



Song Sparrow



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

November-December 2009
Volume 42, No. 2

IN THIS ISSUE

GIAC news.....	2
GIAC programs.....	3
Coming up.....	4
Birding for a Better Columbus.....	6
Backyards for Wildlife.....	8
Conservation Corner.....	11

Send editorial submissions to
Stefanie Hauck, editor,
at stefanie.hauck@gmail.com

Columbus Audubon

Columbus CBC soars out on Dec. 20

By Rob Thorn

Help us monitor central Ohio's winter birdlife in one of the longest-running volunteer censuses in the region. On Dec. 20, we'll have teams of birdwatchers scouring the neighborhoods, parks, and wildlands of greater Columbus, looking for rarities and common birds alike. Christmas Bird Counts, or CBCs, have a few rules: you need to count within a 15-mile-diameter circle and you need to count on a single day within the count period (Dec 14-Jan 5). The Columbus count circle is centered just north of Bexley, so that it stretches from Upper Arlington on the west to Blacklick in the east, and from Minerva Park in the north to Groveport in the south. Key parks and preserves within this circle include Whetstone and the Olentangy Greenway, Griggs Dam, Greenlawn Cemetery, Scioto Audubon Metro Park, Blendon Woods, the Alum Creek Greenway, Blacklick Woods, the Blacklick Creek Greenway, and Three Creeks Park. Even with all these parks, much of the count area is decidedly urban and suburban, although it was much less so when the count started back in the 1960s. Our CBC has literally documented the winter bird population changes as Columbus has grown from a small city into a major metropolitan area.

What can we hope to find on a cold December day? You'd be pleasantly surprised at the number of birds that call Columbus a winter home. Over the past six years, we've averaged 72 species and over 20,000 individuals, and this is only from about 10-12 teams of birders out censusing. The numbers that each team sees varies with the habitats and the amount of time they spend outside, but a list of 40-45 species for each team is quite typical. Of course, many of the birds we find are the ubiquitous urban birds one might expect: Ring-billed Gulls, Starlings, Crows, Cardinals, House Sparrows. But there are also a variety of wilder species that always are lurking in our city.

Many of these 'wilder' birds have been adapting to our urban and suburban areas; these include Mourning Doves, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, Carolina Chickadees, American Robins, Carolina wrens, Dark-eyed juncos, and American Goldfinches. Many of these birds are prospering due to the huge concentration of feeders in Columbus, while others take advantage of our extensive plantings of fruiting ornamental trees like hawthorns and Bradford pears. Unless the weather becomes very cold, all teams should find large numbers of most of these species in every area of Columbus. In fact, many of these species are much more common in suburban areas of Columbus than in more remote rural areas.

Central Ohio Christmas Bird Count circles

COLUMBUS

DATE: Dec. 20
Compiler: Rob Thorn
Phone: (614) 471-3051
E-mail: robthorn@earthlink.net

DELAWARE

DATE: Dec. 20
Compiler: Jed Burt
Phone: (740) 368-3886 (d)
E-mail: ehburt@owu.edu

HOOVER RESERVOIR

DATE: Dec. 19
Compiler: Charles Bombaci
Phone: (614) 891-5706
E-mail: charlesbombaci@aol.com

O'SHAUGHNESSY RESERVOIR

DATE: Jan. 2, 2010
Compiler: Darlene Sillick
Phone: (614) 761-3696
E-mail: azuretrails@columbus.rr.com

KINGSTON

(Chillicothe/Circleville)

DATE: Jan. 1, 2010
Compiler: Brad Sparks
Phone: (614) 751-6622
E-mail: birdmansparks@yahoo.com

With all of these wintering birds come the inevitable predators. Cooper's Hawks and Red-tailed Hawks have become almost regular in most areas of Columbus in winter. In fact we often have one of the highest densities of wintering Cooper's Hawks in the State. We also host smaller numbers of Barred Owls, Great Horned Owls, and Kestrels, and have even had an occasional Bald Eagle in recent winters. More secretive raptors, like Screech Owls and Red-shouldered Hawks, have also been found in Columbus with increasing frequency on recent counts, as we've learned where to look for them.

Not all birds are so adaptable. Open country birds, like meadowlarks, blackbirds, harriers, and many kinds of sparrows, have definitely declined as most of the open fields of past years have been turned into subdivisions.

See Christmas, page 10

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Director's Journal: A time to give thanks

With Thanksgiving around the corner, it is a great time to think about the many things I am thankful for this year.

First and foremost, I am thankful for my family and friends and their health. I am very fortunate to have the best family in the world!

I am thankful to have led a team of amazing staff and volunteers to open the new Grange Insurance Audubon Center which is a gift that will keep on giving long after I am around.

Our Grand Opening weekend was a huge success and I am thankful for all the people who helped us achieve this success.

The hundreds of people that were a part of the ribbon cutting have all played a role in the planning and creation of the Center. Thank you all for leaving a legacy here in Columbus.

Our first annual fundraising gala, Wingding on the Whittier, raised over \$40,000 to provide vital support for the Center's conservation efforts through educational programming for thousands of schoolchildren in the area.

So many volunteers stepped up to help plan and coordinate



Heather Starck

the event including Jan Rodenfels, Sandy Nessing, Julie Davis, Mary Jeffries, Kathy Urban, Lori Overmeyer, Patsy Thomas, Nighat Bukhari, Jane Scott, Stephanie Martt, Coleen Kirk, Sharon Saia, Patty McFarland, Julie Butler, Helen O'Meara, Alisa Hillman, Molly Miller, Sherri Monteith and many others.

Thank you so much for giving us the gift of your valuable time. It is truly appreciated.

The National Audubon Society Board of Directors met here in early October.

What a great time to expose our national senior staff and board members to the brand new Grange Insurance Audubon Center. All were impressed by the beautiful building and site.

The entire weekend focused on using National Audubon Society programs and Centers to reach our national conservation goals through science, policy, and education.

