



NATURE CENTER
AT SHAKER LAKES

SUMMER 2022

INSIDE:

THE CLEVER GREEN HERON

THE MOHAWKED BELTED KINGFISHER

MEET THE WOOD DUCK

SUNNY SUMMER PROGRAM OFFERINGS

ROOKERY

DISCOVERING THE WATER BIRDS OF THE SHAKER PARKLANDS



A water bird is one who lives on or around water. This can include waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, and sea birds. The 20 acres of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes and surrounding parklands include over eight different habitats, many of which are where water birds thrive. This issue highlights some of the amazing birds that call the Shaker Parklands home, including the Green Heron pictured here!



FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR FRIENDS,

Throughout our world, our lives, and certainly here at the Nature Center, the one thing that always remains constant is change. Each new season, each new dawn, and each tick of the clock opens doors to new and exciting possibilities. Days become weeks, weeks become months, months become years, and before you know it, my tenure at the Nature Center has reached 15 years!

Recently, I announced my intent to retire in the Spring of 2023. This was not an easy decision, but something I considered carefully. It is time for me to move in new directions—and time for new perspectives and fresh energy to lead the Nature Center through its next evolution. This change was inevitable, and the time is right.

Through each year of leadership, my fondness and respect for the Nature Center and our mission has grown. As I look ahead to this shift in organizational leadership, my focus is on ensuring a successful transition by solidifying the foundation to sustain and enhance the organization through this change. As such, I have enlisted the help of Business Volunteers Unlimited to help guide us through a succession plan and strategic visioning process. Gradient, a local think tank focused on human equity, will work with us to apply a DEI lens and ensure an equitable and inclusive succession plan and strategic vision is built. Most recently, as we embark upon this transition, we have elevated our DEI Taskforce to a full board-led committee, while also adding accessibility to the focus (DEIA). This task force includes both staff and board members. While my pending retirement is time-bound, I recognize this work is ongoing and something that must be considered in all we do, from programming to recruiting, hiring, and onboarding for staff and the board. Serving all of our community more effectively will be a big focus during the last year of my tenure and throughout the transition to a new President & CEO.

As I just wrapped up what may be my final plant sale and annual benefit leading the organization, I was once again humbled by the support of our community. Each native plant sold and delivered, each silent auction bid, each raffle ticket sold, and each person who steps in to support one of our beloved community events demonstrates the importance of this organization and our mission. As I look forward to my final summer at the Nature Center, I can't wait to fully take in the squeals and smiles of our Summer Outdoor Adventure Campers immersing themselves outdoors throughout our beautifully restored grounds, seeing one more gorgeous bloom of the swamp rose mallow throughout our marsh, and to walk in our woodland forest bathed in bright green leaves. I hope you'll join me on the trails and enjoy these experiences with me, together with all the beautiful sights and sounds of summer.

With gratitude,

Kay Carlson, *President & CEO*



THE CLEVER GREEN HERON

by Lisa Golba, *Program Specialist*

Close observation of a Green Heron will reveal a striking bird with a velvet blue-green back, rich chestnut with grayish hues running down its neck, and a glossy dark cap. This bird can be found around marshes, shaded riverbanks, or quiet streams with dense vegetation. This heron is an opportunistic feeder (one who is able to adapt to whatever food becomes available) who eats primarily fish, but is also known to feed on crayfish, aquatic insects, tadpoles, frogs, snails, grasshoppers, snakes and rodents.

TOOLS AND TRICKS OF THE GREEN HERON

These water birds are intelligent and are one of the few known to use tools. They make bait and lures to catch their prey. A Green Heron will place items like crusts of bread, mayflies, and feathers on the surface of the water to entice food to come to them as they patiently stand and wait motionless near the bait. As soon as a small fish or animal approaches, the Green Heron will grab the prey with its dagger-like bill with remarkable speed and accuracy.

LISTEN CLOSELY!

The Green Heron's sound is a good one to know, as you are more likely to hear versus see this bird. They produce a loud, distinctive "kowp" or "skeow" sound. Next time you are out and visiting the Nature Center, check out areas by the stream and marsh on the All People's Trail and take a listen.

