature Conservancy
- WA = Wildlife Area



COMMON BIRDS OF OHIO

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ON THE COVER: NORTHERN CARDINAL

OHIO BIRDING HOT SPOTS

Under each species account in this booklet is a section titled “Best Spots”. The general statewide location of these sites is shown on the adjacent map. See page 6 for a listing of contact information for various agencies and organizations to learn more.

ABBREVIATION KEY

- MP = Metropark
- NER = National Estuarine Reserve
- NP = National Park
- NWR = National Wildlife Refuge
- SF = State Forest
- SNP = State Nature Preserve
- SP = State Park
- TNC = The Nature Conservancy
- WA = Wildlife Area



DATE/TIME UNGLACIATED

4

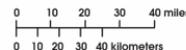
- 1 Lake La Su An WA
- 2 Goll Woods SNP
- 3 Maumee State Forest
- 4 Oak Openings MP
- 5 Maumee Bay SP
- 6 Ottawa NWR
- 7 Magee Marsh WA
- 8 Resthaven Wildlife Area
- 9 Mentor Headlands SNP
- 10 Cuyahoga Valley NP
- 11 Holden Arboretum
- 12 Grand River WA

OHIO BIRDING TRAILS

 Appalachian Discovery
appalachianandiscovery.com

 Hocking Valley Birding Trail
birdhocking.com

 Ohio Lake Erie Birding Trail
lakeerieohiobirding.info



MAP COURTESY: ODNR DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

OHIO LAKE ERIE BIRDING TRAIL

- 13 Quail Hollow State Park
- 14 Tinkers' Creek State Park
- 15 Mohican State Forest
- 16 Beaver Creek State Park
- 17 Woodbury Wildlife Area
- 18 Egypt Valley Wildlife Area
- 19 The Wilds
- 20 Tri-Valley Wildlife Area
- 21 Hocking SF/SP
(Conkle's Hollow SNP)
- 22 Clear Creek MP
- 23 Waterloo Wildlife Area
- 24 Tar Hollow State Forest
- 25 Zaleski SF/Lake Hope SP
- 26 Lake Katharine SNP
- 27 Crown City Wildlife Area
- 28 Shawnee State Forest
- 29 Edge of Appalachia TNC
- 30 Tranquility Wildlife Area
- 31 Indian Creek Wildlife Area
- 32 Miami-Whitewater MP
- 33 Hueston Woods State Park
- 34 Paint Creek Wildlife Area
- 35 Spring Valley Wildlife Area
- 36 Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area
- 37 Findley State Park
- 38 Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area
- 39 Killbuck Wildlife Area
- 40 Big Island Wildlife Area
- 41 Alum Creek State Park
- 42 Blendon Woods MP
- 43 Hoover Reservoir
- 44 Green Lawn Cemetery
- 45 Deer Creek Wildlife Area
- 46 Davey Woods SNP
- 47 Lawrence Woods SNP
- 48 Mercer Wildlife Area

ASHTABULA LOOP

Conneaut Harbor
North Kingsville Sand Barrens
Walnut Beach
Geneva SP
Arcola Creek Park

CLEVELAND AREA LOOP

Hell Hollow WA
Girdled Road Reservation
Fairport Harbor
Headlands Dunes SNP
Mentor Marsh SNP
Mentor Lagoons Preserve
Holden Arboretum
Penitentiary Glen Reservation
Chapin Forest Reservation
North Chagrin Reservation
Eastlake Power Plant
Sims Park
Dike 14
East 72nd Street SP
Lake View Cemetery
Shaker Lakes Nature Center
Chagrin River Reservation
Cuyahoga Valley NP
Wendy Park/Whisky Island
Edgewater SP
West Creek Reservation
Rocky River Park
Rocky River Reservation
Bradstreet's Landing

HURON & LORAIN LOOP

Columbia Reservation
Sandy Ridge Reservation
Avon Lake Power Plant/
Miller Road Park
Findley SP
Lorain Harbor
Lakeview Park
Oberlin Reservoir
Wellington Reservoir
Vermilion River Reservation/
Bacon Woods
Vermilion Main Street Beach
Sherod Park
Edison Woods Preserve
Old Woman Creek NER
Huron Municipal Pier
Sheldon Marsh SNP

SANDUSKY BAY LOOP

East Sandusky Bay Preserve
Pipe Creek WA
Castalia Pond
Resthaven WA
Willow Point WA
Blue Heron Reserve
Pickerel Creek WA
Lakeside Daisy SNP
Marblehead Lighthouse
East Harbor SP
Catawba Preserve
Port Clinton Beach
Little Portage WA

LAKE ERIE ISLANDS LOOP

Kelleys Island SP
Scheele Preserve
North Pond SNP
North Shore Alvar SNP
Middle Bass Island State Park
Petersen Woods & Kuehnle WA
Perry's Victory & International
Peace Memorial
Scheef MP
South Bass Island SP

WESTERN LAKE ERIE MARSHES LOOP

Toussaint WA
Magee Marsh WA
Black Swamp Bird Observatory
Ottawa NWR
Metzger Marsh WA
Mallard Club Marsh WA
Maumee Bay SP
Pearson MP
Bayshore Power Plant
fishing access

OAK OPENINGS LOOP

Cullen Park
Woodlawn Cemetery
Wildwood Preserve MP
Secor MP
Irwin Prairie SNP
Kitty Todd Preserve
Maumee River Rapids
Providence Dam
Farnsworth MP
Sidecut MP
Oak Openings MP
Maumee SF

LAKEERIEOHIOBIRDING.INFO

BIRDING GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

One of the best ways to get involved with birding is to join a group of like-minded people. Fortunately, Ohio has a number of active groups throughout the state that have many birders as members, and most of these organizations host field trips regularly. Listed below are the names and contact information for many of the state's birding groups.

1 AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

The Park Building • 140 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44114

☎ 216-861-5093

www.clevelandaudubon.org

2 AUDUBON SOCIETY OF OHIO

3398 West Galbraith Rd. • Cincinnati, OH 45239

☎ 513-741-7926

<http://home.earthlink.net/~audsocioh/>

3 AUDUBON SOCIETY/MAHONING VALLEY

P.O. Box 3214 • Youngstown, OH 44512

members.cboss.com/audubonmv/

4 AUDUBON MIAMI VALLEY

P.O. Box 556 • Oxford, OH 45056

www.orgs.muohio.edu/audubonmiamivalley/

5 BLACKBROOK AUDUBON SOCIETY

7573 Dahlia Drive • Mentor, OH 44060

☎ 440-255-0961

www.blackbrookaudubon.org



MAP COURTESY: ODNR DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

- 6 BLACK RIVER AUDUBON SOCIETY**
304 West Ave • Elyria, OH 44035
www.blackriveraudubon.org
- 7 BLACK SWAMP AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 7086 • Defiance, OH 43512
- 8 BLACK SWAMP BIRD OBSERVATORY**
P.O. Box 228 • Oak Harbor, OH 43449
☎ **419-898-4070**
www.bsbobird.org
- 9 CANTON AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 9586 • Canton, OH 44711
☎ **330-832-2491**
- 10 CINCINNATI BIRD CLUB**
www.cincinnatibirds.com/birdclub
- 11 COLUMBUS AUDUBON**
P.O. Box 141350 • Columbus, OH 43214
☎ **740-549-0333**
www.columbusaudubon.org
- 12 DAYTON AUDUBON SOCIETY**
1375 East Siebenthaler Ave • Dayton, OH 45414
☎ **937-293-4876**
www.dayton.net/Audubon/
- 13 EAST CENTRAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 55 • Granville, OH 43023
- 14 FIRELANDS AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 967 • Sandusky, OH 44870
- 15 GREAT AKRON AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 80056 • Akron, OH 44308
☎ **330-315-5213**
www.cs.uakron.edu/~pelz/gaas.html
- 16 GREATER MOHICAN AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 907 • Ashland, OH 44805
<http://audubon.cjb.net/>
- 17 KELLEYS ISLAND AUDUBON CLUB**
P.O. Box 42 • Kelleys Island, OH 43438
www.kelleysislandnature.com
- 18 KIRTLAND BIRD CLUB**
www.kirtlandbirdclub.org
- 19 OHIO BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE**
www.obcnet.org/index.html
- 20 OHIO BLUEBIRD SOCIETY**
PMB 111 • 343 West Milltown Rd.
Wooster, OH 44691
www.obsbluebirds.com
- 21 OHIO ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 14051 • Columbus, OH 43214
www.ohiobirds.org
- 22 PRESIDENT R. B. HAYES AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 92 • Fremont, OH 43420
- 23 SHAWNEE NATURE CLUB**
4362 Swauger Valley Rd • Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
☎ **740-820-8382**
- 24 TOLEDO NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION**
www.toledonaturalist.org
- 25 TRI-MORAINÉ AUDUBON SOCIETY**
P.O. Box 5648 • Lima, OH 45802
- 26 WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY**
4310 Bush Avenue • Cleveland, OH 44109
☎ **216-741-2352**
www.wcasohio.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Borror Laboratory of Bioacoustics (BLB) is a research and service unit of the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology at The Ohio State University. It is located in the OSU Museum of Biological Diversity.

The BLB houses one of the largest collections of recorded animal sounds in the world. Founded by the late Dr. Donald Borror, Professor of Entomology and Zoology at The Ohio State University, the collection contains over 34,000 recordings of over 1500 species of animals.



BORROR LABORATORY OF BIOACOUSTICS

The Ohio State University • 1315 Kinnear Road
Columbus, OH 43212-1192

☎ **614-292-2176**

<http://blb.biosci.ohio-state.edu/>

Ring-necked Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

TRACK #2

This spectacular Eurasian species was introduced into Ohio in 1896, and is very popular with sportsmen. Look for them in open countryside that has a mosaic of brushy fields, open meadows, cornfields, and overgrown fence rows. The male makes a loud, unmistakable crowing unlikely to be confused with any other bird.

