

# WINGTIPS



SUMMER TANAGER, photo by Chad Wilson

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MAY 2023

**Editors:**  
**Chad Wilson**  
**Marty Ackermann**  
**Danielle Squire**  
  
**Webmaster:**  
**Rob Swindell**

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# May 2023 Program

Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m.

Carlisle Reservation Visitor Center

*“Wildlife Rehabilitation, What is it?”*

**Tim Jasinski**



Tim Jasinski with his favorite bird, the Canada Goose

Tim Jasinski began his involvement with the Lake Erie Science and Nature Center in 2007 as a volunteer, was hired as a full-time seasonal in 2010, was hired again as a part-time seasonal in 2011, was hired into a part time position in 2013, and promoted to a full-time position in 2014 as Wildlife Rehabilitation Specialist. His exceptional interest in animals has elevated the Center’s wildlife rehabilitation outcomes, and has led to the its participation in the Lights Out Cleveland bird conservation initiative. Tim is a member of the Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitators’ Association (OWRA) where he has served as a conference speaker about waterfowl, songbirds, fostering rehab patients, woodcock care and many other topics. The OWRA recognized Tim’s work in the field at their 2019 annual conference. Tim has also worked with rehabilitators across the United States teaching specialized skills about hard-to-care-for species. He has received professional training through OWRA, the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association and the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, and shares his knowledge with his colleagues, interns, volunteers, and members of various animal conservation associations across the country. Tim has a great passion for all wildlife rehabilitation but has special interest in waterfowl. His favorite animal to work with is the Canada Goose!

Tim will discuss what wildlife rehab is and give some specifics on what he does each day and throughout the year, and will share some success stories.

**May Field Trips**  
**All trips are on Saturdays**  
***Guests Are Always Welcome!***

**May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 9:00 a.m.**

**Magee Marsh**

13229 State Rt 2

Oak Harbor, OH 43449

Paul Sherwood to lead

**May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 9:00 a.m.**

**Wyandot Meadows Preserve**

5401 Cleveland Rd. West

Huron, OH 44839

Paul Sherwood to lead

**Wellington Christmas Bird Count 2022**

By Paul Sherwood

This year the count was held on December 30th with 13 people participating. They counted for 24 hours, covering 5 miles on foot and 210 miles by car. The result was 36 species and 2,489 individual birds reported, which are within the range of the numbers in the last decade.

The species seen and the number of each are: Trumpeter Swan 2, Canada Goose 369, Mallard 3, Northern Pintail 3, Ring-billed Gull 1, Great Blue Heron 1, Bald Eagle 6, Northern Harrier 1, Cooper's Hawk 2, Red-tailed Hawk 11, American Kestrel 27, Rock Pigeon 118, Mourning Dove 23, Red-bellied Woodpecker 11, Downy Woodpecker 20, Hairy Woodpecker 3, Pileated Woodpecker 2, Northern Flicker 4, Blue Jay 60, American Crow 97, Eastern Bluebird 36, American Robin 10, Black-capped Chickadee 15, Tufted Titmouse 7. White-breasted Nuthatch 14, Carolina Wren 1, Golden-crowned Kinglet 4, Dark-eyed Junco 22, American Tree Sparrow 19, Song Sparrow 1, House Sparrow 279, House Finch 16, American Goldfinch 16, Northern Cardinal 58,

European Starling 1223, Common Grackle 2.

Thanks to all who participated!

## **Summer Tanager**

*Piranga rubra*

By Chad Wilson

I saw my first Summer Tanager at Magee Marsh in 2018, and I didn't know what I was looking at...the bird in front of me looked like it flew through a rainbow and all the colors stuck to it. I asked other birders what it was and they grew very excited and identified it for me.

Although this is the most widespread tanager in the continental United States, here in Lorain County we only get a few “overshoot” birds that fly too far north in springtime, then fly back south when the winds permit it. They only nest in the southern two-thirds of Ohio, which makes a sighting in this area a really big occasion. Last year, Lorain County had one at Bacon Woods, Amherst Beaver Creek, and a home feeder near Amherst Beaver Creek (which was the same bird as the Beaver Creek bird). All of the stays were very brief.

Summer Tanager males are the only all-red bird in North America (male Northern Cardinals are close to all-red but have some black on their face). Be careful not to confuse Summer Tanagers with Scarlet Tanagers, which do nest in our area. The Scarlet Tanager male is also a striking red, but it has black wings.

