



# Song Sparrow



A joint newsletter of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and Columbus Audubon

February-March 2009  
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Send editorial submissions to  
Stefanie Hauck, editor, at  
stefanie.hauck@gmail.com



A Red-Wattled Plover.

Photos by Maj. Randy Rogers

## Joining the Army to bird far away lands

By Maj. Randy Rogers

Sometimes pursuing a notch on your life list is unusually hard. For instance, upon arrival in Iraq, all I had to do to find my first life bird was to dress in full uniform, find a sliver of time in my 12 hour work day, buy a bike off the local Turkish trader, and bike 3 miles in 120 degree sandstorm to the local wadi. The payoff was a Grey Hypocolius, an Iraq Babbler, and having to work late to keep up with my job!

I can actually say that military travel has been great for birding. From a nest of Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers at Ft. Polk, La., to the 60 life birds I have found so far in Iraq, the military has taken me to some neat places. That said, it also presents the birder unique challenges. First is to gather the goodwill of superiors so that they tolerate periodic wanderings and violations of "off limits" areas (like the base sewage treatment plant – a heaven for any birder). I like to remind my boss that Israel encourages its soldiers to birdwatch as a technique to stay alert on guard duty and be more in tune with your surroundings. I don't know if this is true, but I read it somewhere, and it



A Little Crike.

supports my cause, so I run with it. The next challenge is to equip yourself for birding in uniform. Finding the right compromise between image quality and inconspicuous size in a pair of binoculars takes some trial and error. I finally settled on a pair of Zeiss Victory 10x32 – as big as I could go and keep them in a pouch on my belt. And finding such a pouch! Obviously it has to be a military spec pouch that can be worn in uniform, and it has to protect your bins from sand and rough treatment, and then be

See Birding in Iraq, page 9



Shrikes at a bird bath.

# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## Grange Insurance Audubon Center Director's Journal

Dear Members,

This is a wonderful time to be part of the Audubon family. As we head towards spring, the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and Scioto Audubon Metro Park are transforming before our eyes.

The Center staff is growing and will all be on board by the end of May. The GIAC Volunteer Program will be launched by early summer in preparation for our grand opening.

The GIAC staff is working feverishly to prepare for the opening. We are completing design and fabrication of our exhibits, ordering furniture, planning for the nature store operations, ordering IT equipment, etc.

Our Conservation Classroom and Conservation on Location programs are in full swing. We are gearing up for our Small Wonders and Urban Conservation Crew programs this summer. Our Conservation Program Coordinator, Doreen Whitley, along with a couple Columbus Audubon volunteers are being



**Heather  
Starck**

trained to set up our site as a bird banding location. We could never have gotten this far without the assistance of so many Columbus Audubon members. We will continue to need your enthusiasm to get to opening day. This is truly a group effort and we appreciate the encouragement.

Don't forget with all the excitement to get involved in the Great Backyard Bird Count from February 13-16! This is a great opportunity to get involved in citizen science by birding from your own yard.

Sincerely,  
**Heather Starck**

**Director, Grange  
Insurance Audubon Center**

## GIAC wish list

If you have a donation for the Center, please call Ellen Armstrong at 614-224-3303.

- Clipboards
- Field Guides in good shape
- GPS Receivers: Recreation Grade, Consumer Grade
- Reference Books: Bird Migration, Bird Identification, Tree Identification, and Ecology and History of Ohio and/or Columbus
- Increment Borer
- D-Tapes
- Office Desks and Chairs
- Spotting Scope
- Telescope
- Laminator
- Garden gloves
- Garden tools
- Color printer
- Kayaks
- Hip waders
- Fishing tackle and boxes
- Art supplies
- Rain ponchos or jackets for children
- Computer speakers
- Digital camera

## Thank you for your support

### Gifts from Nov. 2008 to Jan. 14, 2009

Adkins, Greg  
Alexander, Margaret  
Bickell, Helen  
Bradley, Richard  
Brode, Michael  
Cameron, Sharon  
Campbell, Robert  
Creech & Stafford Insurance  
Cummiskey, Coley  
Dennler, Bill & Jeanne  
Elkins, Catherine  
Estep, James  
Fagan, Sheila  
Flewellen, Portica  
Fosnaugh, Trevor  
Grange- GA Regional Claims  
Grote, Michael & Christy  
Hamersley, Sharon  
Harbin, Michael

Harrington, Mary  
Hart, Lisa  
Hoffman, Sally  
Hollar, Leslie  
Hubbell, Roger & Sally  
Hunlock, Bruce  
Hunter, B. Diane  
Irvin, Gary  
Jedinak, Thomas  
Jenkins, Donneca  
Lombardi, Brent  
MacPhearson, Warren  
Marsh, Debra & William  
Martens, Karen & Frank  
Martin, Scott  
McMurtrie, Peter  
Miller, Joan  
Morley Pareren Bright Insurance  
Morrison, Martha  
Morrow-Jones, Charles  
Nerny, Nancy  
Nessing, Sandra

Ohio State Capital Budget  
Ohio State Football Shows  
Overmire, Peter  
Overturf, Karen & John  
Pierce, S. Lea  
Prunte, John  
Puckett, Cynthia & Steven  
Renard, Kathryn & Bruce  
Riordan, John E.  
Rivizzigno, Victoria  
Royer, Kathy  
Ruggles, Thomas, M.D.  
Rupert, Jack  
Sholl, Tom  
Snapp, Deena  
Teater, Robert & Dorothy  
Urso, Marnie  
Verber, Nancy  
Vozel, Linda  
Weiler, Beatrice  
Yingst, Don  
Young, Mark



## Columbus Audubon annual meeting and potluck dinner

Tuesday, February 17, 2009 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 will be Dr. Andy Jones, Ph.D., curator of Ornithology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Please bring your family and friends! There will be informational displays, our featured artist, photographer Mike Maier, raffle prizes and a few other surprises. Orientation stewards will be there to welcome new and GIAC founding members. 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 Dr. Jones's presentation. Non-members are always welcome but may not vote during the business meeting, which will include the election of three trustees for three year terms (2009-2012). 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 bev-



**Dr. Andy Jones, curator of Ornithology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History with Boow.**

erage other than coffee, which will be provided.

### Who keeps changing my field guide?

Not only is the market flooded with

field guides by many authors and publishers, but existing field guides are constantly being "updated" and sold as new editions, forcing birders to spend more money to stay on top of changing names and identification techniques. But this isn't a conspiracy by the field guide publishers! Instead, field guides are being updated to capture the changing worlds of identification and, particularly, taxonomy in ornithology. This program will highlight several major reasons for why the common and scientific names of the birds are not the same today as when you first started birding (remember the Rufous-sided Towhee, the Slate-colored Junco, and the Northern Oriole?). We will also cover some of the prospects for future changes.

*Dr. Andy Jones received his BS in Biological Sciences from the University of Tennessee, and his PhD in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior from the University of Minnesota. His current research involves the evolutionary history of birds from the Appalachian mountains as well as the Andes and the Philippines.*

## 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-

See artist, page 6



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](mailto:avianexpressions@aol.com).**



# Columbus Audubon

## 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](http://www.columbusaudubon.org) for any changes or additions to the field trip listings. If you have suggestions for field trip locations or want to lead a field trip please contact field trip chair, Earl Harrison at [eharrison@ehe.osu.edu](mailto:eharrison@ehe.osu.edu).

### Field trips

#### Wednesday walks at Whittier

Wednesdays, February 4 and March 4, 7:30 a.m.

Leaders: Paul Gledhill and Heather Raymond

Note: Walks are always held the first Wednesday of the month. Join Paul Gledhill and Heather Raymond 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 (west of Front Street and south of Whittier Street) Please contact Paul Gledhill at (614) 848-7666; [gledhillpaul@yahoo.com](mailto:gledhillpaul@yahoo.com), or Heather Raymond at (614) 785-0342; [heather\\_columbus\\_audubon@yahoo.com](mailto:heather_columbus_audubon@yahoo.com) for more information.

#### The Wilds in winter

Sunday, February 15, 11:30 a.m.

Leader: Michael Flynn

The 10,000 acres that comprise this eastern Ohio preserve have proven to be among the most significant wintering areas for raptors in Ohio. It has become a CA tradition to venture out here in the February cold and see what exciting discoveries await us. In recent years we have had the opportunity of watching Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcon (1), Great Horned Owl on nest, Short-eared Owls, Trumpeter Swans, a diversity of dabbling and diving ducks along with coyotes and various species of plains animals from other continents (from a distance). We have a great time, and there are lots of exciting opportunities. Come along with us! Meet at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant (east). Take I-70 east, past Brice Rd., to Rt.256. Exit south (right) on Rt.256 and proceed to first major light. Turn (right), go to first service drive and turn (right) again. Follow it a short distance and turn (right) into the Cracker Barrel parking lot. We will be at the back of the restaurant. Contact Mike Flynn at [mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com](mailto:mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com) or 614.769.1681.

#### Winter Birds of Hoover Reservoir

Saturday, February 14, 8:30 a.m..

Leader: Rob Thorn

Mid February is when winter starts to seem less fierce. Days are conspicuously longer, and birds & 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

#### CA March Program

Tuesday, March 24, 7 p.m., at Inniswood Metro Gardens

### Fishes and birds of Fiji

For 10 years Michael has vacationed island biomes with the idea to totally immerse himself into the nature and culture and observe some of the world's rarest fauna. He always returns refreshed and with a photo journal of the adventure. In



By Michael Packer

#### Banded Sea Snake.

Fiji he spent 7 days on a resident dive boat "birding coral reefs for fish" as he says. The remaining time he spent with local guides on the islands of Viti Levu and Kadavu fishing rain forests for birds. Please join Michael Packer as he immerses you into this unique south pacific archipelago.

visiting this important bird area NE of Westerville. The 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 surprisingly regular here. Meet at the Hoover dam parking area along Sunbury Rd at 9 AM, and dress warmly. We'll work our way up the reservoir, stopping at spots like the Maxtown boat launch and Oxbow Island; trip should be over by 1 p.m. Contact Rob Thorn, 614-471-3051 or [robthorn@earthlink.net](mailto:robthorn@earthlink.net).

#### Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area

Sunday, March 1, 11:30 a.m.

Leader: Michael Flynn

It's early spring and the waterfowl are flying north to their breeding grounds. Over 20 species of native ducks, geese, and swans migrate through our state. Their colors and designs are as intricate and amazing as other groups of birds. We will venture afield in search of these magnificent birds, along with eagles, hawks, owls and songbirds. We may also travel to a nearby location in search of Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs.

Meet at the Worthington Square parking lot (southeast corner).

Take I-270 to Rt.23 (Worthington), and drive south on Rt. 23 (High St.) to the first light (Wilson Bridge Rd.). Turn right, then right again into the big parking lot. We will be at the opposite

See Coming up, page 11



# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## The year ahead: By Jerry Tinianow, Audubon Ohio executive director

**A**s we begin 2009, we stand at the threshold of what is likely to be the most significant period for birds, other wildlife and their habitats in our lifetime. Both the opportunities and the challenges have never been greater.

Everything we do for the next few years at Audubon Ohio will take place against the background of a worldwide economic downturn.

Bad times can bring out the best in people, but it can also bring out the worst. In poverty-stricken areas around the world, it's not unusual for the people of a village to tear down the trees in the surrounding hills for firewood, even though they know that soil depletion and perhaps even catastrophic mudslides will eventually result. Rich countries like the United States are not immune from this phenomenon; bad times here can tempt people to tear down the environmental protections that we have worked so hard to institute over the past several decades, in the mistaken belief that those protections are luxuries that we can no longer afford. The bright side is that hard times present opportunities for members of the community to emerge from private cocoons of personal consumption and come together to rebuild the economy on a far more sustainable basis. People can learn that having fewer things can actually lead to greater happiness and security. We in the birding community have embraced life's simpler pleasures for a long time.

Although birding can become an excuse for acquiring all manner of expensive equipment and clothing, it doesn't have to. A simple pair of binoculars, a worn but still usable field guide, and a good pair of walking shoes are all we need. Birding not only enriches our lives by getting us outdoors, but also provides a wonderful social activity around which a community can develop.

We need to focus on the basic, the simple and the sustainable. America needs to stop building its economy upon the acquisition of toys through irresponsible borrowing and start building it upon the wealth inherent in shared social experiences and community

achievements. The worldwide recession should provide a temporary pause in the annual growth of the emission of greenhouse gases. We must put this pause to good use by increasing energy productivity, growing truly renewable energy industries, and redirecting transportation priorities from cars and planes to buses, bicycles and, in particular, trains.

If, as I suspect, greenhouse emissions are lower this year, we need to take quick, meaningful action to ensure that they continue to shrink. In the long run we need to redirect the pattern of urban structure towards shrinking urban boundaries and neighborhoods where people can live, work, shop and recreate without the need for constant recourse to the private automobile. More immediately, however, we need to enact meaningful cap-and-trade legislation, so that when the economy begins to grow again, that growth will incorporate and reflect the true cost of carbon emissions. We need a new market structure that tells all businesses that the most profitable course is to produce new goods and services in a way that minimizes, if not eliminates, the production of greenhouse gases. With changes in Congress and the administration, 2009 presents the best opportunity ever to enact meaningful cap-and-trade legislation.

Within the back-to-basics approach which is necessary to restore our economy, the two most essential basics will be water and soil because they directly or indirectly provide the food and water upon which life depends. We are fortunate to have great supplies of both in Ohio. Most notably, we sit on the edge of the greatest fresh water resource in the world, the Great Lakes. Our future economic growth must be based on extreme vigilance to safeguard both the quality of the waters and fisheries of the Great Lakes as well as the quantity of water within them. We will work in both areas in 2009, including addressing the elimination of open-lake dumping of contaminated dredge materials in Lake Erie and enacting water conservation legislation and regula-

tions in Ohio to implement the Great Lakes Basin Water Resources Compact. Agriculture is still Ohio's number one industry and its future success will be dependent on safeguarding the productivity of our soils. We need to work with farmers to eschew fencerow-to-fencerow cultivation in favor of the incorporation of wind breaks, grass strips, reforestation and wetlands into the agricultural landscape. These features have the added benefit of providing new stopover and nesting habitat for migratory birds. In 2009 we want to show success in this initiative by winning significant commitments in watersheds throughout Ohio.

Today's education is the key to tomorrow's economic rebound. Audubon's nature-based approach to education has never been more important than it is today, because we can use it to support public education in its time of greatest need. 2009 will see Audubon Ohio's most significant contribution to education yet - the opening of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. We will be able to educate hundreds of Ohio's neediest students and adults.

We will instill in them the fundamental notions of sustainability in which the future shape of our economy must be based. It's not going to be easy to achieve success in these areas. The temptation to "tear down the trees for firewood" by rejecting sustainability rather than embracing it will be great. Some public officials will undoubtedly succumb to it. But when we in Audubon Ohio, staff, chapter leaders and other volunteers alike, work together, we can win sufficient public support to take our state and our nation in the right direction. Last year we succeeded in winning ratification of the Great Lakes Compact against seemingly-overwhelming odds. We won because staff and volunteers came together to make a compelling case for ratification, which was far more compelling than the case made by those against it. We developed a new confidence that we can persuade our fellow citizens to make the right choices, if we work hard and smart. With your support, we will continue to do so in 2009.

## Tell the Grange Insurance Audubon Center about Your Space!

Do you have what it takes to reduce threats to wildlife in your backyard, place of business, or school? If so tell us about your space. The Grange Insurance Audubon Center is looking for exemplary backyards in Ohio. Backyards can be part of a house, apartment, school, or place of business.

Why do we want to know about your

space? We are kicking off our Audubon At Home program through a contest to find the most exemplary backyards. One lucky winner will help us design a demonstration garden on the center's site.

The criterion for exemplary space is based on the eco-region of the backyard's habitat and the ability to support the needs

of wildlife and/or significantly reduce threats conservation targets. We are looking for places that model good use of landscaping to support the habitat native to your space in Ohio. If you would like to participate, contact Doreen Whitley at [dwhitley@audubon.org](mailto:dwhitley@audubon.org) for the criteria for your county.

# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## GIAC....Look at how far we've come!!!

**I**t was two years ago at the writing of this article (January 2009) that the initial workshop was held to begin the design of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. Today, center staff is pleased to report construction of the facility is on schedule.

The center is rising within the Scioto Audubon Metro Park alongside other park improvements and habitat restoration work. Soon after the groundbreaking on April 20, 2008, concrete was poured and the building began to take shape. Now the building's frame is completed along with the roof decking and is completely enclosed.



**Heather Starck**

Consistent with the goal of attaining Silver LEED certification, the construction of the building takes much more work than hammer and nails.

The parking lot is completed and features porous pavement as well as bio-swales to sustainably manage run-off. The building's heating and cooling will be regulated by geo-thermal wells. Our crew has been working hard to determine the most practical way to install this feature due to the varied past uses of the site. Test wells have been completed and we are on schedule.

Along with the management of the construction, center staff are hard at work on the indoor and outdoor features of the site.

Our exhibits are in the design phase and on schedule for completion at opening. The goals of

Continued on page 7



Courtesy of Audubon Ohio

**Out with the old to make way for the new. Old structures were bulldozed and hundreds of bushes of invasive honeysuckle were removed. (Summer-fall 2007).**



Courtesy of DesignGroup

**(Above) Concept drawing showing the exterior of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. (Below) Concept drawing showing an aerial view of the center and the Scioto-Audubon Metro Park surrounding it.**



Courtesy of Audubon Ohio

**GIAC Groundbreaking ceremony. (April 20, 2008).**



# Grange Insurance Audubon Center



Courtesy of Audubon Ohio

**(Above) The foundation is close to being finished (August 2008). (Right) A tree was planted by Metro Park rangers at the GIAC Groundbreaking ceremony. (April 20, 2008).**



Continued from page 6

the exhibits are to serve as teaching tools for program participants and the everyday visitor. We are creating mock environments of the riparian edge and Scioto River, specifically the successional forest and flood plain. The entryway will feature a three dimensional field guide to the birds of the Important Bird Area that the center is charged to protect.

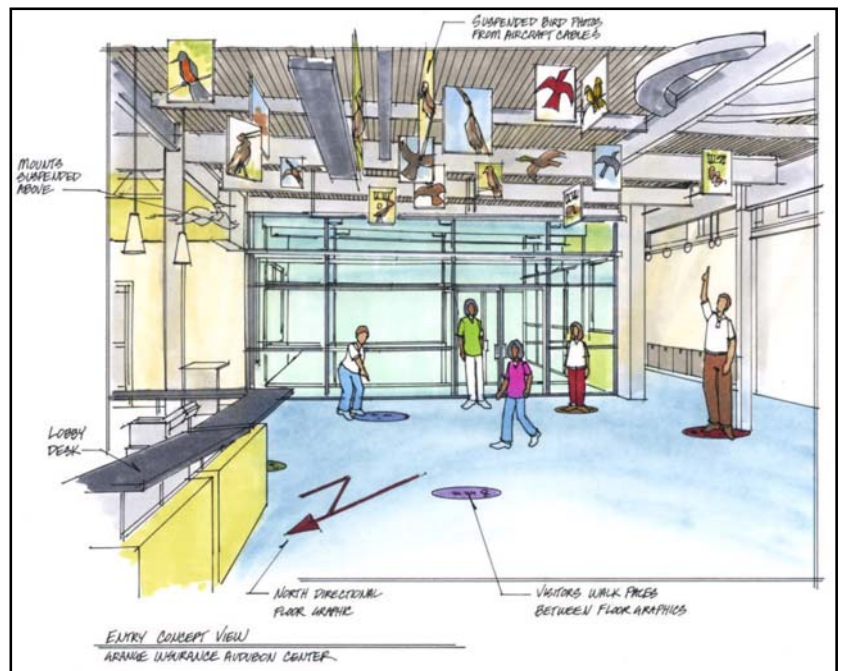
On the outside, our Doreen Whitley, conservation program coordinator, is working with members of the Columbus Leadership Program to create children's sensory gardens. These areas will serve as nature play areas for children and present a window into the past of Ohio's native riparian forests and a peek into the future of the restoration goals for the site. The site will also feature Audubon At Home demonstration gardens as well as a bird habitat and viewing area along the edge of escarpment. These spaces are being designed with the intent to reduce threats to and restore habitat for wildlife.

We hope you have enjoyed our journey from drawings to construction. If you have any questions or would like a tour of the site, contact Heather Starck, Center Director at [hstarck@audubon.org](mailto:hstarck@audubon.org)



Courtesy of Audubon Ohio

**The frame is close to completion. (November 2008).**



Courtesy of Audubon Ohio

**Artist's rendering of what the main entry will look like.**



Courtesy of Audubon Ohio  
**One of the bio-swales  
(September 2008).**

# Columbus Audubon & NWF

## Backyards for Wildlife

## Buy products and services with Ohio birds in mind

By Toni Stahl

I've discovered what choices I make while shopping for everyday items makes a difference for the birds in my own yard. So I thought I'd share some of the things I consider when I go shopping - for the birds:

### At the nursery/ home improvement store

*Are wood and paper products made from Forest Stewardship Council-certified lumber?* These forests are managed under stewardship guidelines in order to be certified. See [www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org) for more information.

*Does the store sell hardwood mulch instead of cypress mulch from endangered habitats?* Cypress trees are where we may find the last of the Ivory-billed Woodpeckers.

*Do they sell invasive plants?* These plants displace the native plants which have deep taproots which clean our air, and water. Native birds and animals also depend upon native plants.

*Do they sell organic alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides?* Chemicals, whether on lawn or garden, poison the bugs that most birds eat.

*Does this store sell composters?* Home-made compost is the best fertilizer of all, and it's free!

*Are there push or electric mowers instead of gas-powered?* Make sure they adjust so you can mow high to shade out weeds (3-3-1/2"). 800 mil-



By Marc Apfelstadt, 2009

### An Ovenbird in the grass and leaf litter.

lion gallons of gasoline are burned in the U.S. each weekend mowing lawns, and mowers do not have catalytic converters.

Weed eaters pollute even more.

*Does the store sell rain barrels and irrigation systems?* Minimize outdoor water use and reduce runoff. Deep native plant roots will clean your groundwater.

### At the grocery store/supermarket

*Does this store sell organic, fair-traded, shade-grown coffee?* If farmers are cutting down the trees to sell us sun-grown coffee beans, the birds we see in summer that go south will eventually have no wintering grounds needed for survival.

*Do they carry organic fruits and veg-*

## Upcoming events

Thursday, 3/7, 7-9pm, Old Worthington Library Meeting Room, 820 High St, Worthington, 43085, hosted by the Library

Monday, 3/23, 6:30-9:30pm, Grandview Heights Library, Meeting Room, 1685 W. First Ave, Columbus, 43212, hosted by the Grandview Gardening Club

*etables imported from Latin America or fresh ones from the United States?* Latin America may use Class I toxins (classified by the World Health Organization and banned in the U.S.) which harshly impact our Neotropical migratory songbirds who breed in North America. (See <http://www.nwf.org/NationalWildlife/article.cfm?issueID=126&articleID=1668>)

**Get Certified:** Putting up National Wildlife Federation's Certified Wildlife Habitat sign helped us explain to others understand what we are doing and encourages others to help birds too. **Lessons learned?** If you're interested, email me at [marc-a@columbus.rr.com](mailto:marc-a@columbus.rr.com) to receive our monthly 'Nature Scoop' or join us at one of our presentations. Let's work together to help birds, one yard at a time.

## It's almost Columbus Audubon Birdathon time!

The Birdathon is right around the corner and our teams are making their strategic plans. This event is the kickoff of the spring birding season and the high point for many of our teams, as well as the main fund raiser for Columbus Audubon. We have 3 time categories to fit any birders schedule. The 24-hour category is for all those avid birders striving to identify every warbler, shorebird and raptor in their path. The 10-hour category is for serious, but well rested birders, who are happy to discern between a magnolia and a Blackburnian warbler. For those who think a hike or a picnic in the park is the best way to see birds, we have the 5-hour category. As you can see we have something for

every member. The CA birdathon is great fun for everyone, whether you are part of a team or a team sponsor.

Our sponsors are as important to the birdathon as our birders. If you would like to sponsor a team look for the team roster in the next newsletter, pick the team you wish to sponsor, fill out the form and send it in. You do not need to send your money until you receive a notice from the team you sponsored.

If you have ever thought about joining in the birding fun, this is the year. Start with your favorite birding buddies, choose a fun team name and call Katryn Renard (614-261-7171) to register. Then, ask all your

friends and co-workers to sponsor you and go birding! Count all the birds your team identifies in your chosen category on any day between **May 1 - 17**. You don't even have to stay in Ohio. Be creative, bird anywhere in the world or your own backyard.

This year's teams are striving to raise even more dollars than ever before. **100 percent** of the profits from the Birdathon will go to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. GIAC will be one of the first urban Audubon Nature Center's in the country. Audubon Ohio envisions this as an opportunity to bring urban programs and education to children and families in the city.

-Julie Davis



## Conservation corner: Climate change and global warming

By Dave Horn

The "Conservation Corner" traditionally focuses on local issues that have immediate impact on the environment in central Ohio. There are certainly plenty of those, but some global issues deserve local attention as well, even though national organizations (like National Audubon) spend a lot of effort keeping us informed.

Climate change is one such issue. We have all heard about the concerns, the arguments, the pros and cons. Is a major shift in climate really underway or are we simply witnessing a cycle? Is there really a major problem? If so, are people responsible? Can we do anything about global warming even if we wanted to?

The facts are undeniable and unavoidable. Temperatures worldwide (land and ocean) increased throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. So did the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere. CO<sub>2</sub> is a so-called "greenhouse gas" that (along with other components of the air) traps solar

radiation, resulting in warming. Any questions so far? Part of my daytime job has been to track population trends of insects, both pests and non-pests, in Ohio and elsewhere. We would expect insects to be especially responsive to trends in climate because they fly and have short life cycles allowing them to quickly track changes in resources. If you would like, I can bury you in data that show northward movements of southern butterflies, moths, beetles, you name it, in Ohio and worldwide.

We can argue endlessly over whether humans have brought global warming on the planet. I would rather focus on the fact that we can certainly reduce our contribution to the carbon (dioxide) load. This may not halt or reverse the upward trend, but it can slow it down. A candidate in our recent election said something like: "What does it matter that I change to energy-efficient bulbs; we need *society* to change." Well, society is us. Trivial as our little contribution may seem, it can help, especially if we spread the word. I encourage every

Audubon member to take a look at his or her "carbon footprint" and look for ways to reduce it. Then tell your friends.

A helpful tool is a "carbon calculator" in which you use an Internet source to input data on your energy use to generate the amount of your contribution to atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. There's a bewildering array of web-sites; I like the Nature Conservancy's site, <http://www.nature.org/initiatives/climate-change/calculator/> but others will do.

Every gallon of gasoline burned produces 20 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> (source: <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/co2.shtml>), so a trip to Cleveland and back (in my fuel-efficient car) adds 200 lbs. of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. Are you surprised? So am I. I think I'll do a carbon audit of my own lifestyle. If each member of Columbus Audubon were to reduce auto travel by 300 miles, that's 200 lbs. x 2250 members = 450,000 lbs. or 225 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> not added to the atmosphere. (If gas is \$ 3/gallon, it's also \$ 67,500 saved to spend on something else.)

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## Birding in Iraq

Continued from page 1

efficiently sized for your particular pair. I bought four pouches before I found one that was just right!

Next you have to figure out how to carry bins, camera, and field guide along with the other 65 pounds of stuff that the Army thinks you need for birding (pistol, flak vest, helmet). Thankfully cameras are now small, and Army pants have big pockets!

I finally broke down and ordered an inexpensive spotting scope and light tripod. Not easy to travel with, but my bins were just not getting the job done on shorebirds at 200 yards.

Once equipped, the next challenge is to find time and place. The military has a bad habit of placing the best places either off limits, which is positive in that it protects the area. As in most aspects of life, a bold front and quick smile will open many doors. Harder is to find time. Here in Iraq, I work 7 days a week, 11-12 hours a day. We get Sunday morning off until lunch, and I try to make the most of that time, even if it means birding in a sandstorm. Although sandstorms are annoying (and hard on optics), they do produce fallouts during migration, and a small but powerful flashlight found a number of good birds after dark taking

refuge around our offices. A bike has also given me decent range to visit spots on post, and sometimes I can get a truck on long summer days when I can go out at sunrise and get back to the office before 0730.

I am fortunate to be stationed along the Euphrates migration corridor and in a location with a well developed oasis and wadi system. It has proven to be an excellent migrant trap, and the varied habitat (palm grove, wetlands, savannah and desert) contain an interesting mix of birdlife. Migration brought a Scops Owl, Eurasian Nightjar, White-Throated Robin, Bluethroat, Golden Orioles, and Black Kites.

As in civilian life, there are a lot of casual or backyard birders in the military. People have put out water and food (cornbread from the mess hall) for the birds, and I am constantly asked to identify some new visitor to our improvised birdbath (a garbage can lid). People are surprised to see charismatic birds like Eurasian Magpie or Hoopoe here – to many Midwesterners the desert contains only sand and snakes. My biggest challenge has been old-world warblers. Can anyone really tell them apart? I don't believe it.

There are plenty of frustrations, but then

there are frustrations when birding around my work schedule at home too. Birding definitely provides relief to stress, and I have seen some cool birds (Little Crake, Marbled Teal, Woodchat Shrikes, Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters). Most importantly, I have gained an appreciation for the habitat here and the challenges of protecting wildlife and habitat in this part of the world. Well, got to run – I have to miss formation so I can run to the wadi and look for nesting Little Grebes!

*At home Major Randal (Randy) Rogers is one of Ohio's top birders and educators in the field. Rogers publishes a nature newsletter called "Al-Asad au Natural". Current issues can be view on CA's web-site [www.columbusaudubon.org](http://www.columbusaudubon.org) under Conservation. In Iraq his efforts have put him in contact with Nature Iraq and IBA monitors. Randy has set up a program that protects birds and "builds bridges between Iraqi and US birders". The program funds and supplies Iraqi scientists, educators, and conservationists with books and optics. If you would like to learn how to support this effort, please visit the Ohio Ornithological Society Web site at [www.ohiobirds.org/news.php](http://www.ohiobirds.org/news.php).*

# Columbus Audubon

## Columbus Audubon trustee biographies

At the Columbus Audubon annual meeting and potluck on Feb. 17 we will vote on three trustee candidates. Below are their biographies so you can learn a little more about them. *For three-year terms 2009-2012:*

### Katryn Renard

Katryn has been a member of Columbus Audubon for over 25 years. In 1982 she naively asked then-president Jim Davidson when the next work trip would be, and Jim's answer was "when you start them." That started a partnership between Columbus Audubon and ODNR- DNAP resulting in many successful work trips to preserves all over the state.