Scan this QR code using your phone's camera app to listen to the Green Heron call



THE MOHAWK KING: MEET THE BELTED KINGFISHER

by Nicole Hindman, *Early Childhood Environmental Educator*

What bird loudly announces its presence during any season and at any time of day? The undeniably cool Belted Kingfisher, of course! Everything about this bird is distinct. It has a big head with an even bigger mohawk, an unmistakable rattling call, and both the females and males have a “belt” across their chest. Interestingly, Belted Kingfishers are unlike many bird species in that the females actually have more color than the male, sporting a rusty colored “belt” as opposed to the male’s navy blue. Kingfishers specialize in fishing, but they will also eat frogs, crayfish, and small mammals, which we can learn partially by going through the pellets they regurgitate, just like owls! What could possibly be their most interesting feature, however, is their large beak that biomimicry scientists have marveled over.

What is biomimicry? What do kingfishers have to do with it?

Biomimicry is the process of taking inspiration from nature and making inventions based on it. In this case, biomimicry was used to solve a problem with a Japanese bullet train that was causing sonic booms when exiting tunnels. Kingfishers’ beaks slide through air and water so they don’t make a ripple, keeping their prey in sight the whole time while they dive into the water. They put the shape of their beak on the front of the train, and not only did it stop making sonic booms, it made it 10% faster and use 15% less energy! Walk along Doan Brook or around Lower Lake to find our resident kingfishers for yourself, remembering to keep your ears open for that raucous call.



VOLUNTEER NEWS

Many thanks to our volunteers for their continued support of the Nature Center. Thank you to Business Volunteers Unlimited, Greater Cleveland Volunteers, Ruffing Montessori, Hawken School, Laurel School, MRI Software, Johnson & Johnson Vision, CWRU Delta Sigma Phi, CWRU Sigma Chi, CWRU The Conservation Project, FeederWatch Volunteers and our 40th Annual Plant Sale Volunteers.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

HABITAT HEROES

With advance planning, groups of all sizes are invited to create your Habitat Heroes Day! Your group will assist our natural resources staff with hands-on stewardship projects that preserve the native plants and habitats found throughout our local parkland. Perfect for families, corporations, colleges, and scouts.

FAMILY FISHING DAY

Saturday, July 9 | 9:00AM–2:00PM | Shifts Available
Rockefeller Park

Volunteers are needed to assist with the NCSL children's activity table at this community event hosted by Doan Brook Watershed Partnership.

STEWARDSHIP SATURDAYS

June 25, July 30, August 27 | 10:00AM–12:00PM

Join us in completing hands-on land management and trail maintenance tasks that help to conserve and preserve the 20 acres of forest, marsh, and stream that make up our gem of a parkland.

TAKE TO THE LAKE

Saturday, August 27 | 10:00AM–4:00PM | Shifts Available
Lower Lake

Help attendees enjoy an afternoon of fun. Volunteers may help at the NCSL activity table or with other family-friendly activities.

HIKE & RUN

Sunday, September 18 | 6:00AM–1:00PM | Shifts available

Volunteers are needed to help with way-finding, registration, refreshments, set-up, clean-up, route monitors, and more.

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Saturday, September 24 | 10:00AM–1:00PM

Join us as we work to improve the habitat of the wildlife area of the Shaker Parklands. Tasks may include pulling invasive species and some trash cleanup.

To sign up or inquire, please email volunteer@shakerlakes.org or visit shakerlakes.org/volunteer.

SUMMER HOURS ARE IN EFFECT!

AN IMPROVED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

MONDAY

CLOSED

TUESDAY–SUNDAY

10AM–5PM

WEDNESDAYS (Memorial Day–Labor Day)

10AM–8PM

The Nature Center now offers restroom facilities outside of our business hours! You can find an outdoor restroom facility near the back corner of the parking lot for your convenience. This new feature was made possible by the generosity of our donors.



SUMMER PROGRAMS & EVENTS

THE HIIT FACTOR

Select Saturdays: July 16, August 6, September 10 | 8:30–10:00AM
HIIT Factor

Start your weekend with an invigorating hike from The HIIT Factor on Larchmere to the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, and back. Focus on the health of your mind and body while alternating between a brisk walk and naturalist-led nature breaks. Back at The HIIT Factor, enjoy a complimentary sampler class led by fitness instructor, Haja Tunkara. Prepare for dirt trails and to hike about 3.5 miles. **Registration required. Free. Donations welcome.**

GUIDED SUMMER BIRD WALKS

Select Wednesdays: July 20 & August 10 | 6:30–8:00PM
Nature Center

Join a guided walk through the Shaker Parklands looking and listening for birds. The walk begins on our ADA accessible boardwalk and moves to dirt trails throughout the Parklands. Participants seeking fully accessible conditions may join the first portion of the walk. You may bring binoculars, a few will be available to borrow as well. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot. Rain or shine. **Registration required. Free. Donations welcome.**

