

Columbus Audubon Song Sparrow

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Creature feature Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

By Rob Thorn

The scientific name means “sea eagle of Pandion”, a seafaring king in ancient Greece. Osprey are unique fish-catching raptors found in many parts of the world. They’re a common sight now along most coasts of North America, although there was a time not long ago when their numbers were severely reduced by bioaccumulation of pesticides.

Family: Falconidae. This is the family of highly-specialized aerial predators. Like many buteos and eagles, osprey swoop down from a circling soar or hovering position to grab their prey. The big difference is that they grab fish in shallow water, a behavior shared only with fish-eating eagles of Africa and Asia. Their feet are modified by having very long curved talons and rough scaly skin so as to better grip their slippery prey. They also have an oily plumage that helps shed the water that they accumulate during their plunges for fish. Some authors place osprey in their own special family, the Pandionidae, because of all their specializations for a fishing life.

Range: Osprey range through many areas of the world, being found in North America, Europe, north Africa, and Asia out to some of the Pacific Islands. Their favorite habitats are bays, shallow coastlines, big rivers, and large lakes. In North America, they are found all along the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts, and along the Pacific Coast from Alaska to Baja, California. Inland they are found sparingly in the lower Mississippi and Ohio River drainages, but are more common along rivers and lakes in Canada and the northernmost states. Most of these birds migrate south in the winter, while the Atlantic and Pacific birds stay year-round in areas of unfrozen water. Large numbers of osprey can be seen in migration at coastal sites like Cape May and Cape Charles, and a few interior sites, like Lake Erie Metro Park in Michigan. Here in Ohio, smaller numbers of osprey can be seen migrating along major rivers like the Greater Miami, the Scioto, and the Muskingum.

Field Marks: Look for them around water. A very long-winged bird of prey, osprey soar on the slightest updrafts. Their wings are often held up at the wrist, so their flight profile forms a shallow ‘^’, making them look like an over-sized gull. The chest, belly, and underwing coverts are white, and contrast with the strongly barred flight feathers and tail. The wrist is conspicuously darker, as are the tips of the primaries. The back is seen more easily when the birds are perched. In older birds it is solidly dark brown except for the white crown of the head; juvenile birds have faint tawny scaling on most of the wing and back feathers. All ages have a distinct dark eyestripe that contrasts with the white throat and crown. The sexes are difficult to distinguish, although local osprey expert Dick Tuttle claims that the males are a ‘dark chocolate’ brown and smaller in size than the larger, ‘milk-chocolate’ females.

Voice & Mating: Ospreys make a series of loud shrill squeals, often in the pattern of ‘chewp chewp chewp chelee chelee chelee’. These calls are made anywhere on their territory, and are a common sound along seacoasts and salt marshes that osprey favor. Osprey nests are conspicuous masses of sticks, placed on dead trees or power line poles, and can be quite common in prime osprey habitat like Chesapeake Bay or the Florida Keys. Ospreys have adapted quite nicely to human structures, and will readily accept



Courtesy of ODNR

Ospreys at one of the many nesting platforms in Ohio.

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2005 Birdathon raises almost \$ 19,000

By Julie Davis

This year our wonderful birdathoners have surpassed our highest expectations! Our teams raised \$18,857.38, well over our goal of \$15,000. As you recall, Columbus Audubon promised to match every dollar raised, up to \$15,000. So, we will be presenting \$33,857.38 to Audubon Ohio to be used for the Whittier Peninsula project and the Columbus Audubon Center. A big thanks goes out to all of our teams and sponsors for all their efforts. Also, thanks to our two prize sponsors, Indian Bear Lodge for donating a night's stay at their B&B (won by Kylene Kruse) and to Eagle Optics for their donation of a Denali 60mm spotting scope (won by Julie Davis). Organizing the Birdathon takes the hard work of many people. A special thanks to committee members Katryn Renard and Elaine Smith as well as Tamara James and Dave Horn. There were also several teams and individuals that stood out this year. Teams that raised over \$1000 this year were: **Chestnut Ridge**



Chachalacas, Scarlet & Gray Tanagers, Slate (Run) colored Juncos, Mellow Bellied Snack Seekers, Les Chasseurs des Oiseaux and Westerville Waxwings. The biggest stand out this year was the team from **Wild Birds Unlimited on Riverside Drive.** The team not only raised over \$2100 but the owners, Tom and Donna Sheley, matched their team's donation. Their final donation to the Birdathon was \$4206! Way to go Wild Birds Unlimited! Other individual sponsors who made very generous donations were Sarah Wilson and Bill Sheley, who both donated \$500 and Joe Meara who donated \$460.

Birding teams that saw the most species this year were: **Wild Birds Unlimited** with **160** birds, **Westerville Waxwings** with **130** birds and **Road Runners** with **125** birds. Again this year, the **Quick Three Beards** saw the most species of birds on their trip, at **168**. Congratulations to all of our teams and sponsors for our best Birdathon ever! Listed below are all the participating teams and the number of species each team saw.

