

Focusing on Winter Ecology and Families in Nature

As winter begins to take hold from the pleasant, pretty days of fall, families are taking their winter coats out of storage, adding extra blankets to their beds and getting their furnaces/cars checked, in preparation for days of snow and cold.

While we get ready, our feathered friends are getting ready too. Some species of birds migrate away from Ohio, some to Ohio from points north and some stay year-round adapting to the changing environment. This issue focuses on those adaptations as well as what you and your family can do to enjoy this season of change from hot busy humid days to the quiet and calm cold of winter.

Popular winter migrants to watch out for are Saw-whet Owls, Short-eared Owls, Pine Siskins, Dark-eyed Juncos and Snow Buntings. Some bird species like the American Goldfinch molt their bright summer colors in favor of winter's subdued hues. Families can take part in many winter activities and help scientists too by participating in a local Christmas Bird Count (December 14 - January 2,) FeederWatch (all winter) or the Great Backyard Bird Count (February). The key is to get out there and have fun!

Look for features inside

Christmas
Bird Count

Creature
Feature:
Horned Lark

Snow tracks

Natural holi-
day decorat-
ing



Look for the
snowflake icon for
our special Winter
Ecology/Families in
Nature features

Stock up for the season by buying bird seed from CA

Fall migration is upon us and time is drawing near to think about stocking up for the bird feeding season.

The Columbus Audubon Bird Seed Sale is a perfect way to stock up on quality seeds and seed blends and lend a helping hand to both birds and Columbus Audubon.

Online ordering via www.columbusaudubon.org will begin in early November for pick-up in December. You can place orders online until December 15.

There is also an abbreviated form included on page six of this newsletter for those of you who wish to mail your order in via snail mail.

As in past years, the seed you order can be picked up December 1-24 at Wild Birds Unlimited, 5400 Riverside Drive in Columbus. All proceeds from the 2011 Bird Seed Sale will go to Columbus Audubon.



SEED MIXES

SUNFLOWER: The sunflower is black, oil seed. If you use sunflower you might also give safflower a try. It also has a high oil content and is a good alternative feed.

WBU DELUXE BLEND: Black oil sunflower 50%, white millet 35%, striped sunflower 10%, safflower 5%.

WBU CHOICE BLEND: Oil sunflower 55%, striped sunflower 15%, safflower 10%, sunflower chips 10%, peanut pieces 10%.

OHIO NO-MESS BLEND: No shell mess with this mix of seed meats, nuts and corn, sunflower chips 50%, cracked corn 25%, white millet 15%, peanut pieces 10%.

Letter from GIAC center director Christie Vargo

Dear Friends!

As I write this, it has been four months since I joined Audubon as the Center Director for the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. It is not cliché when I say I am thrilled to be here.

Some of you may know that I began my career path in the field of environmental education. I also played key roles in building three outdoor/nature education facilities. This includes the Grange Insurance Audubon Center where I worked with community leaders to raise the money to build and help operate the Center.

Although my motivation is creating environments where kids get introduced to nature, this is the very first time I have had the privilege to work in a facility I helped create. What a gift!

Since arriving, I have watched an incredibly committed and talented staff at work and thought I would share some recent accomplishments and benchmarks.

Recent Accomplishments and Short-Term Plans:

- Audubon Adventure Camp served 98 campers over the course of nine sessions held June-August 2011. Each session was larger than the next, culminating in 20 campers for the last session. This speaks to both the quality of the program and the value of word-of-mouth advertising.

- Eight youth-serving organizations participated in the Center's summer Partnership Camp programs, greatly expanding our reach, and enabling 1,275 campers to experience conservation education at the Center.

See giac page 15

Song Sparrow

November-December 2011

Vol. 44 No. 2

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org

614-545-5475

Staff: Center Director: Christie Vargo
Director of Development: Jeff Redfield
Facilities Operations Manager: Josh Cherubini
Finance and Office Manager: Kristen Clark
Program Coordinator: Amy Boyd
Educators: Allison Roush, Tori Strickland, Joe Jennings and Mindy Tehan
Nature Store Manager: Patty Hecht
Facility Attendants: Ian Dowden, Monica Johnson and Abby King
Volunteer Coordinator: Nancy Hartman
Office Phone: 614-545-5475
Center Hours: Winter Hours – Tuesday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Sundays Noon – 5 p.m.

Directions to the GIAC: From High Street (going south) turn right on Whittier (which runs along south end of German Village and Brewery District). From Front Street (going north) turn left onto Whittier. Follow Whittier, making no turns, across the bridge spanning the tracks, past the other side streets until you drive into the parking lot in front of the center.

Sandra Nessing (Chair)	Chester Jourdan
Greg Cunningham (Vice Chair)	Alan McKnight
Frances Beasley	John O'Meara
Beth Crane	Jan Rodenfels
Jeff Chaddock	Milt Schott
Julie Davis	
Carol Drake	
Bill Heck	

Columbus Audubon

Founded 1913

614-545-5475

www.columbusaudubon.org

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Additional chapter leaders:

Conservation: Dave Horn, 262-0312
Service in the Preserves: Katryn Renard, 261-7171
Education: Jackie Bain, jbain@insight.rr.com
Programs: Darlene Sillick, azuretrails@columbus.rr.com
Field Trips: Earl Harrison, eharrison@ehe.osu.edu
CA Web site: Bill Heck, bill.heck@gmail.com
Ohio Young Birders: Gerry Brevoort, jbrevoor@columbus.rr.com
Eco Weekend: Roz Horn, 262-0312; Lois Day, (740) 549-0333
Membership: Joe Meara, 430-9127
IBA Committee: Heather Raymond, 785-0342
Birdathon: Julie Davis, 523-2180 or Katryn Renard, 261-7171

Welcome new and renewed members!

Linda Allen & Dick Cunningham
Kathy Beany
Kirt Beling
Philip Beltz
Roger & Phyllis Bower
Geraldine Brevoort
Melissa Brubaker
Karen Cantlon
Beth Carnate
Deborah Cox
Barbara & Terry Davis
Andrea Denning
Connie L. Emerson
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Dennis & Janet Forrest
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Jeanie Lisak
Andrea Lowman
Bishop Robert Lybbert
Terry Maloney-Rose
Susan Meiling
Valerie Mitrione & Mary Vance
John Morcos
Robin & Dick Mullet
Jen Rankin
Caroline Rayner & Bernadette Vankeerbergen
Rachel Renkes
Andre Robinson
Michelle Rogers
Don & Kris Ross
Ginny Salamy
Joshua Sarver
Pat Smith & Bonnie Halchin-Smith
Karla & Saul Strieb
Gail Thomas
Mike & Tawana Thorn
Jim Tilling
Sean Tominey & Ashlee Clark
Ramon C. Wilson
Muriel J Yeoman
Andrea S.B. Yough
Jane B. Young
Current through 9/30/11

Thank you recent GIAC donors

Jim Kernen
Donna & Thomas Sheley
Wanda & Arnold Coldiron
Gary & Morna Smith
Jeffrey Miller
Alexander Durrugh
Paul Bingle
W. Scott Haynes
Johann Cozart
Frances Beasley
Charles & Jan Rodenfels

Gregory Cunningham
Lisa A. Purvis-Hinson
Robert H. Jeffrey
Timothy & Laura Dornan
James A. & Adelyn K. Nowjack
Linda H. & Delmar G. Nida
"Ward L. Cornett, III and Becky Sutherland Cornett"
Sara and Gregory Klein
Guy Carpenter
Current through 9/30/11

GIAC Wish List

The GIAC's need for donated items continues to change.

Some new "needs" have come up and we're happy to say that other needs have been met.

Our current major need continues to be mud boots, rain parkas and gloves for children ages 8 to 12.

Many of the children attending our school program 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 donations (or questions) for the Center, please call us at

614/545-5475.