RECENTER & RESET HIKES

Select Sundays: June 26, July 24, August 28 | 6:00–7:00PM
Nature Center

Join Jo Rattiliff of Girl Trek to clear your mind, set your intentions and start your week off right. Enjoy the fresh air, sounds of flowing water, evening bird calls, and more. This leisurely walk takes place over mixed surfaces (paved and dirt trails). Rain or shine. **Registration required. Free. Donations welcome.**

FAMILY FISHING DAY

Saturday, July 9 | 9:00AM–2:00PM
Rockefeller Park

Doan Brook Watershed Partnership invites Northeast Ohio residents to “get hooked” and enjoy a day of free fishing and outdoor activities with friends and family at University Circle’s historic Rockefeller Park Lagoon. **Registration will be available at doanbrookpartnership.org.**

HAWK WALK

Saturday, July 9 | 10:00–11:00AM
Lakeview Cemetery

Why do hawks screech so much? How far can hawks detect prey? Join us at Lakeview Cemetery this summer as a naturalist from Lake Metroparks and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes will answer these questions and introduce you to the lives of these glorious raptors—their history, daily patterns, and survival. The first half of the program will be a presentation with live hawks followed by a walk through the cemetery seeking hawks in their natural habitat. Bring your binoculars! **Register at lakeviewcemetery.com.**

BAT NIGHT

Friday, August 19 | 7:30–9:30PM
Lakeview Cemetery

Hold on to your hat—the bats are back! Join us at Lakeview Cemetery this summer. Naturalists from Cleveland Metroparks and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes will discuss the bats that make Northeast Ohio their home. Keep your eyes to the skies to catch bats in flight! **Registration required. \$15 per person. Register at lakeviewcemetery.com.**

NATURALIST NOTEBOOK

Sunday, August 21 | 1:00–3:00PM
Hybrid: Join us at NCSL or online

This quarter, Naturalist Notebook is discussing ISLANDS OF ABANDONMENT by Cal Flynn, a Scottish non-fiction writer. Flynn explores places where humans once inhabited and nature is now reclaiming, including Chernobyl, Detroit, an abandoned botanical garden in Tanzania and more. This book reads like a dystopian novel, but speaks to the restorative powers of nature. Join author, Cal Flynn, Loganberry Books, and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes to talk about life in this post-human landscape. **Registration required. Free. Donations welcome. Purchase your book at Loganberry Books for a 10% discount.**

TAKE TO THE LAKE

Saturday, August 27 | 10:00AM–4:00PM
Lower Shaker Lake

Join Doan Brook Watershed Partnership for the 10th Annual Take to the Lake. You won’t want to miss this fun afternoon of paddling, guided hikes, yoga, and live music along the banks of historic Lower Shaker Lake. **Registration will be available at doanbrookpartnership.org.**

BEHIND THE SCENES: ANIMAL CARE

Wednesday, August 31 | 4:00–5:30PM
Nature Center

Have you ever wondered what it takes to keep our animals at the Nature Center happy and healthy? If you’re curious about animal care or just want a chance to meet our animals close up, join us for an afternoon of feeding our turtles and snakes! **Registration required. Free. Donations welcome.**

Registration and more information at shakerlakes.org/programs, or call 216.321.5935. Accommodations are available upon request.

ART ON VIEW

“In the Garden of Old Age”,
a half verse and half photography
collaboration between Poet
Nina Freedlander Gibans and
Photographer Abby Star.



This exhibit features Nina Gibans and Abby Star’s hanging installation of their book, “In the Garden of Old Age”. Star’s photography of the life cycle of nature is paired with Gibans’ poems about growing older. Several of the book’s more than 50 poems are inspired by life at Gibans retirement community, Judson Park. As you flip through the book’s pages, bright flowers give way to autumnal leaves, the colors becoming more and more monochromatic. The final poems are flanked by black and white photos of streams and tall forest canopies. The exhibit runs through Monday, August 15, 2022, at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. Pieces may be purchased for a fee with a percentage of proceeds benefiting the Nature Center.