We are now being held as the example in the entire Audubon

network of how to implement conservation action at the site based level by achieving real measureable results through education programming. This was a huge success for the Center and our entire network of Centers. Thank you so much to everyone who helped make this possible including the staff, Julie Davis, Alan and Lee Dolan, Dave and the Columbus Audubon volunteers who led an amazing field trip to Calamus Swamp.

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center is wonderful because of our staff.

I am so thankful that they believe in the mission and work hard every day to fulfill it.

They work hard for little monetary reward because of their passion for what they do and they inspire me every day. Thank you. Our volunteer staff is growing by the day.

They help us keep costs lower and our impact higher. We could not do this without their unbelievable dedication to our cause. Thank you....Thank you. Thank you...Thank you.

Heather Starck

GIAC wish list

If you have a donation for the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, please call Christy Smith at (614) 224-3303.

- Garden gloves
- Increment borers
- Gardening tools
- Spotting scope
- Telescope, any type or magnification
- Laminator
- Diameter tape
- Desktop color printer
- Hip waders
- Fishing tackle and boxes
- Rain ponchos or jackets for children
- Binoculars, any type and magnification

Thank you for your support

New donors for the period of 8-1-09 TO 10-9-09

Barbara Hupman
 Annie Lapidus
 David and Vivian Bishel
 Miles Mc Clellan Construction
 Andrew Bergman
 Stewards of Metro Parks of Columbus

and Franklin County
 Nancy Kingsley
 Edwin and Barbara Billman
 Richard and Kylene Sabec
 Patricia Phillips
 Christopher McConnell
 Nadine Block
 Alena Miller

Kate Haddox
 Paula BROOKS
 Grace Hixenbaugh
 Robert Vertrees
 Marcelline Miller
 Danielle and Suzanne Hemlick
 Lois Harrington
 Amy Flannigan

Center address

Grange Insurance Audubon Center: 505 West Whittier Street Columbus, Ohio 43215
Do Your Holiday Shopping at our Wonderful New Nature Gift Shop!

GIAC November-December programs

Wednesday Director's Tour

Every Wednesday, 10 a.m.

Join us each Wednesday as Director Heather Starck and Education Director Chris Kline guide participants through the LEED Certified Grange Insurance Audubon Center and the surrounding landscape. Admission: FREE.

Storytime and Nature Art

Every Saturday, 1 p.m., also offered on occasional Sundays

Younger members of the family will especially enjoy themselves as we combine a storybook from our library with a walk, art project, or puppet show.

No Storytime Nov. 21 and Dec. 26. Admission: Members - \$3; Non-members - \$5. Also, come enjoy Storytime on Sundays Nov. 15 and Dec. 13 at 1 p.m.

Friday Lunch Special

Fridays, Nov. 6 and 13 at noon

Bring a brown bag and enjoy a 40 minute talk on various natural history topics ranging from local conservation topics to world-wide travel.

Call Chris at (614) 545-5486 for a detailed schedule. Admission: Members - \$3; Non-members - \$5.

Date Night: Fall Evening Under the Stars

Friday, Nov. 6, 7-8:30 p.m.

Spend the evening staring at the stars with your favorite person as we use the telescopes to make sense of the night sky. Leave the kids with a sitter. Admission: Members - \$15 per couple; Non-members - \$20 per couple. Take \$2 off the admission price with the donation of two non-perishable food items. Donations will go to local food pantries. Call Chris at (614) 545-5486 to make reservations.

A guide to nature's music: How to Learn the Songs and Calls of Your Favorite Birds

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Does it seem that each Spring you have to re-learn all your bird songs again? While some of us have finally learned the Eastern Towhee's "Drink-Your-Tea" song, many people struggle with learning the vocalizations of a wider array of bird species such as the Blackburnian Warbler.

Local author and ornithologist John C. Robinson will share the step-by-step system he has used for learning bird songs throughout the world for over 30 years. Meet at Grange Insurance Audubon Center. Admission: FREE.

Limited seating available. Call Chris at 614-545-5486 to make reservations.

Date Night: Fireside Conservation Conversation

Friday, Dec. 4, 7-8:30 p.m.

Our December Date Night will start with a short presentation discussing the conservation projects that GIAC is spearheading throughout central Ohio. Afterwards, we'll ask you to pick a name off of our Christmas tree to purchase presents for children at a local community center. Admission: FREE. Call Chris at 614-545-5486 to make reservations.

Leaving the Leaves Behind: A Fool-Proof Method of Winter Tree Identification

Saturday, Dec. 5, 2-4 p.m.

Now that those confusing leaves are gone, tree identification is easy and fun.

Join GIAC Education Director Chris Kline as we learn how to identify trees by their buds, bark, and smell using his Tree Wheels. You will never look at dormancy the same way again! Admission: Members \$10; Non-members \$15. Limited seating available. Call Chris at 614-545-5486 to make reservations.

Do not go dormant this winter

By Chris Kline, GIAC education director

The leaves have fallen, your favorite bird species has touched down in Mexico, and Jack Frost is nipping at various body parts. How easy it would be to go dormant like the surrounding vegetation!

Do not allow yourself to fall into dormancy this winter. Two upcoming programs at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center will surely take the shiver out of your step and brush the frost off your gray matter.

First, on Nov. 10 at 7:30 p.m., noted author and GIAC Board member John Robinson will share the secrets of birding by ear. I have always been impressed, actually "envious" would be a better word, or maybe jealous, when I have been out on nature walks and the group hears a random chirp in the distant woods and someone in the group declares, "that is a such-n-such".

John Robinson, author and birder of many years, has developed wonderful secrets and strategies to identify those random and distant chirps. With John's help, you can be that one in the crowd that impresses the others with knowledge of our feathered recording artists.

In addition, how many times have you heard people comment about the "dead" trees of winter, their skeletons cluttering the horizon? Comments like these could not be further from the truth. There is life in those trees and stories that they can tell, even when

their outer dressing is gone.

While Tree of Heaven and Walnut look very similar in leaf, without the leaves their differences become far more striking and obvious. For example, scratch the twig of Walnut and you'll experience a very pleasant aroma, while the twigs of Tree of Heaven will make your nose hairs curl!

