

## Oak Openings Region Blue Week

Blue Week is an event sponsored by the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative and its partners to give the public a chance to experience the natural wonders of the Oak Openings Region firsthand.

Blue Week is named for blue species in the Oak Openings that reveal themselves in Spring. This year's theme is "Youth in Nature" and events will focus on opportunities for kids of all ages to engage with the Oak Openings Region and its wonders.

The goal is to showcase the beauty of the Oak Openings Region and inspire home-based and collaborative conservation by businesses, organizations, and individual landowners.

Check out the full calendar of events at <https://www.oakopenings.org/blue-week/>

### **Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative Partners**

<i>Nature Conservancy</i>	<i>ODNR Division of Forestry</i>
<i>The Olander Park System</i>	<i>Toledo Naturalists' Association</i>
<i>Wood County Park District</i>	<i>Toledo Zoo</i>
<i>Metroparks Toledo</i>	<i>Ohio State University Extension</i>
<i>Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District</i>	<i>- Lucas County</i>
<i>Black Swamp Conservancy</i>	<i>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</i>
<i>Huron-Clinton Metroparks</i>	<i>Michigan Nature Association</i>
<i>Tomahawk Archers</i>	<i>Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy</i>
<i>Oak Openings Region Conservancy</i>	<i>Ohio Prairie Association</i>
<i>Oak Openings Region Chapter of Wild Ones</i>	<i>The Stewardship Network</i>
<i>Ohio Department of Nature Resources</i>	<i>- Western Lake Erie Cluster</i>
<i>ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves</i>	<i>Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative</i>
	<i>Bowling Green Parks and Recreation</i>
	<i>Black Swamp Bird Observatory</i>
	<i>Michigan Botanical Club</i>
	<i>Michigan Department of Natural Resources</i>
	<i>Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative</i>



# *Oak Openings Region* **BLUE WEEK**

Get outside and explore why many have called the Oak Openings Region one of the 200 Last Great Places on Earth!

THE GREEN RIBBON INITIATIVE, a partnership of public and private organizations, landowners and individuals working to preserve, enhance, and restore critical natural areas in the Oak Openings Region.

## **SCAVENGER HUNT**

### How to Play & Win:

1. Use this booklet to find as many of the 12 native species pictured inside by visiting the parks/preserves at the bottom of the page.
2. Snap a picture and record each item you find.
3. Submit your pictures and findings via the Google Form found online by Sunday, May 22 at 11:59 p.m. for a chance to win GRI Oak Openings swag.

### Where to Get Your Booklet:

1. Download it online and print both pages front/back.
  - a. Find the Google form link at <https://www.oakopenings.org/blue-week/>



*Winners will be emailed and announced on the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative Facebook Page @oakopenings*

# CAN YOU FIND ALL 12 SPECIES NATIVE TO THE OAK OPENINGS REGION?



**Blue Heron**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Facts: This large wading bird can be found in wetlands, ponds and near the shores of open water. Its blue-grey plumage and deep wingbeats make a majestic sight. You may spot one on the Maumee River near rapids or shallows.



**Bluebird**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Facts: This charming, happy thrush is a harbinger of spring. Its bright blue feathers and red breast make it a welcome visitor to prairies, backyards, and farmland. A birder favorite, it lends its name to a blue bird day!



**Bluebird Box**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Facts: Many people have put up bluebird boxes in their yards hoping to attract the colorful bluebird. You may find them in many Metroparks or along the NORTA Wabash trails. Bluebirds prefer their homes facing north or east and away from other nesting boxes.



**Blue Jay**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Facts: Handsome but noisy, blue jays are one of our most intelligent birds. They are social birds with strong familial connections and an important source of acorn dispersal. They will bury them in the ground in a similar manner to squirrels!



**Belted Kingfisher**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Facts: A charismatic bird, kingfishers make their presence known with a rattling call often given on the wing. It is one of the rare bird species where the female is more colorful than the male, with an extra orange "belt" across the belly. It hunts aquatic prey with a headfirst dive after small fish or crayfish.



**Blue Grosbeak**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Fact: An attractive bird with a chunky beak, this bird is rarely seen in our area, but the Oak Openings Region is the place to look! They search for insect prey and grassland seeds within their preferred open woodland habitat.



**Blueberries**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Fact: Wild blueberries are a low bush variety reaching a height of only 1-2 feet. The berries are very tasty and much smaller than the high bush varieties that are grown commercially. Wild turkeys and many songbirds such as bluebirds and cardinals will eat blueberries.



**Blue Lupine**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Fact: A keystone species for the Oak Openings community. Wild Blue Lupine is a member of the bean and pea family. When the pods ripen, they twist open and shoot the seeds out several meters away from the plant. This is the host plant for the endangered Frosted Elfin and Karner Blue butterflies.



**Big & Little Bluestem**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Fact: Early settlers of the area mentioned the sea of grasses they encountered. They had a hard time seeing due to the height of the prairie grasses. Big bluestem will grow 4-8ft. tall and little bluestem up to 3ft. tall. They will remain tall most of the winter providing cover or shelter for animals.



**Blue Racer**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Fact: When they feel threatened, if possible, they will crawl into the underbrush to get away from predators. If they can't get away, they will strike and shake their tail. Their leathery egg cases can sometimes be found on sand dunes.



**Common Blue Violet**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Fact: This familiar wildflower is common in yards but can also be found in woodland settings as well. It is a valuable source of early season nectar for pollinators and a host plant for the fritillary group of butterflies.



**Indigo Bunting**

Found It!

Where did you find it?

Fun Fact: This bird is a common summer resident and frequents "edge" habitat where field and woodlands meet. Its feathers refract and reflect blue light to achieve a brilliant blue hue. The color is especially noticeable as a male sing from a high perch, with the sun setting his plumage aglow.

Need help in your hunt? Visit one of the Blue Week event locations: Wiregrass Metropark, Secor Metropark, Oak Openings Metropark, Blue Creek Metropark, Kitty Todd Nature Preserve, Kitty Todd-Salamander Flats, Irwin Prairie State Nature Preserve, Bradner Preserve, Olander Park, Black Swamp Homestead, Crosswinds Marsh (MI), West Prairie (MI)