

## Focusing on winter gardening

As winter continues to take hold of the Ohio landscape, families start digging in and brace for long days of snow and cold after the excitement of the holidays are over.

While we settle in for the coldest days of winter the birds and other animals do too. Area birds hunker down in the coldest days using pine trees and bushes for shelter, while water-loving birds use the unfrozen areas of lakes, streams and ponds for shelter against the cold. This issue focuses on what you and your family can do to help fill those long cold days by participating in winter gardening, bird walks and other winter projects so that springtime will be much sweeter.

Families can take part in many winter activities and help scientists too by participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb. 17-20, 2012) or project FeederWatch (all winter). The key is to get out there and have fun!

Birds that can be seen in the middle of winter are juncos, red-breasted nuthatches, bald eagles and snowy owls can be found along the edges of Lake Erie in winter.

### Look for features inside

Great  
Backyard  
Bird Count

Creature fea-  
ture: Red-  
bellied wood-  
pecker

Gardening  
tips from the  
NWF



Look for the  
snowflake icon  
for our special  
nature features

## CA Photo Contest winners announced

Congratulations to Kirt Beiling and Tom Sheley for winning our recent photo contest. You can view their photographs on the Columbus Audubon website. You may recall that the contest was designed to provide photos for our service awards that are presented in March.

Kirt Beiling's closeup of a Red-tailed Hawk was chosen to represent the James



**Kirt Beiling:**  
**Red-tailed Hawk**



**Tom Sheley:**  
**Song Sparrow**

Chase Hambleton Award. This award is given for distinguished service in the area of conservation in Central Ohio. Kirt's handsome picture of a rehabilitated native Ohio hawk very aptly conveys this concept.

The Song Sparrow award is given for significant contributions to the mission of Columbus Audubon. Tom's photograph of a stately song sparrow was befitting of this honor.

## Margaret Morse Nice Bio in NA Bird Phenology Newsletter

The September issue of the e-news for the North American Bird Phenology Program has a brief biography of Margaret Morse Nice, renowned ornithologist of the early 20th century. Ms. Nice did much of her ground-breaking observational work on the Song Sparrow, and Columbus Audubon honors her memory with the Song Sparrow in the CA logo. The NABPP is working to understand the scale of global climate change and how it is affecting bird populations across North America. You can read the biography and the entire newsletter online.

## GIAC presents second annual Rodenfels Stewardship Award

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center appreciated major donors and volunteers with its first annual "Thanks-4-Giving" Dinner on Tuesday, Nov. 15.

The celebration of another successful year included bestowing the 2011 Jan Rodenfels GIAC Stewardship Award to a very deserving (and surprised) Sandy M. Nessing. The Rodenfels Stewardship Award was created in 2010 and named for its first recipient, Jan Rodenfels. As the 2011 recipient, Sandy Nessing's dedication and commitment to GIAC, nature, conservation, and the community reflect the purpose of the Center's highest honor.

Center Director, Christie Vargo began the presentation and established a new annual tradition of having each past recipient share a few words, with the most recent recipient announcing the new honor. Sandy's involvement which ranged from being involved with the capital campaign, work on the GIAC Gala, introducing others and securing corporate support, and her service to the Center.



**Sandy Nessing (2011 award recipient), Christie Vargo (GIAC Center Director), and Jan Rodenfels (award namesake).**

# Song Sparrow

January-February 2012

Vol. 44 No. 3

**Grange Insurance Audubon Center**  
**www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org**  
**614-545-5475**

**Staff:** Center Director: Christie Vargo  
Director of Development: Jeff Redfield  
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 and Monica Johnson  
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. Return to summer hours after Daylight Savings time changes in March.

**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.

Greg Cunningham (President)	Chester Jourdan
Frances Beasley	Alan McKnight*
Beth Crane	John O'Meara*
Jeff Chaddock	Jan Rodenfels
Julie Davis	Milt Schott
Carol Drake	Leslie Strader
Bill Heck	Christie Vargo*
Sandra Nessing	*=Ad Hoc Members

**Columbus Audubon**  
**Founded 1913**  
**614-545-5475**  
**www.columbusaudubon.org**  
**Twitter: @ColumbusAudubon**  
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**Officers:** President: Bill Heck, 895-1940  
Vice President: Andrea Cook  
Newsletter/Web Editor: Stefanie Hauck, (740) 972-1680  
Treasurer: Warren Grody  
Recording Secretary: Suzan Jervey

**Trustees:** Julie Davis, Mike Flynn, Joe Meara, Heather Raymond, Katryn Renard, Barbara Revard, Andrea Cook, Tom Sheley, Darlene Sillick, Suzan Jervey, Gerry Brevoort, Warren Grody, Bill Heck, Jackie Bain, April Robinson, Dave Horn and Tim Daniel.

**Additional chapter leaders:**  
Conservation: Dave Horn, 262-0312  
Service in the Preserves: Katryn Renard, 261-7171  
Education: Jackie Bain, jrbain@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, jbrevoort@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

## National Audubon 'Road Map' almost complete

Dear Friends! Audubon is on the threshold of an exciting future. In October the National Audubon Society Board of Directors adopted a new strategic plan. The plan calls for conservation initiatives to be organized for impact within each of flyways with focus on working lands, rivers and wetlands, coasts and seas, global warming, Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and community engagement. This new road map will align our efforts as an organization – for impact on behalf of birds and other wildlife, for the best use of limited resources in our areas of expertise, and for our best opportunities for success. GIAC looks forward to continuing our conservation action, education and advocacy, as well as aligning with the new NAS conservation strategies.