Join me as we use my "tree wheels" to look at characteristics of trees that you have most likely never before noticed. Just because the leaves are gone, does not mean their identities are hidden until next spring.

Be sure to call and reserve your spot in these mind thawing and interesting workshops. Space will be limited for these sure to be hot tickets! Call 614-545-5486 today to reserve your seat. Also keep an eye out for our Conservation Landscaping series which will start in late January.



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 to make sure the trip has not been changed, postponed or cancelled. Also, check the Columbus Audubon Web site at www.columbusaudubon.org or follow us on Twitter at [@columbusaudubon](https://twitter.com/columbusaudubon).

Field trips

Wednesday walks at Whittier

Wednesdays, November 4 and December 2, 7:30 a.m.
Leaders: Paul Gledhill and Heather Raymond

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 Heather Raymond at (614) 785-0342; heather_columbus_audubon@yahoo.com.

Bird hike at Blendon Woods

Saturday, Nov. 7, 8 a.m.

Leader: Bruce Simpson

Check out winter residents and wintering waterfowl as we wander the trails. Bring binoculars. We will start at the nature center, explore Thoreau Lake and other trails for winter migrants. Call (614) 508-8000 for more information or go to www.metroparks.net.

Three Creeks to Pickerington Ponds

Saturday, November 14, 9 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

While this part of the late Fall has bird activity slowing elsewhere, the areas south of Columbus start gathering late migrants and neat winter birds at this time. We'll start at Three Creeks, where the mix of wetlands, ponds and fields is a magnet to wintering birds. The fields and shrubby edges here are often the best place close to Columbus to see a large variety of sparrows and finches, and often hold lingering thrushes and warblers. Then we'll drive over to Pickerington Ponds to visit their wetland areas. This man-made mix of marshes and pools, harbors a good variety of waterfowl and raptors. We'll meet at the Heron Pond parking area of Three Creeks. To get there, take U.S. 33 southeast from downtown (or I-270) to Hamilton Road, exit south, then immediately turn right onto Williams Road. The Heron Pond entrance is just over a mile west along Williams Road. Dress for unpredictable November weather. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at robthorn@earthlink.net or (614) 471-3051.

Deer Creek Lake

Sunday, November 22, 2:30 p.m.

Leader: Dave Horn

In some years a flock of Sandhill Cranes stays in the Deer Creek area from about Nov. 10 until the 25, and it is a thrilling sight to see them coming to roost at sunset. Last year we were treated to five of them. Even without the cranes, Deer Creek Lake in November

CA November program

Tuesday, Nov. 24

7 p.m., social time, 7:30 p.m., presentation
at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center
505 W. Whittier Street, Columbus

Birds of Bulgaria

Earl Harrison had the opportunity to travel to Bulgaria to observe the birds and wildlife that live in this little-known part of Eastern Europe. He joined a trip organized by The Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds.

Earl will discuss the birds and other wildlife he observed while on this trip and the work of the BSPB. This will be an evening to learn about a unique place and its wildlife.

Earl has been involved with birds for many years in the Eastern U.S., and now gives his expertise to Columbus Audubon. He is on faculty at The Ohio State University.

New!! Just for Kids program

Kids of all ages are invited to learn all about nature at the brand new Grange Insurance Audubon Center at 6:30 p.m. on CA program nights with CA board member Jackie Bain. Parents will have the opportunity to learn something new about nature too at the adult program. Every month will be a new adventure for both the adults and kids alike! Please plan on joining us.

is good for migrating waterfowl. Meet at Deer Creek Marina, off state route 207 south of Pancoastburg. Directions: From Columbus, take I-71 toward Cincinnati, exit at State route 57 into Mt. Sterling and pick up 207 there. Look for a green Subaru Outback, license plate # MOTHMAN. For more information, contact Dave Horn, (614) 262-0312, horn.1@osu.edu.

Birds of Killdeer Plains

Sunday, November 29, 12:30 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

This wildlife area is one of the best places to observe wintering birds in Ohio. It is an annual tradition for those who are captivated by birds of prey, as well as waterfowl and many other species of birds. There is minimal walking on this trip. Dress for windy conditions. Meet at the southeast corner of Worthington Square parking lot at I-270/ Rte 23 (High Street). Go south on High St. from I-270, to the first light (Wilson Bridge Rd.). The parking lot is on the right. For more information, contact Mike Flynn at: mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com or (614) 769-1681.

Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area

Sunday, December 5, 10 a.m.

Leader: Earl Harrison

Join us to search for early wintering birds at this wildlife area
See Coming up, page 11

2009 quest for nesting Prothonotary Warblers

By Dick Tuttle

Five successful Prothonotary Warbler nests produced 22 fledglings among two nestbox projects in Delaware County in the 2009 nesting season.

One of the five nests was located in the Green Tree Marsh, a flooded woodland on the Delaware Wildlife Area. The marsh is a sure bet for those needing to add a Red-headed Woodpecker sighting to their lists. Tall, gray skeletons of flooded trees stand on both sides of historic Leonardsburg Road and provide nesting and feeding opportunities for woodpeckers. Prothonotaries also nest in woodpecker cavities where they can drop to hunt insects, caterpillars, and spiders among the shorter willow trees that have invaded the swamped forest floor. The marsh is walled on two sides by a levee that allows Delaware Lake to swell with floodwaters while protecting the City of Delaware from disaster as it did in 1959 and 2005.

Most of the nestboxes are made from four-inch PVC drain pipe in nine-inch lengths and are capped, shaded and insulated by PVC fence railing. I call them "nest jars" since they are fashioned after a successful project started in 1992 where plastic Metamucil® jars were mounted on telescoping PVC pipe sections to accommodate nesting warblers along the Upper Cuyahoga River in Geauga County. Some of them



A clutch of six Prothonotary Warbler eggs.

are made of wood, and others are made from a dense composite of sawdust and recycled plastic milk cartons. All stand six or more feet above the water, higher than most historic flood levels.

