



Song Sparrow



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

Summer 2009
Volume 41, No. 6

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



Courtesy of GIAC

View of the front exterior of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center & Scioto Audubon Metro Park set to open

Friday, August 28 at 10 a.m.

Please join us for The Grange Insurance Audubon Center & Scioto Audubon Metro Park ribbon cutting celebration on Friday, August 28, 2009. The ribbon cutting ceremony begins at 10:00 a.m., with center tours immediately following.

Scheduled speakers are Governor Ted Strickland, Mayor Michael Coleman, National Audubon Center CEO John Flicker, Metro Parks Director John O'Meara, Grange Insurance CEO Phil Urban, and Center Director Heather Starck.

That weekend, Center activities will include bird and dragon fly walks, butterfly gardening classes, and activities for children including puppet shows, face painting, and story times. The Metro Park will feature a 35-foot-climbing wall (including two 7-8 foot boulders), and a rope climbing area.

A primary goal of the 18,000 square foot, nature-based education center is to inspire environmental responsibility and stewardship in the daily lives of students and visitors who enjoy the Center and surrounding park. Initial planning for the Center set a goal for Silver LEED certification, yet thanks to strategic design and unwavering commitment to National Audubon Society sustainability policies, Gold certification is now a strong possibility. Situated along an Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA), on a major migratory flyway where more than 200 species of birds have been sighted, the Center is the only Audubon Center in the US located within one mile of an urban center.



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Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Volunteers still needed to get GIAC ready for opening day and beyond

Volunteers are needed to help with various functions of the new Grange Insurance Audubon Center within the Scioto-Audubon Metro Park.

Critical volunteer positions which will be needed as soon as we open include gift shop clerks and front desk greeters. While experience handling money would be helpful for the gift shop positions, it is not necessary as center staff will train volunteers.

Our front desk volunteers will greet visitors as

they enter the center, and help them find their way to the library, gift shop and other locations of interest. Our front desk will also be our connection to the Metro Parks staff via two-way radios.

We ask that volunteers be available for four-hour blocks of time. Weekday and weekend time slots will be available. If you want to be an important part of this exciting new project, contact Chris Kline, volunteer coordinator, at (614) 754-7055 or via e-mail at ckline@audubon.org.

GIAC wish list

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

- Any type of field guide in good shape
- Increment Borer
- D-Tapes
- Spotting Scope
- Telescope
- Garden gloves
- Garden tools
- Hip waders
- Fishing tackle and boxes
- Rain ponchos or jackets for children

Thank you for your support

Donors from 3/28 to 6/12/09:

Tami Knight	Thomas & Margaret Floyd
David & Judy Canowitz	Frank & Beth Luchsinger
Grandview Civic Association	Richard & Kathy Miller
Ann Baird Speer	Bill & Cindy Calvert
Amy E. Frankenbery	Lynn Barno
Peter & Lois Meyst	Ellen Anderson
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation	Stephen & Sara Browning
Bettye Best	Kay M. Williamson
Richard Doyle	Margaret L. Turner
Burton & Carol Cantrell	Amy Kesting
Blanche Luczyk	Joell & Beth Rabb
Josephine Hopkins	Columbus School For Girls

Columbus Audubon

Play "tag" with the birds: Be a CamClickr with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

We need your keen eye and quick fingers! As you may know, we have live cameras positioned at active bird nests all around the country. Since 1999, we've archived more than eight million images from these NestCams. To help sort through the images, we developed CamClickr—an online tool you can use to view the images and sort them into albums, then tag each image by the type of behavior you see: preening, eating, feeding chicks, etc.

What's in it for you? NestCams allow you to peek into the nests of Barn Owls, bluebirds, Wood Ducks, and other birds for an up-close look at fascinating bird behavior.

CamClickr will appeal not only to bird lovers, but to people who enjoy testing their skills with online games. When you help sort and tag the camera images, you collect points and compete for prizes such as binoculars, DVDs, books and posters. It's easy and fun!

Why do we need your help? By using CamClickr to help tag and sort the NestCam images, you help scientists studying breeding bird behavior. The more we understand about bird behavior, the better equipped we are to understand how birds are responding to threats in their environment.

Just visit www.camclickr.org to create an

account. This allows you to chat in the NestCam forums, tag photos, and track your stats in CamClickr anytime. You can check your rankings in "my sessions" to see how you stack up against other taggers. The redesigned CamClickr home page also provides the latest Twitter feeds. Educators will appreciate the newly developed lesson plan, appropriate for all ages, and easily modified for individualized instruction.

You can watch videos of fascinating nesting behaviors from the Lab's Macaulay Library.