Items Needed:

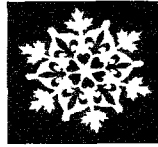
Cords of firewood (local only)
Wheel barrow
Rakes
Snow blower
Power washer
Magnifying glasses
Children's scissors
Recycled copy paper
Spotting scope
Telescope
Laminator
Sharpies and dry-erase markers (any colors)

See Wish List page 15

Horned Lark

The Delaware Christmas Bird Count Circle focuses on this wintering bird

"Look. There goes another!"
 "No way. How did you see that?"
 "Look for the movement."
 "I certainly can't see them when they land."



These were snatches of a conversation I was part of as we traveled through the farmlands of Wisconsin in early Spring, running between ponds looking for waterfowl. The subject? That field will-o'-the-wisp, the Horned Lark.

We'd see their ghostly forms flitting out into the fields everywhere, but it was a challenge to keep track of them, especially once they landed. This is one of the quintessential open country birds of the Midwest, a bird that livens up even the dullest open farmfields.

Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) are members of a large family of larks, but you'd never know it if you were only focused on American birds. Larks are an Old World family that has the vast bulk of species in Eurasia and Africa, with only Horned Larks as a representative in North America. The family includes the Skylarks (*genus Alauda*), the Calandra Larks (*genus Melanocorypha*), and the Desert larks (*Ammomanes*), among others. Horned Larks are known as Shore Larks in much of Eurasia, and are one of the few larks to breed in the tundra of Europe and Siberia.

This trait apparently allowed them to invade our continent, probably over the Bering Land Bridge around the same time that humans migrated to North America.

They are still common breeders in the arctic tundra, as well as above tree-line in most western mountain ranges; most of our winter Larks are birds from the Canadian arctic.

Horned Larks' invasion of North America has been very successful. They now inhabit virtually the entire continent, nesting in virtually every state except Florida. (My own memories of Larks from growing up in Florida were that they were rare, prized vagrants to beaches during winter.)

This success is almost certainly the result of human transformation of the landscape. Larks love the wide open fields created by human agriculture.

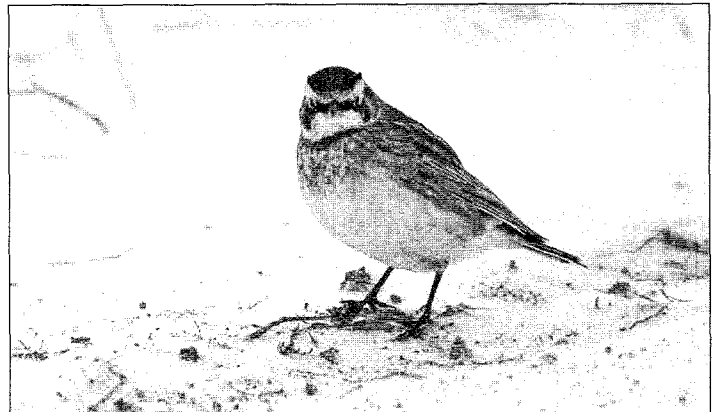
They forage in the fields and nest in grassy borders to these same fields. This is reflected in the fact that they were not original natives of primeval Ohio.

Records show that Horned Larks were strictly migrants and winter visitors to the state before the 1880s, and their colonization of the state after that time correlates with the expansion of large-scale corn farming and industrial agriculture into the state.

The small farm plots of pre-industrial-revolution Ohio would not have held much attraction to Horned Larks; in a very real sense, their colonization was enabled by John Deere and International Harvester.

With their ability to nest and feed in tundra-like conditions, Horned larks are able to breed very early in the year, often setting up territories by March.

Their subtle coloration, which offers excellent camouflage in open fields, does not make for much of a visual display. Instead, adult male Larks advertise their presence by 'skylarking' – flying up into the air and singing on the wing during a spiraling descent. Their song is a beautiful series of tinkling notes and is not easy to localize.



By Terri Sohl

Horned Larks are found in farm fields and open areas in the winter months in Ohio.

It's very different from the thin short 'see....tui' call notes that they use to keep a flock together. Later, as their territories and mates are settled, they will sing more from the ground. The female lays 3-5 eggs in a grass- and feather-lined scrape in the ground, and incubates for 11-12 days.

The nestlings, though born altricial, grow and develop quickly to fledging. Multiple broods are common, helping to explain the seemingly endless supply of Horned Larks on Ohio's fields.

For inhabitants of open fields, Horned Larks are surprisingly hardy, often being one of our last birds to migrate in the Fall and one of the first ones to migrate in the Spring.

They seem immune to the cold, and will even forage roadside edges for windblown seeds if the snow covers their fields.

In Fall, large flocks of Horned Larks are often still migrating into December, and many birds only move south when the snow becomes too thick for effective foraging.

The Lark numbers on central Ohio Christmas Bird Counts vary wildly, depending on weather and snowfall, and the Delaware CBC even offers a tongue-in-cheek Horned Lark award each year to the participant who can guess closest to the correct number of Larks found on the count.

As temperatures moderate in late winter, flocks of Larks start heading back north, usually starting in February. At that time, you can hear calling larks flying north overhead on almost any clear day, one of the first real signs that winter is on the wane.

Where can you see them in central Ohio? Basically, get out of town. Any large flat open field will have a few; the more open the area, the better your chances of finding them.

Airports are great spots to find larks, and Port Columbus International Airport, Rickenbacker Airport, Bolton Field, Don Scott Field, and the Pickaway County Airfield all have a few.

Other nearby open areas that usually have some are along Miller Paul Rd (east of Hoover Reservoir), Beatty Rd (south of Grove City), Darby Creek Drive, and the far western sections of Hayden Run & Rings Roads west of Hilliard and Dublin.

A few birds remain to breed in all of these locations, but they are harder to see in late Spring and Summer except when they are singing. There's really no time when you can't find Horned larks somewhere locally.

-By Rob Thorn

Let nature be your inspiration

Natural Holiday decorating can be more meaningful for the whole family

Even though the temperatures are dropping, you can bring outside in this holiday season and let nature inspire you!

Set out on a fresh, crisp autumn day with a light breeze or a cold winter day with a gentle snowfall to collect some of nature's most beautiful treasures.

Seeing the beauty of the great outdoors incorporated into your holiday decorating will surely warm your heart, home and maybe even your spirit from Thanksgiving through the New Year!

Think of all of the decorations you have sitting in boxes in your basement or attic. You'll just have to drag those out, unpack them, dust them off, enjoy them for awhile and then pack them away once again.

Only pull out those items that hold the most meaning to you and then get creative! Gather leaves, fallen twigs and branches, dried grasses, colorful berries, evergreens and even those last steadfast flowers clinging to hold on to warmer days and turn them into wreaths, centerpieces, napkin rings, even candle-holders...the possibilities are endless for decorating with nature!

After the holidays are over, reflect on your gratitude for your natural surroundings and the gifts nature provided you through the season. Gather up the items you enjoyed during the holidays and return them back to nature!

Throw them in your compost pile, help create a habitat for your outdoor friends to take shelter in for the duration of winter, or provide a new home for nesting animals to move into in spring!

All that's left to do now is exactly what the old song says "Deck the halls with boughs of holly!" It's our hope that this holiday season you'll be inspired by nature — get outside and bring some back in with you!

-By Allison Roush



Other 'ways to go green for the holidays

- Buy a live holiday tree you can later plant in your yard for cover for birds.
- Send holiday cards electronically or use recycled paper.
- Use paper from old grocery bags or use old newspaper as wrapping paper instead of buying wrapping paper.
- Use local and sustainable produce, flowers, beverages, decor and rentals for holiday parties and meals.
- Make sure you have a recycling plan in place. Make recycling easy by having well-marked recycling bins near the tree or where you open gifts.
- Try to buy fair trade products and locally made crafts as gifts if possible.
- Try not to shop on Black Friday. Participate in the international Buy Nothing Day instead. Details can be found at <http://www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd>.
- Donate leftover food instead of throwing it away to a local food bank or homeless shelter.
- Don't serve bottled water. By serving filtered tap water you will generate less plastic waste.
- Don't use disposable plates, cups, cutlery, etc.
- Encourage guests to carpool or use mass transit.
- Encourage guests to book on greener airlines.
- Use green transportation/Rent hybrid and alternative-fuel vehicles. Use a taxi or car service that uses alternative-fuel vehicles.
- Carbon-balance your dinner. You can balance the environmental impact of your meal or party with a carbon offset purchase from a company like TerraPass. It is quite simple to calculate an event's carbon output and the cost of mitigation based on how many people will be attending and how many flights and hotel rooms will be used.