**Christie Vargo**

See Letter page 7

## Welcome new and renewed members!

Diane Alecusan	Gene Mapes
Teresa Ballantyne	Barbara Martin
Kathy Beany	Susan McGarvey
Tina Bozzuto	Melvin Moeschberger
Sam & Ann Bumgarner	Andrea Morris
Rachel Chouinard &	Sara Neikirk
William Woodruff	Phillip North &
Barb Christel	Tammy Vaughn
Cecilia Devlin	Elaine Pfund
Cindy Dunigan & Martha Arter	James Pierce &
Keith & Elaine Ebert	Sharon Soliday
Giovani Faenza &	Stacey Seleen
Katrina Rutherford	Judith V Shriner
Mary Finke	JoAnne St. Clair
Dareth A Gerlach	Mike & Tawana Thorn
Kelly Gramm	Aron Vinegar
Elizabeth Hammet	Kelly Walden
Belinda Jones	Mark Yoho &
Barbara & David Lambert	Simonair Hendrickson

## Thank you recent GIAC donors

All Life Foundation	Melinda Dixon
Allen, Yurasek, Merklin & Owens-Ruff LLC	Lee & Alan Dolan
Eileen M Baranovich	Donatos
Melanie Boyd	Scott Drab
Jill Brant	Carol Drake
Bryan Area Foundation	Cindy Dunigan
Anne Calhoun	Fredrick & Marilyn Dynys
Cardinal Health Foundation, Inc	Geraldine M Eged
Jane Crisman	Amy Eisenmann
Brian & Fran Crow	Jim Elliot and John Behal
Alexander Darragh	Anne Federer
Carol Davis	Russell & Jennifer Fish
Andrea Denning	

See GIAC, page 15

# Red-bellied Woodpecker

Can be found in abundance throughout Ohio in Winter

This is the 'red-headed' woodpecker that so many people in Ohio report from their feeders. One of the hidden bird success stories of the past half century has been this species' spread from its southern strongholds into the Midwest and Northeast. They're now very common in central Ohio, rivaling Downy Woodpeckers in abundance. It's named for one of its least visible field marks, while it's scientific name alludes to the south-eastern U.S. where it was first 'discovered' and where it is still very abundant.



**Relationships:** Red-bellies are woodpeckers, meaning that they share a very unusual biology adapted for spending much of their life on or in the trunks of trees. Their genus, *Melanerpes*, means 'blackneck' a funny reference to the black head of the Acorn Woodpecker, the first described member of the genus. This genus is mostly centered in the neotropics, but includes some of North America's most distinctive woodpeckers, including the Acorn woodpecker, the Red-headed Woodpecker, and the Lewis' Woodpecker. Almost all of these woodpeckers have a diet that includes many nuts and seeds along with the usual woodpecker fare of insects. Indeed, Acorn Woodpeckers and Lewis' Woodpeckers are closely tied to certain western oaks, while Red-headed Woodpeckers seem to be very partial to red oak acorns and American beechnuts. Red-bellies, in contrast, seem much more catholic in their tastes, enjoying a wide variety of nuts, berries, and suet.

**Range:** Eastern and central North America, extending from New Hampshire and southern Ontario south to Florida, and west to Texas and the Dakotas. Don't look for them west of the Great Plains; in fact, they don't even occur on the plains, but extend out the forested river valleys of Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. This range is almost perfectly overlapped by different oak trees, and acorns are likely their food of choice during the winter if they cannot find a nearby feeder. Feeders, in fact, are probably one of the main reasons that Red-bellies were able to penetrate into the upper Midwest and New England starting in the 1950s and 1960s.

**Field Marks:** Red-bellies have so many good field marks that they should have been forced to share some of them with the other woodpeckers. Start with that beauti-

ful 'zebra-striped back', with its narrow bars of gray and white. Add in the gorgeous helmet of orange-red that extends up over the crest of the head (but only to the back of the head in females). Toss in a clear white breast with a shading of red-orange on the belly.

And don't forget about the light rump and the large white wing patches set off against the gray wings. Mix in a variety of distinctive calls and this is one easy bird to identify.

In fact, for me it was the first bird I learned using a Peterson Guide at the tender age of eight in Florida. I already knew Mockingbirds, Blue jays, and Cardinals, but wondered about the big woodpeckers that were so common around our neighborhood.

**Features:** Woodpeckers have some well-known peculiarities, and Red-bellies show all of these features. All woodpeckers have their biology shaped by their tree trunk-centered lifestyle. They have a swiveling toe that allows them to grip 2-up and 2-down, and they also have stiff tail feathers that they use to prop themselves against the trunk surface. This means that they don't really perch for extended periods of time, but must rest or sleep clinging against a tree trunk, preferably inside a hollow cavity. Red-bellies, however, are better perchers than most woodpeckers, and can be quite adept at perching and reaching for bugs or fruit. I've even seen them flycatching after slow-moving bugs, but they're not very good at it. Woodpeckers also have a unique head, with a chisel-like bill attached to a reinforced skull, underlain with an unusually long tongue attached at the back of the skull. All of this helps the birds hack, chisel, and probe insects out of dead or cracked wood. Redbellies have all these traits, and to see one stick out its tongue to its full extent is amazing to the point of disbelief. Their head is so reinforced that Red-bellies are rarely recorded as victims in windowstrikes, even though

they do run into them regularly. The beak is not only sharp, but shows a sexual dimorphism: males have a noticeably longer bill than females. Possibly this helps them reach for deeper bugs, or maybe it's just a feature to impress females.

**Voice:** A surprising variety of sounds for a woodpecker. Probably the most distinctive is the harsh, rolling 'churrrr' locator call that Red-bellies give to keep track of one another. An equally unique call is the repetitive 'chiff, chiff, chiff' that they give as they are climbing up a tree or hacking at some dead wood. When they confront another woodpecker they can give a flickerlike 'fleeeka-fleeeka-fleeeka'. And let's not forget drumming. Like all woodpeckers, Red-bellies drum to announce their territories.

They give a loud rolling series of taps, made by rapping against a hollow branch, trunk, or even the eaves of a house. It's slower than the staccato raps made by Downies and Hairies. In central Ohio, Red-bellied Woodpeckers can be found in almost any woodland or woodlot, even in the middle of suburbia

They need large trees to feed in and roost in, but other than that they seem very adaptable. In the summer, look for them around oak areas, such as Blendon Woods, Highbanks, or Sharon Woods Metro Parks. They will also accumulate in these areas in the fall, especially in years with good acorn crops. I've had up to a dozen in acorn-filled oak woodlots, which is a good number for a nonflocking woodpecker. In the winter look for them around feeders, especially those that have

suet cakes. The feeder banks at the nature centers at Highbanks and Blendon Woods are often great places to watch them. Or better yet, set up your own feeders (don't forget the suet). Chances are good that you'll soon have a few visiting Red-bellied Woodpeckers to admire from the comfort of your own home.