RANGE:

Statewide, with locally abundant populations in northwest and central Ohio.

HABITAT:

Open country with a mosaic of grasslands, overgrown fence rows, and rowcrop agriculture

BEST SPOTS:

Deer Creek WA, Big Island WA, and Lake La Su An WA.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

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Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus*

TRACK #3

These partridge-like birds are forest inhabitants, often congregating where brush piles or downed trees litter the understory. Grouse occur in greatest numbers in young, regenerating forests; especially those less than twenty years old. The drumming of the males – which sounds a bit like an old lawn mower being started – is made by the bird quickly rotating its wings, creating a vacuum that produces a loud booming sound.

RANGE:

Southern and eastern Ohio, from Adams County north to Ashtabula County.

HABITAT:

Forests, particularly in young, scruffy clearcuts and brushy thickets.

BEST SPOTS:

Most state forests, such as Shawnee, Tar Hollow, and Zaleski; Waterloo WA.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*

TRACK #4

A true conservation success story, Wild turkeys had disappeared from Ohio by 1904. Re-introductions began in 1956, and today they are again common throughout much of the state. The “gobbling” of males is unmistakable, but birds also make a variety of clucks and other sounds. Watch for turkeys in fields along woods, especially early in the morning.

RANGE:

Throughout Ohio, but most common in the unglaciated areas of the south and east.

HABITAT:

A wide variety of deciduous forest; turkeys often forage in fields near woodland borders.

BEST SPOTS:

Throughout the Hocking Hills, The Wilds, and Lake Katharine SNP.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

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Northern Bobwhite *Colinus virginianus*

TRACK #5

Once a common bird throughout Ohio, bobwhites have declined significantly and are mostly found in limited areas in the southern fourth of the state. The male’s characteristic song, a cheery, whistled *Bob-white!* – often delivered from high in a tree – is a perfect example of *onomatopoeia*, or a word that is closely imitative of a sound.

RANGE:

Distributed primarily in the southern fourth of Ohio.

HABITAT:

Open country interspersed with brushy thickets, scattered trees, grasslands, reverting fields, and pastures.

BEST SPOTS:

Crown City, Tranquility and Woodbury wildlife areas are excellent places to look for Northern bobwhites.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

TRACK #6

This is probably the most common of Ohio's hawks, and certainly the most conspicuous. Red-tailed hawks are commonly seen perched along freeways and roads, where their white underparts cause them to stand out. Red-tails have adapted well to urban situations, and are often seen in cities and towns. Their typical call is a loud descending scream, which is sometimes mimicked by blue jays.

RANGE:

Common throughout the state.

HABITAT:

All types of open landscapes, woodlots, urban parks, and open forests.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found almost anywhere. Killdeer Plains WA is particularly good, and large migrations can occur along Lake Erie in March.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

TRACK #7

Formerly known as the "sparrow hawk," the American kestrel is the smallest North American falcon. They are very adaptable and occur throughout Ohio, and are often seen perched on roadside wires. Kestrels frequently "wind hover," fluttering in one spot high in the air when prey is sighted below. They also nest in cavities, and can be enticed to use appropriate nest boxes. Their call is a loud, penetrating *killy killy killy*.

RANGE:

Common throughout the state.

HABITAT:

A wide variety of open landscapes, urban parks, meadows; often seen hunting along the margins of roadways.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found throughout the state; they are a sure thing along International Road through The Wilds, where nest boxes have been placed; Mercer WA



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

TRACK #8

The scientific name of this plover includes *vociferus*, and with good reason – killdeer are very vocal, and their loud calls carry long distances. If approached, they usually sound the alarm, and their typical call is similar to their name, a clear, ringing *Kill-deer, Kill-deer*. Killdeer breed commonly statewide, and their nest scrapes are often made in gravel drives and parking lots.

RANGE:

Common throughout the state.

HABITAT:

All types of open areas, but killdeer are especially attracted to mudflats, large open grassy fields, and muddy pastures.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found statewide, except in winter, although some hardy birds will overwinter. Commonly heard calling while flying overhead at night in migration.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

TRACK #9

Widespread and abundant, the mourning dove is the most commonly taken game bird in North America by hunters. Because of their generalized habitat and high reproductive rate, mourning doves are one of the most abundant birds in Ohio, and nationwide only the red-winged blackbird is thought to be more common. They are named for their plaintive, mournful *oh-woo-woo-woo* call.

RANGE:

Abundant throughout Ohio.

HABITAT:

Very adaptable and occupies a wide range of habitats, and is frequent at backyard feeders. Peak numbers occur in open countryside interspersed with rowcrop agriculture, pastures, and open woods.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found statewide; large fall concentrations occur at Deer Creek, Killdeer Plains, and Paint Creek wildlife areas.



© PHOTO BY: DAVID VANMETER

Black-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*

TRACK #10A

Of our two cuckoos, this species is less common and often avoids detection. Black-billed cuckoos also frequently call at night, and they may be partly nocturnal in their habits. An interesting and little-known facet of cuckoo behavior involves nest parasitism; they sometimes lay their eggs in other bird's nests, and the unwitting host raises the young cuckoos.

RANGE:
Found statewide in migration, but primarily restricted to the northern third of Ohio as a breeder, although scattered birds breed further south.

HABITAT:
A woodland species, but favors younger forests and dense, scruffy thickets.

BEST SPOTS:
Cuyahoga Valley NP, Resthaven WA, and Mohican SF.



© PHOTO BY: GARY MESZARS

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Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

TRACK #10B

Often referred to as "rain crows" by old-timers, it was thought that yellow-billed cuckoos would deliver their peculiar vocalizations soon before a storm. While there is no scientific validity to this claim, the cuckoo does have a very distinctive call that carries great distances. Like many birds, they are more easily heard than seen, so knowing this call makes finding a yellow-billed cuckoo to observe a much easier task.

RANGE:
Fairly common to common across the state.

HABITAT:
All manner of woodlots, but especially in scruffy thickets, reverting clearcuts, orchards, and black locust groves in reclaimed strip mines.

BEST SPOTS:
Fairly easily found statewide; Crown City, Spring Valley, and Woodbury wildlife areas; Maumee SF; Quail Hollow SP.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Eastern Screech-Owl *Megascops asio*

TRACK #11

This is the most common owl in Ohio, and is far more frequent than most people would suspect. Eastern screech-owls even occur in treed neighborhoods and other urban settings. Their rich, eerily quavering whistle is easily imitated, and these inquisitive little owls often quickly fly in to investigate a call. Eastern screech-owls occur in two color morphs, red and gray, and very rarely an intermediate brown morph.

RANGE:

Common in appropriate habitats statewide.

HABITAT:

All manner of wooded habitats, even suburban parks and neighborhoods, but they are at their peak in open woods and brushy areas near streams. Eastern screech-owls require cavities for nesting, and will nest in appropriate nest boxes.

BEST SPOTS:

Often found along the Magee Marsh WA bird trail; found statewide in suitable habitat by venturing out at night and imitating their calls.



© PHOTO BY: MICHAEL GREENE

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*

TRACK #12

The largest of our owls, great horned owls are surprisingly versatile in their haunts, and can often be found in big city parks and cemeteries. They will call throughout the year, but vocalizing steps up in early winter, and the birds will often be sitting on eggs by late winter. Great horned owls deliver a classic owl-like call – a deep *hoo-hoo-hoooo*, with each phrase given four to six times. The male and female often call back and forth across great distances, the male gives a lower pitched hoot.

RANGE:

Common throughout the state.

HABITAT:

Will use urban parks and treed neighborhoods, but typical habitat is fields, meadows, and open countryside interspersed with woodlots.

BEST SPOTS:

At dusk, watch for owls perched on utility line towers and poles, and in late winter and early spring, they are often spotted sitting on old hawks' nests in trees, as great horned owls often take them over for nest sites. Killdeer Plains WA, at night often results in "singing" owls.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

Barred Owl *Strix varia*

TRACK #13

Birders love to use mnemonics – memory devices – to remember bird calls, and the barred owl call is a good example of an easy mnemonic. Their typical call sounds just like *Who cooks for you, who cooks for you, all!* Barred owls are more habitat-specific than great horned and Eastern screech-owls, preferring heavily wooded ravines and wet woods. They are easily attracted to imitations of their calls and will fly right in to investigate.

RANGE:

Fairly common throughout the state, more so in eastern Ohio.

HABITAT:

Heavily wooded ravines and hollows, swampy woods. Sometimes occurs in wooded neighborhoods if ravines are present, such as in Columbus' Clintonville area.

BEST SPOTS:

Ravines around the northern end of Alum Creek SP, Shawnee SF, Beaver Creek SP.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*

TRACK #14

Sometimes called “bullbats” due to their erratic flight style, reminiscent of bats, common nighthawks course about high above the ground catching insects on the wing. While doing so, they frequently give their “song,” a nasal peent which sounds somewhat like the call of the American woodcock. Nighthawks nest primarily on gravel rooftops, placing the eggs directly on the rocks. Modernization of roofs has decreased the availability of suitable nest sites, and common nighthawks seem to be declining.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

Nests primarily on gravel rooftops, thus cities and towns are the best place to observe common nighthawks. They are most conspicuous at dusk as they fly high overhead, and males can be seen making fast, steep dives as part of their courtship display, during which they produce a loud booming sound with their wings.

BEST SPOTS:

Cities and towns; sometimes spectacular flights are observed during fall migration in late August/early September.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

Whip-poor-will *Caprimulgus vociferus*

TRACK #15

Few birds sing as incessantly as these odd nocturnal “nightjars.” A whip-poor-will at fever pitch might produce 59 songs a minute, and they have been known to sing a thousand renditions non-stop. Their loud song carries long distances, and is simple to learn; they say their name. While strictly nocturnal and hard to observe, every now and then, particularly in migration, one comes across a “whip” perched perpendicularly on a branch, looking like a piece of wood themselves.