Make it your summer project to help science and the birds—be a CamClickr!

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Center, park set to open on August 28

Continued from page 1

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony and through the weekend, tours of the new Center will highlight classrooms, native plant demonstration gardens, a natural playground area, outdoor amphitheater, nature themed exhibits, a nature store and library, and outdoor observation deck and terrace.

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center actually began eight years ago, when Audubon supporters met with city officials in Columbus, Ohio to discuss a plan for the Whittier Peninsula – a narrow strip of abandoned industrial land in downtown Columbus that also happens to be remarkably positioned on a major migratory bird flyway. Two years later, Audubon Ohio, Franklin County Metro Parks, and the Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks agreed to collaborate on a project to reclaim and restore 160 acres on the Whittier Peninsula. Of this acreage, the Metro Parks will lease 84 acres; the Grange Insurance Audubon Center - so named for its major benefactor, Grange Insurance - will sublease 5 acres from Metro Parks.

The Whittier Peninsula applies to the area bounded by I-70, the Scioto River, and CSX and Norfolk Southern Rail Road Tracks spanning approximately 160 acres.

The peninsula has seen various types of operations over the past 100 years including waste disposal, flood control activities, incineration, dumping and landfill, the City Impound Lot, warehousing, electrical substations, storm tanks, and wastewater treatment. Commercial uses for the peninsula included: steel and iron works, foundry, machine shops, warehousing, electrostatic painting, asphalt, concrete, and brick productions, and gas stations.

Rail operations on the peninsula were extensive and included transportation, a round house, maintenance operation, and a scrap yard. Many of these activities created adverse environmental impacts on the land, and this long and varied history of uses earned the site brownfield status.

This means that the site was severely contaminated, but with a potential for use after clean up.

During its ongoing transformation from a brownfield to a brightfield, the birds of the peninsula have been indicators for the natural resilience of the site. The peninsula is part of the Audubon and Birdlife International designated Important Bird Area (IBA) which also includes Greenlawn Cemetery and Lou Berliner Park to S.R. 104. The IBA designation was granted in October of 2000 due to documented sightings of suites of shorebirds, neo-tropical migrants, and birds of prey. There is also evidence that the peninsula was the historical breeding ground for Yellow-Crowned Night Herons.

Columbus Audubon has also been closely involved in the Center's growth and development – pledging a very generous



Courtesy of GIAC

View from the road of the exterior of the GIAC and some of the Scioto Audubon Metro Park surrounding it.



By Eric Wittine

Fishing dock at the boat ramp at the Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

campaign gift, as well as donating hundreds of volunteer hours to support Center initiatives which span from youth programs, to community outreach and awareness, to database support. Columbus Audubon will also hold meetings and volunteer events at the Center.

Future plans include a full array of regularly-scheduled hands-on programs for the general public to encourage recycling and enhance environmental awareness.

The Center is available to rent throughout the year, and features inside and outside meeting space, a gift shop, an approved catering list, and designated parking. Admission is free! Please see the GIAC Web site for more information: www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center



Wingding on the Whittier

Join the party as Columbus celebrates the opening of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in the heart of the new Scioto Audubon Metro Park. Come see for yourself the beauty of this urban nature center!

What: Wingding on the Whittier – A Night Out With Nature

When: Friday, September 25, 2009 – 7 p.m.

Where: Grange Insurance Audubon Center, 505 West Whittier Street, Columbus

Individual tickets – \$150

Sponsorship Levels

Cliff Swallow (\$1,500)

Red-headed Woodpecker (\$3,000)

Osprey (\$5,000)

Bald Eagle (\$10,000)

Columbus Audubon

South Side Settlement celebrates fifth bird festival

Students who participated in South Side Settlement's after-school program spent the early and late spring learning about bird observation, adaptations and migration through a series of class activities as well as three field trips to the Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

Observing, identifying and listing the birds they saw in the field, the students confirmed the existing bird species list that is being documented in the IBA area of the park.

As in the past, they celebrated their accomplishments with a bird festival held on May 21.

With parents and South Side Settlement board members in attendance, the students were eager to share what they had learned by making displays about bird migration and bird observation skills.

They were very proud of their artistic talents in their displays of "Adaptation Artistry" that featured their creation of new bird species based on unique habitat adaptations.

The SSS board members were impressed by how much the students' learned this year about the natural world around them in their own neighborhoods. They were grateful that the students also had the opportunity to experience field work at the park. The festival featured fun and educational activities including nest building, experiencing the different adaptations birds have for feeding in different habitats; making bird feeders out of plastic bottles; seeing live bird ambassadors from the Ohio Wildlife Center and making a "mud pie" snack.