Backyard Experience Chick-a-dees - 57 Gerry Brevoort Joan Frederick Nina Hawranick Cyndi Henderson Lynn Singleton Lisa Zider	Huffin Puffins - 60 Cathie Pruden Dick Pruden	Whitney Jaeb Fred Lancia Del, Jordan, & Myranda Parrott	Linda Benner Doug Everman Kristen Everman Andrea Haslage Jen Myers Susan Moore Lori Patterson Randy Rogers Brad Sparks Lynn Taylor
Board Walkers - 85 Dave Horn Julie Boreman Heather Raymond Paul Gledhill Marlene Woo Lun	Grey-crested Napcatchers - 20 Ellen Ahern Jane Perry Abby Robinson	No Egrets - 87 Becky Cummings Elaine Smith Larry Smith Roger Stout Laura Thomas	Swans and Coots - 76 Alan Cohen Clyde Gosnell Paul Knoop Katryn Renard Marlene Woo Lun Louise Warner
Chestnut Ridge Chachalacas - 88 Scott Felker Eleanor Nunley Bill Reiner Eric Reiner	Lady Birds who Lunch - 50 Tamara James Kristan Leedy	Pelicans - 28 Mark & Lauren Richards Benjamin Richards Riley Richards	Two Footed Boobies - 89 Marcia Brehmer Marion Farber Melanie Shuter Mary Kay Wood
Coo Coo Birds - 52 Deborah & Ken Buckley	Les Chasseurs des Oiseaux - 54 Kelly Friar Kylene Kruse John Mundhenk Jan Rodenfels John Wilson	Quick Three Beards - 168 Dave Horn Dan Sanders Troy Shively Bill Whan	Two in a Bush - 40 Patty DeMaria Elaine Fujimora Biani Moran
Deck Birds - 1 Cheri Brown Pat Barron Bev May Pete Precario	Marsh Madness - 117 Bill & Deb Marsh	Roadrunners - 125 Chris Frantz Dan Shepherd	Westerville Waxwings - 130 Julie Davis Ken Davis Jen Sauter Darlene Sillick
Even Tempered Longspurs - 50 Mary Ann Hrabley Liz Melick Julia Wolfrom Pat Wolfrom	Mellow Bellied Snack Seekers - 71 John Arnfield Joan Arnfield Becky Mansfield Gary Allison Aaron Mansfield	Scarlet & Gray Tanagers - 70 Joe Gatesman Susanne Gatesman Barb Revard Stephen Revard Mark Setterlin Susan Setterlin	Wild Birds Unlimited Riverside - 160 Michael Flynn Joe Hammond Steve Landes Tom Sheley
Gone With the Wrens - 49 Mary Counter Christine Eitel	Metro Parks Stellar Jays - 90 Jim Davidson Jack McDowell Joe Meara John O'Meara Joel Wachtel	Self-Mockingbirds - 30 Dave Daulton Wanda Schwallie Karen Augenstein	
	Neat Nests - 37 Scott Jaeb	Slate (Run) Colored Juncos - 102	

CA shares birding skills with area youth

By Susan Setterlin

Columbus Audubon volunteers generously donated their time this summer sharing birding skills through two community outreach programs. Both programs reached underserved youth in Columbus' South Side.

Urban Conservation Crew

Our growing partnership with the future Columbus Audubon Nature Center on the Whittier Peninsula presented us with an opportunity to share the joy of birding and teach the proper use of binoculars to an energetic group of teens participating in the Urban Conservation Crew (UCC) camp. The pilot project, developed by center director, Heather Starck, reached out to approximately 32 students from local schools at academic risk near the Whittier Peninsula on the city's South Side. Students at these schools, in academic emergency, benefited from the program. The UCC emphasized Ohio Academic Content Standards in the Earth and Life Sciences as well as Math, Technology, English, Social Studies and Fine Arts. During the first several weeks of the six-week day camp, students explored local wildlife including birds. The rest of the camp then focused on conservation issues such as water and solid waste problems and how they can develop their own plan to make a difference in their communities. Their experience then will culminate when they return to school in the fall where they will share their experiences and research with other students at their respective schools. Columbus Audubon hopes to include at least one presentation by several of the students at one of our monthly nature programs.

During the first week of camp, Columbus Audubon volunteers spent time with the Conservation Crew first on a bird walk through the Whittier Peninsula area honing their observation skills as well as learning the fine art of using binoculars effectively. Many of the students were excited to see "their" bird in the wild for the first time. (Each student had an assignment to research and report on a bird of their choice). Other birds discovered were the Ring-billed Gull, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron and a Cedar Waxwing. For most of these students, it was their first experience birding. Thanks to Joe Meara, Heather Raymond and Paul Gledhill for volunteering to share their love of birding with these students!

The next week on a field trip to Three Creeks Metro Park, the Conservation Crew got another opportunity to fine tune their birding and binocular skills with another bird walk. The students

Volunteers are needed to keep these community partnerships strong. We will continue to offer assistance to Heather Starck as she implements other pilot projects in partnership with Columbus Public Schools as the plans for the Columbus Audubon Nature Center move forward. Heather will also assist us on our commitment to South Side Settlement's after-school program. Please consider an investment of your time to share the wonders of the natural world with our urban youth. To volunteer and to find out more about these programs please call Susan Setterlin at 457-8130. Your community needs you!!



Courtesy of Audubon Ohio

The Urban Conservation Crew with CA volunteers.

learned the importance of listening to bird songs to identify birds difficult to see in the dense foliage. One eagle-eyed student spotted a Eastern Blue Bird cross about 10 yards in front of the group. One of the students, Kenneth Delco, wrote in his journal "The wetlands were great. I learned even more about the binoculars. I saw my bird-the house sparrow and heard its song." Thanks to CA volunteer Susan Setterlin for leading this birding experience on a hot summer's day!!

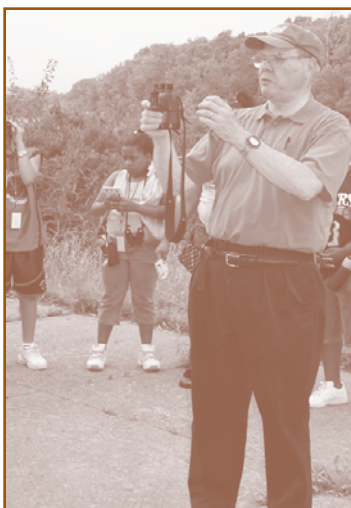
On the July 29 walk, Susan's group almost missed a family of wild turkeys crossing in front of them. (They had their heads and binoculars turned skyward in search of a singing bird). There were six young turkeys flanked first and last by an adult.

