

Columbus Audubon Song Sparrow

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The Song Sparrow is published nine times each year by Columbus Audubon, a chapter of Audubon; Kristan Leedy, editor, kleedy@larkspur-pro.com.



Past and present Columbus Audubon volunteers and a few Metro Parks staff and volunteers who attended our volunteer appreciation party at Highbanks Metro Park on September 6.

Totally lipped over our great



As recently as the 1970s the sighting of a Double-crested Cormorant in Ohio was a noteworthy birding event, especially inland away from Lake Erie. Peterjohn in The Birds of Ohio says that fewer than 10 annual reports of cormorants was normal. Cormorant populations had been decimated by hunting, habitat changes and chronic pesticide exposure, and the birds had not nested in Ohio in many decades.

All that has changed. Beginning in the early 1980s cormorants were observed more and more frequently and in larger flocks, especially along Lake Erie. In 1987, after an absence of nearly a century, the Double-crested Cormorant returned to Ohio as a nesting species. We welcomed the cormorant as a symbol of environmental recovery, of a "cleaned-up" Lake Erie.

They kept coming. In 1992, 186 pairs nested on West Sister Island, home of the largest colonies of Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets, and the only population of Little Blue Herons in the Great Lakes region. By 1995 there were nearly 1500 cormorant pairs on West Sister. In 1996 a single flock of 15,000 cormorants flew past Kelleys Island. The cormorant population continues to increase at an estimated six percent annually, due in part to cleaner lakes and an abundance of small fish.

The problem is that cormorants destroy the nesting habitat for herons, and ultimately for themselves. Their droppings combined with uneaten fish parts increase soil nitrogen to toxic levels, and the trees die. Cormorants can nest on the ground but herons won't. The Black-crowned Night Heron has been eliminated from East Sister Island (Canada), and its numbers, along with those of Great Egrets, have declined precipitously on West Sister. The Great Egret is not only a great bird to watch, it's the symbol of National Audubon.

A solution is not easy to find. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, after considerable study and debate, is issuing a "public resource depredation order" allowing state and federal wildlife agencies to implement a management program to control cormorants where they impact public resources. Wildlife, including herons and egrets, are public resources. Columbus Audubon has communicated with Fish and Wildlife that wherever possible, non-lethal means be pursued for management of cormorants (or any other bird species).

For more information, visit http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/issues/cormorant/cormorant.html. (Thanks to August Froehlich for bringing this to my attention.)

Dave Horn is Professor of Entomology at the Ohio State University. He is vice president of Columbus Audubon, chairman of our conservation committee, Avid Birder participant, and reformed Hell's Birder.

Tips from Audubon Ohio: A guide to the hallowed halls of government

Ever wondered just who is representing you at the state and national level, or how to contact your legislator?

NATIONAL

A service of the Library of Congress, http://thomas.loc.gov offers a wealth of current national legislative information. You can easily search legislative bill text, determine committee members and find out when Congress is in session.

To find your elected officials, simply click on the respective House Directory or Senate Directory links under Quick Links. You can then search the directory by state or last name. Congressional representatives are listed by hometown and district number. You can view detailed sections of the Ohio congressional district map at http://www.nationalatlas.gov/congdistprint.html.

Personal Web pages of your representatives and senators that

include information about how to contact them can be accessed through the directories identified above.

STATE

On the Web site for the 125th Ohio General Assembly (http://www.legislature.state.oh.us), you can search for your state legislator quickly by using the search form on the lower right hand side of the page. Click in the box next to House and/or Senate. Then, search by zip code, district number or name.

The Web sites for the Ohio House of Representatives (http://www.house.state.oh.us) and Ohio Senate (http://www.senate.state.oh.us) have search tools for your convenience. Maps and more information can be found at the Ohio Secretary of State's Web site at http://serform2.sos.state.oh.us/sos/index.html.

State legislators also have personal Web pages that can be accessed through the above links. Don't be shy about letting your legislators know exactly what you think!

