



◀CHIRPINGS▶

NATURALISTS' CAMERA CLUB OF TOLEDO

OVER FIFTY YEARS
OF MAKING THE PHOTOGRAPHER A BETTER NATURALIST
AND THE NATURALIST A BETTER PHOTOGRAPHER

November, 2020

DATE and TIME: Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 2 PM
LOCATION: A digital device near you.
HOST: Please enjoy a snack from your own cupboard.
ASSIGNMENT: Tell us (and show us?) what you've been up to for the last eight months.

PROGRAM: **Open Zoom discussion about the NCCT going forward by NCCT members.**

In light of the difficult year we've been through, most specifically concerning the Covid-19 pandemic, let alone all the other craziness 2020 has thrown our way, we want to step back and take stock of the current club state-of-affairs and where we imagine ourselves to be in the next 6-8 months. It's seriously looking like the medical experts have been right all along and that a viable, safe vaccine may not be widely available until next summer. Given that harsh reality, we'd like to hear your opinions on how you'd like to see us proceed going forward until that time. This all comes with the added news that our courageous and battle-weary leader, Mr. Bob Miller, will be stepping down (for good this time) after the December elections. So get your best ideas, thoughts and opinions together and join us for this important Zoom discussion on November 8th. We really need your input. Our continued success could depend on it.

NEXT MEETING: **Program:** TBD
Date and Time: December 13, 2020 at 2 PM.
Location: Probably Zoom
Host: N/A.
Assignment: TBD.

NEW ON THE NCCT WEBSITE

This month's home page photo was provided by NCCT member Joanna Willis. To visit Joanna's photographer's page, simply click on the home page photo. Also new this month are submissions to the Our Best Shots/October album by Marge Meserve, Mike Bohland, Jon Dunn, Lee Meserve, Frank Patz, Rich Irvin, Charlene Patz and Don Godfrey. Also see several new photos in Jon Dunn's wildlife album. We'd love to see your work on our website, especially on the Our Best Shots page, so get your gear out and let's see what you can bring back from the wilds of Northwest Ohio and Southern Michigan. There's got to be some great fall colors photos out there, but again, archived images are always welcomed as well. Happy hunting!

New Irwin Prairie Project to Launch this Fall

Editor's Note: The following is reprinted with permission from the Green Ribbon Initiative. It is the first in a 4-part series that appeared in the GRI October newsletter. Visit (www.oakopenings.org) if you'd like to learn more about the organization and their programs and if you'd like to receive their newsletter, please email Ashlee Decker at (ashlee.decker@TNC.ORG).

Introducing The Sandhill Crane Wetland Project Series – Part 1: “Piecing It Together”

Toledo Metroparks, TNC, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (ODNR-DNAP) have been working for over 40 years to increase protection in the Historic Irwin Wet Prairie region of the Oak Openings. This fall The Nature Conservancy (TNC) will break ground on the reconstruction of one of the largest remaining undeveloped parcels in the historic Irwin Wet Prairie. Farmed for many years, this 280-acre parcel is a strategically important link at the center of a nearly 13,000-acre corridor of protected land in the region. Pre-settlement maps of the Oak Openings show that 27% of the regional landscape was wet prairie. In fact, the historic Irwin Wet Prairie, where this project is located, was once over 10 miles long. Because of the high groundwater levels, woody species have difficulty establishing themselves in the wet prairie, leaving an open system that is vital to wildlife such as songbirds, waterfowl, turtles and aquatic invertebrates. There have even been accounts of Native Americans canoeing across this prairie expanse in the summer in search of waterfowl. Today only 1% of the landscape is still wet prairie, making this community the rarest of all the Oak Openings plant communities. Decades of ditching, tiling, creating ponds, and paving surfaces have drastically changed the hydrology of the region. Groundwater levels are lower because of that and wetlands that once held water for most of the year now dry up, subsequently allowing trees and invasive shrubs, like buckthorn, to take root. The water that once slowly infiltrated is now quickly funneled it into water ways, along with the nutrients and pollutants from the lands surface. These nutrients and pollutants eventually make their way to Lake Erie, contributing to annual algal blooms. The Sandhill Crane Project will help remedy these problems by reducing nutrient and sediment runoff into nearby streams and expanding natural habitat. As stated, this project area was farmed for decades. Despite drain tiles and ditching, the field continued to flood and annually needed to be pumped in order to be farmed (more about hydrology in upcoming articles). This project will close drain tiles, fill in ditches, and re-create topographic variation to restore the hydrologic variation and thus potential for biological diversity of the site. Restoration of this property will take place in two primary phases, construction and re-vegetation over the next 5 years. The restoration process will provide expanded research and educational opportunities for landowners, students and partners (more to come in subsequent articles). The name of this project reflects the belief that this project will result in ideal nesting and foraging habitat for Sandhill Cranes which have not successfully nested in the Oak Openings region for over 70 years. Sandhill Cranes prefer to nest in isolated areas with vegetation growing in standing water.

Did you know that the earliest Sandhill Crane fossil, estimated to be 2.5 million years old, was unearthed in the Macaspah Shell Pit in Florida? For more about the life history, habitat, and habits of Sandhill Cranes and lots of cool photos, visit – https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Sandhill_Crane/overview.

Toledo Metroparks Receives National Gold Medal Award

Metroparks Toledo is the recipient of the 2020 National Gold Medal Award for excellence in parks and recreation management, the most prestigious honor in the parks and recreation industry. Our local Metroparks system was awarded the *Grand Plaque in Category I (large park system)* on October 27th and won out over 3 other large park finalists from all across the United States. This tremendous achievement certifies what we already know in northwest Ohio – that along with The Toledo Art Museum, The Toledo Zoo, and The Toledo Mudhens, we truly do have some of the greatest gems to be found right in our own backyard. Congratulations to the Metroparks system and all its members and employees who brought this prize home.

	Club Officers:	
Bob Miller, Leader	Assistant Leader (Open)	Don Godfrey, Treasurer
Rich Irvin, Editor	Program Chairman (Open)	Rich Irvin, Webmaster
Bob Ellis, At Large Representative	Frank Patz, At Large Representative	Mary Figgins, At Large Representative
Mike Bohland, At Large Representative	Charlene Patz, Host Coordinator	

Check out our Web Site: <http://www.naturalistcameraclub.weebly.com>
E-mail: <mailto:naturalistcameraclub@gmail.com>
National Center for Nature Photography: <http://www.naturephotocenter.com/>
Toledo Naturalists' Association: <http://www.toledonaturalist.org/>