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# Flight Patterns

[www.tri-moraineaudubon.org](http://www.tri-moraineaudubon.org)

WINTER 2025

**TMAS Board Meeting** - Please check the Tri Moraine Audubon website for TMAS Board Meetings; usually held the last Tuesday of the month, as sometimes they are moved to another date. Our next board meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2026, followed by March 27 in the OSU Student Services Center on the OSU campus at 6:30 p.m.

## Gift Ideas....

By Jeannine C. Roediger

I hate to remind you but Christmas is just around the corner. And, I am sure, you find, as I do, that many of your relatives friends and acquaintances do not share in your passion for bird watching. Perhaps it's because they do not realize how important our bird friends are or how interesting their life stories.

Perhaps a Christmas gift promoting birding is the way to involve them in finding out more about our feathered friends. If so, I have some suggestions that I love.

Of course Roger Tory Peterson's *Field Guide to Eastern Birds* would be a good beginning. Also *Audubon's Field Guide to North American Birds*, both are excellent resources.

Maybe for those who are more technically inclined *Peterson's Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America* might be a good choice. Adding the apps for bird sound identification through *BirdNet* and *Merlin* would make a great package.

One book that I have used most often through the years is *Naming the Birds At A Glance* by Lou Blachly and Randolph Jenks published by Alfred Knopf in the 1960s. It guides you through identification using the most identifiable feature you see in the bird you are viewing and then, through the process of elimination, you are able to identify your bird, by color, markings and size. Although I am not sure it is still being published you can find it online at a reasonable cost.

Cornell University has many books on ornithology that can take one in a more in depth approach on the subject of birds. Also the *Life Histories* published by Dover Publications that feature individual species are a great resource as well.

The more people involved in birding means more people aware of their importance to our environment.



**Wild Turkeys**

## Winter Programs 2025....

### NATIVES OF THE MAUMEE VALLEY

Guest speakers from Metroparks Toledo

**Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. – OSU Lima Visitor Center**

Come enjoy a program about the history of the land we now inhabit and the people who lived here first. Find out what life was like and what resources were available for natives of this land.

Consider how both life and resources have changed. Consider what we can do to celebrate the heritage of the land and people and preserve habitat for living creatures.

### PHOTO SAFARI

Guest presenters: You

**Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. – OSU Lima Visitor Center**

Did you take a trip and take pictures of our natural world? Did you plant native plants and take pictures of them? Do you take pictures of birds and other creatures that you would like to share with us?

This is your opportunity to tell us where you have been and what you have seen. Enjoy food and friendship as we take a photo safari in the middle of winter.

### ORNITHERAPY; THE POWER OF BIRDING

Guest speaker: **Holly Merker, founder of Ornitherapy**

**Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. – OSU Lima Visitor Center**

In today's fast-paced world, slowing down by noticing birds offers many rewards, especially by supporting our mental and physical well-being. Research shows that time spent in bird-rich biodiverse ecosystems actively reduces stress, depression, and anxiety, while helping build a stronger heart and immune system. We'll delve into our personal connections to birds, learn how to maximize the wellness benefits while birding, and cover the latest research surrounding the positive impact of wild birds on human wellbeing.

Holly Merker is a professional birding guide, award-winning author, podcaster, and lecturer who provides nature-based wellness programs for people of all ages. Combining backgrounds in art therapy, nature and forest therapy, wellness counseling, mindfulness mentoring, and bird identification; she is a global advocate for the practice of Mindful Birding.

Holly has co-authored two books which guide readers into optimizing the wellness benefits birds provide us, including the award-winning *Ornitherapy: For Your Mind, Body, and Soul* (Crossley Books, 2021), and *The Power of Birdwatching* (Die Kraft Der Vogel Beobachtung, Freya verlag, 2023 - available in Europe only). She is also co-host and co-producer of the Mindful Birding Podcast and founder of the Mindful Birding Network.

In 2022, Holly was honored to be the recipient of the ABA Conservation and Education Award given by the American Birding Association. In her free time, Holly spends every possible moment practicing Ornitherapy, which she credits in helping defeat breast cancer, restoring her health mentally and physically. *By Nancy Risner*



## Birding Adventures

At the September Tri-Moraine Audubon Society meeting we learned about the Lake Erie Birding Trail program featuring birding hotspots along the Lake Erie coastline. This program provides opportunities to experience the best of birding in any season.

One example of comfortable winter bird-watching is the Window on Wildlife at the Buehner Center at the Oak Openings Preserve Metropark southwest of Toledo. It makes a great day trip and is only one of the 90 best birding sites listed in the Ohio Lake Erie Birding Trail Guidebook.

You can explore the Lake Erie Birding Trail on an interactive map online or order the Guidebook at Lake Erie Birding Trail | Ohio Department of Natural Resources. This is your invitation to get out and get birding! *Contributed by David Gratz*

## Become a Member / Donate to TMAS

[www.tri-moraineaudubon.org](http://www.tri-moraineaudubon.org)

To join or renew your membership please visit our website or email [davgratz@gmail.com](mailto:davgratz@gmail.com). Memberships are from July 1st of the current year to June 30th the following year. Membership forms are also available at monthly meetings.