RANGE:
Declining; now found mostly in southern and eastern Ohio, with a significant population in the Oak Openings near Toledo.

HABITAT:
Open deciduous woods, occasionally utilizes pine plantations, forages on the wing over open fields and brushy areas.

BEST SPOTS:
Oak Openings MP, Zaleski SF,
Indian Creek WA.



© PHOTO BY: GARY MESZAROS

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*

TRACK #16

The “flying cigar” as these extraordinary aerialists are sometimes called, doesn’t sing and has a limited repertoire. Rather, they give a fairly steady stream of rapid, staccato chips while in flight – *chitter-chitter-chitter* – occasionally interspersed with quick series of chip notes. Chimney swifts spend the vast majority of time on the wing, and form large roosting colonies in favored chimneys.

RANGE:
Common statewide.

HABITAT:
Feeds exclusively in flight, capturing insects. Skies over cities and towns are best, but in migration, on cold days, swifts are often seen hawking insects low over water.

BEST SPOTS:
Over urban areas; favored roosting sites in larger cities sometimes draw crowds.



© PHOTO BY: DOMINIC SHERONY

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*

TRACK #17

Becoming familiar with the high-pitched squeaky vocalizations of these tiny birds allows for detection of many more than would otherwise be noticed. They often flash by so quickly that all that is heard are the calls, and the characteristic buzzing sound created by their wings. Ruby-throated hummingbirds can produce up to 80 wing beats per second. They are easily lured to gardens and yards by hummingbird feeders and favored flowers.

RANGE:

Common statewide.

HABITAT:

Very versatile; everywhere from mature forests to gardens in yards. They are especially attracted to sites with numerous flowering plants, which are mined for nectar.

BEST SPOTS:

Often, your backyard. Placing suitable feeders frequently lures these sprites, even in very urban settings. Some lucky people have had over 100 birds using their feeders, at one time!



© PHOTO BY BILL HEBAN

Red-headed Woodpecker *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

TRACK #18

An extraordinary looking bird, the adult red-headed woodpecker is what inspired legendary ornithologist Alexander Wilson to take up the study of birds. This woodpecker favors open woodlands and savannas, especially those that have plenty of oaks, as they are fond of acorns. Typical calls are loud, rough kweer or kwrrr notes, but they give a variety of chattering calls, especially when in family units, which remain together into winter.

RANGE:

Somewhat scattered and local, and primarily in glaciated northern and western Ohio. Can be common in larger woodlots of western Ohio.

HABITAT:

As red-headed woodpeckers eat plenty of mast in winter, they prefer open woods with oaks and hickories.

BEST SPOTS:

Killdeer Plains WA, on roadside telephone poles; Goll Woods SNP; Killbuck and Funk Bottoms wildlife areas; Lawrence Woods SNP.



© PHOTO BY AL FREEMAN

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*

TRACK #19

This big, extroverted and conspicuous woodpecker is easily lured to backyard feeders, and its loud rolling *churr* calls are heard throughout Ohio woodlands. The common name is not very appropriate; the faint blush of reddish pigment on the belly is barely visible. After the downy woodpecker and possibly the Northern flicker, this is the most common Ohio woodpecker.

RANGE:

Common statewide.

HABITAT:

A forest dweller, but will occupy fairly small woodlots, and makes forays into open countryside. Common in urban areas with large trees; frequent feeder visitor.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found in woods statewide; county parks, such as Blendon Woods MP in Columbus, that have feeders are good places to observe red-bellied woodpeckers.



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Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

TRACK #20A

The most common Ohio woodpecker and also the smallest, the downy woodpecker is found in all manner of habitats, and is a frequent visitor to yards and feeders. They sound – and look – similar to the larger hairy woodpecker, but the downy's calls are easily separated with practice. All woodpeckers drum, the distinctive rapid beats produced by pounding on wood – but the various species can't be reliably told apart by drumming.

RANGE:

Very common statewide.

HABITAT:

The most versatile of our woodpeckers, found in all manner of wooded areas. Often ventures into fields, where they bore into goldenrod galls.

BEST SPOTS:

Just about anywhere;
easily lured to backyard feeders.



© PHOTO BY: BILL HEBAN

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus*

TRACK #20B

Resembling a jumbo downy woodpecker, the hairy is best told by its larger size, proportionately much bigger bill, and unspotted outer tail feathers. Hairy woodpeckers are not nearly so frequent, and are outnumbered by downys by ten to one. The hairy has a much louder, more explosive call, and frequently gives a drawn out rattling call somewhat reminiscent of a belted kingfisher.

RANGE:

Fairly common to common in appropriate habitat statewide.

HABITAT:

This species is much less tolerant of forest fragmentation than the downy woodpecker, and is generally confined to larger, older woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:

Any of Ohio's twenty state forests; Hueston Woods SP, Cuyahoga Valley NP, and Davey Woods SNP.



© PHOTO BY: GARY MESZAROS

18

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*

TRACK #21

The highly migratory Northern flicker is found in Ohio year-round, but numbers swell during spring and fall migration. They are often observed on the ground, as ants are a huge part of their diet. Flickers give a wide variety of calls, but the typical song is a loud, laugh-like *wicka-wicka-wicka*. Males are also prone to loud drumming as part of their courtship, and sometimes use metal downspouts of homes to create a barrage of sound.

RANGE:

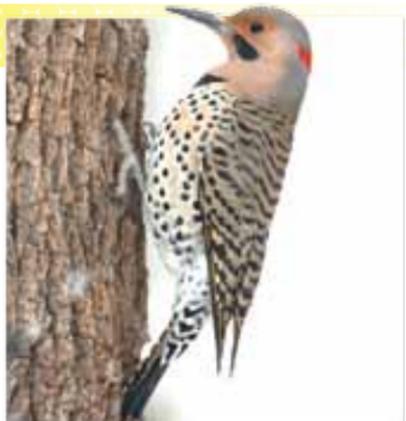
Statewide; more common in migration, particularly in spring.

HABITAT:

Prefers open country and scattered woodlots more than our other woodpeckers; often seen on the ground hunting ants.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found in most areas of Ohio; big migrations can be observed in the vicinity of Magee Marsh WA in April and May.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*

TRACK #22

By far our largest woodpecker, this crow-sized bird is surprisingly secretive. A dweller of larger forests and woodlots, most pileated woodpeckers will be detected by their very loud, maniacal-sounding calls, which carry long distances. The presence of these massive woodpeckers is often obvious by their drillings; cavities are large and oval in shape, and in areas where they have bored into trees for food, the residual wood chips are much larger than those left by other woodpeckers.

RANGE:

Slowly expanding northward; found statewide but least common in western and northwestern Ohio.

HABITAT:

A denizen of large, mature forests; a pair needs about 100 acres of woods for their territory.

BEST SPOTS:

Large forests of unglaciated Ohio; scattered elsewhere. Any of the 20 state forests, Lake Katharine SNP; Cuyahoga Valley NP.



© PHOTO BY: SHARON HOSKO

Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*

TRACK #23

An abundant but non-descript flycatcher, pewees are found in most woodlands and will even occupy wooded parks and river corridors in urban areas. This bird's song, like the bobwhite quail, is another example of onomatopoeia, a word whose pronunciation is imitative of a sound. Eastern wood-pewees say their name, *pee-ah-wee*, so identifying this species is much easier by song than by sight.

RANGE:

Common statewide, wherever suitable habitat occurs.

HABITAT:

All types of woodlands, but prefers some larger trees and a somewhat open understory. Sometimes even occupies urban parks if tree cover is adequate.

BEST SPOTS:

Any good-sized woodlot, such as Lawrence Woods SNP, or forest statewide should harbor pewees.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*

TRACK #24

This small, greenish flycatcher occupies streamside woodlands almost exclusively, and as is sometimes the case with birds, habitat preference can be a clue used in identification. While Acadian flycatchers greatly resemble several other species of flycatchers, their song is very distinctive and easily clinches the identification. Acadians deliver a loud, explosive *Peet-sa!*, sometimes described as “pizza!”

RANGE:
Common statewide in areas of suitable habitat.

HABITAT:
Occurs in greatest numbers in mature riparian woodlands, but will use swampy woods and sometimes other types of mature forest.

BEST SPOTS:
Mohican SF, Clear Creek MP,
Goll Woods, Davey Woods SNP,
and Grand River WA.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii*

TRACK #25

This species is a perfect example of how helpful recognition of songs can be as an identification aid. Willow flycatchers are part of a group of five small Ohio flycatchers that all look very similar, but have quite different vocalizations. Willows, which occur in overgrown shrubby areas and willow thickets, deliver a loud, somewhat nasal *fitz-bew!* Its song and habitat are similar only to the much scarcer alder flycatcher.

RANGE:
Fairly common to common statewide.

HABITAT:
All types of shrublands, even in fairly dry fields, but prefers moist areas dominated by willow thickets.

BEST SPOTS:
Moist successional habitats in reclaimed strip mines, such as Crown City and Woodbury wildlife areas; Ottawa NWR, Lake La Su An WA, Tinker's Creek SP.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*

TRACK #26

One of the easiest of all songs to learn, phoebes say their name, a robust, emphatic *Fee-bee!* This is also our hardest flycatcher, arriving very early in spring, and a few will even overwinter in mild years. Eastern phoebes are intimately associated with people and their structures, as they build their nests under bridges, on building ledges, and in culverts. Some birds can still be found nesting on cliff faces in the Hocking Hills region.

RANGE:

Statewide, but least common in heavily agricultural western Ohio.