For such bright birds, however, Summer Tanagers can be extremely annoying to see, as they prefer hanging out in the canopy of leafy green trees. To make things even more difficult, they sound VERY similar to an American Robin. They also have a chattering call that sounds pretty close to vocalizations made by various squirrels. The only bone they throw us is that males have a distinctive *pit-ti-tuck* call that they sometimes use.

Female Scarlet Tanagers are even harder to see than the males as they are a greenish yellow and blend in more with the surrounding leaves. Immature males are the most exciting to see as they can look like a bowl of Fruit Loops, with wild red, yellow, and greenish designs. The bird on the cover of this Wingtips is an immature male, and for my money they are one of the most tropical-looking birds that can be seen in Ohio!

Summer Tanagers specialize in eating wasps and bees. They will catch the insects in flight, kill them by beating them against a branch, and then rub them on a branch to remove their stingers. They also eat other insects and fruit.

The average lifespan of a Summer Tanager is 4-6 years. The oldest recorded was at least 11 years old, which was captured and re-banded in Arizona in 2021. And Summer Tanagers are actually not true tanagers, but are part of the cardinal family!

The nesting habits of Summer Tanagers are interesting in that the eastern range Summer Tanagers tend to build haphazard nests while the western range ones are skillfully constructed. Male Summer Tanagers are slackers and do not help in the building of the nest.

The total breeding population of the Summer tanager is twelve million individuals. Currently, this species is classified as Least Concern (LC) on the IUCN Red List and its numbers today are stable.

I would not waste a lot of time hunting for Summer Tanagers in Lorain County, but if you do happen to see one enjoy the experience, and then go buy a lottery ticket!

References: [allaboutbirds.com](http://allaboutbirds.com); [audubon.org](http://audubon.org); Kennedy and McCormac, *Lone Pine's Birds of Ohio*; PeterJohn, Bruce: *The Birds of Ohio*, <https://www.thingsguyana.com/10-interesting-facts-about-the-summer-tanager/>

## **San Diego Birding!**

By Gina Swindell



**Greater Roadrunner, photo by Gina Swindell**

The United States has such a diversity of birds from coast to coast and border to border. Thanks to the recommendations from Tyler Ficker of Sabrewing Nature Tours, several great birding spots in the San Diego area proved fruitful for my lifer list.

From Cleveland I flew into Minneapolis then to San Diego. Unlike many stories we hear these days, all went very smoothly. I stayed in Carlsbad, which was a 30-minute drive from San Diego, with a fellow birder friend from Belize.

The first day we drove into Mexico through Tijuana. I do not recommend doing this. We did see a few lifers- the Black Phoebe, Black Turnstone and Surf Scoter, though we would see all but the scoter in California, too. It seems that this endeavor was much more dangerous than we knew, as both the border officer upon our return and later a state trooper would say, “glad you made it back.”

There was a 3 hour wait to get back into the U.S. which, apparently, was a good day according to the border agent. He said it is typically 6-8 hours. During this wait there isn't a single bathroom along the road where you sit, barely moving, for 2 miles while being accosted by vendors trying to sell you everything from food to live puppies. Moms paraded their sick children up to our windows for money. Very hard to take.

On a brighter note, the rest of the trip was a delight. We started our second day by exploring a wetland area off the main highway outside of Carlsbad called Batiquitos Lagoon. This accidental find was such a pleasant surprise located in a nice neighborhood at the end of a cul-de-sac. I was able to tick off a few more life birds with the Marbled Godwit, Hutton's Vireo and the Nuttall's Woodpecker. It surrounded a lake where the main path meandered near a golf course at one point. There were several habitats all within a little more than a mile walk on cinder paved pathways. It's well worth the stop if you are in the area.

Next, we found our way to a marina near Sea World of San Diego. We did a 2-hour whale watching trip which was only \$28, a mid-week special. We saw one gray whale that was heading to Baja, Mexico and another life bird- Brandt's Cormorant. As we drove back toward the main highway, we came upon Old Sea World Drive. This restoration project was heavenly for water birds and us crazy bird watchers. This drivable road was mostly traveled by runners and bicyclists, so it was safe to sit along the side of the road to enjoy close views of so many water birds and in great numbers. Lifers for me included the Long-billed Curlew and the Whimbrel. A highlight was the Cinnamon Teal that was feeding close to the bank. We spent a lot of time with this stunner, only to find more a ¼ mile down the road.