After I installed the nestboxes in the marsh, the stage was set for the procreation of three species and the cast of feathered characters did not disappoint. A pair of Tree Swallows raised five. House Wrens fledged four, and the target species produced five "willow warblers." The first eggs among the three neighbors appeared between May 16 and 24. The swallows and warblers nested five yards apart and it is possible that the Tree Swallows protected the warbler nest from egg-piercing wrens.

The Alum Creek Prothonotary Warbler Project consists of 35 nest structures, standing singly or paired, at 26 over-the-water locations in the northern region of Alum Creek State Park south of Kilbourne, a small village on State Route 521 in Delaware County, Ohio. Since PVC



Five warbler nestlings at six days.

nest jars heat up when exposed to the sun, I mount them along the western shores where they are shaded for all, or most, of the day. I access this water nestbox trail from Hogback Road, where raptor watchers and photographers gather daily to spy on four Osprey platforms that have raised 32 fish hawks over the lake

since 2001.

Between May 3 and July 24, I monitored the Alum Creek water trail during a dozen fun-filled trips, escorted by Kingfishers and Rough-winged swallows that nest in the shale and clay cliffs overlooking the water. The quest to attach U.S. Fish and Wildlife aluminum leg bands to all nestlings requires extra canoe launchings.

Prothonotaries fledge within eleven days after hatching and I prefer to band warbler nestlings when they are five or six days old, and in order to meet the goal of banding all families, the narrow window of opportunity requires vigilant monitoring, precise record keeping, and accurate extrapolations.

The 2009 Prothonotary Warbler season, from the first egg to the last fledgling, lasted from May 13 through July 20, a 69-day period that did not count the earliest date when male warblers arrived to claim nestboxes with moss deposits. I found the first down payments of moss on May 3.

During their season, male Prothonotaries added moss at 15 locations (57.7%), and females completed nests at seven locations (26.9%), or using the same numbers, females completed 46.7% of the nests started by males. Eggs were laid in six nests, the same as 2008, and four (66.7%) of those nests successfully fledged 17 warblers. Sticks deposited on top of two warbler nests left no doubt that House Wrens were responsible for the failures.

Other native species took advantage of nestboxes at Alum Creek. Tree Swallows claimed nine jars to fledge 29. House Wrens fledged 28 from five nests while Carolina Chickadees claimed four nestboxes to add 19 young to Alum Creek's ecosystem. All chickadee nests were found near the creek's mouth and fit within a circle that is 400 yards wide, a very amazing concentration of successful nests.

Prothonotary Warblers made July 2 a very exciting day for me.



Three warblers on the last day in their nest.

I had calculated that three nestlings were going to fledge from Jar No. 16 on July 1, so on July 2, I slid my canoe alongside the jar's pole, snapped a rope around it, and went about lowering the nest. I was shocked to discover that the olive-green nestlings were still inside. Even though I don't like to disturb a family that is due to fledge, I could not resist taking a picture. I was very

pleased to return the jar to its original position without any of the nestlings making a break for it. After my supper that very day, I followed a routine of reporting to Hogback Road to watch Osprey. My objective was to spy on four Osprey nestlings and their mother on Platform No. Four.



Photos by Dick Tuttle
A "nest jar" being visited by a Prothonotary Warbler.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

GIAC launches 'Birding for a Better Columbus' initiative

I've been working in conservation for the last ten years and during that time had the opportunity to work with several Audubon programs throughout the country. Up until my recent work here in Columbus with our local chapter and other inspiring birders and avian researchers I was not a birder.



Doreen Whitley

Now I've joined the ranks and even changed my work hours so I can spend more time in the field and train to run a banding station in our new Scioto Audubon Metro Park. I even listen to bird calls on my ipod and was the proud winner of Bird Jam at the Midwest Birding Symposium.

So how did I become a birder? As we work to implement habitat restoration strategies in the Scioto River-Greenlawn Important Bird Area (IBA) that houses our center the area search data collected by our loyal Columbus Audubon volunteers, Heather Raymond and Rob Thorn has been critical to maintaining and protecting our IBA. It is also the basis for our unique entry way exhibit to the center that functions as a seasonal field guide to the site. I



Birding in urban Columbus in 2006.

By Susan Setterlin

became a birder for both the enjoyment of looking at birds and knowing that there is a purpose behind our observations in the park.

Birds are indicators of change and that is

what we have all worked so hard to do here in Columbus, change a brownfield to a revitalized park for families, change the way people think about their environment, and change the way we use our resources in an urban setting. Now that the center and park are open we need more people helping us look and listen to what the birds are telling us about the changes we've made to the Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

For this reason we are launching a new citizen science program Birding for A Better Columbus. We are recruiting both experienced and newly interested birders to assist in data collection this spring by adopting point counts and assisting at our banding station. If you are an experienced birder and would like to mentor new birders or if you are a new birder and would like to start learning how to train your eyes and ears to identify birds contact me. You will have the opportunity to meet other birders and participate in special social and recreational events at the center and elsewhere.

We will kick off the program on November 16 at 5:30 p.m. at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in the multi-purpose room to match mentors and new birders and plan our participation in the Columbus Christmas Bird Count with Rob Thorn.

Contact me at dwhitley@audubon.org or (614) 545-5481. I look forward to hearing from you!



Birding in urban Columbus in 2009.

Courtesy of GIAC

Columbus Audubon

South Side Settlement After School program begins its seventh year

The students of the South Side Settlement After School Program will once again experience to great outdoors as we embark on our fifth year of partnership. This year's program focuses on "The Seasons of Change". Between 30-40 kids will learn about the changes nature makes to accommodate the changing seasons. The structure of the program includes a classroom experience followed by a field experience the following week in late October, January and April/May.

Activities will include observation of changes of both plants and animals as they prepare for winter, survive the cold of the winter months and as they experience the warmth of spring. In

addition to the observation activities, we hope to include photography as a component of the field experience. Students will also learn how they can help clean up and maintain a healthy environment by participating in service projects both at GIAC and at South Side Settlement House.

Once again, the children will enjoy a May Bird Festival as a culmination of their experiences during the changing seasons. Want to share in the experience of the after school program?