HABITAT:

Open woodlands, clearings, forest edges; most often found near water.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found in Hocking Hills SP and that region; a pair has nested for decades on the Howald mausoleum by the pond in Green Lawn Cemetery.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

21

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*

TRACK #27

This is our largest flycatcher, and the only one that nests in cavities. Great crested flycatchers are fairly common where suitable habitat occurs, but usually lurk high in the tree canopy, and are easily missed. Until they call, that is; their typical call is a very loud, whistled *wheep* and a raucous rattling call that carries a considerable distance. These interesting birds can sometimes be enticed to use appropriate nest boxes.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

All types of deciduous forests, but requires some large trees, and prefers forest openings or edges; even found in wooded parks and occasionally in heavily treed neighborhoods.

BEST SPOTS:

Fairly easy to find in any large woods; TNC Edge of Appalachia preserve, all state forests, Findley SP, Waterloo WA.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*

TRACK #28

Well named, kingbirds are highly territorial and aggressive, and are often seen badgering crows, raptors, and any other large bird that overflies their domain. They possess a sleek, suave look, with crisp blackish upperparts, clean white underparts, and a tail that looks like it was dipped in white paint. Eastern kingbirds do not have much of a voice, though; they give an un-birdlike rapid, electric chattering, *kit-kit-kit-kitter-kitter*.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
All types of open country-rural fields with scattered woodlots, tree lines, and power lines; parks; larger openings and clearcuts in forested areas.

BEST SPOTS:
Most state wildlife areas support this species, Indian Creek, Mercer, and Crown City wildlife areas, Oak Openings MP, Miami-Whitewater MP, Holden Arboretum.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

22

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*

TRACK #29

The white-eyed vireo is a real skulker, lurking in dense, impenetrable thickets, and getting a good look at one can be quite difficult. However, like most vireos, they are chronic singers and easily heard. Their forceful, rapidly delivered song carries some distance, and typical renditions sound very much like *pick-up-the-beer, check!* The only other vireo likely to share this habitat is the rare Bell's vireo, which sounds very different.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Shrubby thickets in overgrown fields, reclaimed strip mines, and woodland clearings; young clearcuts.

BEST SPOTS:
Crown City, Egypt Valley, Tri-Valley, and Woodbury wildlife areas.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*

TRACK #30

Several species of vireos can sound confusingly similar, and this is one of them. Red-eyed, yellow-throated, blue-headed, and Philadelphia vireos all sing somewhat similar short phrases interspersed with brief pauses. Yellow-throateds, however, have a very rough, burry quality to their voice, and once you are familiar with this tone, the species is easily separated from the others.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Woodlands, but favors relatively open woods with a fairly open understorey, and many oaks.

BEST SPOTS:
Probably nests in every county and usually easy to find in suitable habitat.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

23

Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*

TRACK #31A

Known as the “solitary vireo” until 1997, blue-headed vireos are common migrants, and one of the first migratory songbirds to return in spring, often by mid-March. As a breeder, they are rare and local, being confined to larger hemlock ravines, such as those that are found in Hocking County. Their song is similar to the red-eyed vireo, but has a slower tempo and shorter phrases, with a sweeter quality.

RANGE:
Common migrant statewide;
rare breeder in hemlock ravines.

HABITAT:
Occurs in a wide variety of woodlands as a migrant; breeders are intimately linked to hemlock trees.

BEST SPOTS:
Places like Green Lawn Cemetery and Magee Marsh WA are excellent in migration; breeders can be found at Mohican SF and Conkle’s Hollow SNP.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

TRACK #31B

One of the most common birds breeding in our deciduous forests, the song of the red-eyed vireo is a very common sound of the summer woodlands. Mastering this song will make recognition of the other, similar-sounding vireos much easier. Red-eyed vireos are chronic singers, often singing 40 phrases a minute for hours on end. Their song is a series of robin-like phrases interspersed with pauses – *see-me, here-I-am, way-up, tree-tops!*

RANGE:
Common statewide

HABITAT:
Deciduous woodlands, even parks and suburban areas with plenty of large trees.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found wherever there are woods of almost any size.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

24

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*

TRACK #32

Many species of birds are intimately associated with certain plants, and in the case of the warbling vireo, it is the Eastern cottonwood tree. This vireo sings incessantly from high in the treetops, and is a good example of why knowing songs is useful. Getting a look at this nondescript vireo is not easy, but hearing one certainly is. Even when a birder has triangulated on the easily learned song, spotting the sluggish vireo still can be tough.

RANGE:
Common statewide.

HABITAT:
Normally found in or around cottonwoods, thus usually found along streams and lake margins, but sometimes parks and cemeteries if big trees are present.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found in suitable habitat statewide; can't miss in the large cottonwoods around the parking lot by the Magee Marsh WA bird trail.



© PHOTO BY: GARY MESZAROS

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*

TRACK #33

The loud screams of the jay are well known to about anyone who feeds birds, or walks in the woods. Blue jays are an effective alarm system, alerting all of the other animals within earshot of the presence of intruders. They can be skilled mimics, often expertly imitating the call of the red-shouldered hawk, in particular. Although a common winter resident, jays are highly migratory, and we get many more in spring and fall.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Although able to exploit many habitats, even suburbia and parks, blue jays are typically associated with woods that have mast-bearing trees such as oaks and hickories.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found statewide; spectacular migratory flocks queue up along Lake Erie in May, and perhaps the best place to observe this phenomenon is Magee Marsh WA.



© PHOTO BY: DAVID TARR

25

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

TRACK #34

Even most non-birders know this one; the loud raucous *caw-caw* call of a crow is unmistakable. This is one of Ohio's most common birds, and in recent years has adapted well to urban life, and crows are now a common part of the suburban landscape. American crows sometimes form large winter roosts, and exceptional roosts can number into the tens of thousands.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Opportunistic and able to exploit a variety of habitats, but probably does best in rural country with a mosaic of agricultural fields, meadows, and scattered woodlots.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found anywhere; large winter roosts often form in Columbus, Mansfield, and Springfield.



© PHOTO BY: AL FREEMAN

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

TRACK #35

Few birds occupy a bleaker habitat than horned larks. This species prefers wide-open barren landscapes, and is at home in vast agricultural fields with little vegetation. The upper parts of horned larks are muted brownish earth tones, and they blend remarkably well with the soil. Their musical tinkling calls, which carry considerable distances, give them away and allow an observer to locate these birds.

RANGE:

Statewide, but most common in agricultural areas of western and northern Ohio.

HABITAT:

Large barren fields, mudflats, and sparsely vegetated fields and meadows.

BEST SPOTS:

Stopping along large barren croplands and listening for their distinctive calls is the best way to find larks. They often gather along roadsides when snow covers the fields. Big Island, Killdeer Plains, and Mercer wildlife areas are good places to look.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

26

Purple Martin *Progne subis*

TRACK #36

Few birds are as intimately associated with people as the purple martin. Historically, they would have nested in large tree hollows, but humans have been enticing them to nest close at hand since early Native Americans began placing hollowed out gourds near their villages. Today, martins are entirely dependent upon man-made nest boxes for breeding sites. Their pleasant, liquid gurgling notes are distinctive.

RANGE:

Statewide, wherever people have erected nest boxes that martins deem acceptable. Can occur anywhere, especially near water, in migration.

HABITAT:

Large, open areas, particularly those with water bodies nearby.

BEST SPOTS:

Best observed near nesting sites; plentiful around the visitor's center at Magee Marsh WA.



© PHOTO BY: GARY YANKECH

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

TRACK #37

Like the purple martin, barn swallows are very much associated with humans. This bird is aptly named; they typically build their nests on support beams in barns, or under overhangs of sheds and other buildings. Barn swallows are unmistakable, with their very long forked tails and orangish underparts. They are quite vocal, emitting a continuous barrage of rapid twittering notes.

RANGE:

Common statewide.

HABITAT:

Open countryside, especially agricultural areas.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found in suitable areas throughout Ohio; like other swallows, often queues up in large flocks in late summer.



© PHOTO BY: ALLEN CLAYBORN

27

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis*

TRACK #38A

Much confusion surrounds Ohio chickadees, as we have two species and they look very similar. The Carolina chickadee is the southerner, occurring south of the black-capped chickadee's range. Calls are the best way to separate them; the Carolina's song is a four-parted whistle, *fee-bee, fee-bay*, and their calls – *chik-a-dee-dee-dee* – are faster and not nearly so husky in tone.

RANGE:

Southern, from the Ohio River north to about the latitude of Mansfield.

HABITAT:

A wide variety of woodlands; often ventures into urban yards and parks, and is easily attracted to feeders.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found through its range; best observed at feeding stations.



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Black-capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapillus*

TRACK #38B

This species is extremely similar to the Carolina chickadee, but is easily differentiated with practice by their vocalizations. Black-capped occur north of the Carolina's range, and for the most part they don't overlap. The song of the black-capped chickadee is a two-part whistled *fee-bee*, and their *chik-a-dee-dee* calls are much huskier and slower in tempo than the Carolina chickadee.

RANGE:

Roughly the northern ¼ of Ohio, from Mansfield north.

HABITAT:

Similar to the Carolina chickadee.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found in appropriate habitat; Killdeer Plains WA is a noteworthy site to observe chickadees, as both species have been reported there.



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© PHOTO BY: DAVID VANMETER

© PHOTO BY: BILL HEBAN

28

Tufted Titmouse *Baeolophus bicolor*

TRACK #39

The small, dove-gray titmouse is simple to recognize, in part because it is one of very few Ohio birds with a prominent crest. This species is a very common woodland inhabitant, and often fraternizes with chickadees, woodpeckers, and nuthatches. Tufted titmice vocalize year-round, and their loud, whistled *peter-peter-peter* song is a characteristic sound of Ohio forests.

