



Columbus Audubon Song Sparrow

May-June 2005
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Tips to enjoy bluebirds and other cavity nesters

By Darlene Sillick

Henry David Thoreau said, "If the warble of the first bluebird does not thrill you, know that the morning and spring of your life are past ... His soft warble melts in the ear, as the snow is melting in the valleys around. He wears the sky on his back."

If you are lucky enough to have bluebirds in your yard than you are a lucky person indeed. Seeing that flash of crisp azure blue and hearing his soft warbling song will convince you that indeed the bluebird of happiness is here just for you.

Now is the time to place a nest box or clean out the nest box from previous years and lend a hand to our resident cavity nesters.

You have heard the phrase location, location, location. This goes hand in hand with habitat, habitat, habitat. In Ohio there are several species of cavity nesting birds and your habitat will dictate, in most cases, the species that will come to your nest box.

Let's review a few of our common species. In the central Ohio area, depending on habitat specifics, we can have Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Carolina Wrens and House Wrens looking for a natural cavity or nest box to raise their families. The ever present non-native House Sparrows or European Weaver Finches are always trying to capture a good home from one of our protected native species.

Let's start with the bluebird. If you have a lot with open grassy space, short grass and perches (which may include trees, posts, or stakes in a garden), the ground foraging, insect eating bluebird may find a nest box placed at least 40 yards from a wood or scrub edge a good real estate find. This cousin to the robin and member of the thrush family will eat spiders, ants, grasshoppers and crickets. Bluebirds will also eat an occasional flying insect, fruits and berries. Offer water if it is not readily available.

Inspect your nest box to make sure it is constructed well, does not have cracks, and that it is not damp or wet. Be sure there is a door that you can open for monitoring and cleaning after nesting is complete. Make sure the inside of the front door is scored so that it is easy for the young birds to grip the wood as they climb out. The box also needs to have some ventilation and drainage holes. Face the entrance hole away from prevailing northwest winds that can bring rain and snow. Face the opening in a south-eastern direction. Place some type of a baffle to discourage predators such as raccoons, snakes or feral cats. Do not place nest boxes on trees or posts without predator protection.

Now is the time to clean out your nest box. Watch to see if this year's nesting attempts are underway. Bluebirds build a nest of dried grass and sometimes pine needles in a week or less and are skillful enough to construct a level nest with a nice cup. Play detective and watch the scene around you during your weekly trips to monitor your box. Take the time to keep a notebook of what you observe each week. Make sure to include the date, the weather and anything else you find important. Perhaps tulips are blooming as you discover the nest of 4 to 6 blue eggs. The female will lay one egg a day early in the morning and will then leave for the remainder of that day. After she lays the last egg, incubation begins. She will incubate the eggs for 14 days and they will usually all hatch on the same day. Try not to disturb the family during hatching. It could be harm-



By Wendell Long

Eastern Bluebird.

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Birdathon 2005: There's still time to sign up

By Julie Davis

What will our Birdathon teams see this year? Blackburnian warbler, upland sandpiper or maybe our own mascot, the song sparrow. Our teams are working hard planning their trips and recruiting sponsors. We are all looking forward to this great spring tradition. It is all of our members that help make the Birdathon such a success. Your support is what makes this an exciting and fun event for our birding teams.

Our sponsors are as important to our success as our birders. If you would like to become a sponsor, simply pick one of the teams, fill out the sponsorship form in this newsletter and send it in. You do not need to send in your money until you hear from your team.

All of the profits from this year's Birdathon will go to the Whittier Peninsula project, where Audubon, Metro

Parks and the city of Columbus will transform the land and create Ohio's first urban Audubon Nature Center. The most exciting news is that Columbus Audubon has pledged to match every dollar donated up to \$15,000.

So, this is your chance to help Columbus Audubon to double or even triple our usual donations by being a team member or a sponsor.

If you have not formed a team yet, there's still time! Just start with a couple of birding buddies, choose a team name and call Katryn Renard (614) 261-7171 to register.

Ask friends and co-workers to sponsor you and then go birding! Count all the birds that you can identify in 5, 10 or 24 hour increments on any day between May 7 and 15. Remember, you don't have to stay in Ohio to do your birding, so be creative.

The teams that have already registered are listed in the shaded box on the next page. So, call now and add your name to the list.



Birdathon Celebration

We are anticipating our best year ever and we want you to join in our celebration. All of our birders, sponsors, and their families are invited to celebrate their success on Friday, May 27 at the shelter house in Antrim Park. Join Columbus Audubon president and birding expert Dave Horn at 7 p.m. for a pre-party bird walk. If you cannot attend the walk, you are welcome to join us at 7:45 p.m. at the shelter house. We will re-live our birding adventures over dessert and award prizes. All participants who get their money in by Friday, May 27 will be eligible to win one of 2 grand prizes.

Indian Bear Lodge

Indian Bear Lodge has donated a one night's stay at their old west style lodge in Walhonding, Ohio. Poised on a hill over looking 100-acres of

nature, Indian Bear Lodge offers hospitality at it's finest. The

Indian Bear Lodge

lodge is located close to Amish Country, Longaberger, Roscoe Village and much more! Indian Bear Lodge is the perfect place to relax because nothing surrounds it but nature itself. Hike the nature trails, ride bikes, relax in one of our hot tubs or just enjoy your luxury lodge room. Once you're here you'll feel like you're a million miles away!

Denali 60mm spotting scope

Our other grand prize, a Denali 60mm spotting scope, was generously donated by Eagle Optics. The scope has premium optical performance in a light-weight 60mm package. The Denali 60mm spotting scope will be a pleasure to take anywhere because of its robust field worthiness and optical quality. BaK-4 prisms and fully multi-coated lenses ensure bright sharp images. This scope comes with a 15-45x zoom eyepiece which will give you all the range you need. The rugged waterproof nitrogen purged housing make this scope very field worthy in any viewing situation. The scope package includes table-top tripod, photo adapter and view-thru case.