Source: Ecopreneurist, TreeHugger.com

The nature of animal tracks in snow

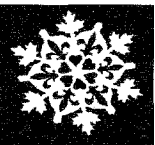
While hiking through the woods with a couple of teenage girls, we stopped for a moment to look at some tracks in the snow. They were neat, round prints, four toes per foot. The back foot had landed neatly on top of the front and the delicate footprints lined up like a necklace of pearls on a string, stretching into the woods. They whispered an irresistible invitation. We took off.

While tracking is a joyful experience any time of year, winter brings us incredible substrate with the snows. Tracking during the rest of the year is like snacking on short stories while tracks left behind in the snow are written like intriguing novels, rich with description and action and a much deeper plot.

A lot of people seem to be afraid to try tracking. It's easy though. You just find a few prints and start following them.

Give yourself permission to not get caught up in getting a quick ID. Just follow along and let all the clues unravel themselves.

That day when we left the trail we fell deep into the tracking spell and became the animal himself. Here he stood on a log and paused. We pause as well and without meaning to, we smell the

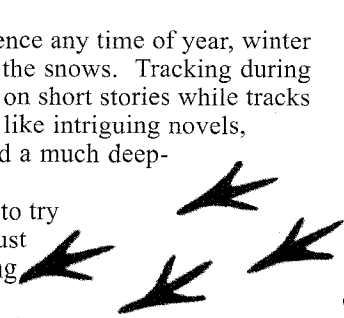


air, we listen, we look carefully around. Why did he stop here? What did he see? He moved on and we do also, in silence. Here is where the pace picked up. Why? Here is where a hole was dug. Was he looking for voles? Our senses sharpen with each step. We don't talk anymore as we move. We start becoming one with the woods.

Most folks think it's hard to figure out what animal they are tracking. If you want to get serious about it, get a good tracking field guide and go through it with a bright colored highlighter. Just highlight the animals in your state. Now that you got rid of most of the book it doesn't seem so overwhelming.

On your snow walk, find a good clear track and count the toes. Four toes on all feet, with claws equals the dog family. Fox, coyote, dog. Four toes no claws equal bobcat or domestic cat. Four toes in front, five in back equals rodents like mice, squirrels, rabbits, groundhogs (yes, they come out in the winter). Five toes each foot include skunk, mink, opossum, raccoon and bear. These aren't all the possibilities but they are the common ones and a good place to start.

Our walk takes us along game trails. We see a place where he sat and laid down. There is some scat and we dissect it with a



See tracks, page 13

Christmas Bird Count

The Columbus Christmas Bird Count heads out on December 18

On Dec 18, teams of birders will be roaming around Columbus parks and neighborhoods looking for all sorts of wintering birds as part of one of the oldest green projects in the country. Who would want to spend a cold winter day birding urban Columbus? We had over 50 participants helping out last year, and we were one of over 50 counts in Ohio alone. There were several thousand Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) spread out across the U.S. and into Mexico and central America last year.

The CBCs are actually a long-running Audubon tradition, established over 100 years ago, and have become one of the longest-running volunteer bio-monitoring projects. The rules are simple: count all the birds you can in a 15-mile-diameter circle on one day between Dec 16 – Jan 7. Columbus aims for an early Sunday to minimize traffic and maximize temperature and that falls on Dec. 18 this year.

How do we do a CBC? Since few counts can hope to completely cover their areas, most CBCs focus their efforts on the best bird-finding locations in their count circles. Here in Columbus, our circle is centered just north of Bexley, so it stretches from Northland south to Groveport, and Blacklick west to Upper Arlington. We have 10 - 12 separate birding teams focused on the best parks and neighborhoods in this area: Blendon Woods, Blacklick Woods, Scioto-Audubon Metro Park and the Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC), Ohio State University, Clintonville, Grandview Heights, Greenlawn, Three-Creeks, and more.

Even with all these parks, much of the count area is decidedly urban and suburban, although it was much less so when the count started back in the 1960s.

Our CBC has literally documented the winter bird population changes as Columbus has grown from a small city into a major metropolitan area.

What can we hope to find on a cold December day? You'd be surprised at the number and variety of birds that call Columbus a winter home. Over the past ten years, we've averaged 75 species and over 20,000 individuals. The numbers that each team sees varies with the habitats and the amount of time they spend outside, but a list of 40-45 species for each team is quite typical. Of course, many of the birds we find are the ubiquitous urban birds one finds all over town: Ring-billed Gulls,

Central Ohio Christmas Bird Count circles	
COLUMBUS	DELAWARE
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DATE: Jan. 1, 2012 • Compiler: Brad Sparks	
Phone: 614-751-6622 • E-mail: birdmansparks@yahoo.com	

Starlings, Crows, Cardinals, House Sparrows. But there are also a variety of other, wilder species that always are residing in our city. Mourning Doves, Red-bellied and Downy woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, American Robins, Carolina wrens, White-throated Sparrows, and American Goldfinches are among the many 'wild' species that are adapting to human yards and parks in Columbus, and all of our teams usually see good numbers of these species. Other formerly-uncommon winter visitors, like Flickers, Cedar Waxwings, Eastern Bluebirds, Mockingbirds, and Juncos, have become more common in recent years, perhaps attracted by the many fruit trees in our yards and feeders around our houses.

Do we ever get unusual birds? You bet, but even a 'usual' summer bird can be a treat in winter. Perhaps it's related to global warming, but many 'fair-weather' birds are now toughing it out here in the winter. Large numbers of Great Blue Herons now winter along our creeks and rivers, and waterfowl have also started to linger in these areas and open ponds. We have found 10-14 species of waterfowl, including lots of dabbling ducks, cormorants, and Pied-billed Grebes. We also have a burgeoning population of resident raptors, led by Cooper's hawks and Red-tailed hawks, which can be found in almost every area of the city. Bald eagles, almost unknown from the area 6 years ago, are now expect-

ed on every Count. Even secretive owls, like Great Horned and Barred, are still found in many of our wooded parks. We have even been getting increasing numbers of 'half-hardy' birds, species like sapsuckers, hermit thrushes, chipping sparrows, and even a few warblers, that are hanging on at the northern limits of their winter ranges. And every so often we get an outright jaw-dropping rarity, like a Rufous Hummingbird ('03), a Grasshopper Sparrow ('05), a Western Tanager ('06), or a Dickcissel ('08). So, yeah, we get unusual birds.

Why even go out into the cold to count birds? In a word, bio-monitoring. While some birds are increasing their winter presence here, other species aren't doing well, and counts like the CBC are the best way to chart these changes. Certain yard birds like chickadees, red-bellied woodpeckers, and white-throated sparrows, seem to be booming, while other species like titmice and House Finches might actually be getting scarcer. CBC totals will help us clarify these trends. Open country birds, like meadowlarks, blackbirds, harriers, and Savannah sparrows, have definitely declined as most of the open fields of past years have been turned into subdivisions. Our CBC will see if the open space initiatives in Columbus and the MetroParks can reverse this trend. Marsh birds like rails, Coots, snipes, and Swamp Sparrows have also become rare as their wetlands have

See CBC page 8

Conservation success story: Ohio snake 'DeListed'

Every now and then we can celebrate a conservation victory and a recent one for Ohioans is the removal of the Lake Erie Water Snake from the Federal endangered species list.

The snake is native to the Lake Erie islands and was listed as endangered in 1999 due to loss of habitat and indiscriminate killing often in the mistaken belief that the animals are poisonous. They are not, but one that is picked up may defend itself and deliver a nasty bite.

The snakes grow to over 3 feet long and are once again a fairly common sight as they sun themselves on beaches, rocks, docks and decks of boats.

A combination of intensive research, pub-

lic education and shoreline protection through outright purchase or conservation easements brought about the recovery, and there are now over 12,000 snakes in a population that seems secure. A further positive note to the story is the interagency cooperation that got the job done.

The Black Swamp Conservancy, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Put-in-Bay Township Park District, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and Northern Illinois and Ohio State Universities all worked jointly with the Ohio Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. (The Lake Erie Water Snake remains on the Ohio endangered species list and it is illegal to kill one.)

In an ironic twist of the story, 90-percent of the Lake Erie Water Snake's food is the Round Goby, an invasive Great Lakes species native to eastern Europe (and the subject of a Song Sparrow article a few years back).

The Goby seems to be in Lake Erie to stay so it looks like the snake's food supply is assured for some time. (The snakes do eat native fish and amphibians and would likely turn back to these traditional prey should the Goby be eliminated some day.)

For more information and resources about the Lake Erie Water Snake visit: www.respectthesnake.com/about.html

-Dave Horn

Columbus Audubon 2011 SEED ORDER FORM

Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Address: _____ ZIP: _____

ITEM	UNIT/PRICE	CODE	NUMBER	TOTAL
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER	20 lbs \$20.00	AA		
WBU SUPREME BLEND	20 lbs \$22.00	AK		
WBU DELUXE BLEND	20 lbs \$20.00	AB		
WBU CHOICE BLEND	20 lbs \$23.00	AC		
WBU SELECT BLEND	20 lbs \$13.00	AJ		
OHIO NO MESS BLEND	20 lbs \$20.00	AL		
NYGER/THISTLE	10 lbs \$15.00	AD		
NYGER/THISTLE	20 lbs \$28.00	AE		
SAFFLOWER	20 lbs \$24.00	AF		
CRACKED CORN	20 lbs \$9.00	AG		
WBU WINTER BLEND	20 lbs \$28.00	FC		
PEANUT CHUNKS	10 lbs \$18.00	AM		
PEANUT CHUNKS	20 lbs \$33.00	AN		
WHOLE PEANUTS	7 lbs \$15.00	FA		
WBU PEANUT SUET CAKES	11.75 oz. \$2.00	AI		
WHITE MILLET	20 lbs \$10.00	FB		
NEW: WHOLE KERNEL CORN	20 lbs \$8.50	AH		

Make Checks Payable To & Mail To: COLUMBUS AUDUBON 877 MOHAWK ST. COLUMBUS, OH 43206
 ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 15 - ALL PRICES INCLUDE TAX

OYBC members help with Lake Erie Water Snake research

Members of the Ohio Young Birders Club (OYBC) went outside the realm of ornithology to experience another field: herpetology on Aug. 20. Gathering at the Catawba Island ferry dock, the group proceeded to South Bass Island (SBI).

After disembarking from the ferryboat, the band of birders, led by club advisors Ken Keffer, Gerry Brevoort, John Sawvel, Tim Daniel, Darlene Sillick, and Susan Setterlin, took the OYBC bus to SBI State Park. Once the unit had assembled at the park shelter house, Kristin Stanford (of "Dirty Jobs" television fame), the Recovery Plan Coordinator of the Lake Erie Water Snake at OSU's Stone Laboratory, presented an interactive lecture on the snakes found on the Lake Erie islands, as well as data about snakes in general.

She also shared the exciting news that the Lake Erie Water Snake (*Nerodia sipedon insularum*) was taken off the federal endangered species list, as she showed us native snakes, including Brown Snake, Rat Snake, Fox Snake, Blue Racer, and, of course, the Lake Erie Water Snake (LEWS).

Once Kristin laid down a few basic rules about snake catching, the troupe broke into two groups; one following her, and the other following Lisa Brohl, Chair for the Lake Erie Islands Chapter of Black Swamp Conservancy. Following the bagging of the LEWS, the snakes were then "read" for a tag number and, if there was none, one was implanted within the snake.

Measuring the length and mass of each snake followed. Upon completion, the herps were put in a closed pillowcase to await release. When all the reptiles had been released, the group went to the Scheeff East Point Nature Preserve for a bird walk led by Lisa Brohl.

LEWS like to lie on, and especially under, large rocks in order to maximize their body temperatures because they are poikilotherms. Poikilothermic organisms are more traditionally known



By Tim Daniel

Lake Erie Water Snake researcher Kristin Sanford, shows OYBC members how to measure the length of a snake.

by the terms "cold-blooded" and "ectothermic," and use external heat sources (like a sunny rock) to warm themselves.

On behalf of all the OYBC members, I'd like to thank the Island Snake Lady, Kirstin Stanford, for an awesome day spent with snakes and all her work with and on behalf of the conservation of LEWS and their habitat. Thanks also go out to Lisa Brohl, for leading a wonderful island bird walk and helping with the snakes. Lastly, thanks belong to those who make OYBC trips such as these possible: Ken, John, Gerry, Sue, Darlene, Tim, and of course the parents and others who support OYBC members.

-Kat Seeley, OYBC student member

New Columbus Audubon program format a success

Wow! OMG! Holy Cow! Oh, it's useless: I can't find the expression that conveys the excitement of our first monthly program of the 2011-2012 year. Greg Miller kicked it off with his presentation on The Big Year, and that's what my wow-ing is all about. Not only did Greg give a great presentation, but Mike Flynn started the evening with a hugely popular short program on Sandhill Cranes, our sponsors kicked in some great door prizes (thanks Wild Birds Unlimited), our new host Leslie Sours did a tremendous job, and Josh Cherubini and Abby King from the GIAC responded to every logistical need. Darlene Sillick has led the charge to bring our programs to a whole new level, and she and her team gave us an evening to remember.

By the time you read this, we will have had what promises to be another outstanding program October program. If you missed our September and October programs, take heart: we have six more coming up this season. The next is November 22 when you can hear from Dave and Jill Russell about "Birding the Ice Trucker Highway" in Alaska. I was fortunate enough to join them on this very highway earlier this year, and can tell you that they have a story not to be missed. (And, having heard them speak before, I also can tell you that their enthusiasm is contagious!) Check the Events Calendar on the Columbus Audubon Web site for all our programs.

While you're at the calendar, be sure to take a look at our field trips as well. You don't have to be a birder to enjoy our trips, but

beware: seeing birds and other wildlife in the beautiful areas that we visit can be addictive. You might just fall in love with such an inexpensive, family-oriented way to enjoy the outdoors. It's a nice way to get yourself – and the kids – away from the computer screen and the TV for a few hours as well.

Finally, I'd like to remind you about an activity that has been going on for years but often seems to fly under the radar. I'm talking about the "Service in the Preserves" series run by Katryn Renard. About once a month, Katryn rounds up some very dedicated volunteers to do maintenance and improvement work in Ohio's preserves and wildlife areas. For example, their November 12th job is in Christmas Rocks State Nature Preserve in the Hocking Hills, where they will mend some boardwalk, install several sign posts, and perhaps do some minor trail clearing. We all know that state budgets are down, but the need to preserve our natural heritage doesn't go away with shrinking budgets. And consider this: don't you like the idea of getting to the end of the day and actually seeing what you have accomplished? You sure can see a nice boardwalk and some new signs! So if you think it's time to get off the couch and do something productive, check out the Service in the Preserves work trips on the Events Calendar at the CA Web site or give Katryn a call at (614-261-7171).

You can find the CA Web site at ColumbusAudubon.org.

-Bill Heck

Columbus Audubon November-December activities

Service in the Preserves: Christmas Rocks
Saturday, November 12 at 7:45 a.m.

Autumn and Christmas Rocks State Nature Preserve in the Hocking Hills are made for each other. It's a steep hike for the best view but once you get there you forget about the climb and simply soak in the magnificence of it all. We will mend some boardwalk, install several sign posts, and perhaps do some minor trail clearing. Meet in the parking lot inside the gate house at the Ohio Department Natural Resources Complex, 2045 Morse Road. Please call Katryn Renard by Wednesday, November 9 at (614) 261-7171 to sign up.

Alum-Hoover Waterbirds

Sunday, November 13 at 8:30 a.m.