RANGE:

Common statewide.

HABITAT:

Forests, woodlots, parks and neighborhoods with ample tree cover.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found throughout the state. Titmice are attracted to feeders, and these are the best sites to observe their antics.



© PHOTO BY: BILL HEBAN

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*

TRACK #40

This interesting tree-gleaner is very distinctive in its foraging behavior. Nuthatches are distinguished by their habit of creeping headfirst down tree trunks, unlike woodpeckers and brown creepers, which travel upward. White-breasted nuthatches have very distinctive nasal calls, but be mindful of red-breasted nuthatches, which are primarily winter visitors. Their calls are similar, but faster and higher pitched.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
All manner of woodlands; even parks and neighborhoods with plenty of trees.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found in appropriate habitat; common feeder visitor.



© PHOTO BY: DAVID VANMIETER

29

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*

TRACK #41

This species is a year-round resident, and their loud, ringing song, which sounds like *teakettle, teakettle, teakettle*, can even be heard during winter months. Carolina wrens are southerners that expanded north into Ohio following the clearing of the original forests that blanketed the state. They are vulnerable to severe winters, such as in 1977-78, which decimated their populations.

RANGE:
Common statewide, but more frequent southward.

HABITAT:
All manner of woodlands, but prefers edges and scruffy thickets; often resides in well-vegetated parks and suburban areas.

BEST SPOTS:
Almost any state park, wildlife area, or state forest.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

TRACK #42

A well named species, the house wren is most often found in proximity to dwellings, and will readily use appropriate nest boxes, as they are cavity dwellers. House wrens winter in Central America, return in mid-April, and throughout the summer the male's loud, bubbling warble is a common sound of suburbia. When alarmed, wrens readily deliver their harsh, rattling scold notes.

RANGE:

Common statewide.

HABITAT:

A variety of open areas interspersed with thickets, shrubs, and scattered trees; woodland openings and edges.

BEST SPOTS:

Easy to find; neighborhoods, parks, open woodlands, cemeteries.



© PHOTO BY: GARY MESZAROS

30

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus platensis*

TRACK #43

Generally a rarity, sedge wrens are notoriously erratic in their movements and where they appear from year to year. Sometimes they don't appear on territory until July or August, and they often utilize nest sites for only one year. They are best detected by song, as sedge wrens prefer dense stands of grasses or sedges, and stay hidden in the vegetation. Their songs somewhat resemble the dry, staccato chatter of an old sewing machine.

RANGE:

Most are detected in the western and northwestern part of Ohio.

HABITAT:

Large sedge meadows, and damp grassy fields; sometimes hayfields.

BEST SPOTS:

Western Lake Erie marshes such as Magee Marsh WA; Killdeer Plains and Big Island wildlife areas.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*

TRACK #44

The liquid gurgling notes of marsh wrens have a mechanical quality, and give away this small bird's presence in the cattails. This a well named species; marsh wrens are strict wetland inhabitants, and prefer larger marshes. As about 90% of Ohio wetlands have been lost since European settlement, marsh wrens have declined as well. Marsh wrens often occur in loose colonies, and frequently sing at night.

RANGE:

Most likely in the northern half of Ohio, but might occur wherever large wetlands are found.

HABITAT:

Mixed-emergent marshes, prefers dense cattail stands.

BEST SPOTS:

Western Lake Erie marshes such as Magee Marsh WA; Spring Valley and Killbuck wildlife areas.



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31

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Poliptila caerulea*

TRACK #45

The tiny gnatcatcher returns from its tropical wintering grounds in late March, before trees are leafed out, and early spring is the best time to observe them. They deliver high-pitched, fussy-sounding notes more or less continuously, and these sounds are often what alert observers to their presence high in the tree tops. Gnatcatchers are quite inquisitive, and can often be lured in by making squeaky scolding sounds.

RANGE:

Common in suitable habitat statewide.

HABITAT:

All types of deciduous woods, but requires some large trees; often found in well treed parks and neighborhoods.

BEST SPOTS:

Woodlands such as Davey Woods and Lawrence Woods state nature preserves; generally easy to find state wide.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*

TRACK #46

One of our most celebrated birds, bluebird fanciers have erected thousands of nest boxes throughout Ohio which have helped to greatly expand populations of this attractive species. Bluebirds are a type of thrush, closely related to the American robin, and males deliver a soft, pleasing warbling song. In flight, bluebirds often emit a whistled *tu-wee* call, and knowing that sound will lead to detection of birds flying overhead.

RANGE:

Common statewide; many overwinter.

HABITAT:

All types of open country: farm land, golf courses, meadows and pastures.

BEST SPOTS:

Most easily found where nest boxes have been erected, such as in many county parks.



ROBERT ROYSE

PHOTO BY

32

Veery *Catharus fuscescens*

TRACK #47

A secretive woodland thrush, the common name is imitative of its call – a surprisingly loud, whistled *veeer!* Many thrushes have some of the most beautiful songs in the bird world, and veerys are no exception. They are common migrants throughout Ohio, but are much more local as breeders. Most nesting veerys are found in the northern half of the state, becoming most numerous in the north-eastern quarter.

RANGE:

Common migrant statewide; nesters most likely in northern Ohio.

HABITAT:

Migrants use all types of wooded areas; breeders prefer lush, swampy woods.

BEST SPOTS:

Migration hot spots like Green Lawn Cemetery and Mentor Headlands SNP; Clear Creek MP and Mohican SF are good places to find breeders.



PHOTO BY: GARY MESZAROS

Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*

TRACK #48

Possessing one of the most hauntingly beautiful voices of any bird, the hermit thrush is a common migrant. As a nester, it is quite rare, and is one of a suite of birds that breed almost exclusively in hemlock gorges. This group includes the blue-headed vireo and black-throated green warbler. Hermit thrushes are surprisingly hardy, and often overwinter in Ohio, particularly in the southern third of the state.

RANGE:

Statewide in migration; breeders confined to hemlock gorges.

HABITAT:

All types of woods in migration; nesters require cool, steep-sided valleys dominated by hemlock trees.

BEST SPOTS:

Can be found nearly anywhere in migration; visiting the beautiful hemlock ravines of the Hocking Hills or Mohican SF is a good way to find – and hear – nesters.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

TRACK #49

A familiar sound of Ohio woodlands, the wood thrush song is a melodious, flute-like cascade of ethereal notes. If it sounds like the singer is harmonizing with itself, it's because it is. This species has a divided syrinx (vocal tube) that allows it to create two separate notes simultaneously. Wood thrushes winter in the Central American tropics, and are thought to be declining.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

Deciduous woodlands with a shrub understory; prefers older, undisturbed forests.

BEST SPOTS:

Davey Woods SNP, Shawnee SF, and Waterloo WA have many; can be found in suitable woodlands statewide.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*

TRACK #50

One of the most obvious sounds of the outdoors is the song of the ubiquitous American robin. One of Ohio's most abundant breeding birds, the males are persistent singers and can be heard almost anywhere. In spring and summer, there are so many singing robins in the earliest hours of morning that this cascade of sound has often been dubbed, "the dawn chorus."

RANGE:
Abundant statewide.

HABITAT:
Generalists, and can be seen in most habitat types.

BEST SPOTS:
Almost anywhere that is out-of-doors.



© PHOTO BY: TIM DANIEL

34

Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*

TRACK #51

This interesting species is one of three mimics in Ohio – birds that routinely imitate other sounds. The gray catbird is the least accomplished imitator of the three, but is the most common. For the most part, catbirds deliver a rapid, squeaky gurgling punctuated occasionally with their namesake call, a *meow* that sounds surprisingly cat-like. Catbirds are the least hardy of the three mimics, but occasionally one attempts to overwinter.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Shrublands, brushy thickets, forest edges, and other successional habitats.

BEST SPOTS:
Abundant at Magee Marsh WA and easily found on almost every wildlife area.



© PHOTO BY: DAVID TARR

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*

TRACK #52

Of our three mimics, the mockingbird is an imitator extraordinaire. They are capable of retaining and reproducing up to 200 different sounds, and the subjects that they mimic can be quite diverse. In addition to offering up amazingly accurate reproductions of all types of birds, mockingbirds will even imitate truck backup beeps, sirens, and people's whistles. Mockingbirds often sing at night; these birds are typically unmated males.

RANGE:

Statewide, but increasingly rare to the north.

HABITAT:

Often found in suburbia, prefers open areas interspersed with shrubs and thickets.

BEST SPOTS:

Often found in the local neighborhood, easily found in suitable habitat in central and southern Ohio.



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Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*

TRACK #53

This is the least common of Ohio's mimics, and is not particularly tolerant of urban situations, preferring wide open country. Thrashers like dry, brushy fields and thickets with scattered fence rows and woodlots. They are accomplished imitators, but don't seem as prone to mimicking other sounds to the extent that mockingbirds do. Brown thrashers typically sing their phrases in pairs – a useful identification tip.

RANGE:

Statewide, but more common to the south.

HABITAT:

Dry, overgrown pastures, fields and thickets; young, open woodlots.

BEST SPOTS:

Reclaimed strip mines such as Crown City, Egypt Valley, and Woodbury wildlife areas; a few birds overwinter in southern Ohio.



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Cedar Waxwing *Bombusilla cedrorum*

TRACK #54

This species might be thought of as the “hearing test bird”; waxwings’ calls are so high-pitched that people with high frequency hearing loss can’t hear them. They emit soft, quiet whistled *tsee-tsee-tsee* sounds, and knowing this call will produce many more waxwings, as traveling flocks constantly vocalize as they pass overhead. Cedar waxwings are big fruit consumers, and nomadic flocks often visit ornamental berry trees.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Very nomadic, flocks can turn up anywhere, but are especially attracted to berries; breeders prefer riparian woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found along rivers in streams in summer; seek ornamental berry-producing trees and shrubs in fall and winter.