Please plan to join us for a great night of birding, food, prizes and FUN. The entrance to Antrim Park is located off Olentangy River Road between state Route 161 and Bethel Road. Both 161 and Bethel can be reached by state Route 315. The park is on the east side of Olentangy River Road.

Please RSVP by May 20 to Julie Davis at (614) 523-2180 if you plan to attend. Birdathon teams should bring their sponsor sheets and money collected to the party or send it to the Columbus Audubon P.O. Box by May 20.

Sponsorship form

Sign me up! I would like to sponsor one of the teams above by pledging a specified amount of money for each species they see during the Birdathon. (For example, 100 species at 15 cents per bird would add up to a donation of \$15.) The money will be paid in cash or check to Columbus Audubon when I am informed of the results of my team's foray.

Team Name _____ Pledge _____

My Name _____ Phone# _____

Street, City, State, Zip Code _____

Mail to: "Birdathon," c/o Columbus Audubon, 5748 Blackhawk Forest Drive, Westerville, Ohio 43082

Birdathon teams

Backyard Experience

Chick-a-dees - 45

Gerry Brevoort
Joan Frederick
Nina Hawranick
Cyndi Henderson
Lynn Singleton
Lisa Zider

Board Walkers - 85

Dave Horn
Julie Boreman
Heather Raymond
Paul Gledhill
Marlene Woolun

Chestnut Ridge Chachalacas - 90

Scott Felker
Eleanor Nunley
Bill & Eric Reiner

Coo Coo Birds - 40

Deborah & Ken Buckley

Deck Birds - 1

Cheri Brown
Pat Barron
Bev May
Pete Precario

Even Tempered Longspurs - 50

Mary Ann Hrabley
Liz Melick
Julia & Pat Wolfrom

Gone With the Wrens - 50

Mary Counter
Christine Eitel

Lady Birds who Lunch - 50

Tamara James
Kristan Leedy

Les Chasseurs des Oiseaux - 30

Kelly Friar
Kylene Kruse
John Mundhenk
Jan Rodenfels

John Wilson

Marsh Madness - 115

Bill & Deb Marsh

Metro Parks Stellar Jays - 95

Jim Davidson
Jack McDowell
Joe Meara
John O'Meara
Joel Wachtel

Neat Nests - 35

Scott & Whitney Jaeb
Fred Lancia
Del, Jordan, & Myranda Parrott

No Egrets - 75

Becky Cummings
Elaine & Larry Smith
Roger Stout
Laura Thomas

Pelicans - 40

Mark & Lauren Richards
Benjamin & Riley Richards

Quick Three Beards - 175

Dave Horn
Dan Sanders
Troy Shively
Bill Whan

Roadrunners - 100

Chris Frantz
Dan Shepherd

Scarlet & Gray Tanagers - 75

Joe & Susanne Gatesman
Barb & Stephen Revard
Mark Setterlin
Susan Setterlin

Self-Mockingbirds - 30

Dave Daulton
Wanda Schwallie
Karen Augenstein

Slate (Run) Colored Juncos - 101

Linda Benner
Doug Everman
Kristen Everman
Andrea Haslage
Jen Myers
Susan Moore
Lori Patterson
Randy Rogers
Brad Sparks
Lynn Taylor

Swans and Coots - 70

Alan Cohen
Clyde Gosnell
Paul Knoop
Katryn Renard
Marlene Woolun
Louise Warner

Two Footed Boobies - 85

Marcia Brehmer
Marion Farber
Melanie Shuter
Mary Kay Wood

Two Good Eggs - 100

Sue Kramp
Jane Kleber

Two in a Bush - 65

Patty DeMaria
Elaine Fujimora
Biani Moran

Westerville Waxwings - 130

Julie Davis
Ken Davis
Jen Sauter
Darlene Sillick

Wild Birds Unlimited

Riverside - 160

Michael Flynn
Joe Hammond
Steve Landes
Tom Sheley

Your Bird Reports: John Arnfield

Spring migration is building as I write this (April 1). In the last two weeks, bird sightings from central Ohio have included Great Egrets, Brown Thrashers, Hermit Thrushes, Rusty Blackbirds, Eastern Phoebes, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Tree Swallows and Chipping Sparrows, as well as increases in the numbers of those species that may overwinter here but are more common in the warmer half of the year, like American Coot, Eastern Towhee, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Golden-crowned Kinglets. Despite all of this avian activity, however, reports from Columbus Audubon's members have been scarce.

Al Harter reported in mid-March that a Red-breasted Nuthatch had been visiting his feeders in New Albany and Darlene Sillick noted a "stunning" male Purple Finch at a feeder at the Ohio Wildlife Center. That's it! Maybe you are all out birding rather than sending in your observations? "Da spring has sprung / da grass has riz / I wonder where da birdies is?"

Please tell us! Send your reports to bird_reports@columbusaudubon.org or phone them in to the Columbus Audubon phone line at (740) 549-0333. Please give your name and the date and location of your sighting. Good birding!

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 and there is no need to register unless otherwise noted.

Field trips

Weekday Bird Walk at Green Lawn Cemetery

Friday May 6, 8 a.m.

Leaders: Ruth May and Katryn Renard

Skill level: All

Join Ruth May and Katryn Renard to bird the every popular and migratory trap, Green Lawn Cemetery. Meet at the pit and have a delightful morning learning bird identification tips from these avid birders. Ruth May learned her birding skills years ago by accompanying many legendary birders of Columbus Audubon on countless trips. These days, she is passing along her own expertise and has been a birding mentor to many, including Katryn Renard. Both Ruth and Katryn find great joy in sharing the wonder of birding with others. *Contact Katryn at brenard1@columbus.rr.com for more information.*

Magee Marsh and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday, May 7, 6:00 a.m.

Leader: Brad Sparks

Skill Level: All

Join Columbus Avid Birder Brad Sparks on a trip to one of the top birding areas in North America. We will spend the morning searching for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other neotropical migrants along the boardwalk at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area. We will then spend the remainder of the day at nearby Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge looking for waders, waterfowl, and shorebirds. A good day in this area can yield well over 100 species! Meet at the Worthington Square Mall parking lot, located at the intersection of High Street and Wilson Bridge Road. Bring a sack lunch and plenty to drink. *Contact Brad Sparks at (614) 751-6622 or birdmansparks@yahoo.com.*

Green Lawn Cemetery – Spring Migrants

Saturday, May 7, 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Jim McCormac

Skill Level: All

Join Jim McCormac on a tour of Green Lawn Cemetery. This birding oasis attracts droves of migrant songbirds. Scarlet tanagers, Baltimore orioles, rose-breasted grosbeaks, and many warblers, vireos, and thrushes are to be expected, and hopefully in good numbers. Plus, one never knows what might be found here – many rarities have turned up at Green Lawn over the years. The cemetery is very supportive of the birding community, and puts on an annual “Birder’s Breakfast”, which will be held this day. So, not only will there be good birding, there’ll also be coffee and donuts!

This trip is sponsored by Columbus Audubon and the Ohio Ornithological Society. Meet at the office, just inside the entrance to the Cemetery. **Directions:** Take Greenlawn Ave. west from I-71 south of downtown. *Contact Jim McCormac at Jim.McCormac@dnr.state.oh.us.*

OSU Wetlands and Olentangy Bikepath

Sunday May 8, 3:00 p.m.

Leader: Steve Landes

Skill level: All

We’ll enjoy a leisurely walk around this unique man-made wetland as we search for migrating birds and other natural wonders. The Ohio State University Wetland Research facility is off of Ackerman Road just north of campus. The entrance is on the north side of Ackerman (opposite Chemical Abstracts) just east of Olentangy River Road. Meet at the observation tower. *Contact Steve Landes at Katbird103@aol.com.*

Pickerington Ponds Wetlands

Sunday May 8, 1 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

Skill level: All

Join Mike Flynn to look at the original portion of this important migratory wildlife refuge. We will then explore the new wetland habitat. Meet at the Bob Evans on U.S. Route 33 or at the Bowen Road parking lot at 1:15 p.m. **Directions:** I-270 South, exit at state Route 674 S (Gender Road). *Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 882-9493.*

Evening Bird Walk at Riverway Park

Thursday May 12, 5:30 p.m.

Leaders: Lynn Wearsch and Donna Siple

Skill level: All

Join CA local birding experts Lynn Wearsch and Donna Siple on an early evening birding ramble through Dublin Kiwanis Riverway Park. Meet at the third driveway south and east of the state Route 161/Riverside Drive intersection. Turn at the stone sign that says Quarry Place and park along the first parking area. *Contact Donna Siple at (614) 487-2742.*

Monthly Walks at the Columbus Zoo

Saturday May 14 and June 18, 9 a.m.

Leader: Barbara Revard

Skill level: All

The Columbus Zoo will host a monthly bird/nature walk

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CA May Nature Program

New wetlands, prairies and grasslands in Metro Parks

Tuesday, May 24, 2005, 7:00 p.m. social time, 7:30 p.m. presentation, Inniswood Metro Gardens

Carrie Morrow will give Columbus Audubon members an overview of new wetlands, prairies and grasslands in Columbus Metro Parks.

Carrie has been the Assistant Resource Manager for Metro Parks since 2000 and has been with the park system since 1997. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Management from The

Ohio State University. Carrie has been very involved in promoting the awareness of non-native invasive species of plants in Ohio and their impacts to native plant communities and has an interest in all aspects of natural history and the restoration of native communities. Carrie may be reached at (614) 895-6214 or morrow@metroparks.net.

President's Message: It was a very good year

By Dave Horn

"Time flies when you're having fun." It seems like only a few days ago I was introducing myself as your President and now my term is almost over. (July 1 is when new officers take office.) Some things I have said bear repeating:

Columbus Audubon has one of the most enthusiastic and committed volunteer bases that I have ever worked with (and I've worked with a lot). Of all the requests for help that I have made this year I did not get a single "no thanks." Our membership makes Columbus Audubon go, and the President's main job is to coordinate enthusiasm. I am particularly pleased with your positive response to Audubon Ohio's developing Columbus Audubon Center project in the Whittier Peninsula area. Our joint efforts open up a whole new realm of opportunity for Audubon involvement in outdoor recreation, conservation and education.

There are lots of other wonderful programs underway in Columbus Audubon, and I enjoyed the envy of officers from other Ohio chapters at the Audubon Ohio Assembly in February. They were amazed at all that Columbus Audubon does, and I was con-

stantly asked "how do you do it?" My answer is that there is nothing like good old-fashioned dedication.

Columbus Audubon also has strength in bringing new recruits into our programs. We are always on the lookout for fresh ideas and new friends. As you look through this issue of the *Song Sparrow* or scan our web site, I hope you find something that interests you. Come to a monthly program, a field trip, a work party, or volunteer to help with an activity. We are only as good as the many individuals who step forward and become involved.

There is a group of people, your Board of Trustees, meeting the first Wednesday each month (except summer) for two hours. They all put in many additional hours behind the scenes to make sure that the business of Columbus Audubon moves forward. I have been fortunate to work with a especially dedicated and unselfish Board and I thank them for their involvement, willingness to work, and tolerating my bad jokes with good humor. Columbus Audubon continues to be in good hands.

By the way, I'm not going anywhere. I'll continue to deal with conservation issues, help with field trips and Eco-Weekend, and so forth.

Prothonotary Warblers at Hoover Reservoir

By Charles Bombaci

One of the most splendid of the wood warblers, a male prothonotary warbler is not shy about showing off his exquisite plumage as he forages along the margins of his territory, nor about declaring his reign from an exposed perch. His loud song rings through the air, a distinctive "sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet" on one pitch. With his brilliant golden-yellow he is hard to miss, but that does not mean this species is easy to find. The prothonotary warbler is on the "Watch List" for Ohio birds and is usually found only in low numbers in suitable habitat around the state.

Prothonotary warblers prefer backwaters with a canopy of trees, damp and swampy river bottoms, and low-lying woods flooded at times and in which woodland pools are left by receding water. The northernmost reaches of Hoover Reservoir provides large tracts of appropriate habitat for prothonotary warblers. In 1988 a group of concerned individuals recognized the value of this area, and persuaded the City of Columbus to create the Hoover Nature Preserve. Most of the original participants have left for other pursuits, but I am now beginning my seventeenth year working on the prothonotary warbler nest box project at Hoover. In 1988 there were four known pairs of prothonotary warblers at the preserve. That year we began installing nest boxes made from milk cartons. The birds readily took to the newly available nest sites and slowly their numbers began to climb. Realizing there were stronger box designs that would work, we began replacing milk cartons with wooden boxes.

In the mid-1990s we installed additional nest boxes farther and farther from where we had started. The results have been rewarding. In 2001 we surpassed 30 prothonotary warbler territories for the first time. During the period 2001 through 2004 water levels at Hoover stayed high throughout the nesting season. The boxes remained over water and hence predators were not a problem, the warblers flourished. Currently we have approximately 180 nest boxes at the preserve.

In 2004 we located 51 prothonotary warbler territories at the north end of the reservoir. Over 200 fledglings were produced by these nests. We also had a graduate student from The Ohio State University working on his thesis project and he banded approximately 30 males and many fledglings. In addition to

using the nest boxes, the warblers continue to use available natural cavities. All told, approximately 40-percent of the birds selected natural cavities. A special treat in 2004 was a stop over by Jon Dunn and his Wings International Tour group. All his charges were from California and the prothonotary warbler would be a lifer for them. A walk to the back of Area N quickly resulted in 8 prothonotaries including a show by a pair feeding young at their nest box.

2005 will include new opportunities as we have begun exchanging information with the Canadian Prothonotary Recovery Program. They are planning to visit the preserve in June to study our project and to discuss how we can best share information to help this wonderful species.

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology conducts a Citizen Science Program known as The Nest Box Survey. The Hoover Nature Preserve began submitting data to the survey from our nest box program in 2002. Our population doubled the prothonotary warbler results being submitted to Cornell.

Prothonotaries are usually first observed at the reservoir around April 15-20. The males generally arrive first, stake out their territories, then patrol them, singing. The females arrive approximately 10 days later, by which time all the males have established territories. Their "sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet" songs can be heard all around the upper end of the reservoir.

The prothonotary warbler is a strongly territorial species. The males will drive off others of their species, as well as competitors such as House Wrens, Tree Swallows, and Eastern Bluebirds. Their territories can take any of several configurations but most commonly they run along the shore and are anywhere from 200--to-500 feet long and about 100-feet wide.

The male will build one or more incomplete nests, adding just a shallow layer of moss to cavities scattered within its territory. The female eventually selects a mate and one of the dummy nest sites. She then builds the real nest with mosses, rootlets, twigs, and leaves. Nest construction for the prothonotary warbler begins during mid-May and continues into the first half of June. In general, the first clutches are produced between May 20 and June 10 and the young fledge between June 15 and July 5. Fall migration begins in late July and is in full swing about August 10-20. Prothonotaries observed after this date are most likely from populations nesting farther north.

Conservation corner

Arctic Refuge, watersheds, invasives and new checklist

By Dave Horn

Arctic Refuge Oil Drilling

Our Conservation Committee devotes most of our efforts to local issues but we will pass along a comment on the U.S. Senate's 51-49 vote to permit oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Jerry Tinianow, Audubon Ohio's executive director, said the battle is definitely not over: "Drilling will not start tomorrow, and there may still be opportunities to prevent drilling," he said. "The House did not include drilling in its version of the budget, so drilling would have to survive a conference committee between the House and the Senate. There are rumors that few oil companies are actually interested in bidding on leases to drill. There will undoubtedly be efforts to send a message to oil companies through the marketplace and shareholder actions, and otherwise to discourage them from bidding on leases. There will also undoubtedly be legal challenges to drilling which could delay drilling for years."

We'll try to keep you informed on this ongoing issue. (Senator Voinovich voted in favor of drilling; Senator DeWine was opposed).

Watershed Protection

As we know, the key to bird protection is habitat protection, and there is increasing concern over the impact of deteriorating water quality on birds, especially in Audubon-designated Important Bird Areas (IBAs). A key to water quality is sensible

environmental management in upstream watershed areas, and an encouraging trend is the formation of local groups concerned with conservation of watersheds. The Conservation Committee will be looking into involving Columbus Audubon in local water quality issues. All the major rivers and streams in the Columbus metropolitan area have advocacy and working groups that offer a variety of information about a watershed near you. For details, visit <http://ohiowatersheds.osu.edu>. This page has links to all local watershed groups.

Invasive Species

The Conservation Committee expects to increase awareness of invasive species in central Ohio. Invasive species describes a set of harmful, nonnative plants, animals, and microorganisms widespread in the United States that cause damage to bird and wildlife habitat along with billions of dollars of damage to crops, rangelands, and waterways. Many of our most imperiled birds are threatened by invasive species, including more than one-third of the birds on Audubon's Watch List. Invasive species have infested more than 100-million acres of the American landscape, and continue to spread across more than 3-million acres each year, an area equal to a strip of land two miles wide stretching from coast to coast. Scientists, academics, government experts, and industry leaders recognize invasive species as one of the most serious environmental threats of the 21st century. Furthermore your Conservation Chair has

some actual professional expertise in this area. We'll highlight invasives in upcoming issues of the *Song Sparrow* and on our web site. Meanwhile, visit <http://www.audubon.org/campaign/invasives/index.shtml> (Some material adapted from the National Audubon web site).

New Checklist, Pigeons and Geese

Our revised checklist is now available for field trippers, Birdathoners and Eco-Weekenders. It features our current phone number and web site, and "rock dove" is now officially "rock pigeon" in accordance with various ruling bodies of ornithology. What is not (yet) on the list is the latest addition to our bird fauna: the Cackling Goose. It's a small version of the Canada Goose (and was thought to be a race of that species) but apparently it is a distinct species. We don't yet know much about its status in Ohio, but watching Canada Geese is now more interesting. For information, visit http://www.ohiobirds.org/news.php?News_ID=181 (The Ohio Ornithological Society web site).

The Conservation Committee tries to focus on issues of direct impact to central Ohio, although we will look at other issues that we feel are important to Columbus Audubon members. For more information or to join the committee, call Dave Horn at (614) 262-0312 or horn.1@osu.edu.

We try to meet the first Tuesday of each month.

Birding by Ear Weekend Workshop at The Wilds

In conjunction with Audubon, The Wilds is hosting a weekend workshop June 3-5 to train birders at all levels of expertise how to identify birds by ear.

Morning sessions will consist of learning sound identification in a classroom setting. In the afternoon, participants will be divided up into teams to practice what they have learned in pre-marked bird transects in the hinterlands of The Wilds.

Enjoy quiet nights around a campfire sharing birding stories and camaraderie. Meals provided (bring snacks). Accommodations will be in the Conservation Education Camp Yurt Village.

The cost for the weekend is \$75 a person. The workshop is limited to 40, so register soon!

Evening speakers will be Dr. Joe Robb, US Fish & Wildlife Service Big Oaks Refuge Manager will speak on Grassland Birds and Fire Management (Henslow's Sparrows) and Tom Bartlett will address Audubon Bird Surveying Standards.

Workshop instructors are John Kuenzli, The Ohio State University Prothonotary Warbler Researcher and Jason Beale, Aullwood Audubon Center & Farm Naturalist.

For more information or to register, contact Al Parker at (740) 638-2116 or aparker@thewilds.org.

Columbus Audubon first annual Volunteer Fair

Calling all Columbus Audubon volunteers, old and new, we are planning a celebration just for you! On the afternoon of August 20, plan to join us for a day of education, fun and recognition of our great volunteers. The fair will offer training stations in all aspects of volunteering options, hands on demonstrations and hikes for adults and kids, raffles, food and lots of fun. We are excited to show new recruits all the possibilities for involvement in Columbus Audubon and, to be able to recognize the efforts of our current volunteers. More information about the fair will be in the summer flyer in July. So, save the date and watch for more exciting details soon.

Coming up

Continued from page 4

around the fringe areas of the zoo's property to note bird species in an area rich with several habitats. Join Barbara Revard at the Shipping and Receiving gate area (second gate east on Powell Rd). Wear proper footwear as we will be roaming off-trail.

Contact Barbara Revard, Assistant Director, Conservation Education at (614) 645-3448 or barbara.revard@columbuszoo.org.

Whittier Park and Greenlawn Dam

Saturday May 21, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Skill level: All

If you can't get up to Erie or don't have the full day for birds, make a morning of it with us at one of Columbus' most diverse birding areas. Migration should be just past its peak, and we'll especially be on watch for an array of late warblers, flycatchers, tanagers, and grosbeaks as we hope for a good turnout. What we don't find along the bike path, we'll try to find at the nearby Green Lawn Cemetery later in the morning. This is a great time for rarities. Meet at the South Scioto boat launch (off Whittier Street west of Front St.) at 8 am. The trip should be over by 12:30 p.m.

Contact Rob Thorn at (614) 471-3051 or robthorn@earthlink.net.

Birding at the Hoover Nature Preserve

Saturday June 4, 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Charlie Bombaci

Skill level: All

Join Charlie Bombaci for a walk at the Hoover Nature Preserve. The preserve is rich in diverse habitats ranging from wetlands, fields, forest and swamp forest. Species to look for include late migrant warblers and vireos, plus cuckoos, red-headed woodpeckers, osprey, sora and cormorants. The preserve is home to one of the best nesting populations of prothonotary warblers in Ohio, helped in part by Charlie's 180 nest boxes. Some areas can be wet so wear appropriate footwear. Meet at the dam parking area along Sunbury Road. Contact Charlie Bombaci, (614) 891-5706 or charlesbombaci@aol.com.

Joint trip with WCAS to Wolf Creek Environmental Center

Sunday June 5, 8 a.m.

Leaders: Darlene Sillick and Nancy Howell

Skill level: All

Join Darlene Sillick to head north to join the Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society organized by Nancy Howell for a day at the Wolf Creek Environmental Center. The center in Medina County opens at noon. We will do some other birding along the way, stops TBD. Dinner stop TBD. Meet at the Worthington Square Shopping center parking lot. Visit the center site at www.medina-countyparks.com/Pages/EEC.html. Contact Darlene at (614) 761-3696 or azuretrails@columbus.rr.com or Nancy Howell at (216) 231-4600 x3225 or nhowell@cmnh.org.