John Switzer Book Signing

Longtime Columbus Dispatch columnist and Columbus Audubon member John Switzer will make an appearance at Wild Birds Unlimited, 5400 Riverside Drive, Columbus, on Thursday, October 23, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. John will sign copies of his immensely popular book Stump Sittin'...and Other Bare Facts and Fiction. John has been entertaining readers with his tales about astronomy, nature, history, personal experiences and the weather since 1982. His book is a compilation of his favorite writings from the past 20 years. Thought to be sold out quickly after its release last fall, a limited number of copies of Stump Sittin' were found in the Dispatch offices and are available for \$9.95 at Wild Birds Unlimited, Riverside. A portion of the sales of Stump Sittin' is donated to Columbus Audubon to support the Calamus Swamp Preserve. For information on the book signing and book availability, call Wild Birds Unlimited at 614-766-2103.



Stump sitter John Switzer. Photo by Susan Setterlin.

Wildlife on Wings draws 300 participants

In spite of going up against an Ohio State Buckeyes' home game, approximately 300 people participated in Wildlife on Wings. This event was held September 6 at Highbanks Metro Park as part of Columbus Audubon's 90th anniversary celebration. Live animals displayed by Columbus Audubon and Ohio Wildlife Center (OWC) volunteer Darlene Sillick and OWC volunteer Kathy Jansen was a popular stop for attendees. The pair introduced visitors to a Screech Owl, Red-tailed hawk, opposum and woodchuck. Among other popular displays and activities were a display on bats set up by Manon Van Schoyck and a field journal craft activity created by Susan Setterlin and patterned after the observational methods of Margaret Morse Nice. Special programs, games and activities completed the full schedule with participants enjoying a fun educational event on a beautiful late summer day.

Columbus Audubon expresses a huge THANK YOU to the many Columbus Audubon volunteers, Highbanks staff and volunteers, OWC volunteers, and Ohio Bluebird Society volunteers who made this a great day: Tamara James, Suzan Jervey, Kristan Leedy, Mike Flynn, Pete Precario, Cheri Brown, Darlene Sillick, Sharon Treaster, Jackie Gribble, Joe Meara,



Elaine Smith shares information about Wildlife on Wings with visitors. Photo by Joan Arnfield.

Susan Setterlin, Lee McBride, Elaine Smith, Joan and John Arnfield, Debbie Marsh, Helen O'Meara, Dave Parshall, Julie Davis, Bill McCracken, Sam Pollock and family, Frank Martens, Marc Blubaugh, Lynn Nowjack, Ken Buckley, Mac Albin, Manon Van Schoyck, Marilyn Paulsen, Mark Skinner, Doreene Linzell, Rosalie Frazier, Marsha Friend, Susie Burks, Kathy Jansen, Chrissy Pfeiffer, Diana Morawetz, Rob Lowry, Larry Smith, Ken Davis, Sarah Fellure, Thomas Fellure, Andrew Fellure, Marguerite Speer, Darrell Gammon, Janice Petko, and Nancy Tetenhorst.

Coming Up

Columbus Audubon activities are for nature enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels. We invite you to join us for a field trip or program to learn more about birds and their central Ohio habitats, as well as other natural history topics. Our activities are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, October 1, 7:00 p.m. Columbus Audubon Board Meeting Museum of Biological Diversity.

Saturday, September 6, 1 – 4 p.m. Wildlife on Wings at Highbanks Metro ParkSee page 5 for details.

Chaparral Prairie Overnight Work Trip Saturday – Sunday, October 4, 7:30 a.m. - October 5

Help preserve manager Martin McAllister with barn painting and trail improvements. This cedar barren prairie has the largest population of Rattlesnake-Master in the state. Little Blue Stem is the dominant grass. Eighteen state listed species found in the preserve include Spider Milkweed, Prairie False Indigo and Pink Milkwort. Secluded group camping with shelter is available at the division's new maintenance building. Bring lunch, water bottle and money for remaining family style group meals. Call Roger Barber at 614-265-6467 by noon Monday, September 29, to reserve space for transportation and determine tool and meal requirements. Bring a cup for drinking water. Meet at building E at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Complex at Fountain Square, off Morse road. Hope to see you there! For more information call Sharon Treaster at 614-292-1395.

