



Song Sparrow



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

April 2010
Volume 42, No. 5

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Creature feature

Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

The scientific name means 'white-headed sea-eagle', which is quite appropriate given their appearance and fondness for wide-open seashores and lakeshores. They're part of a large group of sea-eagles, long-winged coastal birds quite different from the stockier Golden Eagles more common in arid inland areas of North America, Europe, and Asia. This is yet another avian apex predator (at the top of the food chain) that has been slowly recovering from the bioaccumulation of pesticides 2-3 decades ago.

Family:Accipitridae. This is the family of highly-specialized avian predators that includes accipiters, buteos, and eagles. Most of these birds swoop down from a circling soar or hovering position to grab their prey. Unlike most buteos, however, bald eagles rarely hunt from the air. Perhaps because of their size, they favor sitting on a prominent perch and swooping down on their target from there. They will often use their superb eyesight to scan for weak or injured animals, then launch out after them. Often it's a fish sitting on the water surface, but more lively prey can include birds and mammals. Bald Eagles can be startlingly quick for a big bird; I once watched one chase down a twisting and turning Green-winged Teal in flight, grabbing it mid-air after a 7-minute chase. Their target also does not need to be alive; Bald eagles are scavengers *par excellence*, with a liking for dead fish. They often accumulate around areas where fish are dying, such as spawning runs or hydroelectric dams.

Field Marks: A huge long-winged bird of prey, eagles are almost unmistakable after you've seen a few individuals. Their wings are long for their body, which results in a very wide soaring profile, as well as slow, deliberate flapping that is very different from the quick flaps seen in most other buteos and vultures. Turkey Vultures are the only similar bird, and their profile is different (smaller head, shorter wings) and they hold their wings in a slight 'V', unlike the flat-winged look of soaring eagles. Mature eagles are very distinctive with their pale white heads and tails. Juveniles are much more challenging to ID, since they often have dark heads and tails, with only some splotchy white on the underside of the wings to give them away. It takes at least 3 years for young eagles to mature, and birds in the process of maturing can have a bewildering mix of white and brown features, but still have the darkish body, big beak, and long wings of all bald eagles. As adults, females and males look identical except that females are 10-20% larger.



Columbus Audubon file art

A female Bald Eagle watches over her eaglet in a nest.

Range: Bald Eagles are exclusively found in North America, ranging from north-central Mexico north through all of the continental United States and Canada. Their favorite habitats are ocean bays, shallow coastlines, big rivers, and large lakes. They are most common along the Pacific Northwest coast, from Oregon north to Alaska; there, they are common sights, even in urban areas. The largest concentrations of Eagles gather along rivers in British Columbia and coastal Alaska during Salmon runs; the Chilkat River in Alaska has become especially renowned for its large concentrations of eagles (2,000-4,000 birds). A smaller population of Eagles exists along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, from Texas through Florida and the Carolinas. These birds were able to persist in many of the river- and coastal swamp areas, which offered them some protection from disturbance or persecution. Inland, Bald Eagles are found sparingly in the upper Mississippi and Missouri River drainages, but are more common along rivers and lakes in Canada and the Great Lakes states. Most of these birds migrate south to winter along open stretches of the Great Lakes or the Mississippi-Ohio River system. Pacific birds don't migrate much beyond moving up or down rivers. Fair numbers of migrant eagles can be seen at coastal sites like Cape May and Cape Charles, and a few interior sites, like Duluth in Minnesota or Lake Erie MetroPark in Michigan.

Mating and Nesting: Bald Eagles set up a large territory in the late Winter and defend it against other eagles. Courtship is one of the most spectacular among raptors, where soaring eagles will lock talons and pinwheel down for a hundred feet or more before disengaging. Possibly this allows potential mates to judge each others' strength and courage. Pairing is for life, and the pair will build a large stick nest in a prominent site –

See Bald Eagles, page 12

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Director's Note: SPRING- The Season of Change

Spring is absolutely my favorite season of the year. I love being able to spend more time outside and enjoy all of the changes and things coming to life. As I walk around and hear birds singing and see flowers blooming it is easy to enjoy all that life has to offer. Spring is colorful, energizing....it's alive.

Over the past few months, the Grange Insurance Audubon Center staff has been gearing up for the spring and summer seasons.

We have a new seasonal bird exhibit that is now open.

Each season we have a bird model at the front desk that symbolizes the season.

You will see this bird in every classroom and they will lead you through activities and tell you where to find them outside. Our bird for the spring is the American Redstart.

This is a fun interactive new exhibit for all ages; make sure



Heather Starck

you come check it out.

We are taking advantage of the renewal and energy that spring brings to help us create new and exciting programming.

Check out our Web site for program updates as they are constantly being updated.

We will start our bird banding station this spring during migration.

If you are interested in helping, join our Birding for a Better Columbus group on Facebook or sign up at the Center.

We are gearing up for our first public summer camp program, Audubon Adventure Camp.

Our camp will provide fun, educational opportunities for kids all over Columbus.

We have also created a scholarship program for students in our Conservation Classroom program.

We have been waiting for spring to complete our landscaping and create new outdoor educational spaces including our nature play area for kids.

If you haven't been to the Center lately, join us for a spring program or come on you own to experience our new exhibits.

I find it is easiest to make changes in a season of change so I plan to trade in my dormant lifestyle of the last few months and get outside!

I invite you to do the same and there is no better place to do so than the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

See you soon.

Heather Starck

GIAC wish list

We greatly appreciate all of the in-kind donations we have received to date. We would not be able to do it without you! These donations allow us to keep our costs down while continuing to increase the number of people we serve. Thank you for supporting us.

If you have a donation for the Center, please call Christy Smith at (614) 545-5475.