-By Rob Thorn



ODNR

Red-bellied woodpecker.



# Great Backyard Bird Count

Enter your local counts February 17-20, 2012 to [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc)

As movie-goers watch the stars of "The Big Year" in their quest to count birds, some may be motivated to try the hobby for the first time. The annual Great Backyard Bird Count is the perfect opportunity. The event is hosted by Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada. The results provide a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species.



Anyone can participate in this free event and no registration is needed. Watch and count birds for at least 15 minutes on any day of the count, February 17-20, 2012. Enter your results at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org), where you can watch as the tallies grow across the continent. The four-day count typically records more than 10 million observations.

"When thousands of people all tell us what they're seeing, we can detect patterns in how birds are faring from year to year," said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

"The Great Backyard Bird Count is a perfect example of Citizen Science," says Audubon Chief Scientist, Gary Langham. "Like Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, volunteers help us with data year after year, providing scientific support that is the envy of many institutions. It's also a lot of fun."

"We're finding that more people are taking part in our bird count programs every year--and the more that take part, the better it is for the birds," says Richard Cannings, Senior Projects Officer for Bird Studies Canada.

The 2011 GBBC brought in more than 92,000 bird checklists submitted by participants from across the United States and Canada. Altogether, bird watchers identified 596 species with 11.4 million bird observations. Results from the 2011 GBBC included:

- Increased reports of Evening Grosbeaks, a species that has been declining;
- A modest seasonal movement of winter finches farther south in their search for food;
- The Eurasian Collared-Dove was reported from Alaska for the first time, more evidence of an introduced species rapidly expanding its range.

Although it's called the Great

## Make this your 'Big Year' at the GIAC

**Make 2012 your "Big Year" when you participate in the 15th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count happening February 17 – 20, 2012! All ages are welcome to join our educators during Audubon Afternoons from 1-3 p.m. each Saturday and Sunday in February leading up to the big event to learn how to become an active citizen scientist and take part in this important data collection. Learn some basic birding and bird identification skills as well as how to record and report the data you collect whether you participate in your own backyard during the count or here at the center on February 18 and 19.**

"Backyard" Bird Count, the count extends well beyond backyards. Lots of participants choose to head for national parks, nature centers, urban parks, nature trails, or nearby sanctuaries. For more information, including bird-ID tips, instructions, and past results, visit [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter their bird checklists online.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible in part by sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a nonprofit membership institution interpreting and conserving the earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds. Visit the Cornell Lab's website at [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu).

Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Our national network of community-based nature centers, chapters, scientific, education, and advocacy programs engages millions of people from all walks of life in conservation action to protect and restore the natural world. [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

Bird Studies Canada administers regional, national, and international research and monitoring programs that advance the understanding, appreciation, and conservation of wild birds and their habitats. We are Canada's national body for bird conservation and science, and we are a non-governmental charitable organization. [www.birdscanada.org](http://www.birdscanada.org).

### How to participate

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and



**Cassin's Finch, Gary Botello, Arizona 2011 GBBC**

on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one checklist per day if you count in other locations on that day.

2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time. You may find it helpful to print out your regional bird checklist to get an idea of the kinds of birds you're likely to see in your area in February. You could take note of the highest number of each species you see on this checklist.

3. When you're finished, enter your results through our web page. You'll see a button marked "Enter Your Checklists!" on the website home page beginning on the first day of the count. It will remain active until the deadline for data submission.

# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## 2012 Volunteer Recognition Dinner and Fair is March 6

On March 6th at 6:30 p.m., all volunteers and potential volunteers are invited to our 2012 Volunteer Recognition Dinner and Fair. GIAC staff will be present to explain our volunteer opportunities in detail. Our positions include the following activities; Special Events, Classroom Support, Bird Conservation, Gardener and Grounds Keepers, Nature Store Attendant and Greeter. If you have not volunteered and want to know more, this is the opportunity to learn about our fun and exciting volunteer opportunities.

The evening will open with updates on the activities for the year of 2011, upcoming events and activities for 2012 led by Amy Boyd, Program Director. Christy Vargo, the Center Director, will share her vision for the future at GIAC as well as the new strategic plan from National Audubon Society. We will then recognize our current volunteers for their time and talent given so generously to the center. Following the program, the volunteers will be able to walk around and talk with our staff about the various responsibilities and opportunities with Grange Insurance

Audubon Center.

Nancy Hartman, Volunteer Coordinator said, "All volunteers come to us with great commitment to environmental preservation. They want to help educate and sustain the values that GIAC represents. We have all ages from high school to retired seniors who commit to working in our various volunteer positions. In some cases, parents bring their children to assist when appropriate. We welcome all ages to give of their time and talents as GIAC grows. This past year we welcomed 30 new volunteers into our fold and this year we would like to double that number. We celebrate the power of people, as we had the help of 48 volunteers from the community and our own at the Blue Grass, Beer and Birds Event in the fall."

We hope that you will join us as we further the impact that the center can have on the community with more dedicated volunteers to help us accomplish our mission. Please RSVP by March 1 to Amy Boyd at 614-545-5486 or email [aboyd@audubon.org](mailto:aboyd@audubon.org).

## Welcome new board member: Leslie Strader

GIAC is pleased to announce the appointment of Leslie Strader to a three year board term for 2012-2014. She is the Assistant Environmental Steward for the City of Columbus working to implement Mayor Michael B. Coleman's Get Green Columbus initiative. Mayor Coleman created the Office of Environmental Stewardship in 2005 to assist the coordination of sustainability initiatives throughout each city department and the community.

Prior to working for the city, Leslie spent four years with the MORPC educating and engaging the community in the areas of air

quality, energy conservation, water quality, sustainable growth and materials management. Leslie received a B.S. from The Ohio State University and a Master's of Public Administration from Ohio University.

Regarding her appointment Leslie shared "As I imagine is true for any local visitor to the GIAC, I am filled with pride to see such a remarkable facility available to connect people with nature in the heart of our city. As a new member of the Board, this feeling is strengthened as I look forward to contributing to the success of center initiatives."



