

Our “Redefining Green” meeting is fast approaching. **We’ll meet at the Service Building (6555 Shier-Rings Road) at 7pm on January 29th.** Of course, we’ll have some coffee and snacks. Please RSVP, so we know how many of you to expect.

Happy New Years! I had the opportunity to go for a hike on New Years Day. Although cold, I greatly enjoyed the sunshine and bird watching. After spotting a juvenile Bald Eagle, I was able to see some cute winter visitors, Kinglets, our smallest passerine (songbirds or perching birds). Seeing one of Ohio’s largest birds and then one of the smallest was quite a treat.

I’ve written about Eagles before and will refer you to the archives on the web if you’d like to read more about them. I will comment however, that I am and forever will be in awe of this huge, beautiful bird. I have received several reports of them on the Scioto River. It’s a great time of year to look for them.

I’ll focus this update on Kinglets. Knowing that these little birds, just larger than Ruby-throated Humming Birds, withstand such cold weather and subsist on hidden insects in the crevasses of bark is incredible. They eat constantly to fuel their essential, high metabolism. Wikipedia states, “Kinglets prevented from feeding may lose a third of their body weight in twenty minutes and may starve to death in an hour”. I did not read the confirming studies, but if it is true, it’s incredible.

Throughout the breeding season Kinglets can be found in more northern boreal forest. Although, they are slowly adapting to more southern areas and have been found nesting in Ohio. Usually this small bird produces two large broods per year, building a new nest for the second brood. Five to eleven eggs are typically layered in a nest made of grasses, spider webs, dried leaves, mosses, and feathers.

I consider Kinglets chatty and quick. Marcia Bonta, a great naturalist and writer, refers to them as “fluttery” and the “Tinkerbells of the Bird World”. I like her description. It’s very fitting of this small magical bird. A great way to recognize Kinglets from a distance is to watch for their “fluttery” wings. Not only are these birds continuously moving from branch to branch, but with each landing their wings tend to do a quick shuffle. They also tend to be in groups, chatting a high pitched sweet sound, *see see see*.

Kinglets are considered insectivores, but have been seen feeding on nectar and sap. I spotted my birds flitting from branch to branch about ten to fifteen feet off the ground in a young wooded area. They are quite common in Central Ohio and wonderful bird to spot. Of course, the lack of leaves is helpful.

I hope your New Year is full of love, laughter, friends, family, and of course, time with the *natural* world.

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