© PHOTO BY BILL HEBAN

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Blue-winged Warbler *Vermivora cyanoptera*

TRACK #55

This brilliant yellow bird has one of the easiest of the warbler songs to learn; a very buzzy, distinctive *beee-buzzzz!* that is fairly unmistakable. The only real source of confusion would be with the much rarer golden-winged warbler, which normally delivers a four-parted song. However, these species often hybridize, and suspicious sounding blue-winged songs should be tracked down to see who the singer is.

RANGE:
Statewide, but least common in heavily agricultural western Ohio.

HABITAT:
Brushy successional fields, thickets, woodland edges and openings.

BEST SPOTS:
Reclaimed strip mines, particularly Crown City WA; Clear Creek MP.



© PHOTO BY TIM DANIEL

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*

TRACK #56

This is our smallest warbler, and often difficult to see, as these hyperactive sprites are often reluctant to leave the highest tree tops. Their song is easy to learn, though, and fairly unmistakable. Parulas deliver a loud, ascending buzzy trill that ends with an abrupt *zap!* This southerner seems to be slowly expanding northward as a breeder, but migrants can be found statewide.

RANGE:

Most common in the southern ¼ of Ohio, but migrants are fairly common statewide.

HABITAT:

Peak numbers occur in hemlock gorges, but also nests in mature streamside forests of other types.

BEST SPOTS:

Shawnee and Zaleski state forests; Clear Creek MP.



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Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*

TRACK #57

The yellow warbler's song could best be described as cheery; a loud, fast *sweet-sweet-I'm-so-sweet!* It is a common sound, too, as this bird is a very common breeder throughout Ohio. Although the song can be quite variable, the distinctive tone remains the same, and it can usually be easily recognized. Beware of chestnut-sided warblers, which can sometimes sound extremely similar.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

prefers willow-dominated thickets, but found in all manner of scrubby habitat.

BEST SPOTS:

Absolutely abundant around the western Lake Erie marshes.



© PHOTO BY: ALLEN CLAYBON

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica*

TRACK #58

This northerner has become much more common since the original eastern forests were opened up, which created an abundance of the scruffy brushlands and edge habitats that chestnut-sided warblers require. Their typical song is not too hard to recognize – a clear, ringing *please, please, pleased to Meetcha!* The emphatic upslurred ending note helps in recognition, but sometimes this species can sound very similar to the yellow warbler.

RANGE:

Common statewide in migration; breeding birds are most often found in the northern third of the state.

HABITAT:

Young woods, woodland edges, brushy fields and thickets.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found almost anywhere in migration.



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Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*

TRACK #59

One of the first warblers to return in spring, the distinctive buzzy *zee-zee-zee-zoo-zee* of the black-throated green warbler rings out from our woodlands beginning in early April. This is a common migrant, but is much rarer as a nester. Breeding black-throated greens require large hemlock gorges; not a common Ohio habitat. This is one of the easiest warbler songs to recognize, and even beginners quickly learn this one.

RANGE:

Statewide in migration; hemlock gorges in summer.

HABITAT:

Migrants frequent all types of woodlands, but breeders require cool, steep-sided gorges that are dominated by hemlock trees.

BEST SPOTS:

Anywhere in migration; Mohican SF and Clear Creek MP in summer.



© PHOTO BY: BILL HEBAN

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica*

TRACKS #60

Many birds are intimately associated with certain plants, and this species is an excellent example. In fact, the yellow-throated warbler was formerly known as the “sycamore warbler” because of its intimate relationship with that tree. Yellow-throated warblers return in early April, one of the earliest warblers to return. Their sweet song is a descending series of slurred whistles, normally delivered from high in the tree tops.

RANGE:

Statewide, but rare in the northern ¼ of state.

HABITAT:

Breeds almost strictly along streams where large sycamores occur. Occasionally utilizes upland stands of native pines in southern Ohio.

BEST SPOTS:

Very common along streams in Shawnee and Zaleski SFs and Waterloo WA; found along most rivers from central Ohio southward.



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Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*

TRACK #61

Few birds are better named than this one. Breeding pine warblers are always found around pine trees, and even migrants will forage in conifers if they are available. This species gives a relatively brief musical trill, and since the sound will often come from high in pines, the habitat is a clue to the identity of the singer. A number of other species give similar trilling songs, such as dark-eyed junco and chipping sparrow.

RANGE:

Migrants can be found statewide; breeders largely confined to unglaciated southeastern Ohio, with some in Mohican SF and the Oak Openings.

HABITAT:

Strictly associated with mature pines, either native or planted stands.

BEST SPOTS:

Hocking, Tar Hollow, and Zaleski state forests.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor*

TRACK #62

This species has a very pleasing, easy to learn song – a rapid, buzzy *zee-zee-zee-zee* that ascends high up the scale. Prairie warblers can be extroverts, too – often the male will deliver his song from a conspicuous perch, such as the tip of a shrub or small tree, or occasionally while perched on a telephone wire. Most have quit singing by mid-July.

RANGE:

Uncommon outside breeding areas, which is primarily southern and eastern Ohio.

HABITAT:

Scrubby fields, locust groves in reclaimed strip mines, old clearcuts, and cedar groves.

BEST SPOTS:

Stands of young red cedar in southwest Ohio, such as at the Edge of Appalachia preserve; common at Crown City and Waterloo WAs, and Zaleski SF.



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Cerulean Warbler *Setophaga cerulea*

TRACK #63

Primarily an oak-hickory specialist, cerulean warblers spend most of their time high in the crowns of mature trees, and getting a good look at one is not easy. But, their quick buzzy song, which speeds in tempo, is easily heard and alerts observers to the bird. This species is thought to be rapidly declining, and southern Ohio harbors some of the best remaining breeding populations.

RANGE:

Mostly in southern and eastern Ohio, where most of the mature forests occur.

HABITAT:

Upland oak-hickory forests, although some use mature riparian woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:

Shawnee SF, Lake Hope SP, and Clear Creek MP.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

TRACK #64

One of the more obscure songs of the forest, black-and-whites deliver a wispy, high-pitched *weetsee-weetsee-weetsee* that is easily overlooked. So is the bird; this species engages in a foraging habit similar to the brown creeper, crawling over the bark of trees. Thus, they blend well with their surroundings, and are often more numerous than one might suspect, especially if the observer is not in tune with the song.

RANGE:

Migrants found statewide; most breeders are in southern and eastern Ohio.

HABITAT:

Mature deciduous woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:

Most of the large state forests, Conkle's Hollow SNP, and Clear Creek MP.



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American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

TRACK #65

The flashy redstart is hyperactive, constantly fanning its tail and flicking its wings, exposing the bright orange flashes in its plumage. In females, the orange is replaced with yellow, and if a "yellowstart" is observed singing, it is a first year male, as it takes this species two years to mature. Redstarts have quite a variable range of songs, and it takes some practice to master this one.

RANGE:

Statewide, but most common in southern and eastern Ohio.

HABITAT:

Dense understorey shrubs of forests, especially around water.

BEST SPOTS:

Most of the state forests; huge numbers of migrants at Magee Marsh WA.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYCE

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*

TRACK #66

Our only cavity-nesting warbler, this species is an inhabitant of wooded swamps. While most use natural cavities in dead trees, they can be enticed to use appropriate nest boxes placed in suitable habitat. Prothonotary warblers have a rather unmusical, loud song – a monotone series of *zwee zwee zwee* notes that carry for considerable distances. Overall, this species is uncommon, and not often found away from breeding sites.

RANGE:
Statewide, but generally uncommon and local.

HABITAT:
Wooded swamps and forests along slow-flowing streams.

BEST SPOTS:
The upper end of Hoover Reservoir; Killbuck WA.



© PHOTO BY: AL FREEMAN

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*

TRACK #67

This inconspicuous warbler spends most of its time foraging among dead leaves, and inhabits steep, wooded slopes. Worm-eating warblers are generally quite uncommon in migration away from breeding locales. Their song is a rather dry, rapid husky trill, similar to the pine warbler and chipping sparrow. Habitat is a helpful identification clue; those two species normally wouldn't occur in the understory of heavily wooded hillsides.

RANGE:
Primarily the unglaciated hill country of southeast Ohio.

HABITAT:
Inhabits the understory of mature deciduous woods that occur on hillsides.

BEST SPOTS:
Shawnee and other state forests in the southeast; Lake Katharine SNP.



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Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*

TRACK #68

The loud, ascending song of the ovenbird is a common and characteristic sound of Ohio's woodlands. Rising steadily in pitch, their song sounds like *tee-cher, tee-cher, tee-cher!* The only similar woodland song is that of the Kentucky warbler, but it is more monotone and has a flatter tone, and each phrase does not have the sharp inflection of the ovenbird. This species gives a rarely heard, complex warbling song at dusk.

RANGE:

Common statewide, wherever suitable habitat occurs.

HABITAT:

Relatively mature and undisturbed deciduous woods.

BEST SPOTS:

Any of the state forests and many wooded parks



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Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla*

TRACK #69

A harbinger of spring, this waterthrush returns by late March, and their loud, beautiful song heralds their arrival. They are odd amongst the warblers in that they spend a great deal of time on the ground, foraging along creek banks, behaving more like a spotted sandpiper than a songbird. The only similar song is that of the yellow-throated warbler, but that song lacks the rapid warbling chitters that conclude the waterthrush song.

RANGE:

Primarily southern and eastern Ohio; migrants are rare outside this area.

HABITAT:

Forested ravines with creeks or streams flowing through them.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found in the wooded hill country of southeast Ohio.



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Kentucky Warbler *Geothlypis formosa*

TRACK #70

This is a visually stunning species and well worth a look. Kentucky warblers are not easy to see, however, as they tend to lurk in the dense, shady undergrowth of forests. Knowing the song is key to finding them, as singing birds can usually eventually be tracked down and observed. This species sounds a bit like an ovenbird, but has a flat, monotone delivery that is readily recognized with practice.

RANGE:

Breeds almost throughout Ohio, but most common in the south and east.

HABITAT:

Deciduous woodlands with dense understory vegetation.

BEST SPOTS:

Woodlands throughout southern and eastern Ohio, especially state forests.



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Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

TRACK #71

Yellowthroats are one of the most common warblers breeding in the state, and their loud *wichity wichity wichity* song is commonly heard in all types of wetlands. They normally lurk in dense vegetation and are hard to see, but making squeaking or pishing sounds often lures them briefly into view. This is also a hardy warbler, and occasionally will attempt to overwinter in marshes.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

All manner of wetlands; occasionally drier brushy fields.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found in suitable habitats throughout Ohio.



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Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*

TRACK #72

A stunning creature, the brilliant yellow hues of the hooded warbler are not always easy to see, as this species occupies dense, shady habitats and is hard to observe. This is yet another case where knowing the song is very helpful, as the clear, ringing melody carries some distance, and with perseverance the singer can often be found. Hooded warblers have the largest eye of our warblers, an adaptation to the shady realm in which they live.

RANGE:
Breeds statewide, most common in our larger woodlands.

HABITAT:
Dense understory shrubbery of mature deciduous forests.

BEST SPOTS:
All of the state forests, Clear Creek MP, and Cuyahoga Valley NP.



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Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*

TRACK #73

Chats are rather bizarre and completely unlike the other members of the warbler family. They are huge for a warbler – several inches longer than most – and act very differently. Yellow-breasted chats skulk about in dense thickets, emitting odd hoots, grunts, cackles, and squeaks. If lured into view by making squeaking or pishing sounds, one will be rewarded with views of the brilliant lemon-yellow breast of this otherwise greenish bird.

RANGE:
Statewide, wherever suitable habitat occurs.

HABITAT:
Scruffy overgrown fields, thickets, young clearcuts, reclaimed strip mines.

BEST SPOTS:
Edge of Appalachia preserve, Crown City WA.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*

TRACK #74

Part of the robin-like song complex, this song may be one of the harder ones to learn in Ohio, as it is similar to the American Robin and not particularly distinctive. In this case, the call is easier to learn than the song – it is a diagnostic, mechanical-sounding *pit-a-tuk-tuk*. Summer tanagers are much scarcer than scarlet tanagers, and are closely associated with mature stands of oak-hickory forests.

RANGE:
Migrants are rare outside the breeding range, which is mostly southern Ohio.

HABITAT:
Upland oak-hickory woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:
Waterloo WA, Shawnee SF,
and Lake Katharine SNP.



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Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*

TRACK #75

This striking bird is probably far more common in Ohio than many people might suspect, but they tend to remain in the treetops and can be hard to see. Scarlet tanagers' songs are easily enough heard, though, and give away their presence. While somewhat robin-like in phrasing and tempo, their song has a rough, burry quality and has often been likened to a "robin with a sore throat".

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Mature deciduous woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:
All of the state forests and many
of our wildlife areas.



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Eastern Towhee *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*

TRACK #76

Known as the rufous-sided towhee until 1995, this large, showy sparrow has a very distinctive, clear ringing song. It often sounds very much like *drink your teeeaaa*; their call, which has the same clear tone, resembles *chewink!* Towhees are often first detected by another sound they make – with their feet! They feed primarily on the ground, and will scratch loudly amongst the leaf litter, like small chickens.

RANGE:
Common in suitable habitat statewide.

HABITAT:
Brushy fields, woodland openings and edges, cedar groves, thickets.

BEST SPOTS:
Easy to find in appropriate habitats.



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Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*

TRACK #77

This clean-cut, handsome little sparrow has adapted very well to suburbia, and is quite common in most neighborhoods. Their oft-given song is a rather lengthy, dry, monotonous series of chips. Chipping sparrow trills sound much like some other species, like dark-eyed junco, pine and worm-eating warblers, and field and swamp sparrows. It just takes some practice to differentiate them.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Open lawns with scattered trees, cemeteries, open woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found in appropriate habitat statewide.



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Field Sparrow *Spizella pusilla*

TRACK #78

Although field sparrows have trilling songs like several other species, this one is probably the easiest to recognize. They have a very sweet, melodic quality, and the trill speeds up towards the end. The song sounds much like a ping-pong ball that is dropped and bounces to a stop. Field sparrows often overwinter in the southern half of the state, but become quite secretive and lurk in dense brush.

RANGE:
Common in suitable habitat statewide.

HABITAT:
Old fields, abandoned pastures, open woods, orchards, woodland edges.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found statewide.



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Vesper Sparrow *Pooecetes gramineus*

TRACK #79

This species gets its name because it often sings at dusk - vespers are evening prayer services. Vesper sparrows are birds of wide-open, barren landscapes, and are best sought around large farms in very agricultural areas. Once one is in tune with their song - a musical, somewhat bubbly trill that begins with four distinctive notes - it is surprising just how common this bird is in otherwise largely bird-free habitats.

RANGE:
Statewide, but mostly in heavily agricultural western and northern Ohio.

HABITAT:
Large croplands interspersed with tree lines and brushy fence rows; grasslands.

BEST SPOTS:
Big Island and Killdeer Plains wildlife areas and vicinity.



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Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*

TRACK #80

First discovered in Georgia, and named for the city where it was found, Savannah sparrows are inconspicuous residents of wide-open landscapes. Their buzzy, two-pitched trilling song is distinctive and easily learned, and is by far the best way to become aware of their presence. This pleasing song is a regular feature of movie and commercial soundtracks.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Hay and alfalfa fields, grassy fields of airports, and reclaimed strip mines.

BEST SPOTS:
County airports; Crown City, Tri-Valley, and Woodbury wildlife areas.



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Grasshopper Sparrow *Ammodramus savannarum*

TRACK #81

The subtle, inconspicuous song of this skulking species can easily be lost among the cacophony of more boisterous songs in our grasslands. When attuned to the sounds of the grasshopper sparrow, though, it is surprising how common they are. Creation of massive reclaimed strip mine grasslands beginning in the 1970s has been a boon for this species, and large numbers now utilize this habitat.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Fallow fields, pastures, hayfields, reclaimed strip mines.

BEST SPOTS:
Reclaimed strip mines like Tri-Valley WA and The Wilds.



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Henslow's Sparrow *Ammodramus henslowii*

TRACK #82

This obscure bird is more common than thought, but its song is inconspicuous in the extreme and the bird is very easy to overlook. The male Henslow's sparrow tosses his head back, opens his bill, and out comes a pathetic-sounding two-thirds of a second hiccup that sounds like an ill cricket. Once attuned to this sound, an observer will soon learn that there are many more of these birds in suitable habitat than would otherwise be thought.

RANGE:

Statewide, but now primarily in southeastern Ohio.

HABITAT:

Reclaimed strip mine grasslands, hayfields, old pastures.

BEST SPOTS:

Strip mine grasslands like Crown City WA and The Wilds.



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Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*

TRACK #83

Our most common and widespread sparrow, song sparrows occupy all manner of habitats and will sing throughout the year. Their songs have a distinctive tone and quality of pitch, but a keen observer will note the extreme variability – it seems every rendition is slightly different. One of the most intensive studies of any bird species involved the song sparrow, by researcher Margaret Morse Nice in Columbus, Ohio.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

All types of open to semi-open landscapes; very adaptable.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found throughout the state.



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Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana*

TRACK #84

This is another of our trill-singers, like the chipping and field sparrows. However, swamp sparrows occupy a very different habitat than the others – wetlands. Their song has a rather metallic quality, as well, and seems slower in tempo than the others. Also, it is unlikely that any of the other similar-sounding species would be singing in wetland habitats.

RANGE:

Statewide in migration; breeders primarily in northern half of state.

HABITAT:

Wetlands, especially those dominated by cattails and other non-woody plants.

BEST SPOTS:

Abundant at Magee Marsh WA, Springville Marsh SNP, and Maumee Bay SP.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

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Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*

TRACK #85

A widespread and abundant winter visitor, juncos are common at backyard feeding stations. Their status as a nester in Ohio is much rarer; they are largely confined to hemlock gorges in the extreme northeastern corner of the state. Junco numbers swell during the peak of spring migration in March and April, and at this time it is very common to hear the males singing.

RANGE:

Common statewide in fall, winter, and spring.

HABITAT:

All types of wooded and open habitats; breeders use hemlock gorges.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found statewide, especially around feeders.



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Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*

TRACK #86

Along with six other states, Ohio has selected the cardinal as our state bird, and its showy appearance is often depicted, even on a license plate. It is also one of our most common birds, and a species that virtually everyone is familiar with. Northern cardinals sing throughout the year, and their cheery, whistled song is easily learned. This is one of the few species in which the females can and do sing on occasion.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

Very adaptable, everywhere from suburbia to woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found throughout Ohio.



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Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

TRACK #87

Another of the robin-like complex of singers, rose-breasted grosbeaks do sound like a robin, but they have a sweet, slurred quality to their voice that is very distinct. Sometimes, their song is said to sound like a “drunken robin.” Rose-breasted grosbeaks frequently intersperse their call note with the song, and it is an easily recognized *chink* sound that sounds like two trees rubbing together in the wind.

RANGE:

Migrants are common statewide; nesters more common northward.

HABITAT:

All types of woods; breeders prefer younger second-growth deciduous woods.

BEST SPOTS:

Big numbers of migrants at Magee Marsh WA and Green Lawn Cemetery.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*

TRACK #88

A southern species, the blue grosbeak is rare to uncommon in Ohio, and most likely to be found in the tier of counties that border the Ohio River. However, they are expanding northward and sightings are increasing. This bird has a rapid, rich warbling that is reminiscent of a purple finch, a species that would never occur alongside blue grosbeaks, as their habitat and range is very different.

RANGE:

Most likely in southernmost Ohio; occasionally to the north.

HABITAT:

Open country interspersed with brushy thickets and overgrown fence rows.

BEST SPOTS:

Crown City WA and Adams County.



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Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

TRACK #89

A ubiquitous species of the countryside, indigo buntings are nonstop singers even throughout the heat of summer. It is an abundant species; some estimates of the overall population have put the total at 40 million pairs. Their song is a long, complex series of warbling whistles; a helpful identification tip is that most of the notes are sung in pairs. Indigo buntings often sing from telephone wires or other conspicuous spots.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

All types of open country, woodland edges and openings, orchards.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found throughout Ohio.



© PHOTO BY: FRANK BARD

Dickcissel *Spiza americana*

TRACK #90

A grassland and prairie species that reaches peak abundance in the western Great Plains, dickcissels are notoriously cyclical from year to year in Ohio. Our state is at the eastern limits of their range, and a favored locale might have a few dozen pairs one year, and no birds at all the following year. Their song is imitative of the name; a mechanical, chattering *dik-dik-dik-ciss ciss ciss*.

RANGE:

Primarily the western half of the state.

HABITAT:

Prairie remnants, open meadows, hayfields, strip mine grasslands.

BEST SPOTS:

Big Island and Killdeer Plains wildlife areas; many reclaimed strip mines.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

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Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

TRACK #91

Come the first week of May, the bobolinks return to our fields from their wintering grounds in Argentina, and their bubbling melodies fill the air. Bobolinks are loosely colonial, and oftentimes many singing and displaying males can be observed in proximity. In migration, many birds can be detected as they wing high overhead, if one is familiar with their musical *pink* call note.

RANGE:

Statewide; most likely in western and northern Ohio.

HABITAT:

Hayfields, especially with lots of legumes; grass meadows.

BEST SPOTS:

The Wilds, hayfields throughout the countryside.



© PHOTO BY: ROBERT ROYSE

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

TRACK #92

An abundant bird, red-winged blackbirds are one of the more obvious species along our roadsides. The males are prone to perching on fences, wires, and the tops of shrubs and delivering their raucous *conk-a-ree-onk* song. Frequently they accompany their singing by flashing their brilliant red epaulets, which they display by folding their wings out and forward. They reach peak abundance in wetlands.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
All types of open habitats, roadsides, wet meadows, cattail marshes, etc.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found throughout Ohio.



© PHOTO BY: BILL HEBAN

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Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*

TRACK #93

The clear, ringing song of this colorful black-bird is commonly heard wherever large grasslands and meadows are found. While meadowlarks have declined significantly in recent decades, they still remain common throughout much of Ohio. Its western counterpart, the Western meadowlark, is very rare in the state and looks nearly identical. The two species are best separated by their very different songs.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
Meadows, pastures, hayfields, grasslands.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found statewide; abundant in reclaimed strip mine grasslands.



© PHOTO BY: GARY MESZAROS

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*

TRACK #94

Not likely to rank high on anyone's list of favorite bird songs, grackles emit an abrasive variety of harsh, grating sounds, often concluding with a metallic squeak. It is a commonplace song too; common grackles are one of our most abundant birds, commonly found in residential areas. Our largest blackbird often forms enormous winter roosts that usually include other blackbird species, and European starlings.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

All manner of sites, except perhaps large dense forests.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found almost everywhere.



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Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*

TRACK #95

This species is much reviled, as it is parasitic and lays its eggs in other birds' nests. The baby cowbirds normally outcompete the host species' young, and thus cowbirds have had detrimental impacts on other songbirds. Brown-headed cowbirds give a distinctive, high-pitched gurgling call that is quite unlike any of our other species. This bird is well named; they are often seen in pastures foraging around cattle.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

All types of situations, generally avoiding only the densest woodlands.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found throughout the state.



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Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*

TRACK #96

Not as common and well known as the Baltimore oriole, orchard orioles are nonetheless not uncommon in much of Ohio, but are not as conspicuous as the brilliant orange Baltimore. Knowing the song of the orchard oriole is the best way to find them, as they usually lurk in dense growth. The rapid and variable complex of whistled notes almost always ends in a distinctive downslurred note.

RANGE:

Statewide in appropriate habitat.

HABITAT:

Open areas with scattered trees; old fields with brushy thickets.

BEST SPOTS:

Crown City, The Wilds, and Killdeer Plains wildlife areas.



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Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*

TRACK #97

These brilliant orange blackbirds are good singers, and males keep up a steady stream of their melodious flute-like whistling. A person who is a good whistler and attempts to imitate the singer will often be rewarded by having the oriole fly down for a close look at the imitator. Baltimore orioles like large, scattered shade trees and often do quite well in neighborhoods, parks, cemeteries and other urban haunts.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

Tall trees along streams, in parks or neighborhoods; open woods.

BEST SPOTS:

Migrants are abundant at Magee Marsh WA in May.



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Purple Finch *Carpodacus purpureus*

TRACK #98A

This species is primarily a winter visitor to most of Ohio, although they are casual to locally common breeders in the northeastern part of the state. There is a pronounced migration in April and May, and the males often are heard singing their rich, rapid warbling song. Wintering birds are often more common than thought, and if one is familiar with their dry, metallic *pik* call note, many more birds will be detected.

RANGE:

Statewide in winter, but variable from year to year.

HABITAT:

Often attracted to conifers, but utilizes many forest types.

BEST SPOTS:

Frequently visits feeders; nesters often found in Holden Arboretum.



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House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus*

TRACK #98B

A case of remarkably fast colonization, house finches were introduced in New York City in 1940, and from there spread throughout the entire eastern U.S. By the mid-80s they had spread throughout Ohio and today are a common fixture. The rapid jumbled warbling song of the male is a very common sound of suburbia, and house finches are generally far more likely at backyard feeders than is the similar purple finch.

RANGE:

Statewide.

HABITAT:

Often associated with urban settings, parks, farms, etc.

BEST SPOTS:

Easily found throughout Ohio.



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American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis*

TRACK #99

Sometimes known as “wild canaries,” the American goldfinch is an abundant Ohio bird that occupies a variety of open landscapes. They are most conspicuous in spring and summer, when males molt into their brilliant yellow plumage. Their song is a variable and complex mix of warbles and trills, but has a distinctive tone and is easy to learn. Goldfinches often call while in flight.

RANGE:
Statewide.

HABITAT:
All types of open habitats, including yards, gardens, and parks.

BEST SPOTS:
Easily found throughout Ohio.



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BIRDS OF OHIO CD COLLECTION

COMMON BIRDS OF OHIO

PUBLICATION 5414



WATERBIRDS OF OHIO

PUBLICATION 5418



OWLS OF OHIO

PUBLICATION 5423



WARBLERS OF OHIO

PUBLICATION 5349



FAST FACTS ABOUT OHIO BIRDS

- 421 species have been recorded in the state
- About 300 species occur annually
- Of the 421 species recorded, 40 of those have only been seen once
- Three species that once occurred in Ohio are extinct: passenger pigeon, Carolina parakeet, and ivory-billed woodpecker
- About 180 species breed in Ohio every year
- Of the 180 breeding species, about 1/3rd of them winter in the Central and South American tropics
- There are only four species that are common and widespread but non-native: rock pigeon, European starling, house finch, and house sparrow
- Numerically, the most abundant bird is probably the European starling. Since the Christmas Bird Counts began in 1900, nearly 9 million have been tallied just on these counts - far more than any other species
- Our fastest bird is the peregrine falcon, which can accelerate to nearly 200 miles per hour in a dive
- The bird nesting in Ohio that migrates the longest distance is probably the upland sandpiper, which winters in Argentina. They travel up to 11,000 miles round trip, each year.
- The biggest Ohio bird is the trumpeter swan, which can weigh 23 pounds and have a wing span of nearly 7 feet
- The smallest Ohio bird is the ruby-throated hummingbird, which weighs in at 3 grams, or about the weight of a nickel



CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SITES MENTIONED

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15610 Vaughn Road • Brecksville, OH 44141

☎ **216-524-1497**

www.nps.gov/cuva/index.htm

EDGE OF APPALACHIA PRESERVE

The Nature Conservancy

3223 Waggoner Riffle Road • West Union, OH 45693

☎ **937-544-2188**

nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/ohio/preserves/art145.html

FRANKLIN COUNTY METROPARKS

1069 W. Main Street • Westerville, OH 43081

☎ **614-891-0700**

www.metroparks.net

HAMILTON COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

10245 Winton Road • Cincinnati, OH 45231

☎ **513-728-3551**

www.greatparks.org

HOLDEN ARBORETUM

9500 Sperry Road • Kirtland, OH 44094

☎ **440-946-4400**

www.holdenarb.org

OAK OPENINGS METROPARK

4139 Girardham Road • Swanton, OH 43558

☎ **419-826-6463**

www.metroparksstoledo.com/metroparks/oakopenings

OTTAWA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

14000 West State Route 2 • Oak Harbor, OH 43449

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www.midwest.fws.gov/ottawa/ottawa.html

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14000 International Road • Cumberland, OH 43732

☎ **740-638-5030**

www.thewilds.org

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1-800-WILDLIFE

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OUR MISSION

To conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all.

The ODNR, Division of Wildlife is the state agency responsible for managing Ohio's fish and wildlife resources. The primary source of funding for the Division comes from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, federal excise taxes on hunting, fishing, and shooting equipment, and donations from the public. We care about all wildlife and maintaining stable, healthy wildlife populations. Our challenge is to balance the needs of wildlife, habitat, and people.

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