To volunteer your time and talents, contact Susan Setterlin at (614) 457-8130 or rsetterl@columbus.rr.com or Chris Kline at (614) 545-5486 or ckline@audubon.org.



Children in the after-school program fill birdfeeders made of plastic water bottles during the bird festival on May 21 at the South Side Settlement House. The event celebrated the end of another successful year.

A note from CA president Julie Davis

I can not believe it has been a year since our first joint newsletter and membership with GIAC. Last year there was just a frame of a building and now... We have a beautiful center, a great staff and a wonderful new home for Columbus Audubon. Our first program took place in September and we had over 75 in attendance. I hope that trend continues throughout the year. Over the first weekend in October the National Audubon board and officers held their annual meeting at GIAC. I was privileged to attend the

Saturday night dinner with many of our board and past presidents. Columbus Audubon was recognized for our \$100,000 contribution to the center, the largest ever from a single chapter. Many of the board visited Calamus Swamp for a field trip on Sunday and all were very impressed with all our chapter has accomplished. Thanks to each and every one of you, our members for your interest and support. CA is the best chapter and it is because of all of you.

2010 Entertainment Books for sale

By popular demand Columbus Audubon again offers Entertainment Books for sale. Books are available for \$25 each from the bird feeding supply stores listed below now through December 15. Proceeds from the sale will support Columbus Audubon's educational activities and the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Better Earth	59 Spruce St., Columbus (North Market)	224-6196
Backyard Experience	3515 North High St., Columbus	261-0355
Wild Birds Unlimited	21 Cherry Park Sq., Westerville	899-9453
Wild Birds Unlimited	5400 Riverside Dr. Columbus	766-2103
Wild Birds Unlimited	6839 E. Broad St., Columbus (Blacklick Shopping Ctr.)	860-1133
Columbus Audubon	Dave Horn (If you want an out-of-town book, contact Dave directly and he'll make it easy)	262-0312 horn.1@osu.edu

Follow CA on Facebook and Twitter



Become a fan of Columbus Audubon on Facebook by searching 'Columbus Audubon.' Post photos to our fan site, report bird sightings and more! Follow us on Twitter at @columbusaudubon for up to the minute field trip changes and news.



Note: To join CA's online community on Facebook, you must be a member of Facebook. You can sign up anonymously and do not have to fill out a full profile to join. Joining is free.

Backyards for Wildlife

Winterize your yard for wildlife

By Toni Stahl

When I see fresh snow, I look before stepping in it to see what's been in the yard. It's fun to try to identify the tracks and realize what creatures the yard is helping survive. ODNR lists some common Ohio tracks with the key upside down on the bottom of the second page: <http://dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/9/pdf/pub128.pdf>

Many of us get our cars winterized and get out our warmer clothes. It can be a lifesaver to winterize our yards as well.

Winterize your yard for birds

In icy conditions, use sand or non-toxic ice melters because salt is toxic to many things.

If you trim bushes and trees, make a small brush pile in an out-of-the-way corner of your yard to keep birds warm. Birds and other animals need a place to hide from hawks and other predators. It doesn't take much - a Holiday tree can also work as quick cover.

Consider purchasing heated birdbaths or heating elements that can be safely added to outdoor water. Keep clean baths 3" or less deep and add gravel or stones if it is slippery. Place them 10-15 feet from cover. You may see a line of birds in your yard when the river freezes.

Leave seed heads up until spring to provide natural bird food. Wait to cut bushes and grasses high (4" or so) after Mother's Day because many things live there that will be food for birds. Trim dead trees into snags and leave them up permanently (if not a hazard) for wildlife winter homes.

Home, sweet home

Be proactive to prevent wildlife from being able to get into your heated home. Here are some starters:

- Store bird seed in heavyweight containers with tight lids (if needed, a bungee cord can help)
- Check seed containers for bite marks
- Clean up any spilled seed in your storage area
- Feed birds in the morning, only enough for the day
- Rinse recycling to keep it from attracting animals
- Cap your chimney
- Close garage doors consistently
- Caulk small openings*

**Avoid using expanding insulation spray because rodents may scratch it off and use it to keep warm.*

I discover more and more that what I do in my yard makes a positive difference. Winter is a great time for planning. Imagine - what do you want in your yard next summer?

Read about organic lawn and garden care if you aren't already practicing it. The more healthy insects and native plants I have in the yard, the more diversity of birds I have an opportunity to see up close and personal.

Birds and berries go together more than just on holiday cards.



By Irena Kircher, 2008

Tracks in backyard snow.

Backyard gardening links

National Wildlife Federation: <http://www.nwf.org/>

Wild Ones natural landscapers: <http://www.for-wild.org/>

Ohio Wildlife Center: <http://www.ohiowildlifecenter.org/>

Ohio Invasive Plant Council: <http://www.oipc.info/>

What's That Bug? - Great site to identify the insects in your yard. <http://www.whatsthatbug.com/>

Sustainable Sites - The Sustainable Sites Initiative is an effort by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the United States Botanic Garden to create voluntary national guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction and maintenance practices. <http://www.sustainable-sites.org/>

MORPC: <http://morpc.org/>

Consider planting native plants that berry throughout the winter into early spring and consider placing evergreens to block cold winds.

Get Certified: Putting up National Wildlife Federation's Certified Wildlife Habitat sign helps others understand the purpose of the yard and encourages them to help birds too.

Lessons learned? If you're interested, email marc-a@columbus.rr.com to get on our monthly 'Nature Scoop' email or go to www.backyardhabitat.info to learn more. Let's work together to help birds, one yard at a time.

Invasive species: Why not pigeons and geese?

By Dave Horn

Occasionally I have been asked whether Rock Pigeons and Canada Geese should be considered “invasive.” After all, they seem to be everywhere: one can see pigeons sitting on every downtown building while geese are fouling lawns or colliding with aircraft. Certainly a case can be made for considering them invasive. The issue is definitional, yet not all agree on a definition of “invasive.” I happen to like The Nature Conservancy’s definition: An invasive species is “any species not native to an ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” On reflection, the better case might be made to declare the native Canada Goose invasive, rather than the exotic Rock Pigeon (formerly the Rock Dove).

Historically, Canada Geese migrated through Ohio on their way to more northern nesting areas. These geese were wary and shied away from developed areas and human activity. Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, aggressive and highly successful habitat management led both to both a



Canada Goose.

huge increase in goose nesting in Ohio and, subsequently, to goose colonization of agricultural and, ultimately, suburban and urban habitats where they were safe from hunting. Our Canada Geese have largely lost both their fear of humans and their migratory tendencies, and geese unquestionably have major impacts on ecosystems. (For example, accumulation of goose droppings foul water and may serve as a source of pathogens infecting other waterfowl.) Canada Geese introduced to Europe and New Zealand are developing



By Stefanie Hauck

Rock Pigeons in their native habitat in Trafalgar Square, London, July 2009.

the same familiarity with humans there, and legitimately qualify as invasive by any definition.

Rock Pigeons are non-native, having been introduced from Europe probably over 200 years ago. (Nobody seems to have kept track.) They are unquestionably offensive in urban and agricultural settings largely on account of their droppings, soiling clothing, vehicles, structures, statues and the like. Because they are so closely

See Invasive, page 10

Conservation corner: Dr. Dave Blyth, 1917-2009

By Dave Horn

Dr. David D. Blyth, a longtime supporter of Columbus Audubon and of conservation, passed away recently at age 92.

Dave was a visionary who was concerned with the direction that contemporary society seemed to be taking toward an increasingly disconnected, mechanized, indoor world. He saw part of his role to reconnect all generations with the outdoors.

He was active in many local conservation organizations (such as The Wheaton Club, Columbus Rock and Mineral Society, The Nature Conservancy and the Ohio Environmental Council) and was a Columbus Audubon supporter for decades.

As our president in 1968-69 he saw a need for more continuity and institutional memory and was responsible for hiring Lois Day as our Executive Secretary.

After retirement, when most would have been content to relax and reflect, Dave offered his Hocking Hills property, “Deep Woods Farm,” as a conservation research and educational site. Deep Woods is a 280-acre tract of mostly mature forest with var-

ied habitats and can serve as an outdoor laboratory for studies of the natural history of southeastern Ohio.

Since 1998 nearly 400 scientists, students, and naturalists from a score of academic and other institutions have visited Deep Woods. All have come away enriched and refreshed, some with precious data in hand, some with a souvenir (usually a rock from Dave’s extensive collection) and most with a share of Dave’s wisdom and love for the outdoors.

Over 4500 species of animals and plants have been documented at Deep Woods to date.

A special feature has been an annual “BioBlitz” when scientists and naturalists fan out across the varied habitats of Deep Woods to document as many plant and animal species as possible in 24 hours. (The record is 907 found by 44 participants.)

The BioBlitz information is very useful but the greater value has been the networking and cooperation among lovers of the outdoors. The conservation movement is definitely alive at Deep Woods BioBlitzes.

Deep Woods is a short drive from Camp Oty’Okwa, site of Columbus Audubon’s Eco-Weekend.

Dave offered Deep Woods as a site for Eco-Weekend programs and for the past decade one or more programs have been hosted at Deep Woods annually.

We are especially grateful for Dave’s hospitality in hosting the annual stream study, as there is nothing like it at Camp Oty’Okwa.

Dave Blyth was an inspiration to all who wish to have a positive impact on conservation. He will be missed, but he has left us large footprints to follow.

Calamus Thank-you

Columbus Audubon expresses sincere thanks to the intrepid crew who braved pouring rain to clean up and repair Calamus Swamp before the visit of the National Audubon Board. The amphibious work force was: Earl and Alyn Harrison, Dave and Roz Horn, Blaine Keckley and Joe Meara. (The precipitation was about ½ inch in one hour).

Eco Weekend 2010 - Save the date!!

Get your 2010 calendars ready and save these Spring dates for **Eco Weekend: April 30 to May 2, 2010**. Eco Weekend will be held at Camp Oty'Okwa (near Conkles Hollow) in the Hocking Hills.

Eco Weekend is an opportunity to have an affordable and enjoyable weekend experiencing nature's beauty and learning about nature from experienced program leaders. Five activity sessions are scheduled from Friday evening until noon on Sunday. You design your own weekend by selecting your own session activities from among the many choices available for each session. Youth from age 4 through eighth grade have their own special programs on Saturday. Come and learn from professionals who volunteer

their time to share their knowledge with you about the natural world. Everyone is welcome! Participants have so far included families with children ranging from age 4 – 17, single adults, grandparents with grandkids, senior citizens, college graduate students, and small groups of friends enjoying the weekend together. There are varied types of accommodations available at the camp to meet your needs.

For more details, visit www.ecoweekend.org or call the Columbus Audubon Eco Weekend Committee at 740-549-0333. Be sure to look in the January/February issue of the *Song Sparrow* for the Eco Weekend brochure which will have registration information.

Christmas Bird Count in Columbus soars out on Dec. 20

Continued from page 1

Some deep forest birds, like Red-shouldered Hawks, Barred Owls, and Pileated Woodpeckers, have slowly become rare as their habitats have become fragmented. Other birds have slowly disappeared for no obvious reasons. Red-headed Woodpeckers were formerly regular in the circle, but are now rare. Eastern Towhees have declined to the point where they now hang on only in a few park areas. Hopefully these trends can be stabilized or reversed, and continued counts are the most direct way to monitor this change.

What other changes could be forecast for our wintering birds? Increasingly, we're finding hardy strays and wintering birds that were formerly rare or unknown from here during December. Our list of wintering waterfowl has steadily grown as small numbers of dabbling and diving ducks have started to stick around in different ice-free ponds or creeks. Unusual raptors, like Bald Eagles, Merlins, and Peregrines, are now almost expected in the winter here. Sapsuckers and Flickers are now wintering in fair numbers in our ravines and parks. Cedar waxwings and hermit thrushes have become quite regular in recent years ('05 had record numbers of the latter), probably due to many planted fruit trees. Surprisingly, even some tough insect-eaters,

2008 CBC highlights	
On December 14, 2008, 50 observers spent the day counting birds in different areas around Columbus. The final total was 79 species and 55,885 individual birds, which are very good numbers.	Woodpecker - 172; Hairy Woodpecker - 17; N.Flicker - 54 (high); Pileated Woodpecker - 1; Eastern Phoebe - 1; Blue Jay - 144; American Crow - 476; Carolina Chickadee - 489; Tufted Titmouse - 117; White-breasted Nuthatch - 123; Red-breasted Nuthatch - 4; Brown Creeper - 36; Carolina Wren - 88; Winter Wren - 3; Golden-crowned Kinglet - 27; Ruby-crowned Kinglet - 2 (2 teams); Horned Lark - 7; Eastern Bluebird - 26; American Robin - 4157 (high); N.Mockingbird - 12; European Starling - 35,540; Yellow-rumped Warbler - 23; Eastern Towhee - 6; American Tree Sparrow - 61; Field Sparrow - 3; Chipping Sparrow - 1; Song Sparrow - 176; Swamp Sparrow - 4; White-throated Sparrow - 607; White-crowned Sparrow - 17; Dark-eyed Junco - 534; Dickcissel - 1 (present entire count period); E.Meadowlark - 1; Red-winged Blackbird - 3; Common Grackle - 9; Brown-headed Cowbird - 7; N.Cardinal - 453; Purple Finch - 4; House Finch - 622; American Goldfinch - 591; Pine Siskin - 2; House Sparrow - 1123
Species seen: Mute Swan - 2; Canada Goose - 2296; Wood Duck - 1; Black Duck - 503; Mallard - 2034; Green-winged Teal - 1; Gadwall - 20; N.Shoveler - 1; Ring-necked Duck - 191 (high); Lesser Scaup - 3; Bufflehead - 3; Common Goldeneye - 1; Hooded Merganser - 181; Sharp-shinned Hawk - 5; Cooper's Hawk - 18; Bald Eagle - 4 (3a,1j); Red-shouldered Hawk - 1; Red-tailed Hawk - 44; Rough-legged Hawk - 1; American Kestrel - 3; American Coot - 10; Pied-billed Grebe - 1; Great Blue Heron - 73; Black-cr.Night Heron - 13; Killdeer - 2; Ring-billed Gull - 1741; Herring Gull - 1; Rock Pigeon - 1655; Mourning Dove - 847; Great Horned Owl - 3; Barred Owl - 6; E.Screech Owl - 1; Belted Kingfisher - 16; Red-headed Woodpecker - 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker - 97; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 4; Downy	

like Orange-crowned Warbler, Pine Warblers, and Eastern Phoebes, have turned up in the Count Period. And you never know what jaw-dropping rarity will show up, like a Rufous Hummingbird at a Blendon Woods feeder ('03), a Grasshopper Sparrow lurking in an OSU field ('05), or a Western Tanager flitting around a

Grandview neighborhood ('06). That's what makes a CBC so fun.

Teams of birdwatchers will comb parts of the city inside the circle on Dec. 20, looking for common birds and unusual rarities alike.

Rob Thorn is the Columbus CBC compiler.

Invasive species: Why not pigeons and geese?

Continued from page 9

tiated to human activity, they have not had a major ecosystem impact and they have not displaced any native species. Every now and then one can find a pair nesting in their original habitat, cliffsides, but that is rare.

They have adopted us as we have adopted them. So although there are lots of pigeons in cities, towns and farms, their overall environmental impact is slight.

In future issues of the *Song Sparrow* we will feature some native species, like the

Canada Goose, that have features of invasive species because of their overall ecosystem effects.

For more information see <http://www.stopinvasives.org/> and [invasivespecies.gov/](http://www.invasivespecies.gov/).

Coming up

Continued from page 4

near Marion. We'll meet at Worthington Square Shopping Center at 10 a.m. and carpool to Killdeer. Dress for the weather. We will stay until dark in hopes of seeing short-eared owls. Contact Earl Harrison at harrison.304@osu.edu or (614) 505-1123.

Mohican State Forest

Sunday, December 6, 12:30 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

This is one of the most significant and rich wooded ecosystems in Ohio -dominated by large tracts of mature forest on a landscape of impressive proportions. Join us as we travel to this impressive place to see the birds, trees, water and geology. Meet at the southeast corner of the Worthington Square parking lot at I-270/Rte 23 (High St). Go south on High St. from I-270 to the first light (Wilson Bridge Rd). Parking lot is on the right. For more information, contact Mike Flynn at: mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com or (614) 769-1681.

Birding the urban Scioto

Sunday, December 13, 9 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

We don't usually think of the Scioto River as a cold-weather birding destination, but maybe this trip will change your thinking. We'll start at the Scioto Audubon Metro Park, looking for unusual waterbirds and lingering landbirds. Then we'll work our way up the river, looking at the series of dams, pools, quarries and parks up past downtown and through Grandview and Marble Cliff out to Griggs Dam. The variety of habitats along this stretch of the river is surprising and attracts an equally surprising mix of birds. Perhaps we'll see the Bald Eagle that has started to patrol this area in recent winters, or maybe we'll find some of the elusive wintering Night Herons. Meet at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and dress for the weather. The trip should be over by 1 p.m. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at robthorn@earthlink.net or (614) 471-3051.

New Year's Day Nature Hike Glen Helen Ecology Institute

Friday, January 1, 2010, 12 noon.

Leader: Mike Flynn

What are you doing on New Year's Day? On this first day of the year, take some quiet time outdoors and find some of the season's peace and serenity. That's what this trip is about. We will walk through the woods of Glen Helen, looking and listening for any creature or natural feature as we make our way through this special place. For those who wish, we will follow our hike with dinner in nearby Yellow Springs. Meet at: 12 noon at the Bob Evans parking lot on Hilliard Rome Rd. Take I-270 on the west, to 70 W.; Exit at Hilliard Rome Rd.; then drive SOUTH to Bob Evans. Or meet us at the parking lot at Glen Helen at approximately 2 p.m. For more information, contact Mike Flynn at: mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com or (614) 769-1681.