Bird walks at Triple S Camp

CA volunteers also led weekly bird walks with campers at the Triple S camp just south of Lancaster outside of Sugar Grove June- August. This camp, owned and operated by the South Side Settlement House provides urban children with the opportunity to experience the great outdoors in a wonderful natural setting. CA volunteers, Joe Meara, Dave Horn and Susan Setterlin took turns weekly leading morning bird walks

with a group of campers.

Like the UCC, most of these children had little to no experience with birding or just being observant of nature. The campers were for the most part enthusiastic and caught on quickly to the mechanics of the binoculars and locating and identifying birds by looking them up in the field guides. A sample of some of the other birds observed and or heard at the camp included: a male scarlet tanager eating a caterpillar, hooded warblers, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, turkey vultures, Great Blue Herons, Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, towhee, Red-eyed Vireo, crow and Tufted Titmouse. These campers also, like the Conservation Crew learned the value of identifying birds by their call/sound. Our dedicated CA volunteers led seven weekly walks with the Triple S campers. Thanks go out to Joe Meara, Dave Horn and Susan Setterlin for their willingness to drive south of Lancaster multiple weeks to share their love of birding with these eager to learn campers!



Joe Meara instructs students in the use of binoculars on one of the bird walks with the UCC.

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.

Note: Field trip times, dates and locations are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. If you plan on going on a trip, please contact the trip leader 24 hours ahead of time to make sure the trip has not been changed, postponed or cancelled. Also, check the Columbus Audubon Web site at www.columbusaudubon.org for any changes or additions to the field trip listings.

Field trips

Shorebirds in Central Ohio

Saturday September 3, 9 a.m.

Leader: Steve Landes

Skill level: All

Join Steve for a trip to one of central Ohio's shorebird hotspots. Depending on the habitat conditions, we may head to Hoover Reservoir, Big Island Wildlife Area, or a Metro Park. The focus of our trip will be shorebirds, but we will also study any other neat living things which we come across. Meet at the Worthington Mall shopping center parking lot in front of the Kroger, just south of I-270 on US 23 in north Worthington. Bring a scope if you have one, and a lunch as this trip may take several hours. *Contact Steve at Katbird103@aol.com with questions.*

Swift count in Dublin

Wednesday Sept. 14 and Tuesday Sept. 20, 7:30 p.m.

Leader: Darlene Sillick

Skill level: All

Join Darlene Sillick at Sells Middle School just west of the state Route 161/US 33/Dublin Road intersection. Bring your lawn chair and mosquito juice as we focus on the chimney to count the birds as they drop in out of sight. *Contact Darlene Sillick at azure-trails@columbus.rr.com.*

Migration at Whittier

Saturday September 17, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Skill level: All

Migration should be peaking as we survey the Scioto River north and south of the Green Lawn Dam. North of the dam, in the future Whittier Peninsula Park, the narrow riparian corridor high-

lights land birds, while the Green Lawn Reservoir provides a nice target for waterbirds like herons and shorebirds. South of the dam, the bike path is one of the best forest migrant traps in central Ohio. If we have time, we'll even venture further afield to the nearby Green Lawn Cemetery or south to some of the old river quarries. Meet at the South Scioto Boat launch. **Directions:** Whittier west from Front Street and make the first left turn. *Contact Rob Thorn, (614) 471-3051 or robthorn@earthlink.net.*

Monthly Walks at the Columbus Zoo

Saturday September 24 and October 22, 9 a.m.

Leader: Barbara Revard

Skill level: All

The Columbus Zoo will host a monthly bird/nature walk 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.*

Nature in Our Neighborhoods: Westerville

Sunday September 25, 9 a.m.

Leader: Kristan Leedy

Skill level: All

Join us for a leisurely walk through the streets of Old Westerville to Boyer Nature Preserve. We'll meet at the Westerville Public Library parking lot off Walnut Street and walk to the preserve. Afterward, those who are interested will go to brunch at a nearby restaurant. This walk will be cancelled for bad weather. If in doubt, check www.columbusaudubon.org.

Directions to the library parking lot from I-270: Take the state Route 3 exit and head north. Go approximately 3 miles to Walnut Street, turn right. Watch for the library sign on the left and onto the access road to the parking lot. *Contact Kristan Leedy at kristan@design4info.com.*

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101 class schedule

Columbus Audubon's 101 classes are free and open to the public and there is no need to register unless otherwise stated in the class description.

Insects 101

Sunday September 11, 2 p.m., at the Highbanks Nature Center

Leader: Dave Horn

Join Dave Horn of Ohio State University on a fascinating look at insects. After a brief talk, participants will venture outside to swing a net and carefully peek inside to see what might be creeping along the netting.

Astronomy 101 at Perkins Observatory

Wednesdays September 21, 28 and October 5 at 7 p.m.

Leader: Jay Young

The Columbus Astronomical Society (CAS) is pleased to offer a beginner level Astronomy 101 course at Perkins Observatory!

Astronomy 101 will be offered on three consecutive Wednesday nights starting on September 21. All sessions start at 7 p.m. Each session will involve classroom and outdoor viewing time. Classes are designed for beginners and are guaranteed to leave you inspired and motivated to learn more of the wonders of the night-time sky.

You will receive information through email before the class begins. The cost of the Astronomy 101 is \$25 which includes a year membership to CAS and an e-mail copy of its *Prime Focus* newsletter. If you are already a CAS member, the cost is free!

To register for the Astronomy 101 class, which has space for 30 participants, contact Jay Young at young2@ohiodominican.edu (614) 251-4565 or Gary Burk at burk@columbus.rr.com.

2005: Another successful Prothonotary Warbler nesting season

By Charles Bombaci

After the successful 2004 nest season when we had 51 nesting pairs of prothonotary warblers at the Hoover Nature Preserve and we banded 30 males, we looked forward to the 2005 nesting season with anticipation, both to see if our numbers held and to seek returning banded males.

In December 2004 we had a severe ice storm that felled numerous trees opening the canopy at Area N and damaging some of our nest boxes. On the positive side, the spring of 2005 was another rainy season and the water levels were high. The dry period didn't start until the end of the nesting season and had little effect as the nest boxes remained over water and hence predators were not a serious problem.

In 2005 we located 54 prothonotary warbler pairs at the preserve with two that raised a second brood. For the second straight year there were over 200 fledglings. This year approximately 55 percent of the pairs used nest boxes and 45 percent used available natural cavities. I confirmed the return of 18 of the males banded in 2004 and had reports from birders of others being seen although the band colors were not noted by them to identify if they were outside the birds already recorded.

During the 2005 season I had many special times at the preserve. The first highlight was hosting the Canadian Wildlife Service's Prothonotary Warbler Recovery Program. Team member Don Wills visited the preserve in mid-June when activity was at its height. The prothonotary warbler is on the endangered list in Canada with only nine known nesting pairs in 2004. The first stop I took him to was Oxbow Road. We stopped the car, opened the doors, and the first sounds heard were the "Sweet, Sweet, Sweet, Sweet" of the male nesting opposite the end parking lot. Don smiled and we were off and running. When I took him to Area N we located nine pairs there alone. In all, I took him to five of the 10 areas where I have nest boxes and we observed 31 different nest sites. The preserve will continue the working relationship with the Canadian Wildlife Service.

A special treat was a stop-over by Bill Whan and a visiting Swedish birding team. I met Bill and his guests and took them to several areas of the preserve and quickly found them a singing male prothonotary warbler. I "pished" the male in and he perched and sang for them from just a few feet away. Along with the prothonotary warbler they were able to tally many more life birds highlighted by displaying red-headed woodpeckers, yellow warblers, eastern bluebirds, tree swallows, northern cardinals, blue jays and ruby-throated hummingbirds. They were excited by the color of our birds. Their enthusiasm made me think of how we take some beautiful birds for granted.

In all, I took nearly 200 individuals on birding outings at the preserve to see the prothonotaries in 2005 including a fun Columbus Audubon field trip on June 4. The group also observed the red-headed woodpeckers displaying at Mudhen Marsh, a displaying male bobolink at Hoover Meadows, osprey at Area N, and many other resident species. I also had photographers from Toledo; Dayton; Troy, Michigan; and New York meet with me for guided tours to take shots at natural cavities. One got an added bonus when I took him to a great crested flycatcher nest cavity a mere seven-feet above the ground. Each photographer sent me samples of their pictures, which was my reward for sharing my time and the birds with them.

The birds created some exceptional memories for visitors and myself. There were several occasions when I was able to call in curious males to within feet of us. A female I was watching build her nest landed 4 inches from my foot to collect nest material. Two pairs built their nests in adjacent nest boxes just 20-feet apart, the closest I have ever seen two pairs nest. And the Kodak moment was when I watched five fledglings leave their nest box one by one, each displaying its own distinct personality.

The first male prothonotaries were observed on April 10 and the first females on April 26. This is noticeably earlier than most years and is consistent with many other reports of birds migrating to their nesting territories early, some argue because of global warming. The fall migration was well underway by late July.

Audubon at Home

CA awarded grant for South Side Settlement partnership

By Susan Setterlin

Columbus Audubon's partnership with the South Side Settlement is in full swing. CA members led bird identification walks twice a week at the Settlement's Triple S Camp June through August. Columbus Audubon will also be offering after-school programming at the South Side Settlement House during the 2005-06 school year.

The Settlement has a solid after-school program already in place and would like their students to learn about urban wildlife and make a difference for wildlife in their own neighborhoods.

With the help of a \$1000 Audubon at Home grant, CA will be able to enhance the South Side site with bird feeding stations, binoculars, field guides and other

materials to be used in after-school programming. The feeding stations (three so far) are still in the planning stages, but at least one will be outside the windows of the preschool classrooms.

Two other stations are tentatively planned for outside another classroom and one in the courtyard.

Students plan to participate in the Project FeederWatch, sponsored by the

Cornell Lab of Ornithology, once the bird feeding stations are in place. Students will observe birds at their feeders and enter data online via the Web site monitored by the lab.

These activities serve to strengthen skills necessary for academic success as well as open up a new world to these urban stu-

dents. Columbus Audubon volunteers will work with these students throughout the year to establish and maintain this program.

The grant is the third granted to CA in the past year. The other grants awarded were the Dempsey Middle School wetlands project in the city of Delaware and a grant to buy bird feeding stations and help with a landscape upgrade at the Ohio Wildlife Center's Cook Road facility in southern Delaware County.

These grants were funded by National Audubon with the help of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

We thank National Audubon as well as Audubon Ohio for their support! Look to this newsletter for further updates as this partnership grows!



Audubon
AT HOME



Conservation corner

Another victory for Ohio's wetlands

By Dave Horn

The last *Song Sparrow* reported that the Ohio Senate was about to vote on a biennial budget bill, already passed by the House, with an amendment that would have greatly weakened protection for wetlands. Fortunately, the implications of the so-called "Bulldozer Amendment" were recognized by the Senate leadership who gave the amendment a thorough going-over.

The resulting Senate version of the bill eliminated the more outrageous provisions of the amendment, and House leaders caved in to the Senate version during joint conference committee hearings. This was partly due to intensive testimony and letter-writing from an array of conservation groups including Audubon Ohio and quite a few

Columbus Audubon members. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) objected vociferously to the amendment. After the conference version passed, the remaining objectionable provision, to allow developers to create replacement wetlands anywhere in the state (rather than in the local watershed), was vetoed by Gov. Taft.