Leslie Strader

## Many support GIAC through "The Big Give"

On November 10-11, 2011, The Columbus Foundation provided community members the opportunity to support the charities and causes they believe in through "The Big Give." For 24 hours, community members could select and identify from over 600 charities, including the GIAC, with a portrait in the Columbus Foundation's PowerPhilanthropy program. Gifts were matched with a corresponding percentage of \$1 million match. Over \$8.5 million was donated in the 24 hours!

At press time the exact list of donors and final totals are not available. However, GIAC was provided some preliminary results. GIAC received:

\$7992 in gifts

\$1037 in matching support

\$222 in credit card fee reimburse

Projected Total - \$9251.

GIAC would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all those who participated and give toward our mission and programs. Thank you!

### 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: Classroom support, Bird Conservation, Gardner and Grounds Keeper, Nature Store attendant and Greeter. Contact Nancy Hartman, Volunteer Coordinator by email ([nhartman@audubon.org](mailto:nhartman@audubon.org)) or call the Center at 614-545-5486 for more information.



# Amy Boyd is one of 40 TogetherGreen Fellows

Amy Boyd, GIAC program coordinator is the recipient of a national conservation fellowship that will allow her to provide children a chance to know the joy of discovering the natural world through hands-on experiences.

Amy Boyd is one of 40 individuals nationwide selected as a 2011 TogetherGreen Fellow. Supported by a conservation alliance between Audubon and Toyota, the TogetherGreen Fellowship offers specialized training in conservation planning and execution, the chance to work and share best practices with gifted conservation professionals, and assistance with project outreach and evaluation.

Each Fellow receives \$10,000 towards a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy, and contributing to greater environmental health.

Boyd coordinates the education programs that make conservation goals come to life for the children that live in the heart of downtown Columbus, Ohio. As the Center is situated in an economically disadvantaged and racially diverse community, Columbus City School students have substandard science proficiency test scores and few opportunities for environmental stewardship. For Boyd's Fellowship Project, she will work to connect with the Center's many community partners that serve urban youth to facilitate kid powered conservation projects. Participating youth will be tied directly to the Center's conservation goals, eradicating invasive species and repairing the riparian corridor of the Scioto River on the Whittier Peninsula.

At the same time, they will learn about project planning and design, conservation career opportunities, and environmental leadership.

"Amy has the passion and the skills to inspire others, exactly the kind of person the environmental community needs to



**Amy Boyd at a educational event this past fall. Amy has been selected as one of 40 Together Green fellows for 2012.**

tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us," said Audubon President David Yarnold. "Our TogetherGreen Fellows represent a talented and diverse group; each a proven leader with a commitment to both the environment and his/her community."

"This TogetherGreen Fellowship is an honor to receive and will enable me to connect more students with the natural world, regardless of their location and current access to the outdoors," said Boyd.

Fellowship recipients were chosen from a large pool of highly qualified individuals.

All were required to have at least six years of experience in conservation, environmental education, policy, or related issues; a demonstrated passion for conservation and a proven track record of reach-

ing  
pre-



viously underserved audiences.

Applicants also need to express a desire to learn and grow. An advisory committee composed of conservation professionals and experts in environmental education, communications, outreach, and conservation planning made selections.

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year TogetherGreen initiative in 2008 to build the promise of a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism.

### What is Together Green?

It's all about helping you get involved in creating a brighter, healthier future. It's a dynamic and innovative Audubon program funded by Toyota that aims to provide inspiration, leadership and opportunities that inspire people everywhere to take action at home, in their communities and beyond to improve the health of our environment.

Announced on March 26, 2008 TogetherGreen represents an important alliance between Audubon and Toyota. It's built on our shared belief that we must all work together if we hope to confront the tremendous environmental challenges and opportunities of today and the years ahead. Together, we can make a difference.

Act Today. Shape Tomorrow.

# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## Greg Cunningham succeeds Sandy Nessing as GIAC Board President

On January 1, 2012 Greg Cunningham became the third GIAC Stewardship Board President when Sandy Nessing completed a 2-year term in the role.

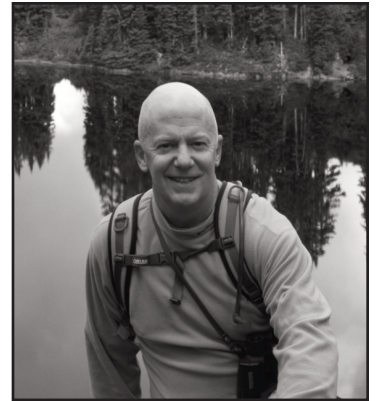
Greg works at Limited Brands and is the Associate Vice President of Environment, Health, Safety and Sustainability. Greg has responsibility for assuring compliance with safety and environmental regulations, and coordinates the environmental stewardship activities at the company. He has been with Limited Brands since 1999.

Greg has been involved with Audubon since 2006, serving first on the board of Audubon Ohio, then transitioning to the board of the GIAC. His involvement in the community includes being a member of the Mayor's Green Team and Green Business Committee, a member of the Board of Directors of the Central Ohio Sustainability Alliance/Waste Not Center, and now after 1.5 years as Vice President, he assumes the role of President of the Stewardship Board of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Greg grew up in Northern Kentucky, and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from Morehead State University, and Master of Science degree in Environmental Management from the University of Findlay. He served in the U.S. Peace Corps after graduating from college, working in the

Philippines as an Agroforestry Extension Advisor. He currently resides in Clintonville, and enjoys travelling to our National Parks, birding, hiking, paddling, and camping.

When asked about taking on this new role and additional responsibilities, Greg shared "I'm excited to be continuing the great work started by our past Board Presidents Phil Urban and Sandy Nessing. I hope to be able to lead the Board in working with the dedicated staff of the Center to increase our outreach to the community, further establishing the Center as THE place in Columbus for connecting people with nature and learning about sustainable living. We will make sure that the secret's out about this great asset to our community!"