Items needed:

- Potting soil
- Pruning loppers
- Wheel barrow
- Rakes
- Leaf blower
- Snow blower
- Power washer
- Live crickets
- Serving carafes for beverages
- Electric griddles (2)
- Stereo for gift shop with speakers
- Nature stickers or temporary tattoos
- Magnifying glasses
- Scissors for children
- Lightweight folding 6-8' tables (2)
- Recycled Copy Paper
- Spotting Scope
- Telescope
- Laminator
- Hip waders
- Fishing tackle and boxes
- Binoculars, any type and magnification
- Black pens-new
- Sharpies-any color-new
- Dry erase markers-any color-new
- Linen napkins-white, brown, or black (100)

Donation of services needed:

- Gardening
- Landscaping
- Printing

Gift Certificates:

- Staples
- Target
- Home Depot
- Barnes & Noble
- Airline Miles

Thank you for your support

From 12/24/09 to 3/3/10

Lyn Boone
Robert Paquette
David Horn
George O'Donnel
Ann Booher
Eric Lipschutz
Scott Drab
Mark Haddox
Maria Barlow
Mochael Conway
Patricia Barron
Franklin Garden Club

Adam Wagenbach
Sidney Druen
George Shellenbarher
On MY Mountain
John Crotty
Gerald Tackett
Christopher Anderson
Virginia Stowe
Starck Van Lines
Beth Arden
Neillynn Crawford
Barb Dittoe
William & Roberta Foster

David Shannon
Thomas Shannon
Laura Skaates
Larry Skeie
Kyle Vertrees
Raymond Walker
Richard & Jane Walker
Neal & Amanda Whitman
GIAC In Kind Donations:
Susan Meyer
Brenda Rushka
Peggy Oates
Carolyn May

Joint GIAC-Columbus Audubon membership benefit issues

It has recently come to our attention that some of our members are not receiving their copy of *Audubon Magazine*.

In addition, some members may be receiving solicitations from National Audubon asking them to rejoin the organization, even though they already paid locally for their memberships through GIAC or the Columbus Audubon Web site.

We sincerely apologize for these issues and are working with National Audubon to correct them.

One of the problems appears to be due to our new use of paypal for online membership payment. New members that paid via PayPal were not being processed as quickly as we would like. Steps have been taken to make sure that anyone new that signs up through Paypal will be processed immediately and should be receiving their newsletter and magazine without delay.

For anyone that signed up through Paypal from December 2009 to March of this year, we have
See Membership, page 3

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

GIAC April programs

Basic Birding Series

Are you a new birder? Need some training before you tackle the upcoming migration season? GIAC's Basic Birding Series will be perfect for you. Educator Joe Jennings will teach you the basics that you need to know about birds and birding equipment to have a successful migration! Class size limited. Call Chris at (614) 545-5486 to make reservations. Sign up for the entire series and get a tuition break, \$25 members, \$35 non-members.

April 23 & 24 – Birding 102

Now that you know the basics, its time to start learning the habits of your feathered friends! In Birding 102 you will learn about bird behavior, diet, adaptations, and songs. This class has two parts so be sure to mark off both dates on your calendar. \$20 for members, \$30 for non-members. April 23, 7-9 p.m.; April 24, 9 – 11 a.m.

Storytime

Saturdays, 11 a.m.

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. Admission is FREE.

Weekend Wild Walks

Join GIAC volunteers and natural history enthusiasts as we explore the grounds of the

Scioto Audubon Metro Park and the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in search of particular organism groups. Data gathered on these walks will help to inform conservation practices on the site. Pre-registration not required.

Bird Walks—*Saturday March 6, Saturday April 3, Sunday April 18, Saturday May 1, and Sunday May 16. 9 a.m.* Join us as we go in search of migrating birds making their way back north for the summer. Binoculars and bird guides are a must.

Tree Walks—*Sunday March 14, Sunday April 11, Saturday April 24, Sunday May 9, and Saturday May 22. 1 p.m.*

Spring is an exciting time of year as the woody members of the forest begin bursting bud and bringing forth flowers. For this walk, a hand lens will come in handy as we look at small but important features of trees.

Wildflower Identification: Looking Beyond the Surface

Spring is the season for the smallest of plants to break out their finest of clothes! But wildflowers are much more than an exquisite wrapping. Join us as we explore the inner workings of wildflowers, learning the structures that are so necessary for the plant life cycle to work. We will also investigate the family relationships between

plant species. Part One is a prerequisite for Part Two. The time for each session is 1-4 p.m. Cost for each class is \$20 for members, \$30 for non-members. Members have the option of signing up for both classes for \$35. Pre-registration required. Call Chris at (614) 545-5486 to make reservations.

Part One: *Saturday April 17—Exploring the Inner Workings*

What are stamens, pistils, stigmas, and the like? You mean a corolla is something other than a car? In this three-hour session we look at the basic structures that make up a flower, and investigate how the placement and organization of these structures is indicative of your family grouping.

Part Two: *Saturday May 1—The Trail Map of Wildflower Identification*

In this three-hour session we walk through how to use a dichotomous key for identifying native wildflowers. This session will be sure to stretch your brain as you look at plants in a totally new way.

Director's Tour

Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Join us each Wednesday as GIAC staff guide participants through the LEED Certified Grange Insurance Audubon Center and the surrounding landscape. Admission: FREE.

Membership

Continued from page 2

already made the correction and you should be receiving your magazine shortly.

Another issue is it appears that some members that bought "Founding GIAC Memberships" may not have been correctly processed by National Audubon.

We are currently following up on those issues and hope to have them rectified soon.

If you do not receive your *Audubon Magazine* by May and/or are continuing to receive letters from National Audubon indicating that your membership has expired, please contact Joe Meara, Columbus Audubon's membership chairperson.

He will make sure you are on the list of paid members and will coordinate with GIAC to ensure you are added to National Audubon's membership list.

As with any new partnership there are always some growing pains.

We hope that you can understand we are doing everything we can to make sure all of our members receive full membership benefits, and any prior problems are quickly rectified. We appreciate your understanding!

Help save the environment and help Columbus Audubon and GIAC too!

Save your old mugs

Do you have some old mugs in an upper cabinet that you don't use? Please bring one (or more) to the next CA monthly program. Use yours and take it home or bring a few to donate to GIAC. We can all enjoy our beverages without any waste!

Save your plastic lids

Did you know that the lids off of plastic bottles cannot be recycled in the same way the bottles are? These lids need to be recycled through a different process, or they end up in landfills. OWC is teaming up with the good folks at Weisenbach Recycled Products to collect all of those lids (water bottles, pop bottles, milk jugs, juice containers, peanut butter jars, etc). We take the lids to Weisenbach, and they recycle them! When you have a collection, bring your lids to our hospital on Billingsley Road or call our Cook Road Nature Center for seasonal hours of operation. We are very excited to partner with Weisenbach Recycled Products on this endeavor!

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. Please contact the trip leader 24 hours ahead to make sure the trip has not been changed, postponed or cancelled. Also, check www.columbusaudubon.org or follow us on Twitter at @columbusaudubon.

Field trips

Wednesday walks at Scioto-Audubon

Wednesdays, April 6, 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.

Early Birds of Dublin

Saturday, April 10, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Time to sharpen your eyes for Spring! The Scioto River cuts a green swath through the heart of this northwest Columbus suburb, with its narrow valley providing a natural migration corridor. We'll sharpen up for the big waves of migrants later in the month (and in May) by hunting for temperate migrants and early neotropicals, as well as raptors and late waterbirds, along this corridor from Dublin Kiwanis Riverway Park up through the O'Shaughnessy Reservoir. Temperate migrants should be in full flow, so expect lots of kinglets, sparrows, woodpeckers, creepers, and some early warblers. Meet at Kiwanis Riverway Park, along Riverside Drive just south of its intersection with I-161. (Turn west into the driveway at the Quarry Place sign and park in the first lot.) The trip should be over by 1 p.m. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at 330-2406 or robthorn2@gmail.com.

Bird hike at Blendon Woods

Saturday, April 10, 9 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.

Spring Valley Wildlife Area

Saturday, April 17, 6:30 a.m.

Leader: Earl Harrison

We will carpool from the meeting place to look for early spring migrants, returning breeding birds, rails. Meet at truck stop at US-42 exit from I-70 West of Columbus.

Birding for Beginners: Early Spring Migrants

Sunday, April 18, 2 p.m.

Leader: Doc Jordan, Mike Flynn

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.

Have you wanted to come on a trip to learn about birds but felt you didn't know as much as you would like? Not to worry. This trip is for you! The purpose of this leisurely hike is to take it slow, and to look, listen and enjoy learning about all the birds, including the common ones. Listening for their songs and calls is a very rewarding part of this adventure. Some of the first spring migrants should also be here by now, and we will look for them along the way. Come share in the joy of birds with us on this spring walk. All are welcome. Doc may be emailed at: docthenatureguy@hotmail.com, or call Mike at (614)769-1681. Meet at the front entrance to the nature center at Highbanks Metro Park. Highbanks is located on the west side of U.S. Rt. 23, about 3 miles north of I-270 and immediately south of Powell Road.

Warblers 101

Tuesday, April 20, 7 p.m.

Leader: Tom Sheley

Tom Sheley will be presenting a "Warblers 101" program at Highbanks Metro Park in the nature center at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April, 20. The program will include some warbler natural history, a Power Point program on warbler identification and hand-outs of Ohio hot spots for viewing warblers. A "warbler walk" will be conducted by a Highbanks naturalist starting at 6 p.m. at the nature center.

Evening at Pickerington Ponds Metro Park

Sunday, May 2, 6 p.m.

Leader: Mike Flynn

Here at the peak of spring migration, birds are arriving from points south and stopping here to rest and feed as they make their way to their spring nesting areas. Some will stay and nest here. Come join us as we search for these spring arrivals. Mike Flynn at (614) 769-1681. Glacier Knoll Picnic Area. For further directions go to www.metroparks.net.

Birders' Breakfast at Green Lawn Cemetery

Saturday, May 1, 7 a.m.

Fans of Green Lawn -- and what Columbus-area birders are not fans? -- should mark their calendars for May 1 when the Green Lawn volunteers are holding their annual birders' breakfast. The volunteers will have a tent and table near the Pond (aka the Pit) starting at a bird-friendly 7 a.m. Birders are invited to stop by and

See Coming up, page 11

Columbus Audubon

Rescheduled to April 27 due to inclement weather

Columbus Audubon annual meeting and potluck dinner

Tuesday, April 27, at 6:30 p.m. at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, 505 W Whittier St.

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, photographs from a talented area high school student, GIAC staff to meet, raffle prizes and a few other surprises.

Orientation stewards will be there to welcome new and current 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 trustees for three year terms.

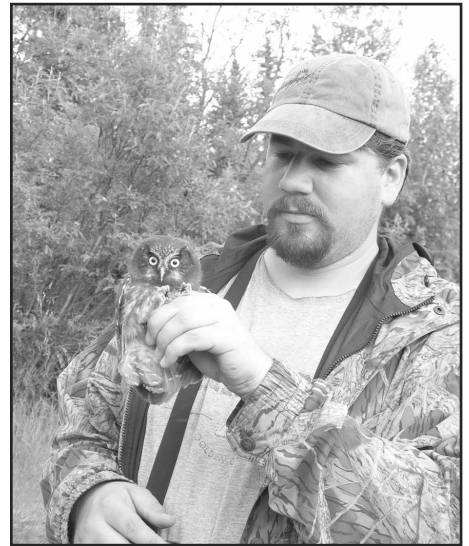
Each individual or family is asked to bring a substantial dish large enough to share with 12 other people. You may bring a casserole, salad, dessert or bread of some kind. Bring your own utensils, plates, cups and beverage other than coffee, which will be provided.

Migration All Around Us: How Birds Navigate the Americas

A visit to Central or South America will cost several thousand dollars in airfare, hotels, food, and souvenirs. This price, as well as the time commitment, can be prohibitive and prevents many of us from taking a vacation here as often as we would like. For some five billion individual birds, an annual trip to these continents from North America is an absolute requirement, and a stunning annual accomplishment. Birds (weighing less than your pocket change) hatch in the boreal forest, eat as many insects as they can manage, and just weeks later find themselves within a tropical forest that is home to competitors and predators that they have never seen before. Many will perish during this migration.

Why do birds undertake this costly annual trip? How do they manage to find their way to a wintering ground that they have never seen before? This talk will answer these questions, as well as detail how ornithologists study the phenomenon of migration.

Dr. Andy Jones received his BS in Biological Sciences from the University of



Dr. Andy Jones, curator of Ornithology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History with Boow. He will be the featured speaker at the CA annual potluck and meeting on April 27.

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.

Andi Wolfe, woodturner and wood sculptor to show wood art pieces at the potluck

Andi Wolfe is a woodturner and wood sculptor whose work is inspired from the botanical and biological realm of her scientific inquiries.

She will be the featured artist at the annual potluck.

"The natural world offers many inspirations, especially when it is examined at high magnification. I am a botanist by day and a part time woodturner in whatever spare time I can glean from the week. My botanical training has served me well in my woodturning endeavors," Wolfe said in her artist's statement.

Andrea Wolfe, Ph.D., is a associate professor of molecular systematics and molecular evolution in the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology at The Ohio State University.



Photos courtesy of Andi Wolfe

Work by Andi Wolfe will be on display at the potluck.

Birdhouse ornaments to be raffled off at potluck

These lovely birdhouse ornaments (pictured at right) will be raffled off at the potluck as part of a joint fundraiser for Columbus Audubon and the Central Ohio



Birdhouse ornaments by the Central Ohio Woodturners.

Woodturners. Andi Wolfe will bring several dozen. They are sure to be great gifts for any occasion.

Columbus Audubon

Birdathon 2010

New teams, new goals, same FUN!

By Julie Davis

What will our Birdathon teams see this year, Blue-winged Warbler, Upland Sandpiper, Yellow-headed Blackbird or our own mascot, the Song Sparrow? Our teams are already hard at work planning their trips and recruiting sponsors.

We are all looking forward to this great spring tradition. It is all of you, our members, who help make the Birdathon such a huge success.

Your support is what makes this an exciting and fun event every year for our birding teams.

Our sponsors are as important to our success as our birders. If you would like to become a sponsor, simply pick one of the teams, fill out the sponsorship form below and send it in. Or, you can sponsor a team and fulfill your pledge with PayPal on the CA Web site.

All of the profits from the birdathon this year will again go to support the Grange Insurance Nature Center, which is located in our Important Bird Area.

Audubon envisions this as an opportunity to bring urban programs and education to children and families in the city.

With only \$18,000 left to raise from our \$100,000 pledge to GIAC, Birdathon 2010 should fulfill our goal!

If you have not formed a team yet, there's still time! Just start with a couple of birding buddies, choose a team name and call Katryn Renard (614) 261-7171 to register. Ask friends and co-workers to



sponsor you and then go birding! Count all the birds that you can identify in either five, 10 or 24 hours any day between May 1 and May 16.

Remember, you don't have to stay in Ohio to do your birding, so be creative. The teams that have already registered are listed below. Call now and add your team to the list.

Birdathon Celebration: New day and location

All of our teams and sponsors are invited to celebrate their birdathon success at our annual BAT celebration.

Our celebration will take place on Tuesday, May 25, replacing our regular monthly program.

The celebration will take place at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in the Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

There will be a bird walk at 6 pm, followed by speakers, door prizes, 2 grand prizes and dessert.

All new this year will be team prizes for most birds seen, most money raised, best photo, best banner and more!

The grand prizes this year include the

2009 Statistics

Total raised in 2009: Over \$11,500.

Teams that raised over \$1000 were: **Low-Carbon Footprinters (\$1025)**, **Stellar Jays (\$1166)** and **Wild Birds Unlimited (\$3753)**. Also standing out were the **Scarlet and Gray Tanagers (\$970)**.

The competition was intense and the

weather iffy at times, but the teams persevered, including the top 3 teams. Birding teams that saw the most species this year were: **Westerville Waxwings** and **Wild Birds Unlimited**, tied at 152 species.

Quick Three Beards saw the **most** species of birds on their trip, at 165.

Spitfire 8.5x32 binoculars generously donated by Eagle Optics and free nights stay at an area Bed & Breakfast (to be determined).

Again this year, we have two great prizes to present at our BAT annual celebration.

Tough construction, fully multi-coated optics, and bright views make the 8.5x32 Spitfire a terrific choice to keep close by for daily use.

This mid-sized Spitfire binocular provides a wide 394 foot field of view for easy observation of fast moving action.

The five foot close focus works well for butterfly and insect studies.

Don't be afraid to take it on the water; the Spitfire is waterproof and fogproof.

Covered by the Vortex VIP unconditional lifetime warranty, you can buy this binocular for generations of use.

The second prize is a free night's accommodations at an area Bed & Breakfast.

The Birdathon committee is working hard on securing a local inn and have not selected a place as of the *Song Sparrow's* press-time. Please check www.columbusaudubon.org for updates.

COLUMBUS AUDUBON BIRDATHON



Sponsorship form

Sign me up! I would like to sponsor one of the teams above by pledging a specified amount of money for each species they see during the Birdathon. (For example, 100 species at 15 cents per bird would add up to a donation of \$15.) The money will be paid in cash or check to Columbus Audubon when I am informed of the results of my team's foray.

Team Name _____ Pledge _____

My Name _____ Phone# _____

Street, City, State, Zip Code _____

Mail to: "Birdathon," c/o Columbus Audubon, P.O. Box 141350, Columbus, Ohio 43214

Columbus Audubon

2010 Birdathon teams

Backyard Experience

Chick-a-dees -90

Gerry Brevoort
Joan Frederick
Nina Hawranick
Lynn Singleton

Deck Birds - 1

Cheri Brown
Pat Barron
Bev May
Pete Precario

Low Carbon

Footprinters - 70

Dave Horn
Katryn Renard
Marty Kotter

Marsh Madness - 100

Bill and Deb Marsh

Metro Parks

Stellar Jays - 100

Jim Davidson
Joe Meara
John O'Meara
John Watts

Mudflats Herons - 160

Julie and Ken Davis

Jackie and Tom Bain

Neat Nests - 40

Fred Lancia
Jordan Parrott and
grandchildren

Quick Three Beards - 171

Dave Horn
Greg Miller
Troy Shively
Bill Whan

Red-Eyed

Weary-os - 100

Earl Harrison
Alyn Harrison
Joe Eickholt
Andrea Cook

Scarlet &

Gray Tanagers - 70

Joe and Susanne Gatesman
Mark and Susan Setterlin

Slate (Run)

Colored Juncos - 100

Linda Benner
Andrea Haslage
Lori Patterson
Randy Rogers

Brad Sparks

Joshua Steele
Chris Toops
Barb Wood

Swans and Coots - 70

Alan Cohen
Clyde Gosnell
Paul Knoop
Katryn Renard
Marlene Woo Lun
Louise Warner

Two Footed Boobies - 90

Marcia Brehmer
Marion Farber
Melanie Shuter
Mary Kay Wood

Two in a Bush - 60

Patty DeMaria
Elaine Fujimora
Biani Moran

Wild Birds Unlimited

Riverside - 170

Michael Flynn
Bill Heck
Steve Landes
John Ross
Tom Sheley

2009 Columbus Audubon seed fundraiser a success

Columbus Audubon would like to extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to all who participated in the 2009 Bird Seed Fund Raiser. Your support provides Columbus Audubon with vital funds to continue our contribution to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, maintain Calamus Swamp Sanctuary and fund Nature education projects. Whether you feed the birds all year or seasonally, Columbus

Audubon's Seed Fundraiser is the perfect opportunity to treat your birds while supporting a great and valuable cause.

100-percent of the proceeds from this sale goes to CA. Participating is easy! Look for the 2010 order form in next September's Song Sparrow newsletter or on-line at www.columbusaudubon.org and order as much bird food as you need for the season from a comprehensive selection of

quality seeds, blends, peanuts, corn and suet from Wild Birds Unlimited.

This year we've made ordering even easier as we rolled out our on-line order form through Paypal, which is accessible from the Columbus Audubon website. So please, mark your calendars as a reminder to purchase your winter bird food through Columbus Audubon and treat the birds for a great cause!

Columbus Audubon

Backyards for Wildlife: Why photograph bugs for a bird article?

By Toni Stahl

If you like birds, you need to love bugs. It doesn't make a difference if they are creepy or crawly or if you were raised to fear them. No matter how the media portrays bugs, birds cannot live without them!

Native bugs serve valuable purposes in your yard as a replacement for using chemicals, as food for birds, and as caretakers for the native plants that birds need.

Bugs have become my yard's pest patrol. They created their own food chain, with the predator and parasitic bugs ('beneficial') eating my "pest" bugs. Beneficial bugs came to eat herbivore bugs, allowing me to switch to limited organic treatments. In return, migrating and resident birds came to eat the protein-rich bugs. Even hummingbirds fed bugs to their young.

Pollinators cross-pollinate the plants birds and bugs need. Bees pollinate 1/3 of the food we eat, such as vegetables, fruits, chocolate, coffee, peppermint and vanilla. Native bees are efficient pollinators. They buzz more, but they don't sting to protect a



Honeybee on a coneflower.

nest like the European Honeybees do.

I saw native Carpenter Ants protecting native sunflowers containing their nestlings, trimming away competing leaves from adjacent plants. A few years ago, I witnessed them protecting a butterfly's caterpillar (pollinator) in exchange for its honeydew. I've read that ants move the same amount of soil as earthworms!

How do you feed these valuable bugs? Native herbivore and nectivore bugs, just like birds, need native plants. Some bugs



Photos by Marc Apfelstadt

Assassin Bug eating a Japanese Beetle.

are keyed into only one type of plant (i.e. Milkweed Bugs needs Milkweed). If that plant is missing, so are the bugs. You can keep the bugs healthier in your yard by leaving leaf litter for shelter. For soil insects, reduce chemical use in your lawn and garden. Tips can be found at www.backyardhabitat.info.

Columbus Audubon trustee nominees for 2010-2013

At the Columbus Audubon annual meeting and potluck on April 27 we will vote on three trustee candidates. Below are their biographies so you can learn a little more about them. *For three-year terms 2010-2013:*

Nadya Bennett

Nadya's birding career began about eight years on a eventful field trip to Killdeer Plains with Columbus Audubon to look for owls.

Her favorite places to bird in Ohio are Killdeer Plains, Magee/Ottawa area and Hoover Meadows. She has served as trustee on the CA board but took a break to go back to school. In September 2009, she earned MS in Natural Resources with a specialization in Environmental Education and Interpretation from The Ohio State University focusing on visitor studies. She works as a freelance consultant with informal learning institutions and organizations such as COSI, Prevent Blindness Ohio and the Columbus Zoo evaluating exhibits, interpretive displays and programs. She enjoys birding, reading and painting in her free time and looks forward to planting her very own organic garden.

Gerry Brevoort

Gerry was bitten by the birding bug in 1996 while on a "Nature Lover's Weekend" at a bed & breakfast... and she hasn't looked back since! As an Audubon member, she has participated in several Birdathons. Gerry holds a B.A. in Journalism and earned a MBA while working as a bank auditor. Gerry works at Fairwood Elementary School (Columbus City Schools) whose students, she is happy to report, are participating in a yearlong series of trips to the GIAC for nature-focused education experiences. She also volunteers as a coach for a Science Olympiad Ornithology Team. A deep love of and gentle respect for the natural world are what she would like to pass on to this next generation.

Mike Flynn

Mike Flynn is a long-time Columbus Audubon trustee, having served for over 9 years in this position. He has served as Program Chair for our monthly meetings and has led a wide variety of CA field trips over the years, including trips at Eco Weekend. Mike has been involved in working to expand field trip offerings including

organizing and co-lead a number of out-of-state trips to Jasper-Pulaski, Ind., (Sandhill Cranes); Illinois (Prairie Chickens); Grayling, Mich., (Kirtland's Warblers) and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Pa., (raptors). Mike holds a B.S. in Environmental Interpretation from The Ohio State University, and loves to share the natural world with others.

Suzan Jervey

Suzan Jervey has 36 years experience in a variety of environmental education roles including vocational teacher, public information officer and park naturalist. She is currently working at the Ohio Wildlife Center as an education associate and is an adjunct professor at Hocking College teaching environmental education. Suzan is currently filling out a vacated position on the board and has served in several roles in CA in the past including two years as chair of Eco Weekend. She is also an elected official serving on the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District board of supervisors.

Darlene Sillick

CA past president Darlene Sillick is now
See trustees, page 9

Conservation corner: The Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp

Sometimes we are on the verge of throwing up our hands at the enormity of conservation issues in contrast to the puny efforts that we see ourselves putting forth. We often ask ourselves: “but what can I do? Well, here is an idea: buy the new Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp.

No tax money is used to conserve, restore and manage Ohio’s wildlife and wildlife habitat. Birding meccas like Killdeer Plains, Big Island and Magee March are supported partly by license fees paid by hunters and fisherpersons. Other sources of support are donations (such as the income tax checkoff) to the Ohio Wildlife Diversity Fund, and



the purchase of wildlife license plates featuring the cardinal, bald eagle or other wildlife. The brand-new Wildlife Legacy Stamp is another opportunity. I’ll let the Ohio Division of Wildlife speak for itself: If you believe in a healthy and diverse wildlife population then **you should buy this stamp.**

If you enjoy feeding birds,

photographing wildlife or find satisfaction in knowing wildlife is being managed then **you should buy this stamp.**

If you are committed to ensuring your children and children’s children inherit a wild Ohio then **you should buy this stamp.**

What sorts of activities can be funded? habitat restoration, land purchases, conservation easements, keeping common species common, preserving endangered and threatened species, educational products for students and wildlife enthusiasts, wildlife and habitat research projects – the list can go on and on.

The stamp is available at the GIAC gift shop and at many

other locations throughout the state. Please seriously consider buying the stamp, and then advertise the opportunity by dangling it from your binocular strap or your jacket zipper or belt loop or (in my case) coffee cup. Talk about it with your friends. The stamp retails for \$ 15.00; if 2,000 Columbus Audubon members each buy one, that’s \$ 30,000 – enough to stock a library, buy a bog, plant thousands of nectar-yielding flowers, *and* put binoculars in the hands of disadvantaged children. Think about it. For more, visit: dnr.state.oh.us/

-Dave Horn (some material shamelessly plagiarized from ODNR)

Invasive species: European Earwig, *Forficula auricularia* L

By Dave Horn

The European earwig may not precisely fit our ecological definition of “invasive” but they certainly attract attention when they invade our homes. The insect is up to ¾ inches long, with short wings in the adult (although they do fly) and best recognized by their forceps-like “pinchers” (technically, cerci) at the end of the abdomen. They do *not* bite or sting, nor do they engage in the behavior that gives them their name: they were thought to creep into the ears of sleeping people and roam around in the brain. (There are a few cases on record of earwigs’ crawling into ears, resulting in a quick trip to the emergency room, but that is well down on the list of things about which we need to worry.) If you are bothered by an earwig indoors, simply usher him or her to the exit. There is no need for insecticide.

Their presence indoors is accidental;

their normal habitat is on or near the soil surface, under rocks, logs, bark and other objects. They are particularly fond of mulched soil which brings them close to foundations and also near their food. Earwigs are omnivores, eating small insects and other soil fauna, fungi, decaying animal and vegetable matter, and plants, especially tender shoots and flowers. It is their damage to vegetables and flowers plus occasionally high populations that leads to their being considered pests. Moreover, they are mostly nocturnal, hiding by day in nooks and crannies which can include cut flowers. If you are decorating a festive table with flowers from your own garden, you might want to give them a shake to disinvite unwanted earwigs from the banquet.

The European earwig was introduced into North America about a century ago, and now occurs from sea to shining sea.

As with many soil animals, the main mode of dispersal is hitchhiking in human commerce. Soil, lawn furniture, firewood, tarps – almost any place with nooks and crannies will qualify. The earwig is yet another reason to be careful when moving any outdoors item a long distance, and to comply with legal restrictions (like Ohio’s current regulations on moving firewood).

What of the ecosystem impact that we usually see in invasive species. The answer is that we don’t really know (at least, I don’t). One can assume that anything that is very abundant and not native can alter ecosystem function; if so, the good news is that the European earwig tends to have its highest populations in soil and mulch associated with buildings. I have found rather few in diverse, forested areas of southern Ohio or New England.

For more about earwigs, go to ohioline.osu.edu.

CA board of trustees nominees

Continued from page 8

stranger to Columbus Audubon. In the past, she has served on the board as trustee, led field trips, organized birding and astronomy 101 classes and worked hard on CA education committee projects. Darlene likes to recruit others to get involved. Her famous

‘velvet hammer’ has clobbered many of us at one time or another. She has led the bluebird conservation cause for over twenty years in central Ohio. She continues to set up trails of boxes and monitoring boxes for the sake of the beneficial cavity nesters and thrilling young and old by placing baby birds in their hands. She enjoys teaching

others to watch birds, then getting them excited to help in some way. She also enjoys volunteering at the OWC and other organizations when she is not working at Cardinal Health as an Executive Assistant. Her passion for non-profits, nature and people and her cause to network with other organizations make Darlene an asset to the board.

Columbus Audubon & GIAC

Sign up now for Audubon Adventure Camp

One-Week Sessions for Campers going into Grades 1-2 and Grades 3-5

(\$200/wk members or \$245 non-members)

- June 21- June 25** **Eco-Kids** – Learn outdoor safety and basic outdoor skills such as making a shelter and more. Campers will be exploring habitats and wildlife, learning about conservation and how to live more lightly on our earth.
- June 28- July 2** **Amazing Flyers** – Observe our wild winged friends that call this Important Bird Area (IBA) their home. Campers will do experiments and explore everything that flies through the park.
- July 5- July 9** **Animal Trackers** – Uncover the wonderful mysteries of the animals that make their homes in the forest. Explore the trails while searching for birds, turtles, bugs, fish, and mammals. Discover the connections between all the living things in the forest.
- July 12- July 16** **Audubon Artists** – Explore habitats and see wildlife. Campers will be painting murals, singing songs, pressing wildflowers, creating field guides, writing poems and exploring the performing arts.
- July 19- July 23** **Eco-Kids** – Learn outdoor safety and basic outdoor skills such as making a shelter and more. Campers will be exploring habitats and wildlife, learning about conservation and how to live more lightly on our earth.
- July 26- July 30** **Amazing Flyers** – Observe our wild winged friends that call this Important Bird Area (IBA) their home. Campers will do experiments and explore everything that flies through the park.
- Aug 2- Aug 6** **Animal Trackers** – Uncover the wonderful mysteries of the animals that make their homes in the forest. Explore the trails while searching for birds, turtles, bugs, fish, and mammals. Discover the connections between all the living things in the forest.
- Aug 9- Aug 13** **Audubon Artists** – Explore habitats and see wildlife. Campers will be painting murals, singing songs, pressing wildflowers, creating field guides, writing poems and exploring the performing arts.
- Aug 16- Aug 20** **Animal Trackers** – Uncover the wonderful mysteries of the animals that make their homes in the forest. Explore the trails while searching for birds, turtles, bugs, fish, and mammals. Discover the connections between all the living things in the forest.

**Spaces are filling up fast so register now at
grange.audubon.org/adventureCamp2010.html or call (614) 545-5475.**

Eco-Weekend: There is still time to register!!!!

If you read this before April 8 - it's not too late! Eco Weekend will be held on April 30 to May 2, 2010 at Camp Oty'Okwa (near Conkles Hollow) in the Hocking Hills, and the Registration Deadline is April 8.

The 2010 Eco Weekend Brochure was enclosed in the February/March issue of the Song Sparrow, but you can also find the brochure on our website, www.ecoweekend.org. All the registration information is there! You can even

register online to save time.

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 programs 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! There are varied types of accommodations available at the camp to meet your needs. It is all described in the brochure.

For more details, check us out on the Web or or call the Columbus Audubon Eco Weekend Committee at 740-549-0333 (not a long distance call from Columbus). Come try us out!

Honor Earth Day's 40th Anniversary on April 22

In 1970, Cleveland's Cuyahoga River caught on fire after being inundated with oil and toxic chemicals; air pollution was rampant; toxic fumes came from factories and automobiles; enormous fish die offs occurred in the Great Lakes and the 'Silent Spring' novel by Rachel Carson documented the connection between pesticides and

the die off of many birds.

On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans demonstrated to clean up the environment! The Environmental Protection Agency started and the Clean Air Act followed. Bald Eagles and other wildlife began recovering after people stopped using DDT and other pesticides. To honor of this

significant anniversary, please consider volunteering to help the environment at home, with a group or at <http://update2010.org/> or <http://www.earthday.net/earthday2010>.

*-Toni Stahl,
NWF Habitat Ambassador*

Coming up

Continued from page 4

have a cup of coffee, donuts, bagels, juice or fruit and get acquainted with the Green Lawn Volunteers and what it is they do.

At 11 am Tom Sheley, owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited store on Riverside Drive and a trustee of Columbus Audubon, will be the speaker for the First Saturday at Green Lawn. He will share how to attract birds to your back yard by creating a habitat using native plants, supplemental foods, water and housing. Both the breakfast and program are free and open to the public, although donations to support the work of the Green Lawn volunteers are welcome.

Blacklick Woods and Pickerington Ponds

Sunday, May 2, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Spring migration will be rising towards its peak as we hit these southwest Columbus hotspots. Blacklick Woods is a natural migrant trap and we'll start here looking for the last of the temperate migrant sparrows and finches, and the first waves of the migrant neotropicals. Along with the swarms of migrants will be plenty of resident woodpeckers, titmice, and other forest birds. Afterwards, we'll journey to the nearby wetlands of Pickerington Ponds to search for lingering waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors. With the overlap of different migrants and the variety of habitats, this should be a good trip for a great diversity of birds. Meet at the Ash-Maple parking area (second left inside the park) in Blacklick Woods. The trip should be over by 2 p.m. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at 330-2406 or robthorn2@gmail.com.

Whetstone bird walk

Friday, May 7, 8 a.m.

Leaders: Donna Siple and Lynn Wearsch

Join Donna Siple and Lynn Wearsch as they take you on a walk around Whetstone Park in search of migrating and breeding birds. Meet in the parking lot in front of the main shelter house. For more information, contact Earl Harrison at eharrison@eche.osu.edu.

Avid Birders field trips

Avid Birders welcome all birders to join any regularly scheduled trip. Ordinary trips involve no lengthy or arduous hiking, although we occasionally traverse snow, loose sand, or rocks, and several miles of leisurely walking is often called for.

We can accommodate an unlimited number of persons on most trips; occasionally, longer trips out of state are planned, and these are usually limited to a small number of participants. The longer trips fill up early, and first priority is reserved for those who participate most regularly on the weekend trips. 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 remember we encourage carpooling. Please reimburse your driver for travel expenses. Dress appropriately; remember that the weather to our north, particularly along the windy Lake Erie shore, is often a lot colder than that in Columbus. The next trip is: **May 1**. Meet at 5:30 a.m.

Service in the Preserves

Big Woods in Hueston Woods SNP

Saturday, April 17-18, 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Leader: Katryn Renard

It's time to see some wildflowers. Our service project this month will take us to Hueston Woods State Nature Preserve where we can hunt for the always-lovely trillium, delicate dutchman's breeches, and bizarre squirrel corn.

There are plenty of other wildflowers to be found as we do some trail work in an old growth beech-maple forest. In addition to fixing steps and bridges along the trails we'll have plenty of time to explore, because this is an overnight trip.

On-site training will be provided, so no experience is necessary.. Please call Katryn Renard by Monday, April 12 at (614) 261-7171 to sign up, reserve space for transportation, and to help us determine tool requirements.

Bring your lunch for Saturday, water, work gloves, appropriate foot gear, and camping equipment. Saturday dinner and Sunday breakfast and lunch will be provided for a nominal fee.

Meet 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. on Sunday.

Non-Audubon events

Delaware County Bird Club meetings

Join the Delaware County Bird Club's monthly program on the fourth Monday of the month. Program information will be available on www.columbusaudubon.org. Meetings begin informally at 7 p.m. with a chance to view mystery birds from the museum.

The formal meeting begins at 7:30 pm with brief reports of birds seen by members.

We then settle back to enjoy our featured speaker. Parking is available in the lot beside the Conrades Wetherell Science Center or across Henry Street next to Selby Stadium.

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: Tues-Friday 10-6 p.m., Sat. 9-3 p.m.,
and Sun 11-5 p.m.

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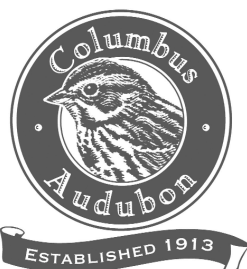


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Additional chapter leaders:

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

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Bald Eagles

Continued from page 1

tree or cliff – on the territory. Since they are not secretive, it's easy to notice these big birds prying dead branches from trees and carrying them off during nest construction, so this is often the first sign of nesting eagles. If successful, they will continue to re-use the nest, adding sticks until it becomes an enormous monstrosity. Many huge old eagle nests collapse their support tree, or weaken it so much that it blows down easily during a storm. The female lays 2-3 eggs, and they hatch asynchronously after an incubation of 34-36 days, which means that eagle broods have different-sized chicks. This acts as a cruelly efficient method to match eagle numbers with food resources. If the adults find enough food, all of the chicks will be well fed and reach fledging. If food is scarce, however, the older bird(s) will often outcompete and starve, or even directly attack and kill, their younger siblings. It takes 70-100 days to reach fledging, so the parents need about 4 months to complete a nesting cycle. It's no wonder they often start nest building in the late winter.

Eagles in Central Ohio. Eagles have been ubiquitous up around the Western basin of Lake Erie for several decades now, so seeing one up there is

easy. They've only become common here in central Ohio over the last decade. In winter, they favor the large mostly-open bodies of water in the area: Hoover Reservoir, Alum Creek Lake, Big Island Wildlife Area, Delaware Lake, O'Shaughnessy Reservoir, and the Scioto River around the Greenlawn dam. In summer, many of these areas now have nearby eagle nests; the nest southeast of Delaware Lake, in the Delaware Wildlife Management Area, has been actively reused for over a decade, and a nest up at Big Island has been in use for nearly as long. Eagles have steadily been moving into new nesting territories throughout the region. Within the past 2-3 years, so many 'new' territories have been reported that we seem to be getting swamped by immigrant Bald Eagles. Now there are at least three nests along the Scioto River between Circleville and Columbus, including a pair nesting in an old quarry just south of the Greenlawn dam. Another pair of birds has been frequenting the Three-Creeks area in Groveport, and a nest was found here within the past few weeks. Yet another nest has been reported from Highbanks Metro Park. With the number of eagles being seen in local areas, from the Darby Creeks to Newark, there seems little doubt that several more nests will be discovered this year.