



Song Sparrow



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

May-June 2010
Volume 42, No. 6

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

Nestbox and feeding tips

Eastern Bluebird nesting season underway

It's April and birds are thinking of one main thing, it's time to raise a family. While this article will come out in May, it is not too late to still lend a hand to help cavity nesters in your area.

There are a few things for you to examine before you run out and build or buy a nestbox. Look around your own backyard. What is the habitat?

Do you know where to place a nestbox and how to make it safe for the guests? What is the level of activity? Are neighbors' cats running loose and spending time in your yard and around your feeders?

Before you put up a nestbox it is important to be responsible and do some homework. By putting up that nestbox you are accepting responsibility to the birds you hope to attract.

Do some research online or pick up a book to learn more before you begin so you and especially the birds you hope to attract can be successful.

Bluebirds start to nest in April but they will nest two to three times a season given the right nesting conditions. They prefer an open grassy space, short grass and perches (which may include trees, posts or garden stakes) to find their favorite food of spiders and ants to caterpillars to larger crawling, hopping and sometimes some flying insects. Try to place the nestbox 40 yards from a wood edge or structure and certainly away from a seed feeding station. Bluebirds will also eat fruit and berries so consider offering some bird friendly plant-

See Bluebirds, page 12

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 21-25: 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 - 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 - 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- 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 - 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 - 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 - 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 - 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.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

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 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!

GIAC wish list

With the opening of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, our need for donated items has changed dramatically!

Our current **MAJOR** need is for children age 8 to 12 mud boots, rain parkas and gloves. Many of the children attending our school programs do not have suitable boots and clothing to complete the field study portion of the curriculum on cold, rainy, muddy days. Your donation of any of the above mentioned items would be greatly appreciated by both our students and the GIAC staff.

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 3/3/10 to 4/2/10

Lesley Avery
Brad Bond
Kevin Davidson
Eileen Dunmire
Phyllis Duryee
Johnston Cathy Hood
Mikaela Howie
Sally Hubbell
Lois Kohnhorst
Albert La Sala
James McCormac
Karen Miller

Norman Craig Moore
Andrea Prudhomme
Barbara & Stephen Revard
Sharon Richter
Randel Rogers
Richard Stelzer
Debra Ventling
Janet Whitlach
Becky Wright
Cecelia Martaus
Janie McIntyre
Christopher Rinehart

Nancy Stinnett
Jennifer Smith
Susanna Heideman
Sharon L. Heamersley
Arnold Berger
William Tacon
Richard Stelzer
Carol J Porter
Susan Bemiller
Mary E Gallagher
Lynne Judith
Heidi & Larry Drake

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!

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

GIAC May-June programs

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.

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.

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. All



By Stefanie Hauck
View of the spit from the Scioto Audubon Metro Park boardwalk.

walks start at 1 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Bird Walks—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 to Canada for the summer. Binoculars and

bird guides are a must.

Tree Walks—Sunday, May 9 and Saturday, May 22.

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.

Butterfly Walk—Saturday, May 8.

Walk with us as we seek out the return of the winged jewels of field and garden. Close focus binoculars and butterfly field guides will prove helpful in learning the stories of these wonderful creatures.

Dragonfly Walk—Saturday, May 15.

With warming weather, the aerial acrobatics of these incredible insects will return to the skies above the wetlands of the Scioto Audubon Metro Park. Join us as we take an up close and personal look at these colorful and unique creatures.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER:

A MOTHER'S DAY

Songbird Spectacular

Join GIAC on Saturday, May 8

10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

For our

First Annual

International Migratory Bird Day Celebration

FREE Mother's Day Breakfast

Provided by the Global Gallery
Breakfast served from 10-11 a.m.

Band Together!

Come watch Conservation Coordinator, Doreen Whitley, catch and band Spring Migrants. Onlookers get to see a bird in her hand and UP CLOSE!

Banding Demo from 1-3 p.m.

Guided hikes and Earth- friendly crafts all day!

And so much more- come check us out!

For more information call the Grange Insurance Audubon Center at (614) 545-5475.

**A little word
about our
spring bird:
The American
Redstart**

■ Black upper-
parts and hood with
white under-parts.

■ Bill, legs, and
feet are black.

■ Distinctive
orange- red patches
on my wing and

■ Sides and a
long, fanned tail.
eats Insects.



American Redstart

■ migrate from THE north to southern California,
Southern Texas, and into the tropics

■ LIVES in forested areas

More from the Cornell Lab:

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Redstart/life-history

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, May 5 and June 2, 7:30 a.m.

Leaders: Paul Gledhill and Heather Raymond

Walks are always held the first Wednesday of the month. Join Paul Gledhill and Heather Raymond for a short walk around Whittier Peninsula to view wildlife as well as to watch the latest developments of the park and nature center. Meet at Lower Scioto Park in the boat ramp parking lot (west of Front Street and south of Whittier Street) **NOTE:** Please contact Heather Raymond at (614) 785-0342; heather_columbus_audubon@yahoo.com to see if the May walk is occurring as scheduled.

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 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.

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.metro parks.net.

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

CA May program

Tuesday, May 25

6:30 bird walk, 7 p.m., social time,

7:30 p.m., presentation

at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center

505 W. Whittier Street, Columbus

The Sport of Birding

Have you ever wondered what a birdathon is all about? This is your chance to find out! We are combining our May program with our Birdathon celebration. All of our members are invited to join in on the fun. Our own Dave Horn and Pete Precario, both past presidents, will regale us with stories of their birdathon adventures over the years. There will be a bird walk at 6:30 pm, followed by our speakers, door prizes, 2 grand prizes for our teams and dessert. All new this year will be team prizes for most birds seen, most money raised by a team, best photo, best banner and more! Please plan to join us for a great night of birding, food, prizes and FUN.

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.

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.

Leader: 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@ehe.osu.edu.

Bird hike at Blendon Woods

Saturday, May 8, 8 a.m.

Leader: Bruce Simpson

Check out winter residents and wintering waterfowl as we wan-

See Coming up, page 11

Columbus Audubon

South Side Settlement House

Students in after-school program explore the winter landscape

The students in the SSS after school program became “bird sleuth investigators” as they honed their skills of observation of the landscape and discovered the diversity of animal activity found in the clues they leave behind.

First, the students learned about “reading the landscape”. By learning to identify a variety of animal tracks and other clues such as tooth gnawing on branches, empty nests, feathers and bones left behind and “blood” droplets in an indoor “nature scenario”, students prepared themselves to explore the landscape around the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

The snowy winter provided them with a wealth of clues to the drama of life in winter.

What’s next? Come spring, their next exploration will include a “migration challenge” as they learn about the challenges and pitfalls that birds face as they migrate to their summer homes.

They will also complete their community service project by helping the center with their spring planting of indigenous plants in the park. Culminating their “Seasons of Change” year will be a spring festival where they will share their findings.



(Left) Students perform animal track investigations at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

(Below, left) Students learned about different bird houses and nests.

(Below, right) Students took turns building nests using natural and synthetic materials.

Photos by Susan Setterlin



You are cordially invited.....

To the Spring Festival at South Side Settlement House

310 East Innis Ave.

Columbus, Ohio 43207

5:30-7:00 PM

Wednesday May 19, 2010

Join the students of the after school program as they display and share their experiences in this year's “Seasons of Change” program. You will enjoy:

- *Displays of students’ experiences**
- *Avian Olympic activities**
- *Participate in planting flowers to beautify the courtyard**
- *Display and live birds from Ohio Wildlife Center**
- *Light refreshments**

Please show your support for the students and all of their hard work this year by attending this fun event. For more information contact Susan Setterlin at 457-8130 or rsetterl@columbus.rr.com

Columbus Audubon

Birdathon 2010

There is still time to sign up and sponsor a team

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 6:30 p.m., followed by speakers, door prizes, two 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 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.