My favorite place of all was our visit to La Jolla (hoya). We were so close to nesting Brown Pelicans, Brandt's Cormorants and Double-crested Cormorants. And, maybe the most memorable spectacle was the California sea lions and harbor seals. They filled



the nearby beach as they basked in the sun. Those that were swimming/hunting looked like children frolicking in the surf. It was spectacular. The smell leaves a little to be desired but we adjusted quickly. I could have stayed there all day!

Other places that we visited and would highly recommend included El Monte County Park where we saw our first California Towhee and the Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler. Calavara Lake and Nature Preserve offered more species to my life-list, including the Spotted Towhee, Bushtit, Wrentit, Scaly Breasted Munia, California Thrasher, Lesser Goldfinch and Cassin's Kingbird. We also enjoyed close-up looks at a friendly Greater Roadrunner. On my final day, I spent a good deal of time at Lindo Lake where I added the Brewer's Blackbird, Black-throated Gray Warbler, the Allen's Hummingbird and the Tri-colored Blackbird. The unique thing about this place was the Black-crowned Night Herons. They were as plentiful as I've ever seen and very desensitized to people. This is a great place to take excellent photos.

After six days of birding, I added a total 26 birds to my life-list! Should you be planning a trip to San Diego, be sure to stop by some or all of the places if your schedule will allow; they do not disappoint! Happy birding!



**Black Phoebe, photo by Gina Swindell**



## Bird Trivia

- 1) Hummingbirds are found all over the world except in Antarctica?
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
- 2) Do chickadees have brains that change size during the year?
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
- 3) The bee hummingbird, the world's smallest bird, is found only in this country.
  - a. Cuba
  - b. Costa Rica
  - c. Columbia
  
- 4) Which bird is known to have the most songs?
  - a. Nightingale
  - b. Brown Thrasher
  - c. Northern Mockingbird
  
- 5) Ornithophily is?
  - a. A love of birds
  - b. Pollination by birds
  - c. The study of bird courtship and mating.

Answers:

- 1) b. Hummingbirds are found only in the Americas.
- 2) a. Black-capped chickadees store thousands of seeds and insects for food during the winter months. The part of their brain associated with memory increases in size during this time so that the little birds can remember where their food is cached when they go to find it in the spring
- 3) a.
- 4) b. The Brown Thrasher has over 2,000 distinct sounds in its repertoire. In comparison, the Nightingale, known for its beautiful singing, has only 300 sounds.
- 5) b. Birds are important pollinators. They are attracted to bright red, orange, and yellow flowers with little scent. Over 2,000 species of birds act as pollinators but the most common are hummingbirds and honeycreepers.

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New York, NY 10014  
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To pay online, go to [blackriveraudubon.org/membership](http://blackriveraudubon.org/membership) and select the type of membership you prefer.

# **Our Local Celebrity Black-legged Kittiwake!**

By Chad Wilson

For my first 5 years birding in Lorain County there were zero Black-legged Kittiwakes seen. Then we had a couple quick visits late last year. Now, we have one that won't leave!

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, a Black-legged Kittiwake was reported at Miller Park, but was gone within minutes. It was then found sitting in Lake Erie off the Lorain Fishing Pier that evening with some Bonaparte's Gulls.

The next day, March 12<sup>th</sup>, it was found at Spitzer Marina on California Avenue in the condominium complex there, and has since been seen by hundreds of people as it just likes to sit in the water or stand on the docks, offering the best views of a Black-legged Kittiwake anyone could ever want in Ohio! This is an immature bird, which stands out due to the thick black half-collar on the back of its neck.

As of the writing of this article, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, this local celebrity is still there, and at this rate it might never leave!



**Our resident Black-legged Kittiwake. Photo by Chad Wilson**



BLACK OYSTERCATCHER, photo by Gina Swindell



## **BLACK RIVER AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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**P.O. Box 33, Elyria, OH 44036**

**Email: [blackriveraudubon@gmail.com](mailto:blackriveraudubon@gmail.com)**

**440-541-9170**

**[www.blackriveraudubon.org](http://www.blackriveraudubon.org)**