

UPPER RIDLEY/CRUM IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

The Need for Important Bird Areas

Almost 1 in 4 breeding birds have been lost since 1970. The IBA program is designed to promote habitat conservation and help combat threats to birds and other wildlife. Threats include clearing of land for development, cutting down dead trees needed for nest sites, farming practices that remove hedgerows, and exposure to pesticides and pollutants that can reduce the number of eggs laid and hatching success.

Types of Habitat at Greentree Park

Different species have different habitat needs, and within the larger IBA, Greentree Park is managed for:



Woodland



Forest Edge



Grassland

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) provide birds with places to rest and feed before migration, winter roost sites, and prime breeding areas. Greentree Park is part of the Upper Ridley/Crum Important Bird Area, one of over 80 IBAs in Pennsylvania.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT



Common Yellowthroats live in thick, tangled vegetation. They are most common in wet areas, but are also found in various dry upland sites.

These small birds will forage on or near the ground, eating adult insects and larvae. The female Yellowthroat builds her nest in low vegetation, constructing a bulky outer cup made of grasses and sedges with smaller materials toward the center. Sometimes the layers will be separated.

The Eastern Kingbird usually breeds in fields with scattered shrubs and trees, in orchards, and along forest edges.

Eastern Kingbirds feed on insects during spring migration and breeding, supplementing their diet with fruit as the summer progresses. Fruit makes up most of their diet during fall migration and on their wintering grounds.

These birds build nests from small twigs, dry stems, and bits of bark on the outside, but may also include found bits of trash such as cigarette butts, plastic, and twine. They line the inside of their nests with softer materials such as fine roots, willow catkins, cottonwood fluff, cattail down, and horsehair.

EASTERN KINGBIRD



WOOD THRUSH



The Wood Thrush is one of the most prominent examples of declining forest songbirds in North America, due partly to habitat loss and habitat fragmentation in both breeding and wintering grounds.

They feed on insects, spiders, millipedes, and small fruits.

Wood thrushes build cup-shaped nests in the lower branches of a sapling or shrub, where a fork provides good support and

Carolina Wrens are found in forested areas, as well as wooded or brushy suburban backyards. They are non-migratory and stay near their breeding grounds year-round.

Caterpillars, moths, stick bugs, leafhoppers, beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, and spiders comprise the wren's primary diet, which is supplemented by fruits, seeds, small reptiles and suet placed in bird feeders.

Carolina Wrens nest in open cavities 3-6 feet off the ground, in trees, overhangs and stumps. Male and female wrens build their cup-shaped nests together out of a wide variety of natural and found man-made materials.

CAROLINA WREN



AMERICAN KESTREL



American Kestrels prefer open areas with short ground vegetation and sparse trees,

including meadows, grasslands, parks, and farm fields.

In addition to eating insects and other invertebrates, Kestrels also eat small mammals, songbirds, and sometimes reptiles.

Kestrels nest in cavities left by other birds, such as old woodpecker holes, as well as natural tree hollows,

rock crevices, and nooks in buildings and other human-built structures.

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Landscaping for Birds



Nest Boxes and Nest Structures



Food and Feeding Preferences of Common Feeder Birds



Pennsylvania Audubon



Cornell Lab of Ornithology



WELCOME TO THE WILDFLOWER MEADOW

The Benefits of Meadow Conversion

Mown turf lawns provide space for recreation and social events and can contribute to an attractive landscape, but they have significant environmental and economic costs. For local governments, institutions, and homeowners, converting some lawn to natural meadow is a cost-effective way to balance ecological, recreational, aesthetic, and financial considerations.

With their deep, extensive roots systems, meadow plants are better than turf grass at absorbing stormwater and preventing flooding. Meadows trap pollutants that are not absorbed by turf and improve water quality. Unlike turf lawns, meadows do not need to be treated with fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides and are not a source of these pollutants.

The native species that make up meadows are adapted to thrive without irrigation, unlike lawns, which need a lot of water to stay green.

WHAT IS A MEADOW?

Meadows are plant communities made up of native wildflowers and grasses. Unless they are maintained by mowing once or twice a year, meadows will become woodlands over time. Meadow plants attract pollinators such as bees, wasps, flies, and butterflies, along with other invertebrates. In turn, invertebrates provide a food source for birds and other insect-eating animals.



Credit: Stacy Cohen



Credit: Arny

FROM LAWN TO MEADOW



Credit: Stacy Cohen

The meadow in Greentree Park was created by seeding and planting into existing turf that was killed with herbicides. Leaving the dead turf in place prevents erosion and helps keep weeds from taking over before the native plants get established.

For homeowners, the easiest way to convert lawn to meadow is to reduce mowing to just once or twice a year. This allows the lawn grass to grow out and other species to come in on their own, although there is less control over the types of plants with this approach. Smothering the lawn with black plastic or cardboard for three months can be used to create a weed-free area before raking seeds or planting into the dead turf.

Meadows need to be mowed once a year, preferably at the end of the growing season or in late winter. Properly timed mowing is needed to support native plant species flowering and seed set and to provide year-round habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. Leaving some sections un-mown will provide overwintering habitat.



Credit: Stacy Cohen

ONGOING CARE

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