A pizza and salad dinner ended the evening and a delightful spring of learning about birds in the South Columbus neighborhood.

The partnership between the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, Columbus Audubon and South Side Settlement has once again successfully provided students with a real connection to the natural world around them and nurtured their growing sense of respect for the earth and all its communities.



(Above) Members of the South Side Settlement board visits a representative from the Ohio Wildlife Center during the bird festival on May 21 at the South Side Settlement House. (Below) Children in the after-school program fill birdfeeders made of plastic water bottles during the event.



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 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@eche.osu.edu.

Field trips

Wednesday walks at Scioto-Audubon

Wednesday, August 5, 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, or Heather Raymond at (614) 785-0342; heather_columbus_audubon@yahoo.com for more information.

Bird walk at Blendon Woods

Saturday, August 8, 8 a.m.

Leaders: Bruce Simpson

Join park naturalist Bruce Simpson for a bird walk in Blendon Woods Metro Park. We start at the Nature Center. Blendon Woods Metro Park includes beautiful stream-cut ravines surrounded by beech-maple and oak-hickory forests in over 654 acres. Within the park, the Walden Waterfowl Refuge with its 11-acre Thoreau Lake provides a sanctuary for hundreds of birds and other wildlife.

Wetland birding at Glacier Ridge

Saturday, August 29, 8 a.m.

Leaders: Park naturalist

Search for waterfowl, shorebirds and other feathered friends. Meet at the Honda Wetland Education Area at 8 a.m.

Summer owling at Pickerington Ponds

Saturday, August 22, 8:30 p.m.

Leaders: Park naturalist

Try to call in screech owls on a one-mile walk and learn about other nocturnal animals. Meet at the Glacier Knoll Picnic Area off of Bowen Rd.

Save the Date: Midwest Birding Symposium

The Midwest Birding Symposium is coming back to Ohio. On the weekend of September 17 to 20, 2009, many hundreds of bird watchers will gather at Lakeside, Ohio, on the south shore of Lake Erie for what will surely be the highlight of the birding year. Hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest*, The Ohio Ornithological Society, and the Lakeside Association, the 2009 Midwest Birding Symposium (MBS) is generating a lot of buzz and interest. MBS will feature birding in the area's best birding spots, programs and performances by some of North America's leading bird watchers, a huge vendor area with nature products and services, and, of course, the opportunity to enjoy the company of hundreds of your fellow birders. Registration fees are \$95. For ore information or to register go to www.midwestbirding.org or call 1-800-879-2473 x314.

Avid Birders field trips

Avid Birders are interested enough in birding to get out of bed very early for day-long field trips. The only requirements to join us are enthusiasm, binoculars, and a reliable alarm clock. A spotting scope is often useful, but not required. Unless otherwise noted, participants should meet at the southwest corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot at the designated time. Worthington Mall is located on the northwest corner of High Street and Wilson Bridge Road, just south of I-270. Bring a sack lunch, and we encourage carpooling. Please reimburse your driver for travel expenses. Upcoming trips are:

August 1 - 5:30 a.m., shorebirds, etc. at best available locations.

August 29 - 5:30 a.m., shorebirds and early landbird migrants

September 19 - 5:30 a.m., songbird and shorebird migrants, Northwest Ohio.

For details, e-mail avidbirders@columbusaudubon.org.

2009 Birdathon preliminary results

With donations still coming in, this year's birdathon was another great success! As of July 1, we have raised just over \$11,000.00 dollars from our 2009 effort. Columbus Audubon is

once again donating all of our proceeds to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, to help fulfill our \$100,000 pledge. Look in our September issue for full results.

Columbus Audubon KIDS!

The Summer newsletter has hit the streets and the fall issue is not far away! Contact Nadya Bennett, CA Kids Committee Chair to get your child's issue mailed to them and to sign up for our CA Kids monthly programs. You can contact Nadya at nadya2003@msn.com or (614) 306-8215.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org

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Columbus Audubon

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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.

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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
Building rental opportunities at GIAC
Bi-monthly Song Sparrow newsletter
CA annual meeting and program
Discounts at partnering affiliates
Voice in CA/GIAC conservation initiatives

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Methods of Payment: Check (Please make checks payable to: Grange Insurance Audubon Center Columbus Audubon)
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Please return form to: Heather Starck, Director

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
692 North High Street, Suite 303 • Columbus, Ohio 43215

Or to: Columbus Audubon, Membership Chair, P.O. Box 141350, Columbus, OH 43214
Chapter code S57