In the early 1990s, Katryn agreed to serve on the board of Columbus Audubon. In 1994, someone noted that we needed a new coordinator for CA's Birdathon and Katryn agreed to take it on. She dismantled the entire machine and built a new one, adding bells and whistles to increase participation within the chapter.

At the end of her time on the board,

Katryn served as President from 1995-1997. Katryn is currently filling a partial term as board member.

### Andi Wolfe

Andi Wolfe is an associate professor in the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal biology. Her research focus is on plant evolutionary biology, but she also has an avid interest in bird biology – especially as it relates to pollination ecology. Several of her research projects have focused on the evolution of bird-plant interactions. Her work-related travels have given her an opportunity to bird in some interesting places around the globe, including North America, South Africa, Australia and Europe. She initiated an avid birders program in the Department of EEOB and has organized field trips for members of the department as well as mentoring undergraduate students in conservation biology projects. She participated in leadership training for the Boy Scouts of America, and has led nature walks for several local scout troops. Andi is a member of

Columbus Audubon, Ohio Ornithological and National Audubon societies, served as program director, council member, or publicity chair for the American Society of Plant Taxonomists for approx 11 years, and as the systematics section chair for the Botanical Society of America for five years.

### Warren Grody

Warren Grody is an attorney with Bricker & Eckler LLP, where he practices education law. In the past, he has served two terms on the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Columbus. He is currently in his fifth year on church council at St. John's Lutheran Church in Grove City, where he has served one term as president and two terms as vice-president. When he isn't misidentifying birds, Warren enjoys singing, picking out songs on his guitar and playing (bad) chess. He hopes to eventually publish his birding journals under the title, "Birding the Bricker Way: What Kind of Bird Do You Want It to Be?"

## Grange Insurance Audubon Center

### Conservation on Location: GIAC Receives Competitive Grant for Conservation Work

During the summer of 2008 The National Audubon Society announced a new alliance with Toyota, called TogetherGreen, to support conservation work nationwide through Innovation Grants, Volunteer Work Days, and a new Fellowship program.

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center was selected to receive funding to support seven volunteer work days and an innovative project to support habitat restoration along the forested edge within the Scioto Audubon Metro Park, home to the center and part of the Scioto River-Greenlawn Important Bird Area. Over 300 programs within the Audubon network applied and only 42 were supported. The process was rigorous and applicants were selected for innovation in working to reduce threats to conservation priorities.



**TogetherGreen grant recipients at a workshop at the United States Fish and Wildlife National Conservation Training Center.**

Doreen Whitley designed the project based on the needs of the IBA conservation plan and joined the 41 other grantees for a three day training at the United States Fish and Wildlife National Conservation Training Center consisting of professional development in conservation planning, partnerships, and development.

Through TogetherGreen high

school students are working with Doreen to learn professional mapping grade GPS skills on Trimble units to acquire spatial data about the vegetation within the riparian forest of the Scioto River-Greenlawn IBA in the Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

This data is being stored in a GIS to be manipulated using a tracking data model to understand the relationships between

the invasive plants within the forest and the new native species that were planted with Metro Parks during last springs restoration efforts.

The analysis that this project completes will be used to create a site specific invasive species management plan for the park in tandem with Metro Parks, that will include removing, treatment, and replacement of invasive species. This opportunity not only allows the center to move forward in its conservation work to reduce invasive species within the IBA but is also an investment to maintain a GIS and acquire site specific spatial data for other projects. At the same time students are learning a valuable skill that can be translated to the work force or a gateway to further study in college. Contact Doreen at [dwhitley@audubon.org](mailto:dwhitley@audubon.org).



## Invasive species: Mute Swan

By Bruce Lindsay

The mute swan is a magnificent-looking bird, large and dazzling white, with a distinctive orange bill. Although not blessed with a sonorous call like the trumpeter swan, the wings of a mute swan make a unique whir, which can announce its arrival from a distance.

The origin of mute swans may be traced to Eurasia. They were transported to northern Europe in the Middle Ages. Their beauty and grace has inspired many writers, painters, poets and composers. According to Jim McCormac in *Birds of Ohio*, they were introduced to eastern

North America in the mid-1880s to adorn estates and city parks. Wild (feral) birds first appeared in Ohio in the 1930s and '40s, and they have nested near Lake Erie since 1987.

As with many invasive species, there is a downside to the mute swan. It is an extremely aggressive bird, defending a nesting territory of up to thirteen acres. I have a favorite lake in Michigan that was plagued by an overpopulation of Canada geese a few years ago. A pair of nesting mute swans appeared and the cob (male) soon rectified the goose problem, chasing them all away. A cob swan can kill a goose and can also present a hazard to pets and

humans.

Mute swans also present ecological concerns. They rapaciously feed on submerged aquatic vegetation, food favored by other native waterfowl species. This devouring of vegetation can also be extremely detrimental to small invertebrates and fish.

The population of mute swans is growing. It is estimated that they are increasing by ten to twenty percent annually in the Great Lake states.

Some experts recommend limiting the mute swan population. Whether this step should be implemented remains to be seen.

## 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 fun, count for the future!"

This year's count will be held February 13-16. 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 — by counting the highest number of each species you see at each site. Then enter your results at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). So get out there and count as many birds as you can!

## Coming up

Continued from page 4

end from Kroger's. Contact Mike Flynn at [mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com](mailto:mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com) or 614.769.1681.

### Big Island Wildlife Area

Sunday, March 22, 12 noon.

Leader: Michael Flynn

This natural area located just west of Marion, consists of a wide variety of wetlands and ponds, along with open space and small woodlots. We will be looking for migrating waterfowl. Bald Eagles may provide added excitement, along with a variety of other raptors and songbirds. Meet at the Worthington Square parking lot (southeast corner). Take I-270 to Rt. 23 (Worthington), and drive south on Rt. 23 (High St.) to the first light (Wilson Bridge Rd.). Turn right, then right again into the big parking lot. We will be at the opposite end from Kroger's. Contact Mike Flynn at [mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com](mailto:mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com) or 614.769.1681.

### Early Spring on the Darby plains

Saturday, March 7, 8:30 a.m..

Leader: Rob Thorn

By mid-March waterfowl migration is in full swing, and the first few migrant landbirds are starting to show up. We'll visit some good locations along the Darby Plains to find some of these early migrants, starting in Prairie Oaks MetroPark and work our way north or south, depending on the recent reports of unusual

birds. The ponds, streams, and flood control lakes of western Franklin County provide a great focus for migrants and are an easy morning trip to warm up to the start of Spring migration. Meet at the Darby Bend Lakes of Prairie Oaks MetroPark (off Amity Rd, just south of its junction with Lucas Pike) at 8:30 a.m., trip should be over by 1 p.m.. Contact Rob Thorn, 614-471-3051 or [robthorn@earthlink.net](mailto:robthorn@earthlink.net).

### Service in the Preserves

#### Siegenthaler-Kaestner Esker State Nature Preserve

Saturday, February 21, 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Leader: Katryn Renard

One of the advantages of living in Ohio is that we get to see the footprints of glaciers. An esker is the remnant of a river that ran through a glacier. When the glacier retreated, the stones and rocks that had been carried by the river were deposited in place, forming a long sinuous hill on otherwise flat land. Siegenthaler Esker in Champaign County is a fine example of an esker.

Our job will be to remove woody vegetation that is growing on the esker, thus obscuring the view of the mound. Underfoot will be rocks that were transported from Canada over 10,000 years ago. All skill levels are welcome. Please call Katryn Renard by Wednesday, February 18 at (614) 261-7171 to sign up, reserve space for transportation, and to help us determine tool requirements. Bring your lunch, water, work gloves, and appropriate foot gear. Meet at 7:45 a.m. in the parking lot inside the gate house at the Ohio Department Natural Resources Complex, 2045 Morse Road, Columbus. We will return to ODNR by 5 p.m. Please complete the Dept. of Natural Area's volunteer form to participate in this activity.

**Grange Insurance Audubon Center**  
www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org

**Staff:** Center Director: Heather Starck, 224-3303  
Conservation Program Coordinator: Doreen Whitley, 224-3303

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**Columbus Audubon**

Founded 1913  
740-549-0333  
www.columbusaudubon.org

**Officers:** President: Julie Davis, 523-2180  
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Secretary: Heather Raymond, 785-0342  
Newsletter/Web Site Editor: Stefanie Hauck, (740) 972-1680  
Treasurer: John Wilson, 481-8872



**Trustees:** Julie Davis, Mike Flynn, Rob Lowry, Joe Meara, Heather Raymond, Katryn Renard, Barbara Revard, Andrea Cook, Tom Sheley, Michael Packer, Bill Heck and Jackie Bain.

**Additional chapter leaders:**

Conservation: Dave Horn, 262-0312  
Service in the Preserves: Katryn Renard, 261-7171  
Education: Susan Setterlin, 457-8130  
Programs: Mike Flynn, mile.flynn.wildandfree@gmail.com  
Field Trips: Earl Harrison, eharrison@ehe.osu.edu  
CA Web site: Bill Heck, bill.heck@gmail.com  
CA KIDS: Nadya Bennett, 306-8215  
Ohio Young Birders: Jackie Bain, 361-4610, Darlene Sillick, 761-3696  
Eco Weekend: Roz Horn, 262-0312; Lois Day, (740) 549-0333  
Membership: Joe Meara, 781-9602  
Scioto-Whittier IBA Committee: Heather Raymond, 785-0342  
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/

**Joint GIAC and Columbus Audubon memberships**

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center has teamed up with Columbus Audubon, our Audubon chapter, to provide a joint membership to BOTH organizations.

The Individual rate is \$30 and the Family rate is \$45. When you join the Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC) and Columbus Audubon (CA) you become a 12 month member of the National Audubon Society as well. Joint membership benefits are:

Subscription to Audubon magazine  
10% discount at GIAC nature store  
Discount on GIAC program fees  
Free CA field trips and programs  
Volunteer opportunities  
Invitations to special events at GIAC  
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