NATURE CONNECTION

ART IN NATURE: THE WOOD DUCK

by Lisa Golba, *Program Specialist*

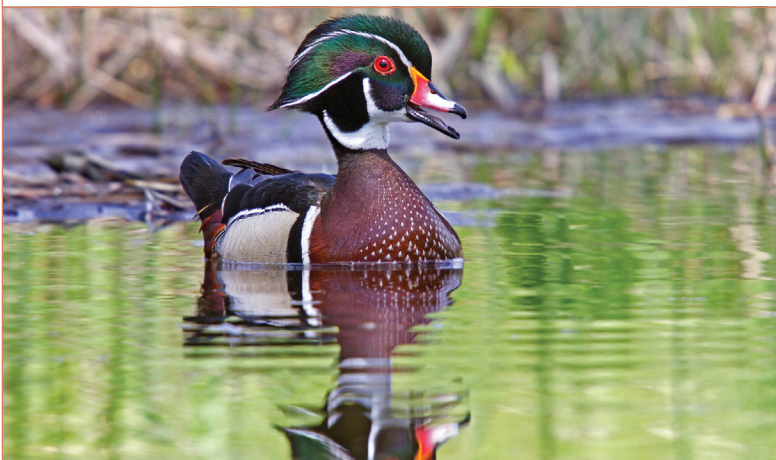
A water bird that stands out for its stunning beauty is the Wood Duck. Males are striking with shimmering colors of chestnut, purple and green, along with metallic blue and black wings. They have decorative patterns on nearly every feather. The females are simple and elegant with shades of brown for cryptic coloration—camouflage—to avoid predators. The male is a product of evolution and female choice. The male plays no role in raising the young, so a female chooses a mate based largely on his attractiveness. These birds thrive in freshwater marshes and ponds but can also be found along streams and rivers. There they can find cover in vegetation and food like plants, seeds, fruits, and insects.

Unlike most waterfowl, Wood Duck's nests are high up in tree cavities near water or directly over the water, giving the Wood Duck its name. Their webbed feet are tipped with sharp claws that allow them to perch on the branches.

Time to Fly Little Ducklings!

Ducklings are born with feathers and leave the nest quickly. When it is time to leave, their mother will call to them from below the nest. The ducklings must jump to reach her and may jump from heights of over 50 feet without injury. The duckling will leave their mother after about 2 months since at that time they are grown and can fly and find their own food. By fall, they are ready to molt and migrate for the winter.

While walking the trails at the nature center or at Lower Lake, look for these beautiful birds that are a true work of art by nature.



FUN FACT:

**THE WOOD DUCK IS THE ONLY
NORTH AMERICAN DUCK THAT REGULARLY
PRODUCES TWO BROODS IN ONE YEAR**

A SUCCESSFUL 40TH ANNUAL PLANT SALE

This year marked our 40th Annual Plant Sale! Hundreds upon hundreds of native plants were sold and distributed to customers and will take root in our region, increasing the health of our local ecosystems. Each year, our unique sale offers the area's largest selection of hard-to-find native perennials, trees, and shrubs together with beautiful herbs, vegetables, annuals, and hanging baskets. The online sale, which included free home delivery to customers, took place in mid-March. For the third year in a row, the online sale closed early due to a record number of sales depleting our stock.

On Saturday, May 7, over 500 customers descended upon the Nature Center for our in-person sale and enjoyed a beautiful sunny day browsing our plant selection while planning their summer gardens. Thank you to all who supported our sale; over \$100,000 in revenue was generated, which will be used to support the Nature Center's general operations and the Barber Habitat Restoration Fund.



AVIAN FLU

Confirmed as Cause of Deceased Birds Found Throughout Shaker Parklands

by Alexandria Yurosko, *Marketing Content Manager*

Over the past few months, members of our community have shared reports of deceased geese, hawks, owls, and other birds around the Shaker Parklands. As a result, our Natural Resources Manager, Nick Mikash contacted the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The state wildlife officer came out and collected two geese for testing. It has since been determined that there is an outbreak of Avian Influenza in Northeast Ohio.

The Nature Center is not licensed to rehabilitate birds, but we are grateful for the work Lake Erie Nature & Science Center, Penitentiary Glen Reservation, and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) are doing to manage the disease outbreak. These locations may not be accepting birds for rehabilitation, so always call first to report a sighting.

What should you do if you see a deceased bird?

Lower Lake is managed by the cities of Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights, not the Nature Center. If you come across a deceased bird in the larger Shaker Parklands, you can contact ODNR directly to report this sighting.

