

Columbus Audubon Song Sparrow

February-March 2008
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Art for Audubon



Photos by Earl Harrison

Guests mingle and bid on silent auction items at "Art For Audubon: Visions of Nature" in the Cardinal Health lobby on Oct. 21, 2007.

Event nets more than \$14,000 for GIAC

By Julie Davis

Columbus Audubon's Art for Audubon: Visions of Nature art auction, held Oct. 21 at Cardinal Health, netted nearly \$14,500 for the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Fine art, photography, jewelry, books, gift baskets and many other items relat-

ing to birds and nature were donated by local artists, Columbus Audubon members and businesses for the silent auction.

Guests were treated to tasty appetizers and wine provided by Judy's Café, while they bid on the silent auction items. Guests were also treated to on-the-spot drawing of live birds from

The Ohio Wildlife Center (OWC) by the event's featured artists, Dorenda Watson and Jim Glover.

The live auction was an exciting event, expertly called by David Schnaidt of Apple Tree Auction Center. Ten pieces were showcased and sold during the live auction including two pieces drawn by birds from the Columbus Zoo. The bidding was fierce, with all the winners happy with their purchases. Everyone enjoyed the "quick draw" of live birds from the OWC. These two pieces were then auctioned as well.

During the silent auction, guests could look at drawings of what the GIAC and the Scioto-Audubon Metro Park will look like when finished in 2009. Columbus Audubon and the (GIAC) leadership officially signed the Memorandum of Understanding to seal their



Heather Starck, GIAC director, speaks about the restoration of the Whittier Peninsula in downtown Columbus.

See Art, page 6

South Side program a success due to dedicated volunteers

By Susan Setterlin

As the partnership between South Side Settlement with Columbus Audubon and the GIAC enters the second half of its third year, it has become evident that the success of this vital after-school program is due in large part to the dedication and perseverance of six CA volunteers and GIAC education program manager Doreen Whitley. While Whitley and Susan Setterlin, CA education chair, plan and develop the curriculum, it is the work of **Tami King, Johann Cozart, Frank Marten, Karen Marten, Carolyn Hill and Betty Daniel** that results in a successful program. Each volunteer brings a certain gift to the program whether it's one of organization and teaching, or the ability to interact and relate to the students. Because of these gifts, the students love to see the volunteers because they know there will be something fun to do that day.

Learning to identify local



Students make strings of cranberries, popcorn and peanuts to feed birds in their backyards. To volunteer with the program, contact Susan Setterlin at (614) 457-8130 or rsetterl@columbus.rr.com.

birds, mastering the use of binoculars and discovering new critters on field trips are just a few of the experiences the students engage in every Wednesday. While the focus this year is on collecting data from the three feeder stations, volunteers also engage students in crafts or games. Just before the holiday break, the older students made luscious treats for

the birds and other critters by stringing peanuts, popcorn, cranberries and raisins. Once finished, they hung them on their own trees in their yards. Thanks again to our dedicated volunteers! If you know them, give them a big thanks for all of the valuable work they are doing to shape the lives of these urban kids and their growing respect for the natural world.

After-school program receives generous support from Dolores Telerski

The CA/GIAC after-school program at South Side Settlement House recently received a generous donation of \$300 which will keep its birdfeeder stations filled for quite some time.

Dolores Telerski is a long time supporter and board member of the South Side Settlement House.

As a retired teacher, her interest in good fun and educational activities for the program's students has been her main priority.

Keeping the feeder stations equipped and in good shape is important to Dolores.

Thanks Dolores for your continued interest and support of this project!

Listening to the Land finale event planned for March 15

It's hard to believe that the year-long celebration of Aldo Leopold's historic book *A Sand County Almanac* is coming to a close in March. With readings each month from March 2007 to March 2008, hundreds of participants have heard the lyrical words of Aldo Leopold read aloud and experienced a wide variety of related activities. Some participants have been inspired to journal and do some writing of their own. If you are not familiar with *A Sand County Almanac*, it is the musings of Aldo Leopold, considered by many in his field to be the "Father of Wildlife Ecology." While the essays spanned over two decades of the 1920's to the 1940's, his message is still relevant today which makes his book so valuable and great to read.

To finalize this year of reading events, there will be a

finale event on Saturday, March 15, from 1-4 p.m. at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.

While zoo admission is charged for this event, if you have attended at least one reading this past year and filled out a registration form, you are eligible for half-price admission. You will be receiving a post card invitation in late February which will be required for the discounted admission. One post card invitation is good for the immediate family.

The event will include a loop slide show representing the reading events during the year, animal ambassador visitors from the zoo's education department collection, presentation from "Aldo Leopold" (characterization), an art show and drawing for prizes.

Contact Susan Setterlin at (614) 457-8130 or rsetterl@columbus.rr.com.

2007 Entertainment book sale successful once again

I'm still doing final accounting at press time but it looks like we sold around 100 Entertainment Books amounting to \$500 for Columbus Audubon. That's somewhat less than we've made in the past, but still good. If you bought a book, thank you again for your support. If you suddenly decide that you still want a book, there is a chance that I may have one or two left. A big "thank you" to our sales outlets: Accent on Nature, Backyard Experience, Better Earth, and Wild Birds Unlimited stores: Westerville, Riverside Drive and Blacklick Center. Thanks also to all who assisted with the sale: Roz Horn, Molly Rudy, Susan Setterlin, Darlene Sillick, Pat Wolfrom and Co-chair Linda Marshall. Finally, a thank you is due to our Columbus Audubon treasurer John Wilson for his timely responses to my requests for moving money around.

-Dave Horn

Columbus Audubon KIDS!

The Winter CA KIDS newsletter has hit the streets! Contact Nadya Bennett, CA Kids Committee Chair to join up! You can contact Nadya at nadya2003@msn.com or (614) 306-8215.

Columbus Audubon annual meeting and potluck dinner

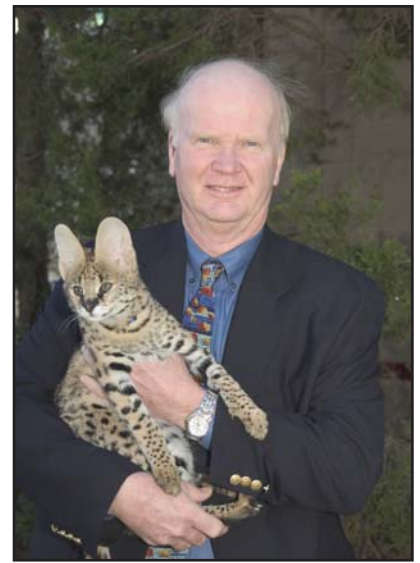
Tuesday, February 26, 2008 at 6:30 p.m at the Clintonville Woman's Club, 3951 North High Street

Please join us at our annual meeting and potluck! Our distinguished speaker this year is Jerry Borin, executive director of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. Please bring your family and friends! There will be informational displays and a few other surprises. Dinner starts promptly at 6:30 p.m. so come early, to find a seat, visit with friends and set out your dish before the line forms.

After dinner, the evening will include a short business meeting before Borin's presentation. Non-members are welcome but may not vote during the business meeting, which will include the election of four trustees for three year terms (2008-2011). Each individual or family is asked to bring a substantial dish large enough to share with 12 other people. You may bring a casserole, salad, dessert or bread of some kind. Bring your own utensils, plates, cups and beverage other than coffee, which will be provided.

An inside look at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

Where would you go to see over 790 species of animals, totaling nearly 7,000 individuals? The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium! In 2007, the Zoo celebrated 80 years of conservation education, wildlife conservation and affordable family recreation. Through its history the Zoo has seen many exciting events and opportunities. In 1956 the first captive-born Western lowland gorilla, Colo, was born in Columbus. Since that time the Zoo has welcomed 33 gorilla births, 23 giraffes, 30 different types of turtles, 24 litters of cheetahs, 27 bald eagles and 36 Mexican wolves. What does it take to manage the 580 acres of the Zoo and its 200-plus employees and more than 300 volunteers? Not to mention those 7,000 animals? Join CA in welcoming Jerry Borin, executive director of the



Jerry Borin, executive director of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.

See potluck, page 6

Avian photographer Mike Maier to be featured at potluck

CA welcomes photographer Mike Maier to exhibit his work at the potluck. Maier will be bringing photographs and a new line of bird related greeting cards. He will donate 20 percent of any sale to CA. He will also donate a door prize item for that evening.

Mike is an Ohio native but ventured north to obtain a B.S. degree in forestry from Michigan State University. He formed Avian Expressions by Mike Maier© in early 2007 for the purpose of using his photography to inspire others to appreciate and conserve nature. In addition to selling his work to the public, he donates work to non-profit organizations often. Over the years Maier has dabbled in various types of photography including portraits, wed-



Photos by Mike Maier, Avian Expressions

Three of the photographs Mike Maier will be showing at the potluck are (left) a Cooper's Hawk, (above) a Cedar Waxwing and (right) a Indigo Bunting. If you are interested in Mike's work and are unable to attend the potluck, you may contact him at avianexpressions@aol.com.



See artist, page 6

Columbus Audubon trustee biographies

At the Columbus Audubon annual meeting and potluck on Feb. 26 we will vote on four trustee candidates.

Below are their biographies so you can learn a little more about them.

We feel very fortunate to have such qualified candidates for the CA trustee position to give their energy and skill to our cause.

For three-year terms 2008-2011:

Bill Heck

Bill Heck is the Columbus Audubon webmaster and a new candidate for the board. He is on the Audubon Ohio advisory board; is past president and board member of Audubon Miami Valley and is a member of the Columbus Audubon

Avid Birders coordinating committee. In addition to his Audubon duties, he has been treasurer of both the Three Valley Conservation Trust and the Environmental Mobile Unit in Oxford, Ohio and is in his third year of service on the nominating committee for the Ohio

See trustee, page 11

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

Winter Birds at Green Lawn Cemetery

Saturday, February 2, 9 a.m.

Leaders: Earl Harrison and John Wilson

Join Earl Harrison and John Wilson for a morning of birding which may bring some interesting sightings. We'll be looking for Pine Siskins, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, the occasional Merlin, and other residents and guests. We'll fill the feeders too. Meet in the office parking lot just inside the main gate. For more information, contact Earl Harrison at eharrison@ehe.osu.edu.

Wednesday Walks at Whittier

Wednesdays, February 6 and March 5, 7:30 a.m.

Leaders: Paul Gledhill and Heather Raymond

Note: Wednesday walks are always held the first Wednesday of the month. Join Paul and Heather for a short walk around Whittier Peninsula to view wildlife as well as to watch the latest developments of the park and nature center. Meet at Lower Scioto Park in the boat ramp parking lot (Entrance is on Whittier Street, West of Front Street). Please note the new start time of 7:30 a.m. For more information, contact Paul Gledhill at (614) 848-7666 or gledhillpaul@yahoo.com, or Heather Raymond at (614) 785-0342 or heather.raymond@epa.state.oh.us.

Winter Birds at The Wilds

Sunday, February 17, 12 noon

Leader: Mike Flynn

This 10,000 acre natural area has become a significant wintering ground for many birds, notably birds of prey. In recent winters, a Golden Eagle has taken up residence here, and shares this vast landscape with Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers, Great Horned and Short-eared Owls and many other species. Join us for an afternoon afield as we search for the exciting rarity around the next curve in the road. Meet at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant, I-70 at state Route 256 south (first light; just west of 256). Bring water and snacks, and dress warmly! It can be very windy and cold. For more information, contact Mike Flynn mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com, 614-769-1681.

Coyotes of Prairie Oaks

Tuesday, February 19, 7 p.m.

Leader: Park naturalist

Join the park naturalist as we use bait and vocalizations to try to lure some coyotes into howling and even in viewing range. Bring binoculars, but please, flashlights only as necessary. This program is made possible by the research of coyote expert Karen Hallberg. The inclement weather date is Feb. 20. This program is not successful in rain or high winds. Please call (614) 879-8903 or (614) 769-1681 for more information or if weather is questionable.

CA March Program

A Cauldron of Evolution, Galapagos Islands

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

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

Sandra L. Gaunt, retired Curator, Borror Laboratory of Bioacoustics at The Ohio State University will present a program about her most recent trip to the Galapagos Islands.

This Archipelago is so remote that it remained unknown by man for centuries and even once found was lost. Yet plant and animal colonizers from the land masses to the east and south did arrive, populated the islands and evolved to form some of the most amazing endemic organisms in the world.

Together this place formed of volcanic activity with the engine of speciation evident makes for a biologist's dream. Though diversity is low, especially when compared to the teaming equatorial rain forests to the east, animals are oblivious to humans and plants are spectacular making for a photographer's dream.

Gaunt will explore the beauty of this seemingly barren place with its amazing flora and fauna. Her work in recording animal sounds over the past 25 years made it difficult to maintain her interest in photography as it is nearly impossible to do both in the field with good results. So this first trip since retiring *sans* sound recording equipment was her happy reintroduction to wildlife photography.

Wildlife at Deer Creek

Saturday, February 23, 9 a.m.

Leaders: Earl Harrison and Darlene Sillick

Join Earl Harrison and Darlene Sillick for a trip to Deer Creek State Park, one of Ohio's official Watchable Wildlife sites. We will be exploring this grassland wildlife area, so come prepared for a day in the field. Meet at Worthington Mall Shopping Center at the southeast corner of the parking lot. For more information, contact Earl eharrison@ehe.osu.edu.

Highbanks and Alum Creek Reservoir

Sunday, February 24, 9 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Late February is when winter starts to lose its grip. Days are conspicuously longer, and birds and mammals become noticeably more active. We'll try to enjoy some of this early activity as well as get a jump on some of the early migrant waterfowl by combining these two good Delaware County birding locales. The ravines of Highbanks often hide a surprising array of wintering birds, and the nature center feeders are excellent spots to look for stray winter finches. Alum Creek Reservoir should be partly open water by now, and often hosts loons, grebes, and the first flocks of north-bound waterfowl. We'll search for unusual species like goldeneye, scoters, and bald eagles which are sur-

See Coming up, page 9

Exploring the nature of change

By Doreen Whitley

Like other educational institutions, the Grange Insurance Audubon Center has been working on our interpretive plan that will help drive our programs, building, site, and hands-on educational exhibits. For instance, when you go to Highbanks Metro Park and walk through the nature center, there is a strong theme of understanding the unique geology of the area. Many nature centers interpret their resources and the animals that live there. With an urban nature center undergoing a huge restoration effort, we have the ability to do something different and unique. We are pleased to announce the theme for the GIAC is "Exploring the Nature of Change."

The hands-on educational exhibits at the center will be considered a tool for reaching our mission to "to awaken and connect participants to the beauty of the natural world in the heart of Columbus and inspire environmental stewardship in their daily lives."

The exhibits will interpret the elements of change found in nature and draw parallels to similar change elements in the urban environment to erase the lines made between the city and nature. They will model a process for making behavioral changes in the best interest of conserving natural resources and enhancing the quality of life and the quality of environment in the heart of the city.

Our mission is two-fold, aiming to both connect participants to nature and inspire stewardship of it. The site where the center will soon reside is unique in that restoration will be ongoing. A natural resource once degraded is now undergoing a huge transformation. This element of change is the basis for our programming and is the reason we gain support for this project.

Our theme is appropriate



(Above) View of downtown from the Scioto-Audubon Metro Park.

Photos courtesy of the GIAC

(Right) Close-up of an old warehouse soon to be razed. (Bottom, right) A wrecker tears down one of the old buildings.



because change is a part of every organism's life. Some changes are biological and others are the result of choice and behavior. The sub-themes understanding the process of change, understanding biological change and understanding environmental change, promote conservation action. Understanding change requires skill in making observations. In determining the direction of behavioral change humans observe, document and decide. Use of this process maximizes positive change. Organisms experience change both internally and within their environment. Many biological changes experienced in the natural world are similar to changes found in the urban environment. Our natural world is constantly changing. Changes are happening at a global level that can be felt locally.

Even though our center is yet to be built, we have been an

agent for positive change in the community we serve with the help of Columbus Audubon volunteers. We thank you for

all of your hard work and look forward to strengthening our partnership as our center grows.

Art for Audubon nets more than \$14,000 for GIAC

Continued from page 1

partnership in the new center and GIAC leaders gave a presentation and update on the project.

Capping off the evening were the final minutes of the silent auction with patrons vying to get their favorite items.

Over 75 donations were sold to the highest bidders as the evening ended. Attendees had a very enjoyable evening and were already looking forward to the next Art for Audubon, planned for fall 2009 at the GIAC.

Many people worked for months to make this event a success. Columbus Audubon gives special thanks to: Cardinal Health, Chapman Graphics, Mr. Tim Platt who secured a donation through the Columbus Foundation, the Margaret Day Platt Fund, David Schnaidt of Apple Tree Auction Center, Judy's Café & Catering, Sonja at Sawmill Florist, The Frame Cellar and and music by the Folkwood Players. Additional thanks go to the members of the Art for Audubon committee and Columbus Audubon board members.



Guests look at some of the silent auction items at the auction in the Cardinal Health lobby on Oct. 21, 2007.

By Earl Harrison

Potluck

Continued from page 3

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. Borin will share his insights of more than 20 years at the Zoo and will also look into the future as the Zoo moves forward with a business and operational transition.

Borin's years of experience include working with leaders in the zoological and conservation communities through his involvement as a board member for the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, the International Rhino Foundation, the Wilds, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, the International Species Information System and Experience Columbus.

Artist

Continued from page 3

dings, sports and travel. However, it wasn't until he concluded a successful 35 year career with Nationwide Insurance that he turned his focus to birds. His style devel-

oped quickly and leans toward the artful presentation of birds in their natural environment.

People are surprised to learn that most of his work is done within a 20 mile radius of his Westerville home. Contact him at avianexpressions@aol.com.



By Doreen Whitley

Paige Trimmer watches birds during field study.

Art for Audubon art contest winners

As part of Art for Audubon, CA sponsored a student art contest. We had two student winners who both received savings bonds and recognition for their efforts.

Paige Trimmer, a student from our first CA and GIAC partnership program at The Southside Settlement House, won first place. Paige has worked

with us for the past two years and it shows in her art work. Not only was her picture drawn with talent but with great accuracy, much like John James Audubon.

She featured a foraging Baltimore Oriole and two fledglings in a nest.

Kelly McCabe came in second place. Kelly's work was submitted to us through the mail. She is a student at Britton Elementary in Hilliard, Ohio. She featured a hummingbird in her artwork.

Her piece was selected for her use of color, shading and its ode to spring.



By Earl Harrison

Kelly McCabe receives her second-place award from Doreen Whitley.

Conservation Corner

Audubon releases updated 'WatchList'

By Casey Tucker & Dave Horn

Fourteen of the 178 bird species which Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) have identified as top-priority conservation prospects spend at least part of the year in Ohio. These birds have the dubious distinction of being included on 2007 WatchList, the newest and most scientifically sound list of America's birds at greatest risk. Unlike those on Audubon's recent survey of Common Birds in Decline, these species are often rare and limited in range.

They consequently face a greater possibility of disappearing from the state. For many of them, conservation efforts in Ohio as well as nationally will play a critical role in determining their survival.

The continental WatchList is based on a comprehensive analysis of population size and trends, distribution and environmental threats, informed and improved by extensive scientific review. The three species on Ohio's "red list" are those of greatest concern, while the additional 11 merit "yellow list" status due to a combination of rarity and/or a declining population.

Species found on either part of the WatchList demand immediate help while there is still time to save them. The five priority

WatchList species found in Ohio are: Henslow's Sparrow, Prothonotary Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Prairie Warbler and Cerulean Warbler.

The Audubon/ABC WatchList is based on the latest available data from Christmas Bird Counts and annual Breeding Bird Surveys along with other research and assessment from the bird conservation community. The data were analyzed and weighted according to methods developed through extensive peer review and revision, yielding an improved assessment of actual peril that can be used to determine bird conservation priorities and funding.

For the complete WatchList, and information on how to help, visit www.audubon.org. To learn more about Audubon Ohio's work protecting these and other species, visit www.audubonohio.org.

Your Columbus Audubon Conservation Committee welcomes your input to these and other matters, via e-mail, phone calls or in person. We can always use a few more folks. Currently our meetings are the second Tuesday of the month, 7:30 p.m. at Dave Horn's house.

- Casey Tucker (slightly edited & abridged by Dave Horn)

Invasive species: House Sparrow

By Rob Lowry

For those readers who monitor nesting boxes intended for Eastern Bluebirds, no bird elicits more negative emotions than a House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

Not actually a true sparrow, the House Sparrow is a member of the Old World sparrow family Passeridae, and is considered, somewhat controversially, a relative of the Weaver Finch Family.

House Sparrows naturally occur in most of Europe and Asia, but were intentionally or accidentally introduced into most of the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as in urban areas in other parts of the world.

The House Sparrow currently is the most widely distributed wild bird on Earth.

In North America, House Sparrows (also known as English Sparrows) were first introduced in 1851 when approximately 100 birds imported from Great Britain were released in Brooklyn, New York as a means of controlling various crop pests. Subsequent independent releases occurred in several American cities between 1850 and 1875 for the same purpose. Ironically, those responsible for the release of the birds at that time failed to realize that House Sparrows are



Courtesy of Wikipedia

House Sparrow.

primarily seedeaters, and therefore were ineffective in their intended purpose. This major blunder was only realized after House Sparrows became well established and by the late 1800s, they were considered pests and their release a disaster.

In the conterminous U.S., House Sparrows occur year round and are abundant in their preferred urban and agricultural habitats.

Although populations reportedly are somewhat declining across their range, House Sparrows are one of the most abundant birds in North America, with an estimated population of about 150 million.

The House Sparrow is one of only three

bird species (including the Rock Pigeon and the European Starling) not protected by law in the U.S. and Canada.

As an invasive non-indigenous species, it is legal to kill House Sparrows and destroy their eggs in most places.

House Sparrows may kill native cavity nesting species (such as bluebirds) and their young, destroy their eggs, and take over their nesting sites.

Therefore, House Sparrows are considered a major factor in the decline of Bluebirds and other native cavity nesters in North America.

It is nearly impossible to keep House Sparrows out of nest boxes built for many native birds because House Sparrows are smaller than the less aggressive native birds with which they compete.

The primary methods used to control the adverse impacts of House Sparrows on native bird populations include the trapping and shooting of House Sparrow adults and the destruction of their nests and eggs.

For those readers who encounter House Sparrows in nest boxes on their property or monitored as part of a program (Metro Parks), you can contact myself or Darlene Sillick for assistance in effective humane removal methods of the House Sparrows.

Backyards for Wildlife

Winter birds depend on your yard

By Toni Stahl

When I think of winter, I think of snow, wind and frozen water. Bird feeders are a supplemental source of nutrition during times of natural food scarcity, although the main source of food should come from native plants. If you start feeding, continue through Mother's Day to make sure ample natural food is available. Feed early so birds eat it all before nocturnal animals come out, keep areas under and around feeders clean, keep seed clean, dry and watch for mold.

When the river freezes a mile away, we have a wide variety of birds come to our house and stand in line for our frost-free birdbaths. It's an amazing sight to see in such a small yard. We keep the water fresh and clean. You can add heating elements to most existing birdbaths or purchase ones that have a heating element in the bottom. Birds can drown in water over one-and-one-half inches deep. To disinfect baths and feeders, clean with one part bleach to nine parts water. If you have a pond, try keeping the water moving or put a bale of hay in the center.

Place food and water about 10-feet from dense shrubs or cover. To create quick cover, check local weed laws to make sure a brush pile in an out-of-the-way corner is legal and if so, talk to your neighbors to educate them of its purpose. Start with larger logs and top with smaller branches. Brush piles are a safe place for birds and small animals to hide from larger predators (like hawks) and to keep warm.

Brush piles should not attract rats. Rats and mice most often found around humans are nocturnal: Norway rats are attracted by garbage cans, dumpsters, sewers, and are usually in groups. House mice primarily live inside buildings and are very secretive. Rodents are natural food for common backyard carnivores (i.e.

February-March events

Saturday, Feb. 16, butterfly gardening presentations, 1:15-2:30 p.m. and 2:45-4:00 p.m., Eighth Annual Gardening Symposium, The Botanical Garden Association, RG Drage Career Center, 6805 Richville Dr SW, Massillon. Web site: www.bcbgarden.org.

Wednesday, March 19, Poster Presentation, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Ohio Botanical Symposium, Fawcett Center at The Ohio State University, 2400 Olentangy River Rd, Columbus, donation to The Nature Conservancy.

Saturday March 29, two trainings, 10:30-11:30 a.m. and 2:30-3:30 p.m. Delaware Green Thumbs Gardener Fair, Liberty High School, 3584 Home Rd, Delaware, small entry fee.



By Marc Apfelstadt/2005

A Cooper's Hawk cannot reach birds protected by our brush pile.

hawk, raccoon, skunk, fox, etc).

I hope the American Robins migrate this year after the terrible cold snap caused deaths last winter. If a robin decides your yard is home, there are fewer berries due to the changing weather last spring. Robin's beaks are soft so they cannot eat seeds. You can help them by providing chopped-up raisins or currants and frost-free water until the ground softens enough that they can eat worms (around late April).

Contact me for more information about transforming your yard at marc-a@columbus.rr.com. Ohio-based information is at (no www.) <http://home.columbus.rr.com/nwfbackyardohio/>.

COSI transforms Big Science Park into native prairie meadow

As part of our ongoing effort to introduce people to birding, the Board of Columbus Audubon voted to provide a year's worth of bird seed to a newly expanded feeder station at COSI in downtown Columbus. The feeders will be located in the area known as Big Science Park on the east side of COSI's building, just outside the exhibit known as Weather

Station.

COSI has transformed Big Science Park over the past two years by turning part of the grass into a native prairie meadow, adding a prairie garden, and incorporating a year round bird bath in the garden. The addition of bird feeders will create an even more inviting habitat for birds throughout the year.

The changes to the outdoor area at COSI provide visitors with the opportunity to observe a native ecosystem that is highly accessible, but not intimidating. "We really appreciate the support of Columbus Audubon and look forward to working together on future programs," said Sharon Tinianow, project manager at COSI.

-Sharon Tinianow

Coming up

Continued from page 4

prisingly regular here. Meet at the Highbanks Nature Center parking area and dress warmly. After birding around Highbanks, we'll drive to Alum Creek. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at robthorn@earthlink.net, (614) 471-3051.

Birds of Big Island Wildlife Area

Sunday, March 9, 1 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

Migrating waterfowl and other waterbirds congregate at this vital natural habitat by the thousands each spring. Spectacular flocks of shovelers and pintails have graced the skies for us in previous years. Come along as we savor early spring and the northbound migration of these wild birds as they head to their breeding grounds. There are also resident Bald Eagles here, along with many other species. Bring binoculars and spotting scopes, dress warmly, and bring water and snacks. Meet at Worthington Mall Shopping Center at the southeast corner of the parking lot. For more information, contact Mike Flynn mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com, (614) 769-1681.

Birding at the Delaware Wildlife Area

Sunday, March 22, 9 a.m.

Leaders: Earl Harrison and Darlene Sillick

Join Earl Harrison and Darlene Sillick for a field trip to the Delaware Wildlife area. Target birds will include waterfowl as well as late winter and early spring migrants. Come prepared for unpredictable March weather and a day in the field. Meet at Worthington Mall Shopping Center at the southeast corner of the parking lot. For more information, contact Earl at eharrison@ehe.osu.edu.

Birding the Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Area

Sunday, March 30, 12 noon

Leader: Mike Flynn

This vast natural area covers thousands of acres along a major creek corridor in Holmes and Wayne Counties. It is permanent home to river otters, mink, Bald Eagles and much more, along with an incredible array of migrating birds. We have seen Sandhill Cranes, over 20 species of waterfowl, and wading and waterbirds, all amidst an especially wild and natural setting in Amish country. Come along and see this special place and its wildlife. Be sure to bring binoculars, a spotting scope if you have one, water and snacks. Meet at Worthington Mall Shopping Center at the southeast corner of the parking lot. For more information, contact Mike Flynn at mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com (614) 769-1681.

Prairie Ridge Interpretive Site, Illinois

Friday-Sunday, April 4, 5 and 6

Leaders: Mike Flynn and Michael Packer

Reservations required, Cost is \$50 per person

Join CA for another fantastic weekend of birding. Mike Flynn and Michael Packer have reserved the private blinds at Prairie Ridge Interpretive Site in Illinois to get a rare up-close look at the courtship of the endangered Greater Prairie Chicken. At this time of year, and at the crack of dawn, the males begin to court females. They strut, dance, display feathers and fill ornate orange sacs on the sides of their neck with air (the sounds made are a low "whoom-a-oom"). The trip is by reservation only and has a limited number of spaces. The blinds have been reserved both Saturday and Sunday to accommodate 16 people for the trip. **NOTE:** As of press time, the trip was about half full. After viewing in the blinds (about two hours) and a nice breakfast, we will seek out the Smith's Longspur and other birds of interest in the area.

Contact Michael Packer, m.packer@yahoo.com or Mike Flynn, mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com to sign up.

Astronomy 101

Back by popular demand: Astronomy 101 taught by Jay Young. Please hold the dates: April 30, May 7 and May 14. Cost for the class is \$25. These are three Wednesday evening classes which will be held at the Ohio Wildlife Center on Cook Road in Delaware County. Time TBD. Watch for more information on the Columbus Audubon Web site and in the April CA *Song Sparrow*. Please e-mail Jay Young if you wish to attend all three classes at youngj2@ohiodominican.edu.

Avid Birders field trips

Saturday, March 22, 5:30 a.m. We expect to look for seasonal migrants, such as waterfowl most likely in northern Ohio, but will adjust the itinerary in light of late-breaking news of rarities. Meet at Worthington Mall Shopping Center at the southeast corner of the parking lot.

Saturday, April 26: 5:30 a.m. We will greet spring migrants as we plan to start at Spring Valley Wildlife Area and go from there. Visit <http://www.columbusaudubon.org> for details.

Birdathon is right around the corner!

May will be here before you know it and that means spring migration and Birdathon. The dates for the 2008 event will be May 2-18. All the information for teams and sponsors will be in the April newsletter. For more information, contact Katryn Renard at (614) 261-7171.

Metro Parks programs

Joint CA/Blendon Woods Metro Park programs

February Birdwalk: Saturday, February 16, 11 a.m., meet at the Blendon Woods Metro Parks nature center for a bird walk to be led by naturalist Bruce Simpson. Call (614) 895-6221.

March Birdwalk: Saturday, March 15, 11 a.m., meet at the Blendon Woods Metro Parks nature center for a bird walk to be led by naturalist Bruce Simpson. Call (614) 895-6221.

April Birdwalk: Saturday, April 12, 9 a.m., meet at the Blendon Woods Metro Parks nature center for a bird walk to be led by naturalist Bruce Simpson. Call (614) 895-6221.

Highbanks Metro Park

Backyard Birding 101: Saturday, February 16, 1-4 p.m. Celebrate the world of birds with Columbus Audubon. We'll learn more about our feathered friends through displays, crafts and other activities.

Wildlife Stroll: Sunday, February 24, 5 p.m. Take a leisurely 1.5-mile hike to enjoy the night sounds including owls. We'll provide candle lanterns. Adults only.

Woodcock Watch: Monday, March 10, 7:30 p.m. Search the fields to observe the unusual courtship of the American Woodcock.

Glacier Ridge Metro Park

Whooo's there?: Saturday, February 2, 6 p.m. (North Park).

Explorers: Waterfowl and Raptors: Sunday, February 24, 2 p.m. (Wetland Education Area).

Woodcock Watch: Sunday, March 16, 7 p.m. (North Park).

Delaware County Bird Club meetings

Monday, February 25 at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Dr. Richard Bradley, professor at The Ohio State University, fondly nicknamed "spiderman."

Monday, March 24 at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Tom Sheley will speak about Texas birding trails.

Notes from the field

Day trip to Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area, Indiana

By Karen Mears

This past November my husband, Jim and I, took a trip to the Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area in Indiana to see the fall migration of Sandhill Cranes. This area has become a popular attraction for birding enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

We were members of a 45-person group on a bus tour which originated at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian and Western Art in Indianapolis, Ind. Dr. Martha L. Hill, vice-president of public programs at the museum, organized the trip. Also joining us was Bill Buskirk, a professor of ornithology at Earlham College and John Dunnagan, vice chief and tribal historian for the Miami Nation of Indiana.

The first half of our trip was spent in touring the environs of historical significance to the Miami Indian tribe of Indiana near Peru, Ind.

Following lunch, we headed to Jasper-Pulaski. The wildlife area is located in northwest Indiana halfway between Valparaiso and Lafayette-West Lafayette.

We were able to view Sandhill Cranes feeding and resting in harvested corn fields at multiple locations in the area.

We brought binoculars and many of our party brought spotting scopes as well.

John Vanausdall, president and CEO of the Eiteljorg Museum broke in his new camera taking pictures of the cranes.

He got some fantastic shots of the cranes throughout the afternoon and evening.

Among the hundreds of cranes feeding in the fields we were able to pick out some family groups of three easily. Bill Buskirk pointed out the brown coloration of an immature Sandhill Crane. The adults would dance and the young cranes would try to imitate their



Photos by John Vanausdall

(Above) Sandhill Cranes socializing in Goose Pasture. (Below) Cranes kiting into the area of Goose Pasture at dusk.

parents playfully.

We proceeded to the observation area known as Goose Pasture in the late afternoon. The adjacent marshes are closed to the public during migration but they do have a trail you can hike to give you a view of the marshes where the cranes rest overnight. While birding in that area, we spotted several red-bellied woodpeckers and a Great Blue Heron in the shallows. The late afternoon sky was clear blue. In the background, black River Birches with their interesting bark could be seen. Bright red winterberry was in abundance in the middleground. As we were leaving, we saw a flock of swamp sparrows in the thicket next to the trail. When we arrived at the parking lot adjacent to the observation area, it was full. Hundreds of people had gathered to see the cranes. It was like a big tailgate party!

We walked to the multi-leveled observation deck where we read written descriptions and looked at photos of the cranes. The observation deck



offers a great view of the cranes as they gather in Goose Pasture. Sandhill cranes fly in a V-formation with as many as 50 individuals. They come from all directions. They fly with their necks extended and their wings beat with an upward flick. It is an amazing sight to see them in flight. As they approach the pasture they kite so low you can almost touch them.

The sound they make, "Garoo-a-a" is haunting. It is repeated hundreds of times so it ends up sticking in your head! The cranes by the thousands

play, dance and socialize in the pasture all day. At dusk, they walk slowly to the nearby marshes to rest for the night.

If you wish to visit the cranes, go to www.in.gov/dnr/fish-wild/publications/scrane.htm to check their migration status. Thousands of cranes come twice a year to Jasper -Pulaski. Wildlife officials on Oct. 31 estimated over 12,000 cranes were in the area. This was a few days before our trip there. We were blessed with a dry sunny day and mild temperatures.

Get ready for the Great Backyard Bird Count!

What mid-winter activity is fun, free and helps bird conservation? ...The answer is ... the Great Backyard Bird Count! The GBBC provides everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood and "Count for the Record."

This year's count will be held February 15–18. The GBBC is sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon.

During the count period, people of all ages, from beginners to experts — people just like you — are invited to join the GBBC which spans all of the United States and Canada. Participate anywhere you want — at home, in your schoolyard, at a local park, in a wildlife refuge, by counting the highest number of each species you see at each site. Then enter your results at the GBBC Web site by going to www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

Submitted counts result in more information about bird population trends which helps scientists in their bird conservation efforts.

You can also hone your bird watching skills and learn more from the GBBC Web site, which offers identification tips and access to photos, sounds, maps, and natural history information on more than 500 bird species.



Jean Kuns of Ohio submitted this photo of a Fox Sparrow last year and it was one of the winners selected in the 2007 GBBC photo contest.

You can also submit photos to an online gallery showcasing the dazzling array of winter birds found during the GBBC. Competitions add another element of fun, including a photo contest, rankings for most numerous birds, and the coveted "checklist champ" title for towns, states,

and provinces with the highest participation. So get out there and count as many birds as you can!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, with sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Trustee biographies

Continued from page 3

Ornithological Society. In addition, Heck is a longtime member of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory.

Heck recently retired from a career in information technology in the higher education and banking industries, most recently at Miami University. He describes himself as an obsessive birder but otherwise harmless.

Joe Meara

Joe Meara is a current board member, running for his second full term. He has been the membership chair of Columbus Audubon since 2002. He was a member of a National Audubon task force which worked to facilitate the transition from printed to electronic communication of membership information from national Audubon to the local chapters. Meara has been a field trip leader for Eco-Weekend and Columbus Audubon programs at the South Side Settlement House. He is a member of the Columbus Natural History Society, the Ohio Lepidopterists and the Ohio Ornithological Society. He is a

retired pathologist.

Jackie Brown

Jackie Brown is education coordinator and a naturalist for Preservation Parks of Delaware County. Brown's parents took her birding and exposed her to many opportunities to learn about nature when she was a child. She recognizes the immeasurable impact that environmental educators and learning centers had on her as she grew up in northern Ohio. These influences have driven and shaped her passion for the environmental awareness she tries to instill in youth today professionally and as a volunteer. She serves on Columbus Audubon's conservation committee, has been a consultant for Eco-weekend and is currently involved in hosting CA field trips at Preservation Parks. Her latest project is a new chapter of the Ohio Young Birders Club at Preservation Parks. Brown has been a volunteer educator for the Delaware Soil & Water Conservation District and ODNr Division of Wildlife. A member of the Delaware Environmental Education Partnership (DEEP) for the past 4 years, she serves on

its teacher workshop and "Hands On The Land" sub-committees.

Jackie enjoys birding, kayaking, hiking, camping, skiing and photography. Her two teenage sons introduced her to the Boys Scouts where she eventually became the naturalist for Camp Lazarus. Brown is chair and co-founder of the Simon Kenton Council's conservation committee where she has been involved in coordinating environmental education and service projects with Ohio youth for the last seven years. Brown has also served on the conservation staff for the 2005 National Boy Scout Jamboree.

Andrea Cook

Andrea Cook is an administrator for the Ohio Education Development Center in Granville and volunteer membership coordinator for the Ohio Ornithological Society. She holds an M.A. degree in Anthropology and has spent the last twelve years working in museums and doing fundraising and management work for environmental non-profits. She is an active participant in the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas and enjoys birding and travel.

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Memberships in Audubon and Columbus Audubon and gift memberships are available through Columbus Audubon

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Includes membership in the national organization and Columbus Audubon; includes 4 issues of Audubon magazine and 5 issues of the chapter newsletter, local activities, and when submitted with our chapter code helps fund our programs. Rates below are available to **NEW** subscribers.

_____ \$20 - 1-year introductory rate
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_____ \$20 - 1-year new membership
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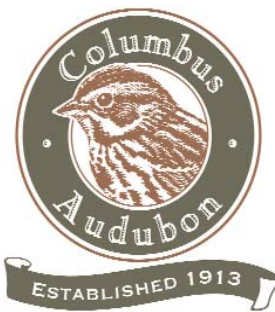
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