Greg Cunningham

## Sandy Nessing reflects on tenure

For the past few years, I have had the privilege of being involved with the Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC). I've watched as the land was cleared, the walls were erected, the impound lot was moved and the Scioto Audubon Metro Park developed. It didn't happen overnight and it took a lot of partners, including the City of Columbus, Columbus Audubon, Metro Parks and the generosity of many donors, to get it done. Those who had the vision and made the commitment are the reason the Whittier Peninsula is now a destination for recreation, education and connecting people with nature.

As I wrap up my two-year term as president of the GIAC's Stewardship Board, I am amazed at how much has been accomplished in such a short time. I am proud of the Center's leadership in helping to enhance the education experience for so many children in the community. This is a place where a child who knows only the concrete of his or her neighborhood can come to catch butterflies, learn about bird banding and walk through a wetland. It is a place

where they can play kick ball or throw a Frisbee while learning about the local ecosystem. The GIAC and Scioto Audubon Metro Park are part of what I like to call Columbus' renaissance. It is connected to the newly-developed Scioto Mile and not far from the vibrancy of Columbus Commons. When Columbus was recently listed as one of ten must-see places to visit globally last fall, the GIAC was one of the reasons why. I was not surprised. When people visit, they fall in love. As I pass the baton to my colleague Greg Cunningham, I am looking forward to the continued growth of the center as more people discover this community gem. We still have much to do to support local educators, further engage our neighbors and enhance our environmental stewardship. The relationships we have with our many partners and supporters are more important than ever to help us move forward. If you haven't visited us yet, please come and let us show you around. If you have been there, please come back – often.

## Letter from GIAC center director Christie Vargo

Continued from page 2

In its early years, the Center took strategic steps to establish vision, goals, guiding principles, program identity, and initial partners. What an excellent foundation and platform to build upon! Now it is time for the Center's focus to turn gradually and strategically more outward. Our closest collaborative partners are the City of Columbus, Recreation and Parks Department, Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks, and the Columbus Audubon Chapter. We are now asking ourselves how we can further draw on our respective strengths and areas of expertise to take our partnerships to the next level where our missions overlap.

At the same time we are carefully exploring opportunities for strategic community partners to further our mission. While we are very conscious of our limited resources and our core purpose, we also recognize our commitment and obligation as an organization to

engage the community. Eight full-time and a handful of part-time staff can have an impact only with and through community partnerships and engagement of the central Ohio community.

This is both an exciting and critical time for Audubon and for those of us concerned about our environment. We are approaching a tipping point relative to the climate, weather-related disasters are intensifying, habitats are disappearing before our eyes, younger and future generations are likely to spend fewer and fewer hours in the out-of-doors limiting their connections with nature and the conservation issues we all need to address.

We have a very real opportunity to have a community-wide, and even a Mississippi watershed-wide impact through community engagement in conservation here at the Center and Metro Park, and in the neighborhoods of our program participants.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you to make this happen!

# GIAC events and programs for January-February 2012

## Adult and Family Classes offered at GIAC

GIAC staff and Columbus Audubon volunteers are teaming up to offer a series of adult workshops to engage new and existing birding enthusiasts. Join us this winter as we learn how to identify winter birds on the peninsula and get those birding skills going just in time for the spring migration. Register on line at <http://grange.audubon.org>.

Cost: Workshop and Bird walk - \$35 per person. Workshops designed for age 16 and up.

### Winter Bird Identification

It can be difficult to identify winter birds because many species are not sporting their bright breeding plumage. Join us we learn how to id birds by size, shape, color, markings and bill. After we learn some of the tricks for identifying winter birds in the classroom we will meet again to take a walk along the Scioto River and in the park to practice identifying winter birds in the field. Dates and Time:

Workshop- Saturday January 21, 2012, 9 – 11 am

Bird Walk – Saturday February 4, 2012 8 – 10 am

### Birding 101: A Workshop For Beginning Birders

Participants will learn about the basics of birding: using size and field marks to identify birds, habitat considerations and behavior of birds, as well as binocular basics and other resources to help you start to enjoy the wonderful world of birding! Workshop includes Birding 101 workshop and a Bird Identification Walk at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Dates and Times:

Workshop- Saturday March 10, 2012 9 – 11 am

Bird Walk – Saturday March 24, 2012 8 – 10 am

### Birding 102: An Introduction to Bird Behavior

Participants will learn about the variety of bird behaviors and how to use behavior in identifying birds and in understanding what our feathered friends are doing from day to day and from season to season. Workshop includes Birding 102 and Bird Behavior Walk at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Dates and Times:

Workshop- Saturday March 31, 2012 - 9– 11 am

## Save These Other 2012 Dates

April 9-13	Spring Break Camp
April 14	Earth Day Celebrations
April 21	Spring Green Event
May 9	Wine and Warblers II
May 12	International Migratory Bird Day/Mother's Day
June 16	Bird Fest
June 18 to August 17	Audubon Adventure Summer Camp Weeks
September 8	Being a Green Student
September 14	Bluegrass Beer & Birds II
September 30 to	
October 5	World-wide Eco Summit in Columbus
October 18	GIAC Fall Breakfast
October 26 & 27	Trick-or-Tweet
November 10	Holiday Shop Around
November 15	Thanks-4-Giving Dinner
December 15	Father Nature

Bird Walk – Saturday April 7, 2012 8 – 10 am

### Family Workshop: Wildlife Tracks

Learn about wildlife tracking.

See presentation on how to identify wildlife tracks and signs and then go out for a walk to look for tracks and signs in the park and along the Scioto River.

Workshop participants will make their own plaster cast of various wildlife tracks.

All materials included.

Dates and Times:

Saturday, February 25, 2012 10 – noon

Ages: 5 and Up

Fee: \$30 for family up to 4, \$5 per person over 4

### MLK Day Camp

Monday, January 16 8:30 am – 4 pm

Members \$30 Non-Members \$45

After Care available from 4:00- 6:00pm \$15

Come and explore “The Nature of Change” as we celebrate the life of Martin Luther King Jr.

### Spring Break Adventure Camp

April 9 – 13 8:30 – 4 pm

Members \$160 Non-Members \$185

After Care available from

4:00 – 6:00pm \$75.

Join us as we explore the wonder of

spring as it comes to life from migrating birds to peepers and all that is green, both in nature and learning to live more lightly on the earth.

### Audubon Afternoons

What are Audubon Afternoons? Audubon Afternoons are education programs conducted by Audubon naturalists.

They deliver short presentations on a featured topic followed by an “Audubon Challenge.”

The Challenge is a nature or conservation investigation and participants receive a small prize upon completion.

Sometimes the program includes going on hikes with the naturalist, sometimes the participants are sent on Audubon Challenges on their own. Audubon Afternoons programs are ideal for families with kids.

The programs are held in GIAC classrooms each weekend from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

For more information, call 614-545-5486.

### Wednesday morning tours

Come explore the Grange Insurance Audubon Center on a guided tour through the facility every Wednesday at 10 a.m.

We will highlight green building features, partnerships, design elements, and programming.

For groups of more than 10, please call ahead to RSVP at (614) 545-5486.



# JANUARY 2012



1	Sunday	2	Monday	3	Tuesday	4	Wednesday	5	Thursday	6	Friday	7	Saturday
	GIAC closed for holiday <b>New Year's Day bird walk, noon</b> <b>Birding at Blendon woods, 8 a.m.</b>	NOTE: GIAC closed every Monday				Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.							Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. <b>Service in the Preserves Clifton Gorge 7:45 a.m.</b> <b>CA Avid Birders</b>
8	Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	9		10		11 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	12	13		14 <b>Green Lawn Cemetery birding 8:30 a.m.</b>  Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.			
15	Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	16 MLK Day Camp 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.	17	18 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	19	20	21 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.  Winter Bird identification workshop 9-11 a.m.						
22	Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	23	24 <b>CA Short Program and regular program 7-9 p.m.</b>	25 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	26	27	28 <b>Winter Birds at Hoover Res. 9 a.m.</b>  Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.						
29	Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	30	31										



Calendar:  
key



GIAC events are in plain text. For complete descriptions of any event or program, see page 8.

Columbus Audubon events are in bold. For complete descriptions of any event or program, see page 14.



# FEBRUARY 2012



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	1 Wednesday	2 Thursday	3 Friday	4 Saturday
	NOTE: GIAC closed every Monday		Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.			<b>SIP Blackhand Gorge 7:45 a.m.</b> Winter Bird Identification bird walk 8-10 a.m. Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
5 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. <b>Birding at Blendon Woods 10 a.m.</b>	6	7	8 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	9	10	<b>Green Lawn Cemetery 8:30 a.m.</b> Love Birds event 7 p.m. Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
12 <b>Winter Birds Scioto river 8:30 a.m.</b> Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	13	14	15 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	16	17 <b>National Great Backyard Bird Count</b>	<b>Killdeer Plains 12:30 p.m.</b> Great Backyard Bird Count at GIAC Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
19 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. <b>National Great Backyard Bird Count</b>	20 <b>National Great Backyard Bird Count</b>	21	22 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.	23	24	25 Wildlife Tracks 10 a.m.-noon Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
26 Audubon afternoons 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.	27	28 <b>CA Short Program and regular program 7-9 p.m.</b>	29 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m.			

**Save the Date:**

Columbus Audubon's annual Eco Weekend is May 4-6, 2012.

Also, Look for information on International Migratory Bird Day in the next issue.

**Save the Date:** May 9 - Wine and Warblers II

May 12 - International Migratory Bird Day/Mother's Day

# The birds and the bees... and your garden

Gardening tips from National Wildlife Foundation Habitat Ambassador Toni Stahl

Oh no... There are dead bees lying on my native flowers! When I reached out to touch one, it started moving and picking up pollen as it ate. It was just sleeping for the night – Yippee! I guess that's where we got the saying "Busy as a bee." Buzzy, fuzzy, shiny, tiny - Bees are as cute as they are necessary.



Many readers have e-mailed me about bees disappearing "What can we do to help?" many ask. Add beautiful plants to your garden for bees! My yard has become a bed and breakfast for friendly, hard-working native bees because of the native plants that thrive in it. Our small city gardens could be the key to saving bees according to the BBC [www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-14309007](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-14309007). For a bee plant list, put your zip code in the Pollinator Coalition guide at [www.pollinator.org/guides.htm](http://www.pollinator.org/guides.htm).

"I'm afraid of bees because I was stung," stated my girlfriend. "It was probably a wasp or hornet, but a bee got the blame," I replied. "Wasps and hornet are aggressive, but native bees primarily sting in self defense. Last summer, a large carpenter bee accidentally flew into me, and it didn't sting me. Male carpenter bees are incapable of stinging, and females sting only if extremely provoked." "Really, I'm surprised." Later she mentioned, "I'm not afraid of bees anymore."

Unlike hornets, wasps, and the European honey bee, the more than 3,000 species of native bees are solitary. They nest singly in the ground or woody places and do not protect a hive. Only the bumble bee has a hive, and only the female stings to protect it. Carpenter bees buzz loudly not to threaten you, but are "whistling" while they work. The buzzing sound is caused by the wings beating as fast as 230 beats per second!

"There are holes in my deck from carpenter bees," a volunteer mentioned last fall (carpenters are the only bees that can drill into wood). "If it is truly a problem, try painting the wood with polyurethane instead of stain in early spring, before bees lay their eggs," I replied. She called me this summer happily shouting, "It worked!"

"My parents raised me that my yard should be perfect, so why aren't my plants as healthy or pretty as yours?" my neighbor asked me. (She waters, replaces, sprays and fertilizes plants, while I sit on my front porch enjoying the yard.) "Pollination helps your blooms, fruits, veggies and berries from being deformed or damaged," I answered. "I don't use insecticides, and natural predators eat insects that damage plants. My insect damage is virtually unnoticeable."

Almost all bee kills (99.5%) occur when bees pick up pesticides while pollinating plants. Pesticides don't kill just bees; they kill nearly all insects that 96% of the birds eat. Even some organic pesticides, including herbicides and fungicides, are toxic to bees. See page 2 in the Xerces Factsheet table [www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/xerces-organic-approved-pesticides-factsheet.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/xerces-organic-approved-pesticides-factsheet.pdf).

Birds eat insects, especially caterpillars. Insects (including caterpillars) rely on plants. Plants rely on bees. We rely on bees for one out of three bites of food, including fruits and vegetables. Bee-pollinated plants are used to make medicine, chocolate, vanilla, peppermint, coffee and wine. "If you didn't have



Tom Sheley

Bumblebee on milkweed.

caterpillars, you can kiss the birds goodbye," said Jim McCormac in the 7/31/11 Columbus Dispatch. I'll add, if you didn't have native bees to pollinate plants, you can kiss the caterpillars goodbye.

**Lessons learned?** If you're interested, email [marc-a@columbus.rr.com](mailto:marc-a@columbus.rr.com) with questions or to receive the monthly 'Nature Scoop' email. Go to [www.backyardhabitat.info](http://www.backyardhabitat.info) to learn more and see videos of my yard. Let's work together to help birds, one yard at a time.

## Toni's Habittips:

**Quick Bird Cover:** Try to use parts of evergreens that have been blown down by storms. Christmas trees can be dangerous to birds. Check for a chemical smell. After unclipping the netting, author Sally Roth went into anaphylactic shock – a reaction to the pesticide the tree was giving off.

Turn on your speakers; start to get in the mood to plan your yard for next year - Build It, and They Will Come!

After leaves have fallen, and deciduous trees and shrubs are dormant is a good time to trim limbs because there is less threat of insect damage. You can use the limbs to create a brush shelter for birds if ordinances allow. It will make safe quick cover. Some Christmas trees can be dangerous to birds. Check for a chemical smell. After unclipping the netting, author Sally Roth went into anaphylactic shock a reaction to the pesticide exuded by the tree.

Frost-free, clean water helps birds survive winter. Store summer bird baths and consider using a non-slip, shallow heated unit 10-15 feet from cover. I use this plastic heated bath or add a separate heat unit something like this to your existing bird bath.

I had to chuckle when my neighbor's chemical company put up its "don't walk on the lawn" sign after the fall treatment. I bought a Pesticide-Free Yard Sign at the Wild Ones Store - Page down about 22 times and see how cute it is :) - to see if it might make a nice addition to your yard.

-Toni Stahl



### Conservation Corner: Tony Peterle 1925-2011

The Audubon cause lost a friend with the recent passing of Tony Peterle, whose name may be unfamiliar to many of our newer and younger members. Tony was a member of Columbus Audubon for many years and served on local, regional, and national Audubon boards as member and consultant. Tony was professor and chairman of Zoology at The Ohio State University and his field of research was wildlife toxicology, focusing on the impact of toxic substances such as DDT on wildlife through direct exposure as well as the more insidious effects of chemicals from the environment. Tony pursued some of the research that proved crucial to ultimately banning DDT in the United States, and he testi-

fied before the U.S. Congress in support of the ban. In honor of his distinguished research and activist career, he received the Aldo Leopold Memorial Medal from the Wildlife Society, and to date is the only member of Columbus Audubon to be so honored. Tony was a hero of conservation in Ohio and nationally, and we honor his life and his contributions. Before his conservation career began, Tony was a different kind of hero -- he was wounded in action in World War II and spent several months as a prisoner of war.

*-Dave Horn*

### Invasive species: Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed was introduced into the United States from the Orient over a century ago as an ornamental plant. Like many such introductions, it has run amok, especially in areas where soil has been disturbed. Roadsides, utility rights-of-way, sites of abandoned buildings, and river and stream banks often harbor extensive patches of Japanese knotweed. The plants grow up to 10 feet tall and leave woody stems behind every autumn, creating impenetrable thickets and a potential fire hazard.

Japanese knotweed has a distinctive red-brown hollow stem reminiscent of bamboo. Leaves are oval, about 3 x 5 inches with a narrow point at the tip. The small flowers appear in narrow clusters in late summer and are considered a good source of honey by some beekeepers.

The chief problem is due to the rapid spread of the plant by underground rhizomes that quickly form dense patches that exclude

other vegetation. Besides the fire hazard from the woody stems, the rhizomes can undermine foundations, sidewalks, stone walls, and the like. Wildlife habitat is negatively impacted, particularly along rivers and streams, and the rhizomes can break away from stream banks and establish new infestations downstream.

The best management strategy is to eliminate infestations as soon as detected and before the rhizomes can establish a foothold. Learn to recognize the plant and dig it up completely as soon as possible. Large colonies have dense woody rhizomes underground and are very difficult to eliminate by digging. Regular mowing or cutting of the plants above ground does eventually deplete the stored food belowground and can work if you keep at it.

And as always, be very careful when moving soil, whether alone or with plant stock. Many invasive species are spread this way.

*-Dave Horn*

### Eco Weekend - Mark your calendars for May 4-6, 2012

Eco Weekend brochures will be mailed to you in February!

Get out your new 2012 calendars and save these Spring dates for Eco Weekend: May 4-6, 2012. Eco Weekend will be held at Camp Oty'Okwa (near Conkles Hollow) in the Hocking Hills.

Eco Weekend is an opportunity to have an affordable and enjoyable weekend experiencing nature's beauty and learning from experienced program leaders. There are nature-oriented programs for adults and families from Friday evening through noon on Sunday, and some special programs for youth from age 4 through eighth grade on Saturday. Come and learn from professionals who volunteer their time to share their knowledge about the natural world.

The 2012 Eco Weekend brochure and registration information will be mailed directly to all Song Sparrow subscribers in February. Be sure to look for the green brochure! You may also download the brochure information at [www.ecowekend.org](http://www.ecowekend.org).

If you have any questions, you can contact the Eco Weekend committee at [ecowekend@columbusaudubon.org](mailto:ecowekend@columbusaudubon.org) or call Columbus Audubon at (614) 545-5475 and then dial Extension 307 to leave a message. You can also contact us through our website at [www.ecowekend.org](http://www.ecowekend.org).

What is Eco Weekend?

EcoWeekend is a nature retreat for singles and families, young and old. It's held at Camp Oty' Okwa located near Conkles Hollow in beautiful Hocking Hills (Southeast Ohio).

Eco Weekend offers an affordable and enjoyable weekend of learning about nature from experienced instructors who share their expertise, enthusiasm, and knowledge of our natural world.

Programs include instructions and excursions on subjects that range from wild flowers to wild animals, backyards to backwoods, creatures to crafts, water sports to winged flight, trees to telescopes, and much more.

Eco Weekend is always held on the first weekend in May. From Friday evening until noon on Sunday, you will be housed, fed, and offered 10 or more programs and activities that will teach and guide you in the wonders of the natural world.

Programs are scheduled conveniently for morning, afternoon and nighttime segments. Schedule a full day of activities, or take a break to find your own special time with binoculars, camera, drawing pad, books or a little shuteye that includes the sounds of nature in your daydreams.

*-Roz Horn*

# Ohio Young Birders Club has busy fall

## Club members explore The Wilds!

Where do an Eastern Meadowlark, a Bactrian camel, a Northern Harrier and a giraffe live in the same place? The Wilds!

OYBC traveled to The Wilds on October 9, 2011 to see both the amazing Ohio birds and the African Savannah animals found there. When we arrived at the Wilds, we met up with two naturalists, Al Parker and Zach Rebar. We went to a pond close by and started to bird.

We were looking at the far side of the pond when we spotted a group of Trumpeter Swans. The adults were pure white, and the juveniles were mottled gray. Trumpeter Swans were introduced at the Wilds as part of a conservation project. Before this, I hadn't had a good look at a Trumpeter Swan. When they took flight, they looked like pieces of rippling white cloth.

While we were birding, our guides told us about the history of The Wilds. The area used to be a coal mine. After the coal was mined, the land looked almost as barren as the surface of the moon. Trees were planted, and slowly The Wilds was transformed into what it is now. The Wilds encompasses many habitats, including forest, shrubland, grassland, wetland, and prairie. We traveled to a place where a prairie was being built and learned about this habitat. Three common kinds of prairie grass are: Indian, Panic, and Turkey Foot. While we ate lunch, one of our guides gave us a presentation on birding at The Wilds.

Another highlight of the trip was seeing a Northern Harrier, far away, soaring on the wind. Overall, we saw 32 birds. Though we didn't see all the birds that are found at The Wilds, we saw some unique species that are not common in Ohio.

*-Aaron Tayal*

## OYBC service project

## Building and erecting a Osprey platform

DZZZZZrrrrrrrrrrrr! Dzzrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr! Not exactly the sound you'd expect to hear coming from a birding club, huh? However, if you had been at the Ohio Young Birder's Club (OYBC) activity on September 24 that's exactly the sound you would have heard. On that day the members of OYBC met at Gerry Brevoort's (one of the club's advisors) house to build an Osprey nesting platform. We were supervised by Dick Tuttle, a man who knows how to build and put up Osprey platforms.

The day began with Mr. Tuttle showing us some pictures of Osprey platforms that had already been built. Then he introduced everyone to the different jobs that we needed to do to build the Osprey platform. There were about six basic jobs. One was building the cradle, which is where the Ospreys build their nest. Another was cutting metal tubing into certain lengths so it could be used as supports for the cradle and the perch. (The perch is a piece of wood held to the cradle by two metal tubes. The parent Ospreys can land on it when they don't want to be in the nest with all their hungry, squawking babies, or the babies can use it when learning to fly.) Some other jobs were banging the ends of the tubes flat so they could be nailed to the wood and putting chicken wire on top of the wooden part of the cradle. The tubes needed to be painted green, too, and the sharp edges needed to be cut off the chicken wire so the Ospreys who use the platform won't be hurt.

After that we all set to work, with a little help from the parents of some of the Young Birders. Sawdust flew and drills whined as the people flattening the metal tubes banged away on a small anvil. We worked at our separate tasks for about three hours. When we had finished making all the parts, we began to put it



## OYBC members in the grass at The Wilds!



**OYBC members and Dick Tuttle with the finished platform.**

together. We put the cradle together and stapled the chicken wire to it. We couldn't put the tubes on, though. They would have to be put on when the platform was erected. After we were done we all stood with the Osprey platform while the adults took pictures of us with the platform. There was even a professional photographer there!

After we had finished the platform, Mr. Tuttle told us some things about where the platform will be put up. He told us that it is going to go in the water at the Twin Lakes in Powell (which happens to be where we went Kayaking last June). Since it is going in the water, though, they will have to wait until the water level is really low to put it up. Hopefully that will happen soon!

As everybody was getting ready to leave, Mr. Tuttle gave everybody an article about Ospreys. I think we all learned a lot that day, even if it was more carpentry skills than birding skills. Hopefully we can go and visit the platform when it is put up and see the ospreys who have made it their home.

*-Sarah Martin*



# Columbus Audubon January-February activities

## Avid Birders

*Saturday, January 7, 5:30 am*

*Saturday, February 25, 5:30 am*

As usual, the destinations and route will be based on late-breaking reports from likely areas of the state. The Avid Birders meet to carpool at 5:30 am in the southeast corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot. All birders are welcome!

For more information, contact the Avid Birders Team at [avidbirders@columbusaudubon.org](mailto:avidbirders@columbusaudubon.org).

## Service in the Preserves: Clifton Gorge

*Saturday, January 7, 2012, at 7:45 am*

There is a steep gorge near Springfield, Ohio that is normally shrouded in vegetation. But in winter you can see the exposed rock and how the glaciers and the subsequent constant flow of water has cut away the dolomite and limestone to form Clifton Gorge. We will be removing one of the bridges and replacing it. We will also build some new boardwalk. If there is still time in the day, we will remove some invasive honeysuckle. We meet at 7:45 am in the parking lot inside the gate house at the Ohio Department Natural Resources Complex to travel in the ODNR van to the site. Please call Katelyn Renard at 614-261-7171 to sign up, reserve space for transportation, and to help us determine tool requirements for both trips.

## Service in the Preserves: Blackhand Gorge

*Saturday, February 4, 2012, at 7:45 am*

What do the Licking River, canal boats, steam trains, electric interurban cars and automobiles have in common? They all ran through Blackhand Gorge at one time or another. This fascinating history will be a part of our conversation as we remove brush at the entrance to the preserