The inspiration for this article, a male Cedar Waxwing sitting on his perch in dead branches at the top of a Norway maple tree behind my house.

Squirrel Hill
19 June 2020

A Cedar Waxwing fluffing its feathers to reveal the yellow margin on its tail as well as the red ‘sealing wax’ finial on its wing secondaries.

Waterfront
June 2008

A flock of waxwings arriving at Magee Marsh. Within such a large group, nesting pairs meet and form a committed relationship.

Magee Marsh
May 2018
Three waxwings on the spit at Duck Hollow looking for water or grit to aid in grinding food in their crops.

Duck Hollow
June 2012

The two Cedar Waxwings that established a nest in my neighborhood, both in the dead branches of the maple tree.

Squirrel Hill
24 June 2020

Seven adult waxwings rest on a dead tree at Green Cove in IBA-80. This mid-afternoon group has probably been cooperatively foraging for berries in the area even though some may be in nesting pairs.

Washington County, PA
June 2010
Through sun and rain the two Cedar Waxwings in my neighborhood remained loyal to their nest and each other.

Squirrel Hill
27 June 2020

This waxwing is snatching berries from a Virginia creeper on the wing. It was lucky to find this cache in the fall.
Moraine State Park
October 2014

In late fall the berries of a hawthorn bush can provide sustenance to Cedar Waxwings, which may or may not migrate south.

Erie National Wildlife Refuge
November 2011
Cedar Waxwings may hang around this area in winter. This striking bird was found on the South Butler CBC on January 2, 2016.

Surprisingly, two ‘visiting’ waxwings were tolerated by the resident male (bottom bird) as he sat on his guard perch. The visitors were probably part of an afternoon foraging group that the male had joined.

Here is part of the flock of waxwings from the South Butler CBC. Flocking means more eyes and more experience in older birds for finding food in winter. A curious robin is seen in the foreground. That’s snow in the background.
A juvenile Cedar Waxwing only has two characteristics of an adult: a small crest and the yellow tail band. Its body feathers are gray with a streaked belly, and there is a lot of white on the face.

Lower Buffalo Creek
1 September 2012

With nesting in full swing near our house, the male waxwing appeared on his perch with a full crop of food for his mate or his nestlings. His ‘full chest’ testifies to the food he has gathered.

Squirrel Hill
12 July 2020

The same juvenile as above showing more white on its face.

Lower Buffalo Creek
1 September 2012
Our resident waxwing seemed to be gone after July 16, but the waxwing’s perch tree was popular with other birds too. Here three American Crows took a break from marauding local nests.

Squirrel Hill
30 July 2020
1:00 pm

An immature Sharp-shinned Hawk also stopped on the perch tree that day. The hawk watched as brave House Finches buzzed by trying to scare it off.

Squirrel Hill
30 July 2020
6:00 pm

Surprise! After an absence of three weeks, the Cedar Waxwing returned to his perch. He probably had been busy with his first brood, so we did not see him at all. Unfortunately, he only appeared a few times in early August, causing me to think a second brood was not coming this year.

Squirrel Hill
6 August 2020
References for the Observations column on Cedar Waxwings:


