



ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020



OHIO BIRD
CONSERVATION
INITIATIVE



This report summarizes the July 2019-2020 accomplishments of the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative, a coalition of 116 governmental agencies, private organizations, and businesses that have an interest in conserving bird populations.

Formed in 2004, OBCI coordinates the diverse skills and resources of its voluntary partners to deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation in Ohio. Our partnerships are essential for the effective delivery of integrated bird conservation through landscape-scale assessment and management. For more information on OBCI and a complete list of our partners, please visit <https://obcinet.org>.

Program Coordinator

Matthew Shumar, (614) 706-6224, obcicoordinator@gmail.com

Steering Committee (2019-2020)

Stephen Matthews, *The Ohio State University/US Forest Service* (OBCI Interim Chair)

August Froehlich, *The Nature Conservancy* (OBCI Vice Chair)

Kelly Williams, *Ohio University* (Conservation Planning & Research Chair)

Stefan Gleissberg, *Ohio Ornithological Society*

Connie Hausman, *Ohio Biological Survey*

Kimberly Kaufman, *Black Swamp Bird Observatory*

Laura Kearns, *ODNR-Division of Wildlife*

Annie Lindsay, *University of Toledo*

Jen Moore, *Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks*

Kate Parsons, *ODNR-Division of Wildlife*

Cotton Randall, *ODNR-Division of Forestry*



Support for OBCI is provided by the ODNR-Division of Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service through the State Wildlife Grant program.

2019-2020 AT A GLANCE

IMPACT

Over the past year, OBCI was represented at more than 40 events, including academic conferences, public lectures, workshops, and bird festivals. Much of our programming in 2020 was repurposed to virtual platforms which brought new opportunities in spite of challenges.

OBCI GROWS

Collaboration with OBCI's signatory organizations has been key to successful conservation action. Recently we welcomed the following organizations to OBCI:

- Columbus Garden School
- Greene County Parks & Trails
- Hamilton Conservation Corps
- Medina Raptor Center
- Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District
- University of Toledo-Dept. of Environmental Sciences

NEW FACES

Coinciding with his retirement from Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks, John Watts stepped down as a long-serving member of the Steering Committee. John was instrumental in helping to form OBCI and has been an important voice in avian conservation. Additionally, Annie Lindsay (University of Toledo and Powdermill Avian Research Center) finished her term on the Steering Committee. We thank John and Annie for their service and look forward to working with them in the future.

At the start of the year, OBCI welcomed Jen Moore (Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks) and Kelly Williams (Ohio University) to the Steering Committee. Kelly will also be serving as the Chair of the Conservation Planning and Research Committee, which will be undertaking an update to the state's All-Bird Conservation Plan. For FY2021, we welcome Shane Good (Akron Zoo) to the Steering Committee.



2020 Ohio Bluebird Society Annual Conference. Photo by Noelle Bye, Times-Gazette.com.



Lights Out Cleveland volunteer releases a rescued American Woodcock. Photo by Tim Jasinski.



Vinton County forest birds teacher workshop leaders. Photo by Greg Smith/ODNR-DOF

OHIO LIGHTS OUT

AVIAN CONSERVATION IN URBAN LANDSCAPES

THE ECOLOGY OF MIGRATORY BIRDS

Every spring and fall, millions of birds migrate through Ohio. Most songbirds migrate at night, and lights on tall buildings or aimed at the sky can disorient them and draw them into the buildings. This causes many birds to strike windows or circle buildings until they fall from exhaustion. Ohio Lights Out is working to change that.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GLASS

An estimated 300 million to 1 billion birds die each year in the United States from collisions with glass on buildings, from skyscrapers to homes. Birds simply can't tell reflection from reality, and highly reflective surfaces adjacent to green space can be deadly. Thus, it is important that we address sustainable building design to consider energy efficiency as well as opportunities to reduce collision.

COLLISION MONITORING

In many of our regional Lights Out programs, teams of volunteers are canvassing downtown areas for dead and injured birds. Thousands of birds have been recovered in recent years, and these efforts help us to mitigate the effects of collisions in the short-term, and learn more about factors leading to higher rates of collisions.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Effectively conserving wildlife in urban landscapes requires collaboration among a broad suite of partners, including public and private entities, as well as traditional conservation organizations along with business and industry. The Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative is excited to expand its network, and we are continually looking for new partners.

BIRD-FRIENDLY DESIGN

It is increasingly important to engage city planners, architects, and engineers in "bird-friendly" building design to effectively conserve wildlife populations in urban landscapes. We promote the use of materials designed specifically to reduce collisions and certification programs such as LEED that incorporate bird-friendly strategies.

4,100+ BIRDS SALVAGED

Volunteer collision monitoring crews salvaged more than 4,100 birds from downtown areas of five cities and three universities throughout Ohio in 2019. Most birds are found dead, and the carcasses are sent to museums for future research. However, more than 950 birds were found alive and taken to wildlife rehabilitators. Approximately 90% of those birds are successfully rehabilitated and released back into the wild.

92 BUILDINGS ENROLLED

The ultimate goal of Ohio Lights Out is to make urban areas safe for migratory birds. We are continually working to encourage businesses to make their buildings safer by reducing artificial light at night and by making glass less reflective. As of this report, 92 buildings were participating in the program. Significant progress was made this past year in Cleveland, and this city will be a priority moving forward.

126 HOMEOWNERS ENROLLED

Although collisions at high-rise buildings in downtown areas receive much of the focus of Lights Out, the majority of bird-building collisions occur at residential and low-rise buildings across the landscape. By 2020, 126 homeowners were enrolled in Ohio Lights Out. We are excited to expand this program in 2021 thanks to our partners the Akron Zoo and Feather Friendly®.



Black-throated Green Warbler from downtown Cleveland. Photo by Janice Soos Farral.



Bird-safe glass treatment at Cleveland State University. Photo by Jennifer McMillin.

THE LIGHTS OUT NETWORK

LIGHTS OUT AKRON-CANTON

Organized by the Akron Zoo and Stark Parks, this collaborative effort seeks to expand safe passage for migrant birds throughout northeastern Ohio.

LIGHTS OUT CINCINNATI

The Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati Nature Center, and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden lead this effort throughout southwestern Ohio.

LIGHTS OUT CLEVELAND

This globally important stopover location for migrant birds has become the focus of our work. Our partners here have done tremendous work to identify and reduce urban hazards.

LIGHTS OUT COLUMBUS

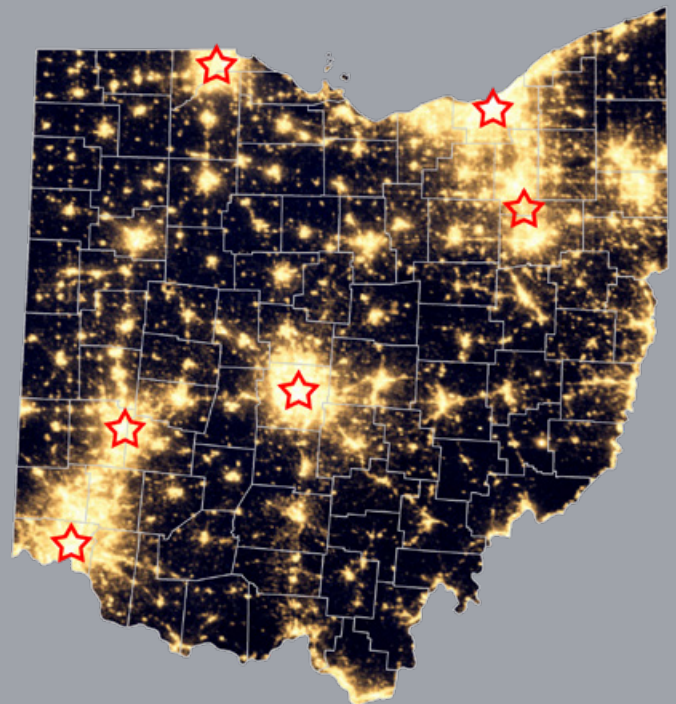
The Ohio Wildlife Center along with the Columbus Zoo and a growing number of local partners have made substantial strides in making central Ohio safer for migratory birds.

LIGHTS OUT MIAMI VALLEY

The most expansive bird-safe program in Ohio, Lights Out Miami Valley engages businesses and building managers in six counties.

BIRD-FRIENDLY TOLEDO

Black Swamp Bird Observatory, the City of Toledo, and Lucas County lead this program to address threats to birds including: building collisions, feral cats, balloon releases, & more.



Lights Out Cleveland collision monitoring volunteers.



RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT



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AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Landowner Guides

Two management guides are available for landowners, providing recommendations for forests in primarily forested landscapes or in regions dominated by either agriculture or development.

Case Study Videos

Our five-part video series features four landowners and the management activities at their properties. Learn about different silvicultural techniques and considerations unique to each property.

Workshops

Working with our partners, we have developed workshops for both professional foresters and private landowners throughout the state.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS

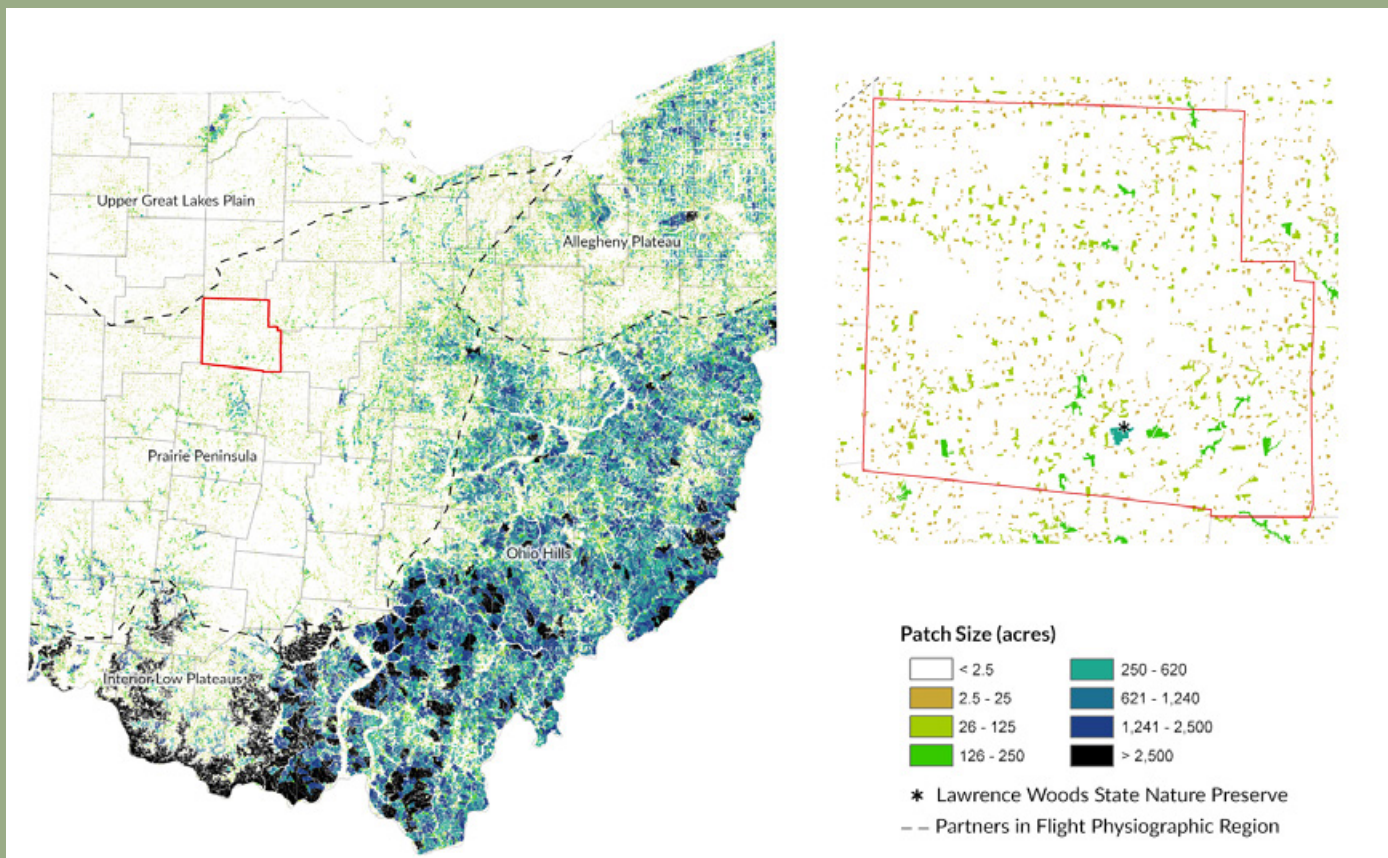
Despite global conservation efforts and successes, many bird species have continued to decline over the past century. Many of these species rely on forests for part of or all their lives, and needs may vary depending on the time of year. Indeed, not all forests are created equal, and those of different ages and with different tree species composition and structure may be equally important.

FORESTRY AS AN IMPORTANT CONSERVATION TOOL

Long-term data on forest conditions (e.g., Forest Inventory Analysis) and breeding birds (e.g., North American Breeding Bird Survey, Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas) combined with local-scale research have demonstrated a strong link between forest conditions and avian population trends. Thus, OBCI supports ecologically-based, science-driven management of forest lands within the state, including the application of timber harvests and controlled fire as it applies to stand- and landscape-level management on both private and public property.

LANDOWNERS HAVE THE POWER

Before starting any management, landowners should work with a local natural resource professional (state forester, private lands biologist, soil and water conservation district forestry and wildlife specialists, extension agent, Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency employees) to develop a management plan for their property and to find sources of financial assistance, if necessary.

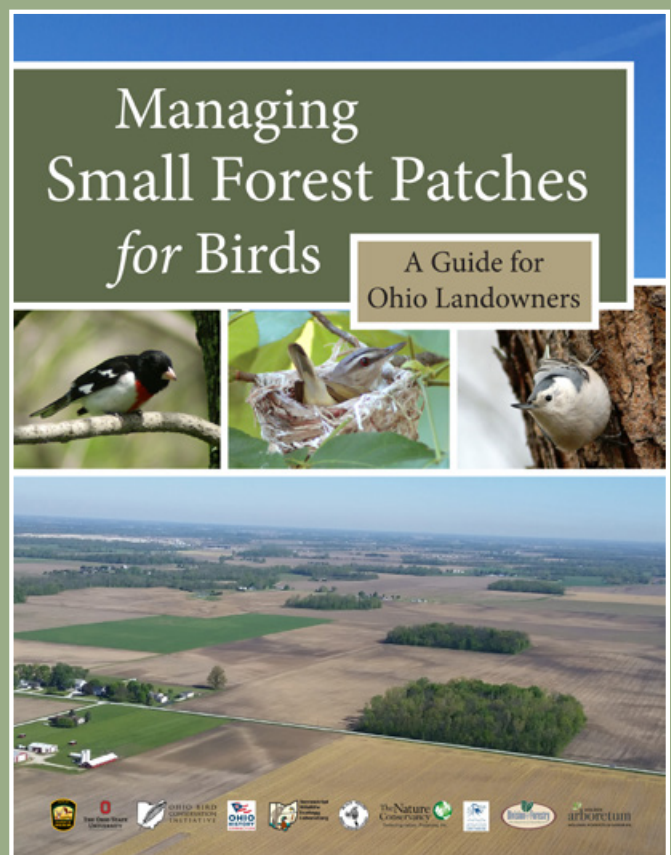


In February 2020, OBCI released a new resource entitled *"Managing Small Forest Patches for Birds."*

This guide is written for land managers and property owners of small woodlots seeking to improve forest conditions for birds across their full annual life cycle: breeding, migration, and wintering. Recommendations are based on multiple research studies conducted in Ohio and similar "small patch" forest ecosystems through the Midwest and eastern North America.

Thanks to generous support from our friends at Holden Forests, printed copies are available to any interested landowner. Digital copies of the guide can also be downloaded from our website. We are currently in the process of developing workshops based on the material, and will offer these virtually beginning in late 2020.

This new resource is a companion to *"Managing Forest Birds in Southeast Ohio: A Guide for Land Managers"* which was developed for primarily forested landscapes.



For more information, visit <https://obcnet.org/healthy-forest-management/>

PLANNED ACTIVITIES: 2020-2021

IMPROVE THE SAFETY & SUITABILITY OF URBAN/SUBURBAN HABITAT FOR BIRDS

OBCI will continue to strengthen and create partnerships to expand Ohio Lights Out, including growing established programs in Akron, Canton, Columbus, Dayton, and Cleveland, but also continuing or initiating efforts in Toledo and Cincinnati. We plan to increase enrollment in Ohio Lights Out to 100 buildings by the end of FY2021. With support from the Akron Zoo and Feather Friendly®, we will also continue to expand enrollment in our Registered Home Program.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

With the release of our “small patch” management guide, we are developing workshops to further help land-owners find the information and resources they need to successfully manage their woodlands for birds. The first workshops will be virtual, but we hope to hold in-person events later in the year.

ALL-BIRD PLAN v2.0

OBCI released a comprehensive avian conservation plan in 2010 that sought to step down regional plans the state level and help inform broader conservation efforts by summarizing local research. In 2019, we started work on an updated version of the plan that will consider the full-annual cycle. We are aiming to complete the project in 2021.



For additional resources, visit <https://obcnet.org>.