Avid Birders field trips

The Avid Birders meet to carpool at 5:30 a.m. in the southeast corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot on the morning of each trip. November-December trips are:

Nov 14: The Avid Birders will be looking for waterfowl, raptors, and very late migrants. As usual, our destination will be chosen based on late-breaking birding news in the state.

Dec. 5: The Avid Birders will be glomming gulls and watching waterfowl as winter sets in along the northern Ohio lakeshore.

Service in the Preserves

Siegenthaler Esker

Saturday, November 14, 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Leader: Katryn Renard

For the past two years we've tried to go to Siegenthaler Esker and the weather has always stopped us. We're hoping that this time there will be no hurricane or blizzard conditions. Come join us for the day as we finally get a look at this remnant the glaciers left behind. We will be removing woody vegetation so the contours of the esker can be seen. This will allow our imaginations to roam freely about what it must have been like back when the native Americans were hunting woolly mammoths in this very area.

No training is needed, just a tolerance for the weather. Please call Katryn Renard by Wednesday, November 11 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. Please complete the Dept. of Natural Area's volunteer form to participate in this activity (contact treaster.1@osu.edu for forms or fill one out on the morning of the trip). We will return to ODNR by 5 p.m.

Non-Audubon events

Columbus Natural History Society program

November meeting and program: Monday, Nov. 9, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the OSU Museum of Biodiversity. Jenny Bowman, the music teacher at Scottish Corners Elementary School, will speak about wildlife of Peru she saw on her 7-plus weeks she spent in Peru this past summer.

Ohio Wildlife Center's Christmas with the Critters

Get the kids out of the house and shake off your post-holiday blues at the Ohio Wildlife Center's Christmas with the Critters on Monday, Dec. 28 from 1-4 p.m. The third annual event features animal encounters, crafts and games, tours around OWC's 20-acre education center, and more. Admission is free with a donation of supplies to get the OWC education animals ready for 2010: paper towels, dog or cat food, dish soap or something else from our wish list.

Delaware County Bird Club November meeting

November meeting and program: Monday, Nov. 16 beginning at 7 p.m. at the Conrades-Wetherell Science Center on the campus of the Ohio Wesleyan University. In case you missed Columbus Audubon's September program you can catch an encore when Bill Heck presents his program on his recent travels to Madagascar (See our last newsletter for the program description). Parking is available in the lot beside the science center or across Henry Street next to Selby Stadium. On December 14, the featured speaker will be Jackie Bain, naturalist at Delaware County Preservation Parks. Please check www.columbusaudubon.org for details.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org

Staff: Center Director: Heather Starck
Conservation Program Coordinator:
Doreen Whitley
Education Director: Chris Kline
Educators: Joe Jennings & Tori Strickland
Finance & Office Manager: Christy Smith
Facilities Operations Manager: Wade Walcutt
Office phone: 614-545-5475
Center hours: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Tuesday - Saturdays;
9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sundays

GIAC Stewardship Board:

Frances Beasley
Beth Crane
Greg Cunningham
Julie Davis
O'Vell Harrison
Barry Hunlock
Chester Jourdan
Tom Katzenmeyer
Bernie Master
Alan McKnight
Sandra Nessing
John O'Meara
Mark Real
Jan Rodenfels
John Robinson



Patsy Thomas
Ellen Tripp
Phil Urban
Christie Vargo
Pete Precario

Columbus Audubon

Founded 1913
614-545-5475
www.columbusaudubon.org
Twitter: @ColumbusAudubon
Facebook: pages/Columbus-Audubon

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



Trustees: Julie Davis, Mike Flynn, Joe Meara, Heather Raymond, Katryn Renard, Barbara Revard, Andrea Cook, Tom Sheley, Darlene Sillick, Andi Wolfe, Susan Jervey, 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, mflynn.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
IBA Committee: Heather Raymond, 785-0342
Birdathon: Julie Davis, 523-2180 or Katryn Renard, 261-7171
Avid Birders: <http://www.columbusaudubon.org/avids/avids.html>

RETURN IN FIVE DAYS TO

Columbus Audubon
P.O. Box 141350
Columbus, Ohio 43214

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
COLUMBUS, OHIO
PERMIT 5146

Warblers

Continued from page 5

This was our largest family since Ospreys started nesting in Delaware County in 2001. Photographers had trimmed a tunnel in the foliage on top of the cliff that overlooked the nest. I set up my equipment near the cliff's edge and soon concluded that all was well with the fish hawks. Then, I turned my spotting scope twenty degrees north to see if anything was going on with Nest Jar No. 16 that is one thousand feet across the lake. With my scope set at 35x, I could recognize a nestling perched in the jar's entrance. It started beating its wings, only to fall forward and ended up hanging by its feet. Its wings never stopped as it righted itself to disappear back into the nest chamber. I laughed out loud, but I had to admit that the clumsy maneuver was not bad for a creature that eleven days earlier was a naked fetus chipping its way out of an egg.

Within seconds, a nestling reappeared at the jar's doorway as an adult warbler flew back and forth between two limbs, apparently encouraging the feathered novice to go for it. At 19:41,

a fledgling was born as the young warbler flew in an upward arc to land in the Oak tree above its nest. Ten minutes later, I was still glued to my spotting scope as a second fledgling followed the same aerial path into the oak tree. Everything else that evening was anticlimactic.

The golden swamp warblers never failed to inspire me as I monitored their nestboxes. Most times when I heard male prothonotaries singing, I could not see them, but when I did, they looked like yellow and green Christmas ornaments. Even though I did not raise as many warblers as I had hoped, I was pleased when they expanded their historic nesting zone south along the lakeshore. All nestboxes and jars are now in storage until next spring when I will try some new management strategies, if I am able. Meanwhile, perhaps a researcher somewhere will read a leg band on a live bird and we'll learn more about the "school bus yellow" warblers from Delaware County.

To read more about Dick Tuttle's Prothonotary Warblers, go to www.columbusaudubon.org.