Saturday, October 4, 8:00 a.m. Blendon Woods Metro Park Bird Walk Skill level: All

Join Rob Lowery and Bruce Simpson at the Blendon Woods Metro Park nature center. Rob and Bruce are avid birders and spend a lot of time exploring Blendon. They enjoy showing beginners where the best spots are for many species. Blendon Woods features nature trails, Walden Waterfowl Refuge and Thoreau Lake. The park is at 4265 Ohio Rt. 161, 1 mile east of I-270, Westerville. If you have questions about the walk, call Rob at 740-549-1689. For a map, visit http://www.metroparks.net/maps.htm.

Sunday, October 5, 2:00 p.m. Clear Creek and Slate Run Metro Parks Skill level: All

Meet leader Mike Flynn, CA trustee, at Rt. 33 and Clear Creek Rd., CR116. This trip is designed to be a pleasing combination of two seasonal highlights. In a typical year, fall color will peak in the Hocking Hills around the 2nd week of October, so consider this trip a good excuse to kick off the beginning of the fall season. This trip will be a general introduction and overview of the vast Clear Creek Metro Park, mainly by car. As the afternoon moves toward evening we will head north and visit Slate Run Wetlands to look and listen for the birds of autumn. Contact Mike for more infor-

mation at 614-882-9493. Join us for one or both parts of this outing. Bring your two-way radios.

Saturday, October 11, 8:30 a.m. Birding by Kayak and Canoe Skill level: All

Darlene Sillick will lead another popular bring-your-own kayak or canoe outing to Twin Lakes, north of Shawnee Hills. From O'Shaughnessy Dam head west on Glick Rd., turn right at Walgreen's on Rt. 745/Dublin Rd., heading north. Turn left into the parking lot just before Twin Lakes. There is a city boat launch ramp. PFD's are a must. Bring water and a snack. We will conclude after about 2 to 2 - 1/2hours on the water. Casual birding, paddling and fun exploration are our mission. Weather permitting we will paddle on the Scioto River. After the water session join Darlene and tour the Ohio Wildlife Center's Education Center on the north edge of the west Twin Lake off Cook Rd. We will leave the parking lot between 11:00 and 11:30 a.m. to spend an hour or so touring the OWC facility. For more information, contact Darlene at 614-761-3696 or e-mail azuretrails@columbus.rr.com. (Sorry no crafts are for rent.) Join us for one or both programs. Information about OWC is available at http://www.ohiowildlifecenter.org.

Thursday, October 16, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Columbus Audubon on WOSU Radio

Columbus Auduboners Tom Thomson and Lois Day will join Open Line host Tom Wiebel. Their guest will be Ralph Ramey, author of *Fifty Hikes in Ohio* and co-author of *Ohio's Natural Heritage*. He served as director of Antioch University's Glen Helen nature preserve and outdoor education facility for 17 years.

Saturday, October 18, 8:30 a.m. (Sunday, Oct. 19 if weather is hideous)

Autumn Migration Downtown Skill level: All

Think you need to go up to Lake Erie to see neat migrants? Many are lurking right here in Columbus, especially along our riparian corridors. One of the best spots sits just south of downtown, at the Whittier Peninsula. It's no accident that Audubon Ohio and Columbus Parks are planning a nature center for this site, and Columbus Audubon is helping to gather bird information about the area. We'll explore along the Scioto River, first at the Whittier Peninsula, then below the Greenlawn dam, looking for lingering land birds, roaming raptors and early waterfowl. Meet at the South Scioto Boat Ramp, south off Whittier Ave., and dress for unpredictable weather. Trip should be over by 12 noon. For more information, contact Rob Thorn, 614-471-3051.

Sunday, October 26, 2 p.m. Autumn at Calamus Swamp Skill level: All

Join Tom Sheley, former CA trustee and avid birder, at Calamus Swamp for a special look at fall color and the creatures who are residing within. Come with Tom and kick up some leaves as he shows you autumn through his knowledgeable eyes. To reach Calamus Swamp, take Rt. 104 south about 20 miles from Columbus, 1/4 mile past where it crosses Rt. 22. Watch carefully! The parking lot is in the field on the left. To learn more about Calamus Swamp, visit http://www.geography.ohio-state.edu/CAS/calamus/habitat.html.

Tuesday, October 28 Columbus Audubon Nature Program Speaker Jim Davidson will present Charismatic Microfauna

See page 5 for details.

Avid Birders

For the trips listed below, bring a lunch and meet at the Worthington Mall parking lot for carpooling. Questions? Contact Bill Whan, danielel@iwaynet.net; Doreen Linzell, dlinzell@att.net; Joe Hammond, kestrel@columbus.rr.com. Or check the Web site www.jjhammond.com/kestrel.

Saturday, October 4, 5:30 a.m. Travel to northern Ohio in search of migrant shorebirds, passerines and hawks.

Saturday, November 1, 5:30 a.m. Look for late fall migrants. Destination TBD.

It's time for more for Birding 101!

Our popular Birding 101 series will be continued this fall and winter. Each Birding 101 course is comprised of a **Thursday evening classroom session held in the**Nature Center at Highbanks Metro Park, combined with a bird hike/practice session on the Saturday morning immediately following the classroom session. The bird hike is also at Highbanks and starts from the Nature Center. Below are dates, times and topics for October and November.

Hawk Migration

Classroom Session: Thursday, October 2, 7:00 p.m. We'll look at slides to compare silhouettes of various raptors and brush up on identification and bird behavior.

Bird Hike: Saturday, October 4, 7:30 a.m.
We'll take a 2-mile bird hike to look for fall migration.

We'll take a 2-mile bird hike to look for fall migrating birds. Bring binoculars.

<u>Winter Birding</u>

Classroom Session: Thursday, November 6, 7:00 p.m. Come to learn or brush up on sight and sound identification of our winter residents.

Bird Hike: Saturday, November 8, 7:30 a.m. We'll take a 3-mile bird hike to practice our new skills. Bring binoculars.

CA Nature Program

Charismatic Microfauna Speaker: Jim Davidson

Tuesday, October 28, 7:00 p.m. social time;

program starts at 7:30

Tonight we will have a unique opportunity to discover and learn about a remarkable part of our natural world that you may not have experienced. This world includes tiny dragons, damsels and nymphs. All you need to enter this world is a sense of wonder and adventure. Step outside and look around you - up, down, side to side. Whether you are beholding a field, woods, stream, river or lake, taking a careful look at these winged wonders using binoculars or a camera reveals their intricate detail and stunning beauty. Join us as Jim Davidson,long-time member and friend of Columbus Audubon, leads us on a fascinating journey into the realm of these minature animals (microfauna) and expands our appreciation of the amazing world around us.

Your BIRD REPORTS- by Charles Wheeler

We have only one report for you this month, but it's a dandy. (Hey, guys and gals, forgot your binoculars?) Suzanne Fahey sent this in, and we'll let her tell it in her own words: "We had a great pleasure of observing a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks nest and raise two babies near our home. The nest is located at East Dominion Blvd. and Sharon Ave., close to the Overbrook Ravine. . . in a large sycamore tree at Colerain ElementarySchool/park. Because I am not very good at identifying hawks, I finally decided it had to be a Red-shouldered by listening to tapes of hawk calls. Then when the babies were about three weeks old, John Ritzenthaler [Audubon Ohio Important Bird Area coordinator came out and got a great look at babies and parents and positively identified them as Red-shouldered Hawks. We also got some great photos of them. The babies successfully fledged. They are still around, as you can hear them calling on a regular basis. And, even better, you can count on seeing them on a regular basis also. All of us who knew about them took great joy in seeing the courtship, the nesting, and the fledging. We saw both parents bringing mice, chipmunks and squirrels to the nest." —Congratulations to the Faheys, and keep an eye peeled for the hawks next year—they may very well come back!