There is an obvious take-home message: Get involved; together we can make a difference. Beyond that, I was struck once again with the range of conservation organizations working side-by-side to protect wetlands. For example, the Ohio League of Sportsmen lined up with Audubon and the Sierra Club. I know that Audubon as an organization leans toward preservation and that some of our members are vehemently opposed to hunting but it is good to

see that hunters and birders can find common ground when critical habitats are at stake. On a local wetland note, our own Calamus Swamp was given a cleanup by a stalwart band of a dozen volunteers on June 25. It was hot, but the weed-whacker wined, the chainsaw wailed away, and the trail and boardwalk are now passable (if muddy) and several bags of trash were hauled away. Many thanks to those who participated.

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 meet the first Tuesday of each month.

Birds of prey - Raptors 101

By Dorenda Watson

There are over 400 listed birds of prey in the world today. This group includes falcons, eagles, hawks, owls, and vultures. They range in size from the one-ounce Bornean falconet to the 30-pound Andean condor that has an impressive 10-foot wingspan! The word raptor, from the Latin *rapere*, means "to seize." In most cultures, raptors represent strength and authority, and are used as symbols of victory and pride...this is most prevalent in our own Native American culture. In ancient Egypt, the god of the sky and the heavens, Horus, was depicted as a falcon's head on a human body. Raptors have several prominent features in common, however, there are exceptions to the rules. All have large, strong hooked beaks with a tomial tooth notch to kill prey and tear flesh from bone. All have talons...powerful claws that catch and hold prey. After catching and killing its prey, the raptor will stand on the carcass and pluck fur and feathers away to get to the viable meat. If it should ingest a bit of bone, it will regurgitate it later in the form of a "pellet." Some raptors swallow prey whole, such as in the case of owls. A good way to find an owl's favorite dining spot is by finding a group of pellets on the ground and looking up. Beak and talon size depend entirely on the size of the prey the raptor seeks out. Smaller falcons, such as the kestrel, with its 20-24 inch wing span, will hunt smaller prey, such as mice, small birds and insects...while the Harpy eagle, with its impressive grizzly bear-sized claws are known to kill small sheep.

Most raptors are diurnal or "day-hunters." They have exceptional eyesight, three-to-eight times better than any human. They use this asset to find prey high above the ground. Upon spotting prey, some raptors will go into a dive of more than 80 miles-an-hour. This dive, with wings close to the body, is called "stooping." As they hit their prey, a third eyelid (the nictitating membrane,) closes across the eye. It is clear enough to see through, but serves as a protective covering to keep debris from injuring the eye. Most birds of prey have forward facing eyes even though they may be located on the sides of the head and the eye is hooded by the supra-orbital ridge, which gives the bird a "mean" look. The eyes facing

forward give the bird the ability to see depth and distance. The exception to all of this is the owl group. They hunt at night because their eyes have an abundance of rods, which make them light sensitive.

Raptors primarily depend on their eyesight to find prey which they kill as they need it, for nourishment or to feed their young.

The turkey vulture, however, is known for his notable sense of smell. He is the one member of the raptor family that relies on previously killed food to eat. While other raptors will harry other birds to get to a fresh kill, not many are truly scavengers. The turkey vulture is also one of the few raptors where the male is larger than the female (most raptor females are larger than their male counterparts). This is called reverse sexual dimorphism. The



Red-tailed Hawk

body of a raptor is surprisingly lightweight. In some, the feathers may actually outweigh the skeleton of the bird! Many of the larger bones are hollow and filled with air, (pneumatic bones.) If a bird of prey breaks a major wing bone, that break can allow the bird to "breathe" through it! Half of the weight of a bird of prey is in muscle. The dense muscles allow for the grand ability of flight as well as the skill in being able to lift, if necessary, equal their weight in prey. The wings at the raptor are engineering wonders. Larger birds of prey have broad wings for gliding while the mid-size birds like owls and hawks have wings that are shorter for maneuverability in trees. Smaller birds like falcons have thinner wings that are built for speed. All have tails that are used as rudders for steering and braking.

Now you are equipped with some basic knowledge on raptors. Please use the above information as a guideline to learn more but remember, there are always exceptions to the rules. For instance, you recall that I said that the size of a raptor's beak and talons indicates they size of his prey? Then why does the kestrel in my backyard insist on trying to cart off my rather large Boston Terrier? And why does the hawk that hangs out here in the Hilltop find my husband's ponytail a source of possible nourishment? I think that as the birds of prey are squeezed out of their known environments, they learn to adapt as well as possible...good for them!

Coming up

Continued from page 4

Fall Migration at Prairie Oaks

Saturday October 1, 8 a.m.

Leader: Steve Landes

Skill level: All

Come and enjoy a leisurely walk through one of our area's newest parks. At this time of year, many migrating birds should be passing through the diverse habitats at Prairie Oaks Metro Park. **Directions:** I-70 west from Columbus to state Route 142 and go north about one mile to the park entrance. Meet at the main park office. *Contact Steve Landes at Katbird103@aol.com.*

Green Lawn Cemetery and Whittier Peninsula

Saturday October 1, 9-11 a.m.

Leader: Dave Horn

Skill level: All

Join Dave Horn on a morning walk to look for migrating sparrows or an orange-crowned warbler. Meet at the entrance to cemetery (west on Greenlawn Ave., from I-71). Look for a green Subaru Outback with "MOTHMAN" license plate. *Contact David Horn at horn.1@osu.edu if you have questions.*

Blendon Woods Migration Spectacular

Sunday October 2, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Lowry

Skill level: All

Meet Rob Lowry at the nature center. We'll be looking for late-season warblers and other goodies that may be passing through. Blendon Woods always holds surprises right from the nature center window! **Directions:** Take state Route 161 east towards New Albany. Take the Little Turtle exit and turn right at the light. Turn right again at the next light (Old state Route 161) and drive a quarter-mile to the park entrance. Turn left into the park. Follow the main park road past the main picnic area. Nature center is located on the left. *Contact Rob at rlowry517@aol.com.*

Creeks to Pickerington Ponds

Sunday October 2, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Skill level: All

While wetlands and riparian areas are disappearing elsewhere, these two parks are expanding these habitats. We'll start at the Creeks, where the narrow riparian corridors catch both early sun and migrants. While there, we'll also peek at their newly-developed wetlands to search for lingering shorebirds and early waterfowl. Then we'll hop over to the nearby Pickerington Ponds to scout their diverse new wetland areas. This vast complex of marshes and pools will almost certainly yield interesting marsh birds and waterfowl, along with raptors and lingering land bird migrants. We'll meet at the Heron Pond parking area of the Creeks. **Directions:** Take US 33 southeast from downtown (or I-270) to Hamilton Road, exit south, then immediately turn right onto Williams Road. The Heron Pond entrance is three-quarters of a mile west along Williams Road. *For more information, contact Rob Thorn, (614) 471-3051 or robthorn@earthlink.net.*

Nature in Our Neighborhoods: Location TBD

Tuesday October 11, 10 a.m.

Leader: Kristan Leedy

Skill level: All

Visit www.columbusaudubon.org in mid-September to discover the location and details for this walk to discover the nature in our neighborhoods. *Or contact Kristan Leedy at*

Special event

OWC Fall Festival

Saturday, October 1, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Please join us at OWC's Outdoor Education Center at 6131 Cook Road in Powell, Ohio to share in the joy of nature and "up-close" view of Ohio wildlife. Tour the butterfly gardens, design a backyard for wildlife and observe a red-tailed hawk up close. Come see the new bird feeders and landscaping made possible with Audubon At Home grant funds. Admission is \$5 per person. Children under 12 are free. Volunteers are also needed to staff the Columbus Audubon booth the day of the festival. Please contact Julie Davis at (614) 523-2180 or greenheron58@insight.rr.com or Darlene Sillick at azuretrails@columbus.rr.com. **Directions:** OWC is one mile north of Shawnee Hills off of Dublin Road at 6131 Cook Road. Turn left on Cook Road and follow the signs.

kristan@design4info.com.

Migration at Alum Creek Lake and Hoover Reservoir

Saturday October 16, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Skill level: All

Migration should still be strong as we survey these two reservoirs north of Columbus. We'll start at Alum Creek, where the small woodlands at the southern end of the lake are excellent migrant traps and the wide lower reservoir attracts a wide variety of waterfowl. After taking in the morning migrants there, we'll move to the upper end of nearby Hoover Reservoir. The mudflats of the Hoover Nature Preserve should be infested with ducks and shorebirds, and a trip to Hoover Meadows should round out our lists with marsh and field birds. We'll meet at the Heritage Park parking lot (on Cleveland Ave just north of Main Street, about one mile north of I-270). Bring sturdy shoes (for possible wet walking), snacks, and a windbreaker/jacket if the weather is cold. *For more details, contact Rob Thorn, (614) 471-3051 or robthorn@earthlink.net.*

Winged Creatures of the Night

Saturday October 29, Time TBD

Leader: TBD

Skill level: All

Joint program with the Columbus Metro Parks at Highbanks Metro Park. Please check the Columbus Audubon Web site for more details on this Halloween themed presentation in mid-September.

Waterfowl at Walden Refuge and Hoover Reservoir

Sunday October 30, 2 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

Skill level: Beginner through advanced

Come join us as we walk the woodland trail to the two observation shelters to look for waterfowl and other birds. We will then drive to several prime viewing locations on Hoover Reservoir to observe fall waterfowl. Meet at the nature center in Blendon Woods Metro Park. **Directions:** Take state Route 161 east towards New Albany. Take the Little Turtle exit and turn right at the light. Turn right again at the next light (Old state Route 161) and drive a quarter-mile to the park entrance. Turn left into the park. Follow the main park road past the main picnic area. Nature center is located on the left. *Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 882-*

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CA September Nature Program Wings of Flight

Tuesday, September 27, 2005
7:00 p.m. social time, 7:30 p.m. presentation,
Innis House at Inniswood Metro Gardens

See some of the Avian wonders of the world in a special presentation of the Columbus Zoo's "Wings of Flight" show including colorful talking parrots and beautiful free-flying raptors. Learn what you can do to help the birds in your own backyard and elsewhere. Learn about the Zoo's conservation efforts around the world. Program is presented by the Zoo's Education Department.

Take note:

Environmental Teaching Staff Needed for 2005-2006

A variety of part-time positions are available at the Elam Environmental Education Center at Camp Ken-Jockey. We are looking for instructors to plan, present, and carry out our environmental education programs with Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, School Groups and other youth organizations. Even if you are only interested in occasionally helping, or have a specific environmental interest or expertise that doesn't involve teaching, we are very interested in talking to you. Teaching opportunities for grades K-12 include Wildlife Ecology, Pond Science, Camping, Fishing, Low Ropes Course, Forestry, Night Hikes, Campfires and special seasonal programs and events. We offer over 70 different programs!

Hours are flexible and are most often after school and on weekends. Seasonally there can be opportunities during the day as well. Ideal candidates could work four to five week nights a month and one to two weekends a month. Pay ranges between \$8 and \$9 an hour. Training is provided but a desire to learn and a love of children are required. Staff can sign up to teach as much or as little as they like and sign up is on a first come basis. *For more information or to apply contact: Grant Lewis, Director, Elam Environmental Center, 1295 Hubbard Rd., Galloway, Ohio 43119. Phone: (614) 878-1382. E-mail: grant@sealofohio.org.*

CA Board meetings for September and October

Board meetings are held at the Museum of Biological Diversity at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month. All members are welcome to attend.

Delaware County Bird Club meetings

Meetings will be in the new science building on the Ohio Wesleyan University Campus, north side of the atrium, Room 163 at 7 p.m. on the fourth Monday of the month. **Directions:** U.S. Route 23 north to the Williams Street exit, turn left and then left again on S. Henry Street. Turn right into the parking lot. Program for September is a presentation on the owls of Montana. Jen Sauter

CA October Nature Program World of mushrooms

Tuesday, October 25, 2005
7:00 p.m. social time, 7:30 p.m. presentation,
Innis House at Inniswood Metro Gardens

Join us this evening for a look at the fascinating world of mushrooms led by Jim Davidson. Jim will use slides to present a wide range of species and will also discuss the interest and appeal of mushrooms from many points of human perspective, including visual attraction, edibility, toxicity, economic, chemical, recreational and ecological.

and Julie Davis will speak about their ABA trip to Montana to study owl behavior with nationally known owl researcher, Denver Holt. They will share their experiences from banding young long-eared owls to finding nesting boreal and pygmy owls. *For details on other upcoming programs, contact Edward H. Burt, Jr. at (740) 368-3886 or ehburt@owu.edu.*

Feathers and Foliage Bird Festival

Join us on Kelleys Island for fall migration on Saturday, Sept. 24 starting at 8 a.m. Highlights include a bird walk led by Jim McCormac, Tree ID walk led State Park Manager, Mike Monnett and a hawk watch. Directions: Exit Route 2 at 269 North. Take 269 North to Route 163 East into Marblehead. Sponsored by: Kelleys Island Audubon Club.

Contact the Kelleys Island Audubon Club at (419) 746-2258, email staff@kelleysislandnature.com, or visit our web site at www.kelleysislandnature.com.

Swift Night Out

As summer draws to a close and the swifts have finished raising their young, these fascinating aerial acrobats begin to congregate in communal roosts prior to their migration in the fall. Look for old, tall brick chimneys and near dusk, watch for the chattering swirling cloud of swifts as they feed in a tight circle just before they appear to be sucked into a large chimney.

Check your neighborhood for some old brick chimneys, pull out your lawn chair just before dusk and with counting clicker in hand count and be amazed. Old school and industrial chimneys all over town from downtown to the suburbs host hundreds to thousands of swirling swifts looking for safe haven for the night. Eventually the swifts will migrate to the Amazon basin of Peru.

On one night over the weekend of Sept. 9-11 observe the roost starting about 30 minutes before dusk and estimate the number of swifts that enter. Send in your sightings to www.chimneyswifts.org.

2006 Entertainment Books for sale

The books will be available through December. Proceeds from the sale support Columbus Audubon's educational activities.

Accent on Wild Birds	1340 Grandview Ave., Grandview	486-7333
Better Earth	59 Spruce St., Columbus (North Market)	224-6196
Backyard Experience	3515 North High St., Columbus	261-0355
Wild Bird Supplies & Gifts	738 E. Lincoln Ave., Worthington	431-2473
Wild Birds Unlimited	21 Cherry Park Sq., Westerville	899-9453
Wild Birds Unlimited	5400 Riverside Dr. Columbus	766-2103
Wild Birds Unlimited	6839 E. Broad St., Columbus (Blacklick Shopping Ctr.)	860-1133
Wild Bird Center of Dublin	6535 Perimeter Dr., Dublin, Ohio	734-3333
Columbus Audubon	Dave Horn (<i>If you want an out-of-town Book, contact Dave directly</i>)	262-0312

Creature feature: Osprey

Continued from page 1

nesting platforms. This has been a key factor in their successful population growth in the Midwest, where they have utilized human-provided platforms extensively.

Hunting & Diet: Watching an osprey hunt is one of the great spectacles in coastal birding. The bird will circle up on a thermal, helped by a few strong wing beats, to a height of 80-200-feet. Then it slowly cruises the bay or river, stopping to hover if it spies something interesting. If it judges a target worthy, it will drop, slowly at first by shortening its wings. If it has not been detected, it will gain speed by trailing its wings back above its body, and will stretch its talons out in front as it hits the water. It rarely completely submerges; a few seconds after hitting the water, it will use its wings to lift itself high in the water, then flap from the wrist to 'helicopter' itself out of the water. Most dives are aborted before the final plunge, and success rates for the plunge vary from 10-to-25-percent. The usual targets are surface feeding fish, but osprey have also been known to take frogs, snakes, and waterbirds. If successful, the osprey will carry off its prize to a favored perch before tearing it into bite-sized pieces.

Humans & Osprey: Osprey have had a difficult relationship

with humans. Although they still are found in areas of northern Europe and Asia where human civilization has existed for many centuries, their fortunes in North America have been fickle. While coastal osprey held their own through the 20th Century, by the 1950s it was apparent that their populations were in severe decline. It wasn't until scientists pieced together how ospreys accumulated all of the toxins in their aquatic food chains that the population decline was understood. The pesticide controls imposed in the 1960s and 1970s helped stem the decline. Even then, it took the work of many wildlife professionals and volunteers building artificial nesting platforms to help the surviving birds multiply and prosper. Inland osprey were hit even harder with the double-whammy of toxin accumulation and wholesale loss of wetland habitat.

In remote areas of Minnesota, Michigan, and Canada, osprey have done well, but breeding birds were virtually exterminated from lower Midwest states like Ohio. That's part of the reason for the excitement as osprey have recently expanded into the reservoirs and wetlands of central Ohio. If you want to see them, look around the nesting platforms at upper Alum Creek Lake, upper Hoover Reservoir, and Pickerington Ponds through mid-to-late September.

Common shorebirds of Ohio identification guide

By C. Steve Landes



Plovers- medium sized "grass-pipers"

***Killdeer:** Seen all year except late December through late February. A large plover, very loud and conspicuous- our most common shorebird. Plain white below, tan above, with two black chest stripes.

Semipalmated Plover: Seen in May, late July through early October. A smaller plover, very similar to Killdeer.

Distinguished by size, dark black "mask," yellow legs, and single black breast stripe.

Larger, Taller Shorebirds "waders"

Greater Yellowlegs: late March to mid May, July to late October. A very large, tall, shorebird with long, yellow legs. Patchy gray on back, neck, and head, plain white below. Often gives a 3-4 note call. Both yellowlegs have a white rump patch.

Lesser Yellowlegs: (see Greater Yellowlegs). Very similar to Greater, best distinguished by smaller size, darker bill, and 1-2 note call.

Solitary Sandpiper: late April to mid May, July to September. A medium tall shorebird, very similar to Lesser Yellowlegs. Best distinguished by darker shoulder, greenish legs, and white eye ring.

Medium sized Shorebirds

***Spotted Sandpiper:** Late April to September. (often found along streams, rivers, and ponds). A medium sized, shorter shorebird, constantly bobs its tail. Spring and summer: Gray-spotty above, distinct black spots on breast. Fall: loses spots, plainer gray above.

Dunlin: May, September to November. A medium sized shorebird with a slightly long, decurved bill. Spring: splotchy reddish brown back, large black belly patch. Fall: more plain, gray overall, belly patch worn or missing.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Late March through mid May, mid July through October. A slightly larger, heavily streaked and spotted shorebird. Reddish brown above and on breast, but streaking ends abruptly at belly. Yellow legs.

Wilson's Snipe: April, Aug. through October, (but can be found all year). (Formerly Common Snipe). A short, stout shorebird with a long, straight bill. Tan to brown overall, with distinct tan stripes on the back and head. Has vertical bars on flanks, and a short tail.

Smaller, short billed Shorebirds- "peeps"

Semipalmated Sandpiper: May through early June, July through September. A quite small, grayish brown shorebird with black legs.

Least Sandpiper: Late April through May, July through October. A very small, normally reddish brown shorebird with a slightly drooped bill and yellow legs.

Larger, Stout Shorebirds

Short-billed Dowitcher: May, July through mid-September. A larger, heavy looking shorebird with a long, straight bill. Light reddish brown overall with black splotches on the back, and a distinct brown "cap," and white line over the eye. Light yellow legs. (Very similar Long-billed Dowitcher is best distinguished by call and molt pattern- NOT length of bill. The Long-billed is a later migrant and is found almost exclusively along Lake Erie).

* - commonly nests in Ohio

Note: when looking at leg color on shorebirds, consider the fact that the legs may appear much darker because of mud, or may not be able to be seen at all.

Coming up

Continued from page 7

9493.

Waterfowl and raptors at Big Island Wildlife Area

Sunday November 6, 2 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

Skill level: Beginner through advanced

We will travel to this outstanding wetland wildlife area in search of migrating waterfowl, along with the birds of prey that have come here from the north. Meet at the Worthington Mall shopping center parking lot in front of the Kroger, just south of I-270 on US 23 in north Worthington. Carpooling is available. Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 882-9493.

Avid Birders field trips

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

September/October Work trips

Defining Popular Footpaths

Saturday, September 10 7:45 a.m.

Leader: Randy Beinlich

Assist Randy Beinlich, Central Preserve Manager, in continuing trail work at Stages Pond State Nature Preserve in Pickaway County. Alternative trail maintenance tasks will rotate volunteers' efforts. This kettle lake and adjacent marsh refuge attracts a variety of waterfowl during fall migration. Populations of

quail, pheasants and several species of hawks inhabit the oak-hickory upland and open fields. Please call Roger Barber, researcher and DNA & P work trip coordinator, by noon Sept. 6 at (614) 265-6467 to sign up, reserve space for transportation and determine tool requirements. Bring lunch and cup or water bottle for drinking.

Meet in the parking lot inside gatehouse at the Ohio Department Natural Resources Complex, 2045 Morse Road.

Directions: I-71 to Morse Road. Travel east on Morse, past the former Northland Mall (now NorthlandPark) and turn right into the complex. Contact Sharon Treaster at (614) 292-1395.

Calamus Swamp

Saturday, October 22 9 a.m.

Leader: Sid Foster

Join Sid Foster, at Columbus Audubon's first dedicated nature preserve property in Pickaway County. Teams will build short boardwalks, clean the boardwalk and informational displays, complete trail/parking lot maintenance and collect trash. Bring lunch, drinks, gloves, hammers or loppers if you want. All skill levels welcome!

The boardwalk accessible swamp is home to a diversity of flora and fauna that flow through the seasons. Visiting birds can be viewed from the observation decks or the bird blind. Meet at Calamus Swamp. **Directions:** Take state Route 104 south about 20 miles from Columbus to a quarter-mile past where it crosses state Route 22. The parking lot is in the field on the left (look for signs). If you want to carpool, meet at Great Southern Shopping Center at 8:30 a.m. (between Tim Horton's and the Kroger Store). More details can be found by visiting www.columbusaudubon.org. Contact Sharon Treaster at (614) 292-1395.

Columbus Audubon

Founded 1913

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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; Roz Horn, 262-0312

Membership: Joe Meara, 781-9602

Corresponding Sec'y: Emily Eby, 855-3879

Calamus Committee: Kylene Kruse, 262-0375

Birdathon: Julie Davis, 523-2180 or Katryn Renard, 261-7171

CA Phone Line: Lois and John Day, (740) 549-0333

Avid Birders: <http://www.columbusaudubon.org/avids/avids.html>

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