Ohio Wildlife Center Bird Count

Saturday June 11, 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Darlene Sillick

Skill level: All

Meet Darlene Sillick at the Ohio Wildlife Center's Cook Road facility in Delaware County where we will continue to compile a list of birds we see on this property, adjacent to the Twin Lakes Nature Preserve. We will roam the edges and check out the bird feeding area for local and visiting residents. **Directions:** Take state Route 315 to Powell Road. Turn left. Follow Powell Road until it dead ends into state Route 257. Turn left and immediately

turn right onto the O'Shaughnessy Dam. Drive over the dam and turn right at the traffic light onto state Route 745. Follow 745 about 4 miles. Look for the OWC sign and turn left. The facility is at 6131 Cook Road. Contact Darlene Sillick at (614) 761-3696 or azuretrails@columbus.rr.com.

Camp Ken-Jockey

Sunday June 12, 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Brad Sparks

Skill Level: All

Come join us for birding at this Seal of Ohio Girl Scout camp. We will explore various habitats at the camp, especially the riparian corridor along Big Darby Creek. Resident breeding birds should be on territory and in full song! We will meet in the parking lot for the Elam Environmental Center. **Directions:** From I-70 on the west side of Columbus exit onto state Route 142 south, take the first left after crossing over the interstate (Hubbard Road), then after crossing over Big Darby Creek look for the sign for the environmental center on your right. Contact Brad Sparks at (614) 751-6622 or birdmansparks@yahoo.com.

Denison University Biological Reserve

Sunday June 18, 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Michael Packer

Skill level: All

Join Michael Packer (new CA trustee) for bird walk in the Denison University Biological Reserve. Nesting warblers, butterflies and an exceptional nature walk through native flora and fauna are the highlights. Meet at the Worthington Square Shopping Center parking lot. Contact Michael Packer at packerdigital@yahoo.com.

Birds of Clear Creek

Saturday June 18, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Skill level: All

Think that most bird activity stops with the end of migration here in central Ohio? Think again. Join us as we hunt for the rare breeding birds of Clear Creek Metro Park, near Hocking Hills. We'll focus on forest birds not found easily around Columbus, including Red-shouldered Hawks, forest thrushes (Wood, Hermit, and Veery), vireos, tanagers, and the 18-plus species of warblers that make this park an outstanding spot for breeding birds in south-central Ohio. Meet at the Starner Road parking area. Wear durable footwear, as we'll be on trails most of the morning; bug repellent and sunscreen are also suggested. Contact Rob Thorn at (614) 471-3051 or robthorn@earthlink.net.

Glacier Ridge Metro Park

Sunday June 19, 2 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

Skill level: All

Join Mike Flynn at Glacier Ridge Metro Parks Wetland. This new natural area is already proven to be very attractive to many species of birds and other wildlife. We will get a great view of the wetland from the observation tower, then walk a portion of the boardwalk into the wetland area. Meet at the McDonalds on state Route 161 between Old Dublin and I-270. Contact Mike Flynn (614) 882-9493.

Twin Lakes kayak/canoe trip

Saturday June 25, 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Darlene Sillick and Julie Davis

Skill level: Some skill needed with a kayak or canoe

Join Darlene Sillick and Julie Davis for a kayak/canoe float at

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CA embarks on two outreach partnerships

By Susan Setterlin

Columbus Audubon is partnering with two great organizations to reach the central Ohio community. We are embarking on two projects that will share environmental lessons with a wide audience primarily in the southern region of Columbus.

While the Columbus Audubon Center has not even broken ground, Heather Starck, center director, is busy lining up an enriching experience targeted at students in a school in "academic emergency" due to poor proficiency test scores. These students are part of a particularly vulnerable segment of our community. A pilot program will be offered this summer to help these students. The Urban Conservation Crew is a 6-week summer program that will focus on Ohio Academic Content Standards in Earth and Life Sciences, as well as in Math, Technology, English, Social Studies and Fine Arts. Heather has lined up a long list of stellar community organizations to contribute their skills to the program. Among them are: Columbus Audubon, Olentangy River Wetland Research Park at The Ohio State University, Greater Columbus Arts Council, Columbus Zoo & Aquarium, Franklin Park Conservatory, Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio, Metropolitan Park District of Columbus & Franklin County, Keep Franklin County Beautiful, Jackson Pike Wastewater Treatment Facility, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Friends of the Olentangy

Watershed, and the Ohio Wildlife Center. The program will be held at COSI with two field trips each week. In the final week, students will develop individual presentations about their experience and will be asked to deliver their presentations to three different classes when they return to school in the fall.

Another vulnerable segment of our community lives in and around the South Side Settlement House on Innis Ave. In the past, Columbus Audubon supported the Southside Settlement House by giving bird walks for students at their summer camp in Lancaster. Once a week, a Columbus Audubon volunteer would lead a one-hour walk for students through the woods of Triple S Camp. Many of these children have had little to no connection with the natural world around them. Columbus Audubon's involvement has given the children in this program an enriching experience.

Columbus Audubon is planning to re-establish this annual opportunity in 2005 and beyond. From mid-June thru July, Columbus Audubon will lead a weekly nature/bird walk through the woodlands of Hocking Hills.

Additionally, Columbus Audubon plans to establish an after-school program at South Side Settlement (in conjunction with Heather Starck from Columbus Audubon Center). We are applying for an Audubon At Home grant to provide funding to purchase materials and landscape and feeder stations that will enhance our programs there.

Take note:

The Prairie Nature Center at The Ohio State University's Marion campus is holding its annual Native Plant Sale on May 7 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Directions:** U.S. 23 North, exit west on state Route 95 and travel a half-mile to the campus. When you turn left into the campus, veer to the right at the fork in the road. Follow the signs for the plant sale. For details, contact Emily M. Frase at (740) 389-6786 ext 6269.

Delaware Bird Club is Sponsoring a Field Trip for Ornithology May 6-7. Meet at 3:45 p.m. This is an over-night camping trip. (Magee Marsh and Crane Creek). For details, call Jed Burt at (740) 368-3886.

The Columbus Zoo's International Migratory Bird Days are May 6-7 on the zoo grounds. Hours are from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, May 6 and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 7. Regular Zoo admission rates apply. This two-day event is filled with activities, including bird related games and exhibits. Go to <http://www.colszoo.org> for more information.

Point Pelee National Park Birdwatching trip offered by JET EXPRESS is Thursday, May 12. It includes roundtrip transportation aboard the JET EXPRESS hydrojet catamaran to Point Pelee National Park in Leamington, Ontario; continental

breakfast onboard boat; shuttle bus and admission to Point Pelee; and box lunch. Boat departs Port Clinton at 7:45 a.m. and arrives at Point Pelee at 9 a.m. We'll depart Point Pelee at 4:30 p.m. and be back in Port Clinton by 6 p.m. Reservations go quickly, so call 1-800-245-1538. Hotel information can be found by calling 1-800-441-1271.

Bald Eagle and Osprey Watch: Bald Eagles hatched in early April and are expected to fledge sometime close to Memorial Day. The Ohio Division of Wildlife and the Delaware Environmental Education Partnership will sponsor two public viewings on Sunday evenings, May 22 and 29, from 6-9 p.m. Spotting scopes for all ages will be provided. Consult the Ohio Division of Wildlife web site for a map of the Delaware Wildlife Area. The eagle nest viewing lot is located on Panhandle Road near its intersection with Leonardsburg Road. Visit the Web site at <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/wildlife>. A mating pair of osprey have built a new nest on platform number one at the northern reaches of Alum Creek Lake along Hogback Road. Stop in at the Hogback Ridge Nature Preserve at 2656 Hogback Road for an update on the ospreys. Also, ospreys have returned to the Delaware Lake platform south of the state Route 229 bridge that crosses the Olentangy River where it enters Delaware Lake (south of Waldo).

Memorial to Ruth Melvin

Ruth Melvin, the founder of Columbus Audubon's Eco-Weekend, passed away at the age of 95 on June 18, 2004. Ruth, an active environmentalist and teacher, proposed the concept to the Audubon Board in 1972 and the first Eco-Weekend was held in 1973. Now in its 33rd year, Eco-

Weekend is an ongoing memorial to her contribution to Audubon's mission. A service in celebration of her life will be held at The First Presbyterian Church, 73 West Winter St., Delaware, Ohio, at 2 p.m. on June 18. All are invited to attend.

Tips to enjoy bluebirds and other cavity nesters

Continued from page 1

ful to the young if they become chilled or get damp because you opened the box. Wait a couple days before you take that first quick peek to count beaks, or use a mechanic's mirror and flashlight to peer inside. Watch to see if she is removing the egg shells. She will sometimes eat the shell before leaving the nest box and this will help her to replace the calcium and minerals lost to egg laying. Also watch to see if the pair are flying back and forth with food in their beaks. This is a good sign of a growing family! The parents can feed their young 30 to 50 times a day. Do not use chemicals on the lawn.

As the young grow older, be careful to keep good notes and do not open the nest box after the young are 12 to 14 days of age. Opening the box after that day could easily cause the birds to prematurely fledge and lessen their chance to survive. As it is, only 50-percent make it to their first birthday. The one good thing is that they nest two and sometimes three times a season. The young from an earlier nesting will help to feed and care for the second or third brood.

Offering mealworms will help the busy, growing family. The young fledge or leave the nest box at 18 to 22 days of age. Keeping track of the fledging date is another reason to keep good notes. The adult bluebirds will carefully watch over the youngsters for about 2 to 3 weeks teaching them to hunt and fly. It is a lot of fun to watch the young chasing the parents about the yard begging for food. I've watched the male bluebird actually push the youngsters head down to the food trying to get him/her to fend for themselves. Soon after, the female will start another nest and begin the process all over again.

Now this sounds like a perfect life in a perfect world and I wish it were always the case. To learn more about bluebirds, view the most widely read book "Enjoying Bluebirds More" by Julie Zickefoose and *Bird Watchers Digest* or visit some helpful web sites. Visit the Cornell site at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/?lk=csgw> or the North American Bluebird Society's fact sheets at <http://nabluebirdsociety.org/facts.htm>.



Bluebird perched on top of a goose.

Some of the other area nest box residents are Tree Swallows, neo-tropical migrants and delightful aerial insect eaters who prefer to be somewhat close to water. They line their dried grass nests with curved feathers and it is fun in the spring to toss the curved duck or chicken feathers near water where the birds are swooping to feed. They will take these feathers, fly about and place them in

their nests. House Wrens are also neo-tropical migrants. They are called the boss-of-the-brushland and eat insects. They are territorial in nature and they check out any cavity in the area that they can, sometimes at the mercy of other bird species. Their melodious call and willingness to nest close to people make them a popular occupant. Chickadees and titmice, year-long residents and cousins, prefer a woods or wood edge to build a nest. The nest of a Chickadee is very mossy where the nest of the titmouse is a mixture of moss, dried leaves and grass. Both birds can hiss at you when you monitor their nests.

This is just a sampling of some of our backyard favorites. Keep in mind these birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Act. Providing food, water, cover and housing is a rewarding experience for the whole family. It is highly important to eliminate the use of pesticides and try to garden with native plants for the benefit of your backyard guests. Birding is the number two hobby second only to gardening. Isn't it nice how the two go hand in hand. Keep a field guide, binoculars

and journal close by to document what you are seeing in your yard. The rewards are endless and your contributions to conservation are monumental. The sharing of family time is priceless! Maybe Mr. Bluebird will Zippety Doo Dah just for you!

Darlene Sillick has made a hobby and 'volunteer' career out of working with cavity nesting species for 16 years. She has given countless programs and workshops for many groups, been involved with banding and research projects at OSU and OWU and along with her bluebird army has distributed almost 6000 nest boxes to groups in Ohio and 6 other states. Currently she is a trustee for Columbus Audubon, Ohio Wildlife Center and the Hoover Nature Preserve Council.

Ohio Wildlife Center prepares for baby wildlife

By David Hoy

It happens every spring: warm weather heats up human activity, making young, unskilled wildlife more susceptible to accidents and attacks. Wild animals are displaced by development and injured by domestic animals, toxins, cars, lawn mowers and inadvertently abused by humans.

Baby wild animals become orphaned – left hungry and vulnerable when their parents are killed. In these cases, wild animals need human intervention in order to survive. The Ohio Wildlife Center, a non-profit organization, is our area's only agency whose mission is to care for and rehabilitate such animals, with the goal of releasing them back into their natural habitat.

Founded 20 years ago by Dr. Donald Burton, local veterinarian and nationally respected wildlife rehabilitation expert, OWC cared for nearly 4,700 injured, diseased, or orphaned wild animals in 1983.

Injured animals are treated at OWC's veterinary clinic at 2661 Billingsley Road in northwest Columbus. Successfully rehabilitated animals are then released back into the wild.

I respectfully request that, in the future, when issues arise concerning wildlife in our community, you think of the Ohio Wildlife Center as the "go to" agency to contact. Such issues might develop in many ways – injured or at-risk animals, homeowners with unwanted wild visitors in their dwellings and animals suspected of carrying some sort of illness or disease. You can reach me at (614) 734-9453, visit our web site at www.ohiowildlifecenter.org for more information that will further explain both our mission and the kinds of services we offer. Our 24-hour wildlife crisis hotline is (614) 793-WILD (9453). We stand ready to be of assistance.

David Hoy is Director of Operations and Development of the Ohio Wildlife Center.

Coming up

Continued from page 7

Twin Lakes. Plan to see nesting Prothonotary warblers, green herons, rough-wing swallows to name a few. Bring your own canoe/kayak, Personal Floatation Device and drinking water. Note: There is no restroom on site. **Directions:** The preserve is north of Glick Road off of state Route 745. Turn left into the parking lot access before the first lake. If you come to Cook Road, you went too far. Boat launch is west of the lot. *Contact Darlene Sillick at (614) 761-3696 or azuretrails@columbus.rr.com.*

Hogback Road kayak/canoe trip

Saturday July 2, 9 a.m.

Leader: Darlene Sillick

Skill level: Some skill needed with a kayak or canoe

Join Darlene Sillick for a kayak/canoe float north of Hogback Rd where the Osprey are nesting. Bring your own canoe/kayak and Personal Floatation Device. Hogback Road parallels Alum Creek Lake along its eastern shore and terminates into state Route 521 east of Kilbourne. **Directions:** From Hogback Road and state Route 521 go west and turn left into the boat launch parking lot. *Contact Darlene Sillick at (614) 761-3696 or azuretrails@columbus.rr.com.*

Twin Bridges kayak/canoe trip

Sunday July 17, 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Darlene Sillick

Skill level: Some skill needed with a kayak or canoe

Join Darlene Sillick for a kayak/canoe float at Twin Bridges on Hoover Reservoir. Bring your own canoe/kayak and Personal

Floatation Device. Meet in the parking lot. *Contact Darlene Sillick at (614) 761-3696 or azuretrails@columbus.rr.com.*

Prairie Oaks Metro Park

Sunday July 31, 3 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

Skill level: All

Join Mike Flynn at Prairie Oaks Metro Park Wetland. This new wetland is an outstanding site for nesting, feeding and migrating birds. This trip is intended to provide opportunities to observe the many species of birds that should be here, given proper water level conditions. Last year King Rails nested here and many species of shorebirds stopped at this wetland on their journey south. We will meet at the park. **Directions:** I-70 west to state Route 142, turn right (north) then right again at the park entrance. Meet in the lot just past the wetland. *Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 882-9493.*

Avid Birders field trips

Go to <http://www.columbusaudubon.org/avids/avids.html> for more information.

Work trip

Friends of Calamus Day

Saturday May 21, 9 a.m.

Leaders: Columbus Audubon Board members

Skill level: All

Join the Friends of Calamus Swamp and Columbus Audubon board members to help do a little spring cleaning at Columbus Audubon's wetland preserve in Pickaway County. More details will be available on Columbus Audubon's web site, www.columbusaudubon.org.

Columbus Audubon

Founded 1913

740-549-0333

www.columbusaudubon.org

Officers: President: Dave Horn, 262-0312
Vice President: Kristan Leedy, 818-9440
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Additional chapter leaders:

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Work Projects: Sharon Treaster, 846-8419
Education: Susan Setterlin, 457-8130
Programs: Mike Flynn, 882-9493
Field Trips: Darlene Sillick, 761-3696
Eco Weekend: Lois Day, (740) 549-0333
Membership: Joe Meara, 781-9602
Corresponding Sec'y: Emily Eby, 855-3879
Calamus Committee: Kylene Kruse, 262-0375
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CA Phone Line: Lois and John Day, (740) 549-0333
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