To donate to Tri-Moraine Audubon Society (TMAS) please visit our website. Donations help support programs and projects listed on our website. TMAS is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations may be tax-deductible.

## ***Feed Birds not Squirrels ...***

By Andy McGlashen, Sr. Editor Audubon Magazine  
Taken from Audubon Website

The 10 years that Eli Haislip has worked at The Wood Thrush Shop, a bird-feeding supply store in Nashville, one of the questions he's fielded most often concerns not birds, but mammals: What can I do about squirrels? "We answer it literally every day," he says. In late spring and early summer, when young squirrels emerge from their nests to forage, "we might get 15 or more squirrel questions in a day."

There's a lot to love about fox, red, gray, and other squirrels. They're undeniably cute. They're native species that play important ecological roles, including as food for hawks, owls, and other birds. And they're resourceful, adaptable survivors skilled at exploiting whatever food sources are available to them.

For Haislip's customers and countless others, that last bit is the problem. Clever, agile, and seemingly insatiable, squirrels are notorious for gaining access to feeders and siphoning off scads of seeds and nuts.

But take heart, bird-feeding enthusiasts: "In our experience, anybody that wants to be squirrel-proof can be squirrel-proof through one way or another," Haislip says. "Nobody has to suffer through having squirrels eat all their bird seed."

The key—if it's not overkill to invoke Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* in an article about small rodents—is to know your enemy. "They're not as smart as they get credit for," Haislip says. "They're very persistent, and they're very good at two things: climbing and jumping. If you take those away from them, there's not much they can do."

With that in mind, here are the best bets for defending your feeders, depending on your situation. Haislip says. *See next column*

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**Great: pole with baffle**—We lack the hubris to describe any feeding setup as "squirrel-proof," but you can get pretty darn close by sticking a pole with a baffle into the ground. Baffles are devices ideally made from metal that, when properly installed, block squirrels from climbing up the pole to the feeder. There are two kinds, cylindrical baffles and those that wrap around the pole.

With this setup you can use whatever type of feeder you want, with a couple of important caveats: First, be sure to place it at least 8 to 10 feet from anything solid—trees, buildings, fences, whatever. Otherwise the nimble rodents will simply leap onto the feeder. Second, the baffle needs to be between four and five feet off the ground. If it's too low, the squirrels will jump on top of it, using it as a launch pad to a feast. If it's too high, they might jump straight from the pole to the feeder. "The best weapon against a squirrel is a tape measure," Haislip says.

**Good: weight-activated feeder**—If you don't have enough space between structures to allow for that setup, your next best option is a weight-activated feeder. When a squirrel climbs onto one of these feeders, its body weight pulls down a shroud that blocks the feeding ports. Birds weigh much less, so they can feed as usual. These products can be very effective, Haislip says, but make sure the feeder hangs farther from the pole or tree trunk than a squirrel can reach. Otherwise, it can pull the feeder closer to it and access food without triggering the shroud. Another option is a feeder surrounded by a cage that keeps squirrels from reaching the food. The downside? The cage also keeps out larger birds.

**It'll Do: safflower**—If the above setups don't work for you—maybe you're in an apartment and can only feed birds on a fire escape or with a window feeder—you can at least discourage squirrels by offering safflower seed. Many birds will happily gobble up this nutritious oilseed, but squirrels dislike the taste and will generally avoid it, Haislip says.



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**WINTER 2025 Newsletter**

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#### President's Message

Hello, Friends! I'll be honest, I don't usually express a lot of love for winter. Spring and summer have my heart, with lively bird song and warm sunshine. But as we look at the beginning of this winter, I'm more excited than I've been in several years. Something about the gentle decent into dormancy, the exhale that is the autumn season. And I'm thinking about the pause I know is coming in winter. As a friend of mine encourages, take some time to reflect a little during this season. Learn from the patience of the trees and the quiet of the birds. The natural world has not died, but it takes a break and lies dormant for a bit.

While winter birding may seem slower, with many birds gone and others quieter, it is actually a great time to go birding! Certainly, our bird feeders make winter birding a treat (for us and the birds!). But this year I am especially excited for the raptors. Just over the last couple of weeks I've had many great looks at tremendous birds including Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks as well as Northern Harriers and, a new one for me around here, a Rough-legged Hawk just down the road.

Now is the time to get familiar with our local birds and enjoy our winter visitors. BAEA (that's the alpha code for Bald Eagles) can be seen year round, but NOHA (Northern Harriers) only visit in the winter. Likewise at the feeder the NOCA (Northern Cardinals) may be in your yard all year, but DEJU (Dark-eyed Juncos) are only here for the colder months. At the end of the day (or the beginning, depending on when you go birding), it's about enjoying the beauty of birds in our area, our neighborhood, our own backyard this season. Happy birding, I hope to see you soon! Naturally, Dan Hodges