If a bird is spotted on the Nature Center property (Stearns Woodland Trail, All Peoples' Trail or marsh) you may share your findings with us.

BIRDS and BEAKS

Think of the different birds that you have seen. You most have likely seen several different types of birds with different beaks or bills, coloration, body shapes and feet. The birds that we see may look different depending on the type of habitat you see them in.

Why are they so different?

If all birds ate exactly the same food, lived in exactly the same place, and tried to raise their young in exactly the same habitat, they would all be competing for the same types of food, water, shelter and space. Over time, they've developed special ways to adapt to their unique place in the environment so they have a better chance of surviving. Some adaptations or changes are physical, like the shape of a bill or beak. One great way to see how a bird has adapted to its environment is to take a close look at its beak. Bird beaks come in all shapes and sizes.

Beaks are like a tool that is used to get their food. Each type of beak works differently. Look at each bird and beak below. Match the bird with the correct tool and description with how the beak works.

Great Egret



1

Hooded Merganser



2

Osprey



3

Solitary Sandpiper



4

A



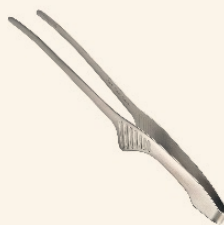
Scissors are like my curved beak for tearing food like snakes, birds, frogs, fish, reptiles and invertebrates.

B



Chopsticks are like my long, sharp beak for catching and spearing fish and amphibians.

C



Tongs are like my long, thin beak used to probe shallow water, mud and sand for small invertebrates.

D



A **strainer** is like my blunt, spoon-like bill that strains aquatic plants and algae from water.

Answers: 1.B 2.D 3.A 4.C



Answer: Osprey

CREATURE FEATURE:

Can you guess this month's featured creature using the clues below?

- I am a big, white and black bird whose favorite food is fish.
- I have large talons, a sharp beak, and broad wings for soaring over the water to look for prey.
- I can plunge into the water from up to 70 feet high to grab my fishy feast!
- Some people call me a fish hawk or sea eagle, even though I'm neither a hawk nor an eagle.



On June 4, over 500 guests enjoyed an exceptional evening full of culinary favorites, crafted cocktails, dancing, and conversation with friends. More than \$125,000+ in critical funds were raised to support the Nature Center's acclaimed environmental education programs, beautiful public trails, and native habitats that welcome over 140,000 people each year.



NATURE at NIGHT

A special thank you to our benefit co-chairs Laura Dean, Courtney Novak, Catey Peters, and Libby Ray; our culinary partners at Zhug, Spice Hospitality Group, Zoma Ethiopian Restaurant, Scorpacciata Pasta Co., Farmer's Feast, Adun Spice Company, On The Rise, and Luna Bakery & Cafe for their delicious creations; and Gigi's on Fairmount, The Wine Spot, and Sibling Revelry for keeping our spirits flowing. We are also grateful for the generous support of our numerous sponsors and patrons.



MEET THE STAFF:

NICOLE HINDMAN
Early Childhood
Environmental Educator



Q: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT THE NATURE CENTER?

A: I started in 2017.

Q: WHAT'S YOUR TYPICAL DAY LIKE AT THE NATURE CENTER?

A: My favorite part of my job is that as an educator, it's hard to know what to expect each day. One day I might be doing animal care and a hike for adults, and another day I might be in the creek with 4th graders catching macroinvertebrates! The thing that stays constant is my life's passion, and that's connecting people to nature.

Q: FAVORITE NATURE MOMENT?

A: My favorite nature moment was seeing my first and only barn owl in the wild! It was at Lakefront Nature Preserve and a naturalist friend had told me what tree this owl was spotted in the day before. I got there at dawn, stood where she told me, picked up my binoculars and immediately saw the spooky long legs of a beautiful barn owl in the tree. Such an unreal moment.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND?

A: I went to school for biology at the University of Northern Iowa and have a degree in ecology and evolution.

Q: FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

A: I love a good ghost story.



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#SHAKERLAKES

*Conserving a natural area, connecting people with nature,
and inspiring environmental stewardship*

SHAKERLAKES.ORG

216.321.5935 · naturecenter@shakerlakes.org



SHAKER LAKES HIKE & RUN

SUNDAY 9.18

5K & 10K | 1 MILE FAMILY FUN RUN
GUIDED HIKES OF VARIOUS DISTANCES

More information and registration available at shakerlakes.org/hikerun

Pets are welcome at this family-friendly event!