

Song Sparrow



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

February-March 2010
Volume 42, No. 4

IN THIS ISSUE

GIAC news.....	2
GIAC programs.....	3
Waterfowl Symposium....	5
CA Annual Potluck.....	7
GBBC.....	10

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

2009 Columbus Christmas Bird Count

Good turnout overwhelms cold weather

On December 20, 2009 52 observers spent the day counting birds in different areas in and around Columbus. Despite cold weather for much of the prior two weeks, and a light snowfall the prior day, the Count date was dry and partially clear, with still water partly frozen and moving water open. The final total was 79 species and 45,342 individual birds, which are very good numbers for a late-ish date and cold weather. We had no jaw-dropping rarities, but the large number of observers helped pull out many uncommon expected species.

With some cold weather, including a snowfall in the prior day, the weather appeared to push down some of our totals. Starlings, Robins, waxwings, and sparrows all showed noticeable declines from last year; most were probably pushed a bit further south by the extended cold weather. We also had none of the bizarre warm-weather lingerers, like Phoebe, Rufous Hummingbird, Dickcissel, and others, that have graced our count over the past years. Balancing that, however, was an unusually strong year for waterfowl diversity, with 19 species of waterfowl. The cold weather was cold enough to freeze small ponds, but many large lakes and old quarries were still open, and acted as magnets to waterfowl.

What were the trends in this Count? Canada Geese, Mallards, Ring-billed Gulls, and Rock Doves continued to show strong numbers, but they couldn't offset a big drop in Starlings, Robins, and other fruit-eating birds. Although many teams had large flocks of Starlings, they were not in the huge numbers of last year, and their roost in south-central Columbus was 'merely' 14,000-plus birds. Crows bounced back up to 950-plus birds after a low number last year, but their big roost down in south Columbus has split into several much smaller roosts; perhaps this is how they survived. Other notable booms and busts for 2009:

Who's Hot

Mute Swans – these big brutes once again are showing up in increasing numbers, if you can call 6 an increased number. Still, given their belligerent nature, any increase should be noted.

Pied-billed Grebes – there are always a few around; this year there just happened to be a bunch, seen by several teams. Icy weather must concentrate them hereabouts.

Wild Turkeys – they were found in 3 different locations – Blendon Woods and two other east side locations. They should probably be looked for in any large wooded area in the eastern edge of the circle, which basically

2009 CBC species list and number seen

Count Date: December 20; 6:30 a.m. To 5:30 p.m. Temp. 24 to 34. Wind West-SW 0-3 mph. Still water mostly frozen, moving water open. A.M. Partly cloudy; P.M. Partly cloudy. Observers: 60 in the field in 13-14 parties, 4 at feeders. Total party hours: 120 (104 on foot, 16 in cars). Total party miles: 218 (86 on foot, 132 in cars) Owling: 3.0 hours.

Species count: Mute Swan – 6 (high); Canada Goose – 3270; Wood Duck – 4; Black Duck – 450; Mallard – 1941; American Wigeon – 5; Gadwall – 9; N.Shoveler – 1; Ring-necked Duck – 93; Redhead – 1; Bufflehead – 1; Common Goldeneye – 1; Hooded Merganser – 125; Red-br. Merganser – 1; Ruddy Duck – 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk – 3; Cooper's Hawk – 15; N.Harrier – 1; Bald Eagle – 4 (4a); Red-shouldered Hawk – 2; Red-tailed Hawk – 37; Merlin – 2; American Kestrel – 2; American Coot – 1; Wild Turkey – 33; Pied-billed Grebe – 13; Horned Grebe – 2; Double-cr.Cormorant – 1; Great Blue Heron – 51; Black-cr.Night Heron – 12; Bonaparte's Gull – 2; Ring-billed Gull – 2150; Herring Gull – 26; Rock Pigeon – 1186; Mourning Dove – 382; Great Horned Owl – 6; Barred Owl – 3; Belted Kingfisher – 30; Red-headed Woodpecker – 12; Red-bellied Woodpecker – 164 (high); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 8; Downy Woodpecker – 199; Hairy Woodpecker – 23; N.Flicker – 61 (high); Pileated Woodpecker – 7; Blue Jay – 323; American Crow – 926; Carolina Chickadee – 548; Tufted Titmouse – 139; White-breasted Nuthatch – 173; Red-breasted Nuthatch – 8; Brown Creeper – 36; Carolina Wren – 69; Winter Wren – 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet – 14; Horned Lark – 26; Eastern Bluebird – 40; American Robin – 2375; N.Mockingbird – 30; European Starling – 25,730; American Pipit – 8; Yellow-rumped Warbler – 15; Eastern Towhee – 4; American Tree Sparrow – 60; Song Sparrow – 109; E.Fox Sparrow – 3 (different teams); Swamp Sparrow – 3; White-throated Sparrow – 486; White-crowned Sparrow – 11; Dark-eyed Junco – 277; Red-winged Blackbird – 3; Common Grackle – 13; Brown-headed Cowbird – 43; icterid sp. – 90; N.Cardinal – 756; Purple Finch – 1; House Finch – 380; American Goldfinch – 493; House Sparrow – 1786. **Totals:** 79 species, 45,342 individuals. **Species seen count week but not count day:** Peregrine Falcon, Pine Warbler, Field Sparrow.

means Blendon Woods or Jefferson Township.

Ring-billed Gulls – They're still on the rise in winter Columbus, and even areas with little water found some. One of the biggest flocks I saw was in the middle of a shopping mall parking lot.

Big Owls – the numbers of Barred (3) and Great Horned (6) were high once again for such a developed circle. How so many Great Horneds wind up in such an urban circle is a mystery.

Flickers – these big 'ground-peckers' often get pushed south by freezing weather. Usually, though, they get pushed further south than Columbus. Not this year!

Mockingbirds – where were these guys hid-

See Columbus, page 12

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

GIAC operates to tread more lightly on the Earth

From reuse to protecting water to saving energy...here are some ways GIAC is operating to live more lightly on the Earth.

In order to guide the operations of the GIAC, in partnership with the City of Columbus' Green Spot program GIAC staff members have created sustainability guidelines.



Heather Starck

While these guidelines for operations will surely evolve throughout our existence, we felt we wanted to have a guiding document to lead our staff and volunteers. Many of these things you can do in your own home or office. For more ideas and information or to join the Green Spot program visit www.columbus-greenspot.org. Below are some examples of how we will operate at the Center:

To inform and engage staff and volunteers we will:

Keep staff and volunteers informed about our green efforts by including updates in newsletters and bulletins.

Openly encourage staff and vol-

unteers to be responsible environmental stewards in their personal lives.

We will set aside time at each staff meeting to talk about our green efforts.

We will track and post utility bills in a common employee space.

To reduce, reuse, and recycle we will:

Buy office and other supplies made with recycled materials.

We will encourage staff and volunteers to use our recycling program for glass, aluminum, plastic bottles, and paper.

We will perform a waste audit of our business.

We will track our monthly waste.

We will buy products in returnable, reusable or recyclable containers.

We will communicate electronically-instead of on paper whenever possible.

We will donate unwanted furniture, supplies, scrap materials, phones, etc.

We will email or post staff memos and schedules in a central place instead of printing copies for each staff member.

We will provide staff and guests

reusable dishware instead of disposable.

We will purchase condiments (milk, sugar, cream, etc) and supplies (soap, toilet paper, etc) in bulk.

We will purchase reusable rather than disposable office supplies such as refillable pens and erasable white boards and wall calendars.

We will recycle electronics that no longer work, or are no longer useful.

We will recycle toner and inkjet printer cartridges.

We will not make unnecessary copies and double-side copies we do make.

We will keep our customer mailing lists current, without duplications.

We will replace chlorine-based white paper napkins and towels with energy-efficient air dryers.

We will reuse packaging or donate them to a local shipping company.

When creating mailings, we will design them so they don't require an envelope.

We will make recycling bins convenient for employees, placing them at desks and in common areas.

We will reuse our holiday decora-

See GIAC, page 6

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 borer
- Gardening tools
- Spotting scope
- Telescope, any type or magnification
- Wheelchair
- Diameter tape
- Hip waders
- Fishing tackle and boxes
- Binoculars, any type and magnification

Thank you for your support

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

ACKERMAN, KENNETH
ANTHONY, DON
BARNUM, ELAINE T.
BENZ, MICHELLE R
BRUCE, ROBERT
CARPENTER, DAVID
COLQUITT, MICHAEL
CREADON, PAM
DARRAGH, ALEX
DE SIMONE, KIMBERLY
DOW, LAWRENCE
EBERT, CARRIE
ESTEP, JAMES & CHERYL
FOSTER, WILLIAM
FREUNDLICH, CONSTANCE
GARLAND, JAMES
GERLACH, DARETH
GLANDON, PHIL & LYNN
GREENBLOTT, CANDY
GRIFFITH, DONN & GAYLE

HALL, GAYLE
HEALTH, CARDINAL
HUGHES, KATHERINE
KALMAN, THOMAS
KELLER, MARY & KENNETH
KELLY, LINDA
KENNEDY, JOHN
LIGHTY, SHARON
LIPSCHUTZ, ERIC
LOGAN, WILLIAM
LOMBARDI, RICHARD
MARTENS, FRANKLIN
MASSICK, DOUG
MC CORMICK, ROSE-MARIE
MC FARLAND, TODD
MCCALL, CAROLYN
MEHAN, TRACY
MERRY, DAVID
MOORE, L. THOMAS
MUDGE, MARGARET
MYERS, MARY & AJ

MYERS, RION & ALLI
OSWALD FAMILY FOUNDATION
PAUSCH, DR. JERRY
PROBASCO, JOHN
PROFFITT, JO
PUCKETT, STEVE
RALSTON, ANN
RECHEL, SCOTT
REEVES, JANE
RENARD, KATRYN
RIORDAN, JOHN
ROBINSON, ABAGAIL
ROYER, GARY
RUGGLES, THOMAS
SEREN, MS. ANN
SPECK, SAMUEL
STEVENSON, JANE
SZABO, LAJOS
WARD, JANE P
WILLIAMSON, KAY
WOODLAND, JANE

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

GIAC February-March programs

Winter Landscaping Series

With this landscaping series, GIAC Education Director and former landscaper Chris Kline will take you from start to finish in redesigning your home landscape. The time for each class is 2 – 4 p.m., and cost for each session is \$10 for GIAC members and \$15 for non-members. Or better yet, attend the entire series for \$30 for members and \$45 for non-members. Series started January 30. February-March sessions are listed below.

February 6 – Landscaping with Natives

For every exotic species that you place in your landscape there is a native that can provide equivalent color, shade, wildlife value, and beauty. This session focuses on working with those natives.

February 13 – Landscaping for Wildlife

Landscaping can be a collection of plants or creation of a habitat. Learn how you can add beauty and color to your landscape by incorporating birds, butterflies, dragonflies, and other jewels.

February 27 – Designing your Home Landscape

Bring a map or photo of your yard as we sit down and plan out your new habitat. Have some ideas in mind for the look and purpose you are hoping to achieve in your new yard.

Conservation Boot Camp

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center is more than a pretty place. A portion of our mission is to return our site, as well as central Ohio, to the beauty it once was. In this series of classes we will walk you through the habitat conservation process. The time for each class is 2 – 4 p.m., and cost for each

session is \$10 for GIAC members and \$15 for non-members. Series started January 23. February-March sessions are listed below.

February 20 – Defeating the Invader

Now that we know who the invaders are and what they look like, how do we go about eliminating them? There is a strategy, and this session will teach you the strategy to deal with each of our primary invasive species.

March 20 – Deploying Allies

To successfully eliminate the invaders from our landscape we will need the help of our allies. Learn about the role native plants play in this battle for territory.

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 545-5486 to make reservations. Sign up for the entire series and get a tuition break, \$25 members, \$35 non-members.

March 13 – Birding 101

What do the numbers on the binoculars mean? Which binoculars are best? Which bird book is best? What's a nape? Birding 101 will bring you up to speed on birding equipment and basic bird terminology. Come prepared for weather as the second hour of class will be outside practicing what you learned during the first hour! \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members. Class time 9 – 11AM.

Storytime

Saturdays and Sundays, 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.

Winter Hike Series

Sundays, 1 p.m.

Join us as we investigate what's stirring on the Whittier Peninsula during the winter months. Bring binoculars and hand lenses if you have them! Admission is FREE.

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 – 9PM; April 24, 9 – 11AM

Birds of a Feather walk

Sunday, February 6
& Saturday, March 6, 9 a.m.

Join GIAC staff and volunteers as we walk Scioto Audubon Metro Park and learn more about our winter bird residents. Come dressed for weather. Admission is FREE

'Branch Out Columbus' tree walk

Sunday, March 14
& Saturday, March 27, 1 p.m.

Even though the leaves have left, the trees still have a great story to tell. Join GIAC staff and volunteers as we listen to the trees of the Whittier Peninsula and learn the tricks to identifying them without the leaves. Come dressed for weather. Admission is FREE.

Birding for a Better Columbus: Count one count all!!

It's hard to believe that the above photo was taken three years ago on February 12, 2007. Now the center is open and we continue to work to conserve birds and their habitats through community based monitoring efforts.

This photo also marks the anniversary 13th anniversary of the Great Backyard Bird Count. We will be conducting the count at the center everyday from February 12-15th as part of the on-going training for Birding for A Better Columbus volunteers.

Volunteers are admitted on a rolling

basis to assist the center in two site based monitoring programs to evaluate avian response to our habitat restoration efforts. We need your help looking and listening for birds on designated point locations, maintaining nest boxes, and assisting in our bird banding station. All of this work will begin in the spring and we are recruiting and training birders of all levels.

If you would like to bird for a better Columbus contact Doreen Whitley at dwhitley@audubon.org or stop into the center and sign up!



The GIAC staff and volunteers on February 12, 2007.

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.

Field trips

Wednesday walks at Whittier

Wednesdays, February 3 and March 3, 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, February 13, 10 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.

Hoover Reservoir

Sunday, February 14, 9 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

Mid-February has been the cold depths of winter in recent years. Despite this, the days are conspicuously longer, and birds & mammals become noticeably more active. We'll try to enjoy some of this early activity as well as get a jump on some of the early migrant waterfowl by visiting this important bird area Northeast of Westerville. The reservoir should be partly open water, and often hosts loons, grebes, and the first flocks of north-bound waterfowl. We'll search for unusual species like snow geese, goldeneye, scoters, and bald eagles which are surprisingly regular here. Meet at the Hoover dam parking area along Sunbury Rd and dress warmly. We'll work our way up the reservoir, stopping at spots like the Maxtown boat launch and Oxbow Island; trip should be over by 1 p.m. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at robthorn@earthlink.net or (614) 471-3051.

Late Winter at Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area

Saturday, February 20, 9 a.m.

Leader: Bill Heck

If you could not make it to the Killdeer Plains trip in December 2009 -- or even if you could -- join us for this late winter trip to one of the best winter birding sites in central Ohio. During many winters, Killdeer Plains hosts amazing numbers of raptors, including Rough-legged Hawks (often hard to find elsewhere) and Northern Harriers, as well as both Long-eared and Short-eared Owls.

CA March program

Tuesday, March 23

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

March program TBD

Saty tuned!! Details are still being finalized for the subject matter and speaker for our March monthly program. Please visit www.columbusaudubon.org for updated information.

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.

This trip is co-sponsored by Columbus Audubon and Audubon Miami Valley (Oxford). The CA group will meet at Worthington Square Mall to carpool to Killdeer, where we will meet the AMV contingent. Dress for cold weather! Some of us may wish to return to Columbus in mid-afternoon, but the hardier among us will stay until dusk in hopes of seeing Short-eared Owls hunting over the fields in the area. For more information, contact Bill Heck (614-895-1940).

Early migrants on the Darby Plains

Saturday, March 6, 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

By early March waterfowl migration is starting to hit high gear, and the first few migrant landbirds are starting to show up. We'll visit some good locations along the Darby Plains to find some of these early migrants, starting in Prairie Oaks Metro Park and work our way north or south, depending on the recent reports of unusual birds. The ponds, streams, and flood control lakes of western Franklin County provide a great focus for migrants and are an easy morning trip to warm up to the start of Spring migration. Meet at the Darby Bend Lakes of Prairie Oaks Metro Park (off Amity Rd, just south of its junction with Lucas Pike); trip should be over by 1 p.m. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at robthorn@earthlink.net or (614) 471-3051.

Bird hike at Blendon Woods

Saturday, March 13, 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,

See Coming up, page 11

Columbus Audubon

CA and OOS is proud to present a Waterfowl Symposium Feb. 26-28

Walk, swim, fly, or waddle your way to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center this February. Columbus Audubon, partnering with the Ohio Ornithological Society, will present a Waterfowl Symposium, the weekend of February 26-28, at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Through lectures and speakers, we'll travel to the marshes of Iraq, visit the breeding grounds of the Arctic, flyover the stopover habitat of Lake Erie, and look inside nests to learn about the secret life of waterfowl.

The weekend swings into action Friday evening with a special performance by The Swinging Orangutangs. The band, featuring Julie Zickefoose, Bill Thompson III, and musical friends, is a special fundraiser.

Saturday's line-up includes a day of great speakers. We're honored to present

Dr. Azzam Alwash as our keynote speaker Saturday evening. Alwash, and NI's efforts to restore the critical Iraqi wetlands and marshes drained by Saddam Hussein, was recently featured on CBS's "60 Minutes." But folks in Ohio have long known about the good works of Dr. Alwash and efforts to restore Mesopotamian marshes deemed a Ramsar wetland site of international importance. As you may recall, CA's Randy Rogers, while serving with the Ohio Army National Guard in Iraq, mobilized an armada of support for Iraqi environmentalists and ornithologists through his fundraising efforts on behalf of Nature Iraq. Randy also distinguished himself by providing crucial bird sightings from the Al Asad Air Base.

Two speakers from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will join us. Jessie Barry, the Assistant Curator of the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds, will share "The Secret Life of Ducks" highlighting fascinating and unique waterfowl life history traits through photos, audio, and video of courtship displays. Learn more about evolutionary adaptations, intriguing natural history, and the role waterfowl play in wetland conservation. Also from Cornell, Mr. eBird himself, Chris Wood, will talk about the roles bird-watchers can play in tracking duck populations to ultimately better conserve species. Wood is the project leader for Cornell's eBird database and a tour leader for the birdwatching tour company WINGS. GIAC



Dr. Azzam Alwash

Symposium schedule	
<p>Friday evening 7-10 p.m.</p> <p>A special musical fundraiser features The Swinging Orangutangs playing at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, with proceeds benefitting Nature Iraq. In addition to the music, the evening will feature guided tours of the GIAC, Middle Eastern-themed appetizers, and your choice of wines and beers. Come alone to meet your friends! Or better yet, bring a guest for a small additional fee.</p>	<p><i>Eiders</i>), and Chris Wood (Saving Waterfowl with Your eBird Data).</p> <p>We will keep you going with a box lunch and snacks during the day. You also should find time to visit our vendors, check out the GIAC gift shop, and enjoy the sculpture exhibit "Lost Birds" in the lobby of GIAC.</p>
<p>Saturday Lectures 9 am - 4 pm</p> <p>Start the day off right with a few birds for your Columbus list in an optional birding walk on the grounds of the GIAC at 8 am. Then grab some coffee and pastries at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and settle in for a series of informative, and maybe even entertaining, lectures about waterfowl. Emcee Bill Thompson III will keep things moving with presentations by Jessie Barry (<i>The Secret Life of Ducks</i>), Paul Baicich (Federal Duck Stamp Program), Keith Lott (Lake Erie Aerial Surveys and Wind Farms), Dr. Gwen Myers (<i>Spectacled</i></p>	<p>Saturday Banquet: 6-9 pm</p> <p>Enjoy dinner at the sumptuous Pasta Bar between 6:00 - 7:00 pm. Our Keynote Speaker takes the podium at 7:30 pm: Dr. Azzam Alwash, CEO of Nature Iraq and recently featured on CBS's 60 Minutes, will present "Iraq's Marshlands: Resurrecting Eden."</p> <p>Sunday Birding 8 am - 12 noon</p> <p>Meet expert guides from the Columbus area and around the state at field trip sites. You can choose from a variety of birding locations in the Columbus area, including Hoover Reservoir, Dawes Arboretum Wetland, and the Green Lawn Cemetery/Scioto River complex.</p>

also hosts a sculpture installation called "Lost Birds" by a Cornell professor of art: the display laments the extinct Great Auk, Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet, and Heath Hen through larger-than-life artistic versions.

Legendary birder, author, and duck stamp supporter Paul Baicich, will share the inside scoop on 75 years of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, better known as Duck Stamps. More than \$750 million dollars has been raised since 1934 in Duck Stamp sales supporting 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge system. Other speakers include Dr. Gwen Myers, Associate Veterinarian from The Columbus Zoo & Aquarium, will share her research on Spectacled Eiders.

Keith Lott, Ohio Division of Wildlife, will reveal what's currently being discovered about concentrations of migratory waterbirds via Lake Erie aerial surveys and how this information relates to future installation of wind turbines.

Sunday morning, we'll travel independently to Central Ohio's reservoirs, rivers,

and ponds including Hoover Reservoir, Deer Creek Wildlife Area, Pickerington Ponds, Slate Run Metropark, the immediate vicinity of GIAC (the Grange-Scioto River area and Greenlawn Cemetery), and more!

Columbus Audubon and Ohio Ornithological Society members are eligible for discounted registration pricing.

Packages available are: Non-Member All Inclusive Package for \$95; Member All Inclusive Package plus one guest for Friday evening for \$90; Non-Member All Inclusive Package plus one guest for Friday evening for \$105; Friday Evening Fundraiser only, no Saturday or Sunday events for \$10; or Friday Evening Fundraiser only, with guest, no Saturday or Sunday events for \$20.

Registration is now available on the OOS (<http://www.ohiobirds.org>) and Columbus Audubon Web sites (<http://www.columbusaudubon.org>)

Ann Oliver is the editor of the Cerulean, a quarterly newsletter of the Ohio Ornithological Society and the Southwest Regional Director, OOS.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

GIAC is gearing up for Spring exploration

Beginning this spring, Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC) will use its Weekend Wild Walks to explore the incredible biodiversity that exists on the Whittier Peninsula. These walks, available free of charge to whoever wants to join in, will explore the bird, plant, and insect life with which we share the Scioto Audubon Metro Park.

As many of you know, conservation of birds, habitat, and other wildlife is very important to GIAC. But how can we successfully practice responsible conservation if we do not fully understand who we are conserving? While our Weekend Wild Walks will provide an opportunity for sparking new interests for participants, they will also help inform our conservation efforts on the Whittier Peninsula.

The initial planning efforts of these



By Chris Kline

Widow Skimmer

walks are focusing on birds, plants, butterflies, and dragonflies. GIAC is looking for volunteers with a moderate level of expertise, and a love for sharing that expertise, to lead these walks. Now of course, beetles, snakes, and fungi are people too, sort of! Perhaps you have expertise in one of these other specialties. We would love to have



By Chris Kline

Calico Pennant

your help in expanding our topics. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Chris Kline at ckline@audubon.org, or 614-545-5486 if you'd like to become a Wild Walker!

GIAC sustainability plan

Continued from page 2

tions.

We will tell our suppliers that we prefer recycled and/or recyclable materials in packaging.

We will provide our customers with an on-line payment option.

We will use rechargeable batteries or solar power for calculators.

We will buy customer or volunteer recognition and/or promotional gifts that are made with recycled and/or recyclable materials.

We will set up a composting station for staff and guests of the Center.

To conserve and protect water we will:

Check for leaks by closely reviewing our water bills.

Fully comply with the City's Fats, Oils, and Grease Regulation.

Clean all outdoor areas with a broom and/or damp mop instead of a hose.

Install a water-efficient (1.6 to 2.2 gallons/minute) pre-rinse spray nozzle in our kitchen for washing dishes.

Maintain our automatic faucets on the sinks.

We will not hose off or wash cars, equipment, or other items where runoff water flows into the storm drain or river.

We will maintain our dual-flush toilets and waterless urinals.

We will only run our dishwashers when

they are full.

We will use only biodegradable soaps and detergents.

To landscape more responsibly we will:

Maintain our rain gardens.

Install a rain barrel to catch rainwater and use it to water landscaping.

As new plants are needed, we will use native, drought-resistant plants.

We will maintain our installed permeable paving.

We will use water only when needed.

To conserve energy we will:

Track our energy usage and make goals each year to use less.

Maintain our overhangs that provide shade to sun-exposed windows and walls during the warm season.

We will convert to energy-efficient bulbs or upgrade existing fluorescent tube lighting with T-8 or T-5 lamps with electronic ballasts.

We will maintain our motion sensors and make sure they are working correctly.

We will implement a facility-wide policy of turning off equipment and lights when not in use (like computers and monitors over night).

We will set our programmable thermostats to 68 degrees or below in the winter, 78 degrees or above in the summer, and 55 degrees at night.

We will insulate water heaters and storage tanks.

We will perform regular maintenance on our HVAC systems.

We will replace leaky, inefficient, or broken windows.

We will use caulk and/or weather-stripping around windows and doors to the outside.

We will maintain Energy Star appliances.

To travel sustainably we will:

We will encourage staff and volunteers to participate in "Two by 2012" a commitment to commute to work twice a month using an alternative for of transportation (not a single-occupancy vehicle).

We will provide staff and volunteers with bike racks and shower facilities.

We will encourage employees to walk or bike to meetings, lunch, etc.

We will offer preferred parking arrangements for car pool and energy-efficient vehicles.

We will provide green driving tips on an employee bulletin board or in newsletters.

We will provide staff and volunteers with information about ridesharing and bus transportation.

We will encourage teleconferences and web-meetings when possible.

We will encourage staff and employees to purchase carbon credits to offset their emissions from any necessary trips.

-Heather Starck, center director

Columbus Audubon annual meeting and potluck dinner

Tuesday, February 16, 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, 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.

Birds Around Us: Migration in the Americas

This program will highlight bird behavior and their migratory patterns from North America to South America and back again. Dr. Jones will give insight on how important migratory flyways, stopping points (like our own IBA on and around the Whittier Peninsula) are for successful migration of several common species of birds we see each spring and summer in our own backyards.

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



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 February 16.

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



Photos courtesy of Andi Wolfe

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

Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology at The Ohio State University.



It's almost Birdathon time again!

The 2010 Birdathon is right around the corner and our teams are making their strategic plans. This event is the kickoff of the spring birding season and the high point for many of our teams, as well as the main fund raiser for Columbus Audubon. We have three time categories to fit any birders schedule. The 24-hour category is for all those avid birders striving to identi-

fy every warbler, shorebird and raptor in their path. The 10-hour category is for serious, but well rested birders, who are happy to discern between a magnolia and a blackburnian warbler. For those who think a hike or a picnic in the park is the best way to see birds, we have the 5-hour category. As you can see we have something for every member. The CA Birdathon is great

fun for everyone, whether you are part of a team or a team sponsor.

Our sponsors are as important to the birdathon as our birders. If you would like to sponsor a team look for the team roster in the next newsletter, pick the team you wish to sponsor, fill out the form and send it in.

See Birdathon, page 11

Backyards for Wildlife: Enjoy birds in your yard more

By Toni Stahl

In winter, I enjoy watching birds and studying their behavior through my windows.

Mourning Doves sleep on the heated birdbath at night when it is cold. Ground-foraging birds find food in the leaf litter I left in my garden beds. I watch birds hide in the old Holiday tree when the hawk visits.

I put places for birds to perch in safe, ideal lighting conditions for viewing by window. Keep perches 10-15 feet from cover. You can hang logs with suet on them or stick perches in the ground near food or water.

Perches can be made from small-diameter stakes for plants by planting two stakes in the ground and crossing a few stakes or twigs between them. You also can plant a large stake and attach a branch upside down on the top of it. Birds use the perches by the heated birdbath to wait in line for their turn to use it.

Hanging log perches may bring woodpeckers and friends into close view. Large or small diameter perches attract different types of birds, and the height you mount perches also makes a difference as to what

type of bird may use it.

If you enjoy taking photos or videos of birds, sit by the window with little movement (a tripod helps) so the bird realizes you and your camera are no threat. Turn off your flash so you don't get any window reflection or startle the bird. Use your zoom to focus through the window. You shouldn't even need to clean the window unless there is a very dark mark.

Find a book or course you can take about photography if you want to learn more. It can become a fun winter hobby. Birds are easier to see in winter after deciduous trees lose their leaves.

Marc Apfelstadt, who does most of the photos of birds in my yard for my articles, has been able to capture very natural, close-up photos and videos of many different behaviors without the birds even realizing it. Replace your window screens when finished so that birds don't accidentally fly into the window to escape a predator.

Did you know that invasive Garlic Mustard lives in winter? One plant becomes an entire colony. Check to see if all your native plants are dormant around it. If so, you can kill Garlic Mustard aggressively as it chokes out the forest-



By Marc Apfelstadt

Red-breasted Nuthatch.

floor, native plants our birds need to have a good home.

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

South Side Settlement after-school program fall highlights

The South Side Settlement After-School Program is trying something new this year by having all of their classroom as well as field trips at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. (The spring bird festival will continue to be held at SSS). This continues our history of this successful partnership between Columbus Audubon, GIAC and South Side Settlement House. In the past, only field trips were taken at the site. This fall the students began their discovery of birds and nature with classroom activities centered on bird adaptations. After a brief introduction by GIAC staff Joe Jennings and Tori Strickland, the students learned about beak and feet adaptations by taking part in the "Fill the Bill" activity. There were eight manned by CA volunteers,



Out looking for birds. More photos from the program can be seen on the Columbus Audubon Web site, columbusaudubon.org.

GIAC and SSS staff activity stations with each station asking the students to mimic certain beak movements such as straining out cereal (to represent the bird's food) using a sieve and picking up "seeds" with a tweezer. The children had a great time going from station to station to learn about

the beak and feet adaptations as well as fun facts and photos of a variety of birds.

Their corresponding outdoor hike allowed students to watch bird adaptations in action. The hikes took place the first week in December (schedule conflicts delayed the November hikes) so the children did not

see much action of birds using their beaks but did see a variety of birds such as: great blue heron, mallards, robins, starlings to name a few. They did observe some of the birds other adaptations such as puffing up to stay warm, swarming (starlings) to stay warm and search for food as a group. The heron was poised to use his beak in hunting for dinner, but he had no luck. After a brief trip up to the look out deck on the water tower at the park to look for more birds, we headed back to the classroom as darkness was upon us. The students did however continue their search to learn about birds and nature by having a close encounter with a resident snake at the GIAC. The students marveled at how small the snake was and

See South Side, page 9

Conservation corner: More about Calamus Swamp Preserve

Calamus Swamp is a 19-acre kettle hole, formed at the end of the last Ice Age when a chunk of ice separated from the glacial front and slowly melted. Most of Ohio's kettle holes have disappeared from the landscape, due to ecological succession or drainage for development, especially agriculture and peat harvesting.

People interested in natural history have long known Calamus Swamp. In the 1930s, a student at The Ohio State University produced a master's thesis describing the natural features of Pickaway County, and noted similarities in vegetation between Calamus Swamp and the nearby Stage's Pond State Nature Preserve. The aquatic vegetation in Stage's Pond has been almost completely eliminated, mostly due to excessive sedimentation and fertilizer runoff from surrounding lands. Consequently, Calamus Swamp serves as a relic of plant associations that formerly occurred in central Ohio glacial lakes. This wetland survives in a relatively pristine condition, primarily due to the exemplary conservation ethic of the pre-

vious landowner, Mrs. Ada Burke and her family. The family owned Calamus Swamp and much of the surrounding land for over 100 years, and always recognized the swamp as an unusual treasure worthy of protection. Because of their conscientious stewardship, the plants and animals of Calamus Swamp survive to this day. To insure that Calamus Swamp is protected for future generations to enjoy, Mrs. Burke donated Calamus Swamp and critical buffer areas to Columbus Audubon in 2000.

Calamus Swamp is characterized by several distinct plant communities that support a number of unusual plants and animals. Space prevents listing everything here but we'll get it posted on the Columbus Audubon Web site. Of special interest to birders are a number of waterfowl and marsh birds that use the area especially during migration. Prothonotary Warbler, Least Bittern, Common Moorhen, Virginia, Sora and Yellow Rails have been recorded at Calamus. The increasingly rare Tiger Salamanders is found here along with at

least 8 species of frogs and toads. Over fifty species of butterflies and skippers are known from Calamus.

With a generous donation from Crane Plastics, in 2001 Columbus Audubon constructed a boardwalk partially encircling the wetland. We hope to complete the boardwalk in the near future. Other management challenges will us now and in the future due to changing hydrology, and invasive plants and animals. Currently there is a carpet of Garlic Mustard in the surrounding woods. Forty percent of the trees are ashes, and the Emerald Ash Borer has been detected in Pickaway County but not (so far) at Calamus. Meanwhile, Calamus Swamp Preserve is there for you to enjoy. It's located on state route 104 (east side), 1/3 mile south of its intersection with US 22 in Pickaway County, west of Circleville. It is open and available to the public at all times, and no permits are required. Please treat it with the respect due any natural area.

- Dave Horn (with help from Jim McCormac)

Invasive species: Crayfish?

By Dave Horn

The world is a complicated place. There was a time, after I developed an interest in the outdoors but before my education as a professional biologist, when I thought there was only one kind of crayfish. After all, they all seemed similar; they all *looked* like crayfish.

Actually there are hundreds of species of crayfish, 21 in Ohio alone, and new species are still being described, even from Ohio! Some are very restricted in their habitats, limited to caves, or clear streams, or springs, and others are common and widespread. Two crayfish are invasive, if not in Ohio, then elsewhere.

The Red Swamp Crayfish (sometimes called the "Louisiana Crayfish") is the one you may find in markets and as part of those delicious Cajun recipes. It is native to the southeastern USA but has been introduced

to many other parts of the world, mostly for aquaculture.

Where it is established it outcompetes native crayfish, impacts amphibian populations by feeding on their larvae, and its tunneling changes the pattern water flow in rice culture. Fortunately in Ohio the Red Swamp Crayfish occurs primarily near the sites of old fish hatcheries, although there is a large and expanding population in Sandusky Bay on Lake Erie. Freshwater biologists in states to our northwest, especially Wisconsin, are very concerned about the invasive potential of the Red Swamp Crayfish to harm native species, and are taking steps to limit its entry.

The Rusty Crayfish is Ohio's most common and widespread species. It is native to central and western Ohio but fairly recently has spread to all areas of the state. Much of its movement is assisted by humans transporting live crayfish for fish bait. Its popu-

lations are expanding throughout the northeastern and Midwestern USA, and it threatens to overwhelm and replace some native species (such as the little-known Sloan's Crayfish in Ohio). It feeds voraciously on algae, especially the common *Cladophora*, and in doing so it alters aquatic ecosystems, which is partly what defines "invasive." Like many invasive species, the Rusty Crayfish appears to thrive in waterways and ponds disturbed by human activities.

A take-home message is that what may not be invasive in our own backyard might cause problems for someone else, and we must continue to be careful when we move living plants and animals around.

For more on the Rusty Crayfish, visit <http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/rusty-crayfish.htm>. An "Ohio Crayfish and Shrimp Atlas" is available from the Ohio Biological Survey, and a book on crayfish of northeastern Ohio will be available soon.

South Side Settlement

Continued from page 8

wondered what he ate. They also had an opportunity to feel what it was like to live in a tree by climbing up a "tree" in the discovery classroom at GIAC as well as try

on bird and animal costumes and mimic the bird.

All in all, the students had a great time and were enthusiastic to learn more about animals and their adaptations. They are already talking about their next adventure

at GIAC in which they become "BSI" (Bird Sleuth Investigators) searching out birds in their habitat using tracking and observation skills as well as looking for nests left behind from the last nesting season. Stay tuned... -Susan Setterlin

Get ready for the 2010 Great Backyard Bird Count

Fet your cameras, field guides and tally sheets ready for the Great Backyard Bird Count on February 12-15.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent and in Hawaii.

Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>.

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or any-

where in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year's numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery.

Why Count Birds?

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

Audubon and Cornell need your help. Make sure the birds from your community are well represented in the count. It doesn't matter whether you report the 5 species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing to a wildlife refuge.

Your counts can help us answer many questions:

How will this winter's snow and cold temperatures influence bird populations?

Where are winter finches and other

"irruptive" species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?

How will the timing of birds' migrations compare with past years?

How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions?

What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?

Are any birds undergoing worrisome declines that point to the need for conservation attention?

Scientists use the counts, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to give us an immense picture of our winter birds. Each year that these data are collected makes them more meaningful and allows scientists to investigate far-reaching questions.

For highlights of past results, visit the Science Stories section of the GBBC web site.

-from birdsource.org

Dr. David D. Blyth 1917-2009

Long-time supporter of Columbus Audubon and conservation will be missed

By Dave Horn

Dr. David D. Blyth, a long-time 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.

Dave 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 varied 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.

Coming up

Continued from page 4

explore Thoreau Lake and other trails for winter migrants. Call (614) 508-8000 for more information or go to www.metroparks.net.

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 March trip is: **March 27:** Birds of the season. Meet at 5:30 a.m.

Service in the Preserves

Gallagher Fen, Clark County

Saturday, February 13, 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Leader: Katryn Renard

Have you been to a fen? Come join us and find out what makes it unique from a bog as we work off our winter lethargy. We will be burning brush piles (probably ones that some of us will remember stacking) as we feed and watch several fires at once. There will be no worries about getting cold on this winter project. The ODNR preserve manager of this site put in a special request to have our Audubon group help with this project.

No training is needed. Please call Katryn Renard by Wednesday, February 10 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

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.

Winter Bird Survival Challenge

How are feathered friends surviving the season?

How do birds withstand wicked winter weather and other daily threats to survival, even in warmer climates? A new environmental challenge from the Celebrate Urban Birds project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology invites participants to show how birds are surviving in their neighborhoods this winter.

It can be a photo, artwork, video, even a story or a poem describing how birds are finding the food, water, and shelter they need. People of all ages can participate as well as groups such as schools, libraries, clubs, and businesses. Celebrate Urban Birds is a free, year-round citizen-science project focused on birds in neighborhood settings.

Prizes include a pair of Eagle Optics binoculars, bird feeders, a birdsong calendar, books, posters, cards and more.

How to enter:

1. Email entries to urbanbirds@cornell.edu. If you submit a video, post it on YouTube and send us the link.
2. Write "Survival_yourfirstname yourlastname yourstate" in the subject line.
3. Include your mailing address in your email
4. Explain why you submitted your entry-describe your winter conditions and what you observe the birds doing during winter.

One entry per person, please.

Deadline for entries is February 15.

Birdathon

Continued from page 4

You do not need to send your money until you receive a notice from the team you sponsored.

If you have ever thought about joining in the birding fun, this is the year. Start with your favorite birding buddies, choose a fun team name and call Katryn Renard (614) 261-7171 to register. Then, ask all your friends and co-workers to sponsor you and go birding! Count all the birds your team identifies in your chosen category on any day between **May 1 and May 16**. You don't even have to stay in Ohio. Be creative, bird anywhere in the world or your own backyard. We want everyone to get involved this year so remember, the rules and dates are just guidelines. Raising funds is the most important thing!

This year's teams are striving to raise even more dollars than ever before. **100 percent** of the profits from the Birdathon will go to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, part of the Whittier Peninsula project, which is located in the Important Bird Area adopted by Columbus Audubon.

This year's BAT **will fulfill** CA's pledge of \$100,000 to the nature center. It has taken Columbus Audubon less than five years to raise the funds we pledged to GIAC.

This is the largest amount ever donated by a single chapter to an Audubon center. Proving once again, Columbus Audubon **IS** the best chapter in the country!

-Julie Davis

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
Pete Precario
Mark Real
Jan Rodenfels

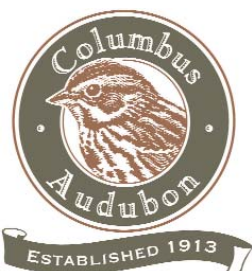


John Robinson
Patsy Thomas
Ellen Tripp
Phil Urban
Christie Vargo

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, Suzan Jervey, Warren Grody, 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

Columbus CBC

Continued from page 1

ing? For such a southern bird, they seem to be adapting well to cold Ohio winters. Almost every team had at least one; several had 5 or more.

Who's Not

Open-country raptors - Their presence is just a roulette game for us now. This year we went without Rough-legs, but lucked out on a northern Harrier, and a few Kestrels.

Screech Owls - they're almost certainly in our circle, but three owling teams couldn't find any. Perhaps the large numbers of Great Horned made them stay safely quiet during the count.

Tufted Titmouse - they still seem locked in a slow decline. Formerly they were as common as chickadees; now they've fallen well behind nuthatches. Even the rise in urban feeders doesn't seem able to arrest this slow loss. What crucial feature do they need to survive the winter here?

Larks, Pipits, Meadowlarks - Just like the open-country raptors, these birds are disappearing with our last big farm fields. Larks and Pipits were found by single parties, and Meadowlarks weren't seen this year at all.

Chipping & Field Sparrows - these half-hardy sparrows of the genus *Spizella* have been a feature of recent counts, but not this year. I think that once we get more accessible feeders in

the southern part of the circle, these should become expected and regular.

Blackbirds - Redwings and Grackles continue to flirt with no-show status in Columbus, but cowbirds had an unusually strong year, being found by many teams. Large roosts were only a bit further south (Pickerington and Chillicothe), so we're just at the edge of their winter range.

Winter Finches - despite the cold weather, we had only one Purple Finch and no siskins or grosbeaks. Our urbanization, with its steady elimination of mature trees, probably has a role in this, along with the light irruption of these species this year.

Participants: Steve Anderson, Charles & Linda Bombaci, Aaron Boone, Nancy Bringardner, Don Burton, Brad & Lindsay Deering, Sheila Fagan, Diana Fowler, Ryan Franz, Bret Graves, Kay Greisen, Dianne Griffin, Dave and Roz Horn, Becky & Mike Jordan, Kristi Kumkauf, Bruce & Helen Lindsay, Neil Marquard, Carolyn May, Jim McCormac, Robert McNulty, Barbara Merritt, Dick & Kathy Miller, Richard & Rick Oxley, Sam Pollock, Pam Raver, Heather & Matt Raymond, Robert Royse, Andy Sewell, Bruce Simpson, Jim Skinner, Dave Slager and Rob Thorn (compiler).

For a complete list of observers, go to the Columbus Audubon Web site at www.columbusaudubon.org.

-Rob Thorn