Can't wait til Spring to get that waterfowl fix? This trip may be just the finger to scratch that itch. We'll use a gap in the waterfowl hunting season to search for migrant waterbirds, starting at Alum Creek State Park, then making the short jaunt east to nearby Hoover Reservoir. Meet at the Westerville Community Center. Contact Rob Thorn at robthorn@earthlink.net or 614-551-0643.

Green Lawn Cemetery Birding

Saturday, November 19 at 8:30 a.m.

Join Darlene Sillick and Warren Grody at one of the oldest cemeteries in central Ohio. <http://www.greenlawncolumbus.org>. Meet at the Green Lawn Cemetery Office. Contact Darlene Sillick at azuretrails@columbus.rr.com or 614-288-3696.

Deer Creek Lake

Sunday, November 20 at 2:30 p.m.

A small group of Sandhill Cranes sometimes spends November 10-25 near Deer Creek Lake, and we will make our annual trek to see if this is a good year. We will meet at Deer Creek Marina, east off State Route 207 south of Pancoastburg. If the marina gate is closed, go to the boat launch area. Look for either a green or a black Subaru Outback. Contact Dave Horn at (614) 262-0312 or davehorn43@columbus.rr.com.

Killdeer Plains

Saturday, December 3 at 8:30 a.m.

Join us to look for early wintering waterfowl

and raptors. Meet at the old Worthington Mall (SE Parking Lot). Contact Earl Harrison at harrison.304@osu.edu or 614-505-1123.

The Urban Scioto - Scioto Audubon MP

Saturday, December 3 at 9 a.m.

Migration should be leaving its last marks as we survey the Scioto River north and south of the Green Lawn Dam. Meet at the Scioto Audubon Boat launch. Contact Rob Thorn at robthorn@earthlink.net or 614-551-0643.

Birding at Blendon Woods Metro Park

*Sunday, December 4 at 10 a.m. and
Sunday, January 1, 2012 at 8 a.m.*

Join metro park naturalist Bruce Simpson on a bird walk on the trails around Blendon Woods Metro Park. Meet at the Nature Center. Contact Bruce Simpson at Simpson@MetroParks.net.

Birding Around O'Shaughnessy Dam

Monday, December 26 at 9 a.m.

We'll check out the new dam park west of the zoo, then move on to the Twin Lakes area and the Ohio Wildlife Center. We'll visit a quarry on Dublin Road and check out the Emily Traphagen Preserve before circling back to Wendy's. Dress warmly and bring your scope if you have one. Contact Darlene Sillick at azuretrails@columbus.rr.com or 614-288-3696.

New Year's Day Hike at Battelle Darby

Sunday, January 1, 2012 at noon

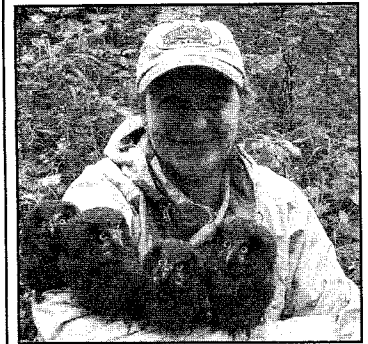
Join us as we discover some of the exceptional features to be found in our largest Metro Park. Battelle Darby Creek consists of 7,000 acres including forests, fields and prairies. Meet at the parking lot near the main park entrance. Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 769-1681.

Winter Birrrrr-ding in Minnesota

Feb. 9-13, 2012 (Tentative)

Trip to Sax Zim Bog, one hour north of Duluth, Minn. Limited number of spaces available. We will search for winter species such as Great Gray, Snowy, and Boreal Owls. The tentative aspect of this trip is that there must be enough confirmed reservations by Dec. 1 to reserve housing and transportation. To find out more, please call Mike Flynn (614) 769-1681.

November Program



By David Russell

Jill Russell with Boreal Owls on her arm.

Please join us Tuesday, November 22 to learn about the birding adventures of David and Jill Russell along the Ice-Trucker Highway, also known as "Haul Road," in Alaska. (starting at 7:30 p.m. after the short program).

For the past two summers David and Jill have taught at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and, in addition this past summer, they conducted research on the growth and development of young Boreal Owls in Alaska. David and Jill are very passionate about their birding careers and they will share their work from our 50th state from their research project and photographic documentation.

David Russell, is a professor at Miami University. His wife, Jill Russell is Assistant Professor of Biology at The College of Mount St. Joseph.

The CA Short Program (7 p.m.) will feature Columbus Audubon Co-Field Trip Chair, Earl Harrison. He will discuss Gull ID and the Cleveland Lakefront area and where best to view wintering gulls.

Columbus CBC heads out on December 18

Continued from page 5

been filled in. Can the mitigation wetlands springing up along Blacklick and Alum Creeks reverse this decline? CBC data will help answer this question. Only long-term counts like the CBC can tell if Columbus' efforts to 'go green' are actually helping wildlife in our city.

Why are we pestering you? Well, the bottom line is that we need good observers. The more sharp eyes we can field Dec 18th,

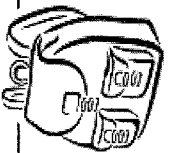
the better our chances of getting a good, representative count of Columbus' winter birds as well as ferreting out the rarities. You don't need to be a birding pro to help out. Most teams are a mix of veteran and neophyte birders. If you can walk and can look, you can help. So please consider coming out for the day, or at least the morning. Even just walking around your neighborhood and watching your feeders can be valuable. Join the green tradition of the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts.

-Rob Thorn

NOVEMBER 2011



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	NOTE: GIAC closed every Monday		Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.			Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
6 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.	7	8 Daylight Savings Time Ends	9 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	10	11	12 Service in the Preserves Christmas Rocks 7:45 a.m. Holiday Shop Around 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
13 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Alum-Hoover Waterbirds 8:30 a.m.	14	15	16 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	17	18	19 Explore the Many Wonders of Water at the GIAC (Brownies), 9-11 a.m. Green Lawn Cemetery bird walk 8:30 a.m. Get Energized and Take Eco-Action at the GIAC (Junior) noon-3 p.m.
20 Journey Between Earth and Sky at the GIAC (Daisy), Noon-1:30 p.m. Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Deer Creek Lake 2:30 p.m.	21	22 CA Short Program - Winter gull ID at 7 p.m. by Earl Harrison. David and Jill Russell will talk about the Ice Trucker Highway adventures at 7:30 p.m.	23 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	24 GIAC and Audubon will close at 3pm on Wednesday 11/23 Closed on both Thursday 11/24 and Friday 11/25 Reopen on Saturday (10am-3pm) and Sunday (Noon - 5pm) that weekend	25	26 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
27 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.	28	29	30 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.			Beginning Sept. 9 thru January 2012, limited edition watercolor prints by Jim Turanchik will be on display at GIAC.



Calendar key



GIAC events are in plain text. For complete descriptions of any event or program, see page 2.
Columbus Audubon events are in bold. For complete descriptions of any event or program, see page 2.





DECEMBER 2011



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 Bird walk at Blendon Woods 10 a.m. Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.	5 NOTE: GIAC closed every Monday	6	7 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	8	9 Cub Scout Overnight 7 p.m. Friday, - 10 a.m. Saturday.	10 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
11 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.	12	13	14 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	15	16	17 Breakfast w/ Father Nature 8-10am Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Hoover Reservoir Christmas Bird Count
18 Columbus & Delaware Christmas Bird Counts Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.	19	20	21 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m. Drop-in Winter Day Camp December 21-23	22	23 • GIAC will close at 3pm on Friday, December 23 • Reopen at 10am Tuesday, December 27	24 GIAC will close at 3pm on Friday, December 23
25 Christmas Center closed	26 Biding around O'Shaughnessy Dam 10 a.m.	27	28 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	29	30 GIAC will close at 3pm on Friday, Dec. 30	31 O'Shaughnessy Christmas Bird Count is Jan. 2, 2012

Save the Date:

New Year's Day Hike at Battelle Darby noon | Birding at Blendon Woods 8 a.m.
Winter Birr-riding in Minnesota Feb. 9-13, 2012 (Tentative)

Save the Date:

GIAC will close at 3pm on Friday, Dec. 30
GIAC Reopens on Tuesday January 3, 2012

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

GIAC receives a 2011 Scenic Ohio Award

On Saturday, Oct. 15, the Grange Insurance Audubon Center was recognized with a 2011 Scenic Ohio Award. The Scenic Ohio Award recognizes the work of agencies, local government, non-profits and others that significantly preserve and improve Ohio's scenic resources.

This awards program elevates the work of the many volunteers, staff and others behind the scenes that make projects like The Grange Insurance Audubon Center happen. The award selection jury was impressed by the GIAC's efforts to involve and educate students and the local community while reclaiming and restoring significant migratory bird habitat on the Whittier Peninsula. The Center and its programs were commended on their job of engaging students and visitors in a workable model of sustainable design and living.

Scenic Ohio is an affiliate of Scenic America. Created in 1933 as the Ohio Roadside Council, Scenic Ohio is the only not for profit in Ohio dedicated to protecting and enhancing the visual quality and scenic character of Ohio's towns and countryside. Scenic Ohio seeks to educate the public and elected officials about their ability to enact stricter laws, guidelines and cooperative agreements to enhance and protect the visual quality of the landscape. Scenic Ohio (www.scenicohio.org) is an entirely volunteer not for profit 501



GIAC Photo

(From left) Hope Taft, First Lady of the State of Ohio Emeritus; Christie Vargo, Grange Insurance Audubon Center Director; Gary Meisner FASLA, Chairman Scenic Ohio; and Jeff Redfield, Director of Development, Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

(c)(3) organization. Scenic Ohio is the oldest organization in America dedicated to preserving the visual environment.

Inaugural "Bluegrass Beer & Birds" Starts New Fall Tradition

On Friday, September 30, GIAC started a new fall tradition with "Bluegrass Beer & Birds", a counterpart to spring's Wine and Warblers event. Due to unseasonably cold weather, the festivities were moved inside and featured stage performances by Grassinine and Salty Caramels, two of Columbus' own bluegrass (or new-grass) bands.

Guests who bought "Back Stage Passes" enjoyed unplugged performances by Salty Caramels, beer, and pizza donated by Donatos.

Superior Beverage helped provide signage, the specialty beer sold- Leinenkugel Octoberfest, and Miller Lite and Coors. Each guest got a souvenir mug sponsored by Weisenbach, and \$10 in food/beverage tickets that could be used for beer, soda, water, snacks, or pizza. In addition to welcoming many people to the Center for the first time, the 2011 Bluegrass Beer and Birds raised funds for GIAC's conservation and free admission programs through tickets, purchases of additional food/beverage, and raffles for six great prizes including monthly pizza for a year from Donato's, a gift bag from Limited Brands, a Metro Park shelter rental, Columbus Zoo passes and behind the scenes tour, a birding package from GIAC Nature Store, a Bill Heck led birding session, and a Beer Pyramid donated by various board members, staff and volunteers.

"One of our big goals was to reach an audience that may not have been familiar with the Center. That's why kept it a low-cost



GIAC Photo

The crowd was entertained with a Eastern Screech Owl from the Ohio Wildlife Center.

birds presentation

- Eartha for the waste and recycling containers
- Metro Park for their Tram and special permits, and
- An amazing planning committee that included board members (Greg Cunningham, Julie Davis, and Jan Rodenfels), GIAC staff, and community volunteers (Andrea Morris, Chuck Clark, Kay Worrel, Laura Fullen and Anne Hays).

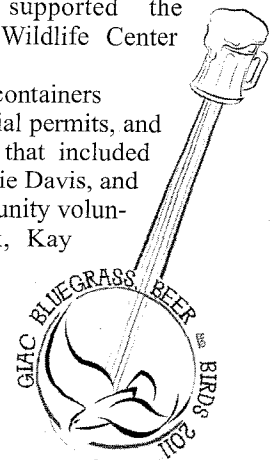
Planning for next year's event will start in March.

If you'd like to volunteer for the committee or on any special event, contact Amy Boyd at aboymd@audubon.org or 614-545-5486.

ticket-cost event. In addition, we received amazing support and promotion by WBNS-10TV, by Grassinine, and by Salty Caramels to their supporters on Facebook pages. This new tradition will continue to grow" shared Center Director, Christie Vargo.

In addition to the bands and other sponsors mentioned above, GIAC would like to thank:

- over 75 volunteers- including a large number of AEP employees and Columbus Audubon for birding
- Greg Cunningham who supported the Ohio Wildlife Center



Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Crane and Overmyer Win AFP Awards

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) – Central Ohio Chapter recently announced their 2011 philanthropy award winners and amongst those selected are two with very close ties to GIAC.

Beth Crane has been selected as AFP's community Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year for the variety and significance of her philanthropy efforts for a number of local non-profits including GIAC, Planned Parenthood, Columbus Metropolitan Club, the Columbus Museum of Art, the Women's Fund of Central Ohio, the Columbus Foundation's Conservation Fund Board (which she currently chairs), and many more. Beth's volunteer time, energy, and leadership for these organizations helps raise funds so they can achieve their various missions and serve the community.



Beth Crane

Lori Overmyer has been selected as AFP's 2011 Outstanding Fundraising Professional. Prior to her current position with

Goettler Associates Lori worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters in Columbus. GIAC supporters may know her for as she lead Goettler's team and efforts toward GIAC's capital campaign. Lori has twenty-five years of professional fundraising experience with a focus on the arts and human service organizations.



Lori Overmyer

Lori has developed an expertise in implementing annual and capital fundraising plans, strategic analysis, major donor solicitation, and establishing development procedures to maximize effective operations and communication. In addition to her work on GIAC, other projects she consulted for include the LifeCare Alliance and Capital Square Foundation. She has also served on countless committees and boards and was AFP chapter president in 2010. The award is the highest honor for AFP members.

Their awards will be presented on Tuesday, Nov. 22 as part of the 2011 AFP National Philanthropy Day luncheon. Ticket information can be found at www.afpcentralohio.org under Philanthropy Day.

GIAC welcomes new and renewed board members

This fall, GIAC welcomed three new members to our Stewardship Board and another board member renewed for an additional term.

New Board Members

Carol Drake – As one of the individual employees from Grange Insurance that personally got involved in the GIAC's initial planning and formation, Carol Drake has a history of supporting the Center. Carol has once again upped her involvement with her appointment to the Board and lends her knowledge and experience as Grange Insurance's Director of Marketing to help GIAC complete our mission.



Carol Drake

Bill Heck – Bill is a longtime birder and conservation advocate. Many of you know Bill through his significant involvement as

a member and a Board Member of the Columbus Audubon Chapter for many years. When Bill became President of Columbus Audubon in July, his position includes joining the GIAC Stewardship Board.

Milt Schott – While Milt has had a lifelong passion for the outdoors and conservation, his interest and awareness of the GIAC increased as others made him aware of the GIAC Capital Campaign. Milt encouraged his family's foundation (Harold C. Schott Family Foundation) to make a significant gift to the Center's capital campaign. Now back fulltime living in Columbus after a couple year of mainly working in North Carolina, Milt added joining the GIAC board to his transition and return to Columbus plans.

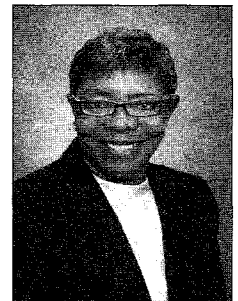


Milt Schott

Renewing Board Members

GIAC is also pleased to share the return/renewal of board members

- Frances Beasley
- Julie Davis (though Julie previous appointment was as President of CA, she has agreed to continue and accepted a 3-year appointment), and
- Jan Rodenfels



Frances Beasley

Thank You To Board Members Completing Their Terms

This year also marked the transition of five GIAC Board members stepping down after completing their terms: Barry Hunlock, Tom Katzenmeyer, Dr. Bernie Master, Mark Real, and Ellen Tripp. GIAC would like to thank and extend our deepest appreciation to these Center founding board members for their dedication and service.

Volunteer at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center has a variety of opportunities for volunteers ages 16 and up. The roles offer flexibility with your schedule and provide choices matched with your interests. Positions include: Activity Guide, Birding for a Better Columbus Tech, Habitat Restoration Tech, Gift Shop Attendant, Greeter and more. Contact Nancy Hartman, Volunteer Coordinator by email or call the Center at 614-545-5486 for more information.

End-of-Year Giving

As 2011 comes to an end, and as you review your financial and charitable giving, we hope you'll keep the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in mind. Not only will you receive tax incentives, you'll be helping children and the community to learn more about conservation and birding.

As we all know, the government and IRS are very particular when it comes to tax filings and credits. In this regard, gifts must be made/post-marked by December 31 to be claimed in your next tax returns. Please plan ahead as 12/31 falls on a Saturday this year and this impacts the timing and giving of some resources such as stocks and commodities. While GIAC and Audubon offices will have limited hours during the week between the holidays, local GIAC development staff can be reached on 12/28 and

Chance at IRA Charitable Rollover running out

Chance at IRA Charitable Rollover Running Out Program set to expire after this year and may/may not be extended

- If you're 70 ½ by 12/31/11
 - Would like to make a gift to GIAC
 - Using the IRA Charitable Rollover program
- Contact Jeff at jredfield@audubon.org, (614/545-5479) for more information or questions.

12/29 for questions (phone 614/545-5479, email jredfield@audubon.org) or National Audubon on 12/30/11.

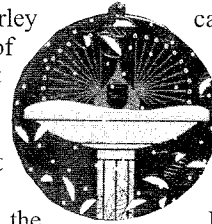
Nature store news: Bring Winter indoors

Celebrate the season's beauty by decorating your home, and giving decorative gifts that mimic the loveliness we see in nature. Especially selected in hopes of outliving the usual holiday decorations, these can be displayed in your home from November through March.

Gold, silver and white bird ornaments, bird place-holders, bird candle sticks, as well as little egg and nut accents are avail-

able for purchase in the store. Charley Harper makes a hanging work of art, called an "Adornment" that can work as a holiday tree ornament, a window decoration to prevent bird strikes, or a piece of art hung on your rear view mirror.

The Nature Store also carries the Charley Harper Adornments as well as the Charley Harper mugs and glassware, note



cards, calendars and engagement books.

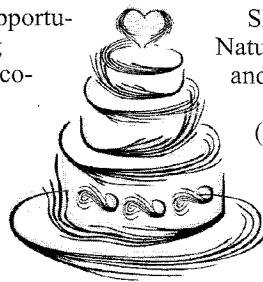
Get to the Nature Store in early November, and purchase our beautiful seasonal GIAC post cards at a special rate of 4 for \$2.00 (regularly .80 cents each).

For any questions or help with buying a gift please call Patty at 614-545-5485 or email her at phecht@audubon.org

Tis the season...for engagements

The Holidays are here and will present us many opportunities to get together with friends and family. During these "get togethers," we usually hear the news of a co-worker, a friend, or a family member that has gotten engaged.

"There are many engagements that occur during November and December" according to www.theweddingreport.com. December is the most popular month for engagements and Saturday is the most popular proposal day."



Share your support of GIAC, by reminding them that our Nature Center is available to rent for wedding ceremonies and receptions.

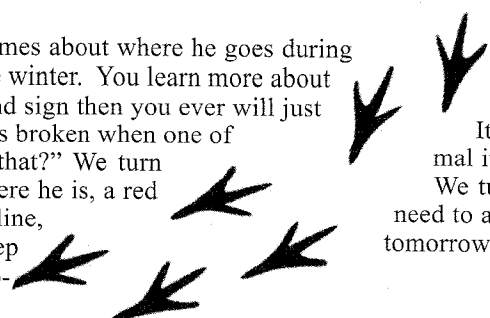
We also rent out space for special ceremonies (batzmitzva, barmitzva, bridal showers, family reunions), business meetings and retreats, private parties, etc. It is truly a beautiful and serene setting for any special occasion.

Please call Patty Hecht, at 614-545-5485 or email her at phecht@audubon.org for more information.

The nature of animal tracks in snow

Continued from page 4

stick. The contents tell us volumes about where he goes during the day and how he survives the winter. You learn more about the animal through his tracks and sign then you ever will just by looking at him. The silence is broken when one of the girls asks simply "What's that?" We turn and look across the field and there he is, a red fox trotting just inside the tree line, sunlight glowing off the deep thick coat. We glow too, cap-



tured by the moment, any sense of being cold and tired having instantly disappeared. We feel blessed and humbled and proud of ourselves, all at the same time. It's the first time the girls have ever seen a fox. It's the first time I've ever tracked one down to the animal itself.

We turn around and leave him be, deeply grateful with no need to ask for more. Besides, there will be new stories to read tomorrow.

- Sandy Willmore

GIAC events, programs and hours for November-December 2011

Holiday Shop Around

GIAC will host the second annual "Holiday Shop Around" on Nov. 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In addition to wonderful GIAC nature store items, we're inviting local for-profit artisans and businesses, and other educational and museum non-profit gift stores to set up shop for the day. It will be your chance to walk into a shopper's paradise all under one roof, and to "shop around" for holiday gifts and goodies. Members of GIAC will receive a 10-percent discount in the Nature Store as well as other special offers.

Enjoy refreshments and holiday music as you peruse tables and booths with a wide array of beautiful nature-inspired, one of a kind, quality gifts and goodies to fulfill everyone's holiday wish list.

Products for sale will be available throughout the building, along with gift certificates for memberships to the center, and gift certificates for our GIAC Summer Adventure Camps.

Our own nature store, "The Bird House," will be open for you to see a gorgeous Holiday tree adorned with beautiful ornaments all of which can be purchased and hung on your own tree.

We will also provide samples of Audubon Shade Grown Coffee and will feature wonderful Charley Harper merchandise including mugs, books, ornaments and calendars.

Breakfast with Father Nature

Bring the family to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center for a Hot Catered Breakfast with Father Nature on Dec. 17 from 8-10 a.m.

Stay for crafts and a Winter Hike to learn and enjoy the legend of Father Nature! Cost: \$5/person. Children under 3 eat free.

Winter Break Adventure Camp

School is out and the kids are beyond excited to be out and get the holidays started. But you might not be ready...still have to work, presents to get and wrap, baking not done yet?

No worries bring the kids to Winter Break and they will have blast learning about how animals survive the harsh winter ahead by exploring the forest and wetland surrounding the center. We will get outside to investigate and play and then enjoy the warm center getting creative with crafts and enjoying a healthy snack. Campers bring a waste-fee lunch each day, www.wastefreelunch.org.

Dec 21 and 22 - 8:30 - 4:00 After Care from 4 - 6pm.

GIAC Winter hours and holiday schedule

The Center hours change in November with the end of Daylight Savings Time. These "Winter Hours" will be: Tuesday - Friday from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Sundays from noon - 5 p.m.

Holiday Hours

Veterans Day (Friday 11/11/11) GIAC is open regular schedule hours (10 am-5 pm)

Thanksgiving Weekend

- GIAC and Audubon will close at 3 pm on Wednesday 11/23
- Closed on both Thursday 11/24 and Friday 11/25
- Reopen on Saturday (10 am-3 pm) and Sunday (Noon - 5 pm) that weekend

Christmas

- GIAC will close at 3 pm on Friday, December 23
- GIAC will reopen at 10 am on Tuesday, December 27
- Please note that while National Audubon Society offices may have limited business hours during this week, GIAC will be open 12/27 - 12/30 for the public but no rental events

New Years Day

- GIAC will close at 3pm on Friday, December 30
- GIAC will reopen on Tuesday January 3, 2012

Dec. 23 - 8:30 - 3:00 - no aftercare.
Cost: \$30 a day for members and partner schools.

Take \$10 off for each additional child in the same family. \$45 for non-members. \$15 a day for after-care. Register online at grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org

Questions? Amy Boyd 614-545-5486
aboyn@audubon.org.

GIAC Scouting programs

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center offers a variety of exciting programs designed to help scouts complete their electives, achievements, badge-work and special awards throughout the year as individuals or as part of the den/troop.

Scout leaders may reserve a 1 1/2 hour or 2 1/2 hour den or troop level program.

Larger scouting events and overnights are planned throughout the year as well to provide scouts with the opportunity to complete steps in earning specific special awards.

These events are great for individual scouts working on a specific award as well as dens or troops working together on a specific award. To make a program reservation, inquire about specific dates or for pricing information or other questions, call or e-mail Allison Roush at (614) 545-5482 or aroush@audubon.org.

Journey Between Earth and Sky at the GIAC (*Daisy*)

\$8/Scout. Take a journey between Earth and Sky at a hidden treasure in the heart of the city and you'll be inspired to see how you can explore nature at home in your own backyard or even in your community when you leave!

11/20 - Noon - 1:30 p.m.

Explore the Many Wonders of Water at the GIAC (*Brownies*)

\$9/Scout. Start your Wonders of Water journey at the GIAC by learning about why it's so important, where we find it around our center and why it's so important to keep it clean and conserve it!

11/19 - 9-11 a.m.

Get Energized and Take Eco-Action at the GIAC (*Junior*)

\$10/Scout. Energize yourself for your Get Moving journey when you investigate the world of energy from birds to the building at the GIAC inspiring innovative change at home and in your community when you leave!

11/19 - Noon-3 p.m.

Cub Scout Overnight

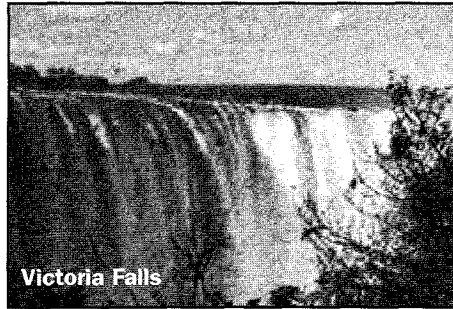
7 p.m. Friday, 12/9 - 10 a.m. Saturday, 12/10 \$30/Scout.

Birding Safari in Southern Africa - Spring 2012

Local ornithologist John C. Robinson will lead what promises to be an unforgettable birding and natural history tour of South Africa, Zimbabwe (Victoria Falls), and Botswana from March 13-25, 2012.

The tour will visit many locations, including Cape Town, world-renowned botanical gardens, and a penguin breeding colony. Participants will stay in quality hotels and luxury tents near Kruger National Park, Victoria Falls (one of the world's greatest natural wonders), safari locations in Botswana, and many other breathtaking sites.

You'll get to experience the people, the land, the culture, and the flora & fauna of southern Africa. John's previous two tours to these locations have yielded over 400 species of birds, including Hamerkop,



African Fish-Eagle, Dark Chanting-Goshawk, Cardinal Woodpecker, Crimson-breasted Gonolek, Greater Blue-eared Glossy-Starling, and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, to name a few.

You will also have the opportunity to observe the Big 5 (elephant, rhino, buffalo,

lion, and leopard) on private game drives. Several species of mongoose, zebra, crocodile, eland, impala, and fruit bat are among the many additional species of wildlife you may encounter.

Limited seating is available. At \$1300 less than a similar trip in 2006, the cost for the 11-day/10-night trip starts as low as \$4260 a person (plus airfare to Cape Town, South Africa) with details on the website.

Please Note: A portion of the proceeds (\$100) from each person's tour can be donated/designated to the GIAC/Columbus Audubon chapter to support camp for children from low-income families! Complete itinerary and informative video are available upon request at: www.onmymountain.com or john@onmymountain.com. Call 707-688-2848.

GIAC Wish List

Continued from page 2

Linen napkins – white, brown, or black (100)

Items for Birthday Parties and Scout programs:

Cake knives (2)
Cake servers (2)
White tissue paper
Egg cartons
Screw eyes
Washable stamp pads
Empty soup cans

Duct Tape
Waterproof Tape
Saran Wrap
Rubber Bands

(For these items, please call Allison or Tori at 614/545-5483)

Gift Certificates
Staples
Target
Home Depot
Barnes & Noble
Airline Miles

Letter from GIAC center director Christie Vargo

Continued from page 1

•The Center's conservation goals continue to guide all that we do:

- Reduce invasive species;
- Increase the riparian corridor and restore floodplains; and
- Increase Scioto River water quality.

As an example, acres of honeysuckle bushes have been removed and replaced with native plant species at the Scioto Audubon Metro Park. In the surrounding community, more than 500 honeysuckle shrubs have been removed and more than 1,000 native shrubs have been planted in their place.

•The number of Columbus City schools participating in the Conservation Classroom Program (now called the Chase

Conservation Classroom in honor of our lead funder) has grown from 1 in 2008 to 17 this school year.

•Students and campers continue as active participants in conservation planning, evaluation and action, as all program participants gather and record data to measure both baseline information and progress, and assist with on-the-ground conservation projects.

•The 2006 business plan for the Center has served as an excellent guide. The 2011 fiscal year ended June 30 with the Center on sound financial footing and tracking with projections as planned.

In short, we are increasing our impact as intended, and I assure you we will continue to do so – especially with supporters like you. In the next issue of the newsletter, I will share a glimpse of the vision for the Center.

Columbus Audubon offers 2012 Entertainment Books for sale

By popular demand, Columbus Audubon again offers Entertainment Books for sale for \$30 each. You may purchase the 2011 Entertainment book at any of the following outlets:

Better Earth - 59 Spruce St. (North Market), Columbus (614) 224-6196

Nature's Barn - 20 E. Columbus St., Lithopolis (740) 837-1929

Wild Birds Unlimited - 21 Cherry Park Square, Westerville

(614) 899-9453

Wild Birds Unlimited - 5400 Riverside Drive, Columbus

(614) 766-2103

Wild Birds Unlimited - 6839 E. Broad Street Columbus (Blacklick Center) (614) 860-1133 or directly from Columbus Audubon: Dave Horn, 262-0312, horn.l@osu.edu.

Contact Dave if you'd like to purchase an out-of-town book. The sale runs through Dec. 15.

RETURN IN FIVE DAYS TO

Columbus Audubon/GIAC
505 W. Whittier St.
Columbus, OH 43215
DBA - National Audubon Society

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

Columbus Audubon/Grange Insurance Audubon Center joint membership

Apply now for joint membership in Columbus Audubon (CA) and the Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC). We offer these membership levels:

Basic Individual \$30. Includes membership in GIAC and CA, The Song Sparrow newsletter, subscription to Audubon magazine, and many other benefits.

Basic Family \$45. Includes the benefits above plus discounts at the GIAC Nature Store and on GIAC programs for your entire family.

Chickadee \$100. Includes all standard membership bene-

fits plus enrolls you as a Founding Member of GIAC plus an Audubon coffee mug.

Great Blue Heron \$250. Includes all of the above plus your choice of an Audubon cap or tote bag.

Bald Eagle \$500. Includes all of the above plus a copy of the world-famous Guide to North American Birds by David Sibley.

Great Egret \$1000. Includes all of the above plus a personalized birding day in the Columbus area with a guide from Columbus Audubon.

Joint membership benefits are (all levels):

- * Membership in the national Audubon society
- * Subscription to Audubon magazine
- * 10% discount at the GIAC nature store
- * Discount on GIAC program fees
- * Free CA field trips and programs throughout the year
- * Volunteer opportunities
- * Invitations to special events at GIAC
- * Building rental opportunities at GIAC
- * Bi-monthly Song Sparrow newsletter, a joint publication of Columbus Audubon and the Grange Insurance Audubon Center (electronic delivery only for basic membership)
- * An invitation to attend the CA annual meeting
- * Discounts at partnering affiliates
- * Voice in CA/GIAC conservation initiatives

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Method of payment

Check (made payable to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center)

Master Card Visa Discover

Card expiration: _____

Name as it appears on card _____

Check the box to receive the Song Sparrow electronically

Please return form to: Kristen Clark,
Grange Insurance Audubon Center
505 W. Whittier Street, Columbus 43215