Birdathon teams should bring their sponsor sheets and money collected to the party or send it by May 20 to: Julie Davis, 5748 Blackhawk Forest Drive Westerville, Ohio 43082.

Our second grand prize is a night's stay at Murphin Ridge Inn, a bed & breakfast in Southern Ohio. The inn is the perfect getaway for birdwatchers in Amish Country. Situated on 142 acres of rolling woodland and farmland in Adams County with breathtaking vistas of the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, it is the ideal spot for the winner of our grand prize to spend a night away from home. Visit <http://www.murphinridgeinn.com/> for details.

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.

**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

BSBO to host 'The Biggest Week in American Birding' May 6-16

A BIG birding event is planned during the peak of spring warbler migration in the "Warbler Capital of the World," the Lake Erie Marsh Region of Northwest Ohio.

This inaugural bird festival: "The Biggest Week in American Birding" is hosted by Black Swamp Bird Observatory, Tropical Birding, *Kaufman Field Guides*, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, and Magee Marsh Wildlife Area. The week-

long event will be held Thursday, May 6, through Sunday, May 16. There will be field trips, workshops, various birding activities and more.

Birding guru, Kenn Kaufman, will be presenting evening talks during the bird festival on a variety of subjects.

All-in-all, this "week" is staged during Northwestern Ohio's "warbler migration madhouse" where the superlative warbler

viewing opportunities make it an idyllic setting. If warblers are not your thing, then fear not as there will be many other varied birding opportunities in the area too, and the festival-organizers will also be running an innovative non-birder program to ensure spouses do not miss out on any of the fun either. For more information go to the event's Web site at www.biggestweek-inamericanbirding.com/

Backyards for Wildlife: Can you adapt like birds do?

By Toni Stahl

We've seen birds adapt to survive – some have different kinds of beaks for different kinds of food, others have webbed feet for better swimming, but can we humans adapt?

Scientists and citizens are seeing climate change coming faster than expected. Is each CA member willing to make choices to slow this change so the earth can adjust naturally?

If you look on the CA Web site under Resources, CA Newsletters, many articles I've written in the past show simple, easy steps you can follow to help wildlife and create a bird sanctuary at <http://www.columbusaudubon.org>.

What difference does your yard make? Read this short article called 'Gardening for Life' by Douglas Tallamy linked on the "What is the impact?" tab on our Web site at www.backyardhabitat.info.

To those who want to begin creating a habitat... Can you be the first on your block to let go of the idea of the perfectly manicured lawn? Can you lead by example?

To go organic sounds scary and maybe complicated. I have discovered it to be easier and less expensive to let Mother Nature take over some of the work I used to pay contractors to do. Just put the right native plant in the right place. To save you time on your transition, check out the fliers on the tab "How do I do this?" on our Web site at www.backyardhabitat.info.

To those who have already created a Certified Wildlife Habitat... The birds sing thank you. A great way to spread the word is to share your yard with others. Inviting people walking by to see a special insect or plant (especially when they have children along who are our future stewards) and the



Baby Cardinal.

feeling they get from stepping into a bird sanctuary will remain in their mind. The children who live in the adjacent home say this yard is the best on the block.

Think big and have a yard tour. It's fun to show off the fruits of your labor and make the world a better place at the same time. Have your sign posted and fondly remember special stories from your yard about how much fun your nature sanctuary has been to share. Most visitors to my yard have never seen native plants before! They are excited about adding them to their yards.

When giving tours of my yard, I start with a short talk about the Backyard Wildlife Habitat to provide context for what they will be seeing and have some handouts for those interested. Feel free to print information from our Web site for distribution.

Afterwards, I walk around and point out the habitat elements (sustainable gardening, food, water, cover, and places to raise young). I also show them predator bugs and explain how pest bugs are kept under control without chemicals.

If you would like to be in a Columbus Parks and Recreation tour individually or as a group, call Aniko at (614) 645-6640. She will send you a form to complete, and



Photos by Marc Apfelstadt

A skunk.

Skunks and Pets

Skunks live near humans whether or not you have established a bird habitat. You can help keep your pets from surprising a skunk and getting sprayed. Give the skunk fair warning - Stomp your feet, clap your hands, and turn the porch light on and off to allow the skunks leave your yard before letting your pets outside. Keep pets on a leash.

If you have skunks trapped, they will likely be killed and another skunk move in to fill the gap. It's best for all of us to learn to live in harmony with our striped visitors.

their department will publish it in the newspaper. Include that you have a Certified Wildlife Habitat in your yard.

Children want this planet to survive in its fullest diversity and glory. Can you be the first on your block to adapt?

Lessons learned? If you're interested, email marc-a@columbus.rr.com to receive our monthly 'Nature Scoop' email. Let's work together to help birds, one yard at a time.

Great Backyard Bird Count boasts another record-breaking year

The 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) results are in and it was a record-breaking year for participation.

During the four-day event in February, more than 97,200 bird checklists were submitted by an estimated 63,000 volunteer bird watchers from across the United States and Canada.

From reports of rare species to large-scale tracking of bird movements, the GBBC provides insight into the lives of bird popula-

tions.

The GBBC is a joint project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology with Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada.

The results provided a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species.

The next Great Backyard Bird Count is February 18-21, 2011.

Top 10 birds reported on the most check-

lists in the 2010 GBBC:

- 1) Northern Cardinal
- 2) Dark-eyed Junco
- 3) Mourning Dove
- 4) Downy Woodpecker
- 5) Blue Jay
- 6) American Goldfinch
- 7) Tufted Titmouse
- 8) House Finch
- 9) American Crow
- 10) Black-capped Chickadee

Conservation corner: Bats, birds and wind energy - can they co-exist?

This article is a response to an anonymous flyer that was left on the windshields of several people, including Audubon members last year. Statements from the flyer are addressed as directly as possible.

"Wind turbines are killing birds and bats, displacing feeding and breeding wildlife while fragmenting and destroying habitat, vistas and views for people."

The U.S. fish and wildlife service has observed that wind turbines have killed both birds and bats depending upon a number of things. Wind farms can fragment habitat, affecting ground-nesting birds and possibly raptors.

BWEC, Bats and Wind Cooperative, does voluntary pre-construction monitoring and post-construction reviews.

They are doing studies testing turbine speeds and use of radar to see what they can do to reduce the problem and the economic impact of any changes BWEC is composed of the American Wind Energy Association, Bat Conservation International, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory – Department of Energy and

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Placing wind turbines along ridges, shorelines and in farm fields in the path of migrating resident birds and bats is ecologically irresponsible."

There is no argument that fragmenting habitat has negative impact on the environment. And there also is no argument that habitat fragmentation has occurred with wind turbine installation – see the above statement from the FWS that wind farms can fragment habitat, causing ecological problems. And a whole different set of issues for marine wind farms exist, one being that it's hard to detect birds swimming on the water, flying low to the water, or behind obstacles, making it hard to determine accurate flight paths.

But studies are being done to determine how to improve this. The California Energy Commission advocates:

■Minimization of fragmentation and habitat disturbance by placing roads, turbines and other infrastructure in a pattern that does not fragment habitat corridors.

■Establish buffer zones around known avian habitats to minimize collision hazards

■Reduce impacts with appropriate turbine layout by studying daily flight patterns of birds

■Reduce artificial prey habitat at the base of turbines

What is a properly sited turbine? The truth is there is none. There is not, and there probably will never be, any turbine where there is a zero mortality rate for birds and bats. Fatality rates can be significantly reduced, however.

Turbines are being redesigned. The causes for bats and birds being killed by turbines are being researched (bats die of the bends). Pre and post construction surveys are done, at least on a voluntary basis.

Habitat for rare creatures is being identified, and turbines are not allowed in those areas. Turbine wind pressure is being studied. Types of radar to use to identify migration patterns and daily habits are being studied.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife has developed interim guidelines which recommends 3 years of data as a standard for

determining the presence and/or magnitude of bird and bat migration in areas of high seasonal concentration....."

There is no quarrel with the statement, but the interim guidelines expired in 2005.

On July 10, 2003, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided to the Regions and the general public our voluntary Interim Guidelines to Avoid and Minimize Wildlife

Impacts from Wind Turbines. The Interim Guidelines are to be evaluated over a two-year period, and then modified as necessary based on their performance in the field, and on the latest scientific and technical discoveries developed in coordination with industry, States, academic researchers and other Federal Agencies.

A lot of work needs to be done on this.

Migration patterns need to be better understood. Endangered species need to be protected. The Great Lakes and other flyways need to be protected. Government protection, if needed, needs to be implemented.

- Sue Kramp

Invasive species: Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)

As noted previously in this column, an invasive species is a non-native plant or animal that causes significant damage to wildlife and wildlife habitat. Invasive species cause billions of dollars of damage annually to crops, rangelands and waterways.

An invasive species of concern in Central Ohio is common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). It arrived here from Europe in the mid-Nineteenth century to be used as a hedge. Lacking natural controls from insects or disease, it forces out native plants, forming impenetrable layers of vegetation especially in poorly-drained areas and along waterways. There are native species of buckthorn, but they do not force out other plants.

Buckthorn is a tall shrub or small tree, growing up to 25 feet high, often sporting multiple stems at its base. The bark is similar to that of a cherry tree, with egg-shaped, glossy leaves that stay green late into the fall, later than most plants. Berry-like clusters of fruit ripen in August and September.

One of the more troubling aspects of common buckthorn is that it serves as an overwintering host to the eggs of yet another invasive species, the soybean aphid. These aphids suck the nutrients from soybean plants, potentially causing significant damage to one of Ohio's most important crops. The soybean aphid arrived in the Midwest from the Orient in 2000 and is now our most important insect

pest of soybeans. If the buckthorn had not already been in the USA, the aphid never would have become established.

A final irony is that yet another invasive species, the multicolored Asian lady beetle, is a voracious predator of soybean aphids, and researchers at Michigan State and other places credit the lady beetle for partial control of the soybean aphid in recent years. This may not be appreciated by those of us who are subjected to home invasions by lady beetles in the fall.

If you discover buckthorn on your property, remove it by cutting it at soil level and treating the stump with an approved herbicide.

Bruce Lindsay (with entomological input from Dave Horn)

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Bird is the Word

Birdology

Lessons Learned from a Pack of Hens, a peck of Pigeons, Cantankerous Crows, Fierce Falcons, Hip Hop Parrots, Baby Hummingbirds, and One Murderously Big Crosswary.

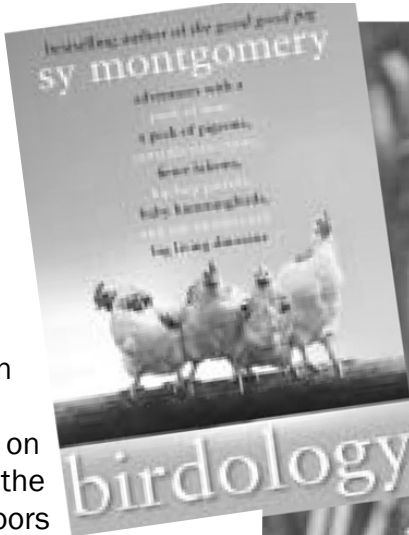
Join us for a fascinating presentation by nature-writer Sy Montgomery - based on her new book, "Birdology," on Wednesday, May 26 at 7 p.m., at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. (Doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

The lecture is presented in partnership with the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium's Conservation Lecture Series.

The cost is \$10/person and you must purchase tickets for the event through the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium Web site at www.columbuszoo.org.

There will be a reception and book-signing following the presentation.

Call (614) 724-3405 for more information.



Award-winning author Sy Montgomery.

Photo by Phebe Lewan

Sy Montgomery writes for adults and children. Montgomery has written and developed two television documentaries for National Geographic. She is a contributor to the national environmental radio show "Living on Earth."

Montgomery also lectures widely on conservation topics at zoos, museums, universities and schools, for both adults and children.

Montgomery is a 1979 graduate of Syracuse University, a triple major with dual degrees in Magazine Journalism and in French Language and Literature and in Psychology.

Columbus Audubon

Coming up

Continued from page 4

der 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.metro parks.net.

Birds and Hyacinths at Stratford Ecological Center

Tuesday, May 11, 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Katryn Renard

Stratford Ecological Center has everything - woods, fields, edge habitat, ponds, even a state Nature Preserve. We will explore all this in our search for migratory birds. There's a bonus feature too; if our timing is right, the wild hyacinth will be in bloom, literally blanketing the forest floor. SEC is in Delaware County and it is well worth the drive. In addition to the birds we are sure to see, you will be welcome to stay and explore the woods and fields and then to top off the morning with a visit to the barn. Stratford is also an organic farm and has many farm animals that enjoy a nice back-scratching. Directions to the Stratford Ecological Center: Stratford is located just south of the city of Delaware, Ohio - a short distance west of the junction of State Route 23 and State Route 315.

From State Route 315, turn west onto Bunty Station Road and follow for 1 mile (Gabby's Place, a small carry-out, is at the corner of 315 and Bunty Station Road). At stop sign, turn north onto Liberty Road. Stratford is a quarter of a mile on the right. Follow the gravel drive through the woods to the parking lot.

CA Birdathon trip to Magee Marsh

Saturday, May 15, 6:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Leader: Earl Harrison

Have you wanted to do a "Big Day" or "May Run" (trying to see as many species as possible in a single day) or participate in the "Bird-A-Thon" (a Big Day to raise money for conservation) but have not? Well, now is your chance! Join a CA "team" (the "Red-eyed Wearios") as we bird our way from Columbus to Magee Marsh and the shore of Lake Erie in an attempt to see 100 species. We'll car pool from the Worthington Mall. For more information, contact Earl Harrison, eharrison@ehe.osu.edu or (614) 505-1123.

Scioto-Audubon/Green Lawn Cemetery

Sunday, May 16, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

If you can't get up to Lake Erie or don't have the full day for birds, make a morning of it with us at one of Columbus' most diverse birding areas, as well as its developing urban nature park. Migration should be just reaching its peak, and we'll especially be on watch for an good array of warblers, flycatchers, tanagers, and grosbeaks as we hope for a good fallout. What we don't find along the bikepath, we'll try to find at the nearby Green Lawn cemetery later in the morning. This is a great time for rarities. Meet at the South Scioto boat launch (off Whittier Street just before you reach the GIAC parking lot. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at 551-0643 or robthorn@earthlink.net.

Bird walk at Green Lawn Cemetery

Tuesday, May 18, 8 a.m.

Leader: Katryn Renard

Greenlawn Cemetery is one of the most well-loved birding spots

in Columbus. Beginners and novices are especially welcome on this walk as we search for our favorites, including scarlet tanagers, bluebirds, and of course, warblers of any kind. Meet at "the pit" Green Lawn Cemetery is located at 1000 Greenlawn Ave., Columbus. Greenlawn Avenue is exit 105 off Interstate 71 just South of Columbus. Head west on Greenlawn Avenue, and it will take you right into the cemetery.

Strays of the Darby Creeks

Saturday, June 5, 8 a.m.

Leader: Rob Thorn

The isolation of the Darby Creeks, along with the mix of different habitats along them, make for an enticing place to find a diversity of birds, including some very out-of-place species. In late Spring and early Summer, all sorts of unusual species stray here, and past years have produced Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Clay-colored Sparrow, Black-billed Cuckoo, White Ibis, King Rail, Sedge Wrens, and others. The new wetlands at Prairie Oaks and Battelle-Darby parks will only increase this trend. We'll have our ears to the local grapevine and be roaming around the best spots in search of this year's strays. Meet at the Darby Bend Lakes area of Prairie Oaks MetroPark, off Amity Rd, at 8:00 AM; the trip should be over by 1:00. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at 551-0643 or robthorn@earthlink.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 week-end trips. Unless otherwise noted, participants should meet at the southwest corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot at the designated time. Visit www.columbusaudubon.org for upcoming trips.

Service in the Preserves

Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve

Saturday, June 5, 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Leader: Katryn Renard

Have you been to Boch Hollow? It's a beautiful hollow tucked away in the Hocking Hills that not many people know about. It is not normally open to the public, but our ticket for entry will be helping the Ohio Department of Natural Resources care for it. Our primary task will be clearing trails (there are 10 miles of trails through woods, past rock faces and along ponds) followed by perhaps some staining of a gazebo and shelter house. There are plenty of other miscellaneous tasks, too—something to fit everyone's preference.

No training is needed. Please call Katryn Renard by Wednesday, June 2 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.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org

Staff: Center Director: Heather Starck
Conservation Program Coordinator: Doreen Whitley
Educators: Joe Jennings & Tori Strickland
Finance & Office Manager: Christy Smith
Facilities Operations Manager: Wade Walcutt
Office phone: 614-545-5475
Center hours: Tuesday-Friday 10-6pm, Saturday 9-3, and Sunday 11-5.

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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, jmeara@columbus.rr.com
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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Bluebirds

Continued from page 1

ings in your yard. Offer water if it is not readily available.

Inspect your nestbox to see that you can open it for monitoring and cleaning and is ventilated and has good drainage. Make sure the inside of the door has grooves so the young can climb out for their maiden flight. Face the nestbox in a southeastern direction out of the prevailing northwest winds and weather. Place a baffle on the pole (do not place the nestbox on trees) do discourage climbing predators such as raccoons, snakes and feral cats.

Bluebirds build a nest of dried grass or pine needles in a week or less and are skillful to construct a level nest with a nice cup where they lay an egg a day (4-6 in a clutch) then begin incubation after the last egg is laid. Take the time to keep a notebook of your observations and be sure to monitor or open the nestbox weekly. The female will incubate the eggs for 14 days and they will all hatch on the same day. Try not to disturb the female during hatching. It could be harmful to the young if they become chilled or damp because you opened the box during cool, wet weather. Use a mechanic's mirror and flashlight instead of opening the box. By watching the behavior of the adults you will be able to see them flying to the nestbox with food and leaving with a whitish fecal sac in their beaks. This is a good sign of a growing family! The parents can feed the young 30 to 50 times a day. Offering mealworms can help the adults and later the young and can be a fun thing to do in your yard.

As the young grow older, be careful to keep good notes and do not open the nestbox after the young are 12 days old.

Opening the nestbox after the 12th day can cause the young to prematurely fledge or leave the box too early and lessen their chance to survive. As it is, only 50-percent make it to their first birthday. The young fledge or leave the nestbox between 18-22 days of age.

The adults, primarily the male, will carefully watch over the young after fledging and will teach them to fly and hunt for their own food. By about 2.5 weeks after fledging the young will begin to hunt on their own. Soon the female will start another nest preparing to raise another family.

Providing food, water, cover and housing is a rewarding experience for the whole family. You will learn together, feel like you are really lending a hand to who ever moves in to your backyard housing then share your experiences with others. It is very important to eliminate the use of pesticides and to try to garden with native plants for the benefit of the well being of your guests.

The rewards are endless and your contributions to conservation important. Spread the word to your friends and neighbors so they can join in on the fun.

Pick up the most widely read book by Julie Zickefoose "*Enjoying Bluebirds More.*" Visit the Web sites of *Bird Watchers Digest*, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and their Birdhouse Network site and the North American Bluebird Society to obtain more useful information. Good luck.

-Darlene Sillick