Delaware Bird Club Program

October 27, 7:30 p.m. at Ohio Wesleyan University. Director of Perkins Observatory Tom burns will speak about birds and the stars named after them. Contact Darlene Sillick for more information at 614-761-3696 or azuretrails@columbus.rr.com.

Take note

Two-day Sustainability Festival to be held in Athens, Ohio

The third annual Athens Area Sustainability Festival is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, October 11-12, Athens County Fairgrounds; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday, and 12 noon to 5 p.m., Sunday. A potluck dinner featuring locally-grown foods is scheduled for 7 p.m., Saturday night. The Festival showcases many aspects of community including recycling, solar and wind power, watershed restoration, organic farming, alternative transportation, and heritage preservation. Also featured are musicians, theatrical groups, jugglers, storytellers, food vendors, educators, etc., all committed to a community identity rooted in the principles of sustainability. For more information call 740-448-1016 or send email to isbalkits@yahoo.com.

Your bird reports

Please send news of your local bird sightings for publication in the *Song Sparrow* to kleedy@larkspur-pro.com or call them in to the office at 614-451-4591. Include as much information as possible about your sighting, including location, date, time, and weather. Don't forget to give your name!

Song Sparrow available by e-mail and on the Web site

Send an e-mail to casmem@juno.com if you wish to receive the newlsetter by e-mail. Say whether you want to get it only by e-mail, or if you would still like to receive a copy by postal mail as well. You can also go to our Web site and download the newsletter in PDF format. Please remember that the newsletter *usually* is available on the Web page before you get it in the mail. All our programs, trips and courses are posted on the Web site, along with a variety of other useful information and links. Check it out! www.qeoqraphy.ohio-state.edu/CAS/

New birding trail opens in southern Ohio - e-mail address correction

The new Appalachian Discovery Birding and Heritage Trail was dedicated this past spring. The trail runs for approximately 200 miles. Beginning at Woodland Mound Boat Ramp on the Ohio River on U.S. 52 in western Clermont County, approximately 15 miles east of Cincinnati. The new trail was organized in part with support provided by Audubon Ohio. To request a trail brochure, contact Deb Singer at 614-224-3303 or dsinger@audubon.org. (Please note the e-mail address shown in the September issue was incorrect.)

Feathers trump bird bands (part of a larger report from Audubon Ohio's e-newsletter)

The Scientist, a British journal (www.the-scientist.com), recently reported that advances in genetic investigation tools have enabled researchers to gather much valuable data from bird feathers. These new tools allow researchers to gain information about a bird's diet, mating behavior and migratory habits merely by examining its plumage. The new tools could allow scientists to bypass the fundamental weakness of bird banding, namely, the infrequency with which banded birds are recaptured. According to *The Scientist*, only about one in 20,000 banded birds is ever recovered. On the other hand, feathers can be plucked from netted birds easily and painlessly. In return for their feathers, reported *The Scientist*, "the birds would get better long-term protection, as researchers could determine the ecological niches they inhabit, the pollutants that are especially harmful, and the way stations they use between breeding and wintering grounds."

2004 Entertainment Books

The 2004 Entertainment Book is available at the bird supply stores listed below, through Columbus Audubon or directly from Dave Horn (614-262-0312, horn.1@osu.edu). The cost will again be \$30. Proceeds from the sales support Columbus Audubon's educational activities.

Accent on Wild Birds	1285 Grandview Avenue, Grandview		614-486-7333
Better Earth	59 Spruce Street, Columbus, in the North Market		614-224-6196
Backyard Experience	3337 N. High Street, Columbus		614-261-0355
Wild Bird Center of Dublin	6535 Perimeter Drive, Dublin		614-734-3333
Wild Bird Supplies & Gifts	738 East Lincoln Avenue, Worthington		614-431-2473
Wild Birds Unlimited	21 Cherry Park Square, Westerville		614-899-9453
	5400 Riverside Drive, Columbus		614-766-2103
	6839 East Broad Street, Reynoldsburg, Blacklick Shopping Ctr.		614-860-1133
Columbus Audubon Society	1065 Kendale Road North, Columbus	CALL AHEAD	614-451-4591

Columbus Audubon Volunteer Interest Form

When you volunteer with Columbus Audubon and share your talents, skills and time, you help educate people about birds, nature and conservation. We have a variety of ways you can help. Please check off each volunteer opportunity that interests you. One of our volunteers will be in touch to give you more information and talk about how you can get involved.

Leadership Serve as a trusteeServe as an officerChair a committee Activities and ProgramsLead field tripsHelp identify field trip leadersIdentify speakers for monthly programsDisplay your nature art or collection at monthly programsParticipate in work tripsServe on Eco-Weekend planning committeePlan and organize special events EducationServe on education committeeDevelop educational programming and/or materialsSpeak to children's groupsSpeak to adult groupsStaff displays at community and other eventsAnswer CA phone line from your home Conservation	Development Identify fundraising opportunitiesDevelop fundraising eventsPromote BirdathonDevelop corporate sponsorsSolicit businesses for donations of goodsResearch and write grantsServe on planned giving committee Public Relations and CommunicationsDevelop media contacts/write press releasesEdit newsletterWrite articles for newsletterProvide original artwork or photography for newsletter and Web siteServe as WebmasterDevelop content for Web siteCreate promotional materials MembershipMaintain membership databaseDistribute membership flyersPromote CA membership at special events Special Skills
Serve on conservation committeeAttend meetings/follow leads regarding local conservation issuesDevelop network of conservation champions to contact officials about issues, pending legisla- tion, etc.	PhotographyAudio visualArtWritingOther:
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Memberships Memberships in Audubon and Columbus Audubon and gift memberships are available through Columbus Audubon. The rates below are available to NEW subscribers. Audubon Membership Includes membership in the national organization and Columbus Audubon; includes 4 issues of Audubon magazine and 9 issues of the chapter newsletter, local activities, and when submitted with our chapter code helps fund our programs. \$20 - 1-year introductory rate (your renewals will be \$35) \$30 - 2-year introductory rate _ \$15 - 1-year student/senior rate Columbus Audubon Chapter Only Membership Chapter only membership includes 9 issues of the chapter newsletter, local activities and helps fund our programs. \$20 - 1-year new membership

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To change your mailing address, call Joe Meara at 614-781-9602 or e-mail casmem@juno.com.

Columbus Audubon Founded 1913 614-451-4591 www.geography.ohio-state.edu/CAS/

_ \$20 - Renewal

Officers: President: Pete Precario, 228-1984 Vice President: Dave Horn, 262-0312

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818-9440

Treasurer: John Wilson, 481-8872

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Davis, Mike Flynn

Additional chapter leaders: Conservation: Dave Horn, 262-0312 Work Projects: Sharon Treaster, 846-8419 Education: Susan Setterlin, 457-8130 Programs: Mike Flynn, 882-9493

Field Trips: Darlene Sillick, 761-3696 Audubon Adventures: Dave Horn, 262-0312 Eco Weekend: Lois Day, 451-4591

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WOSU Radio Program Coordinator: Tom Thomson, 464-0103

Avid Birders: http://www.jjhammond.com /kestrel/avids/avids.htm

CA Phone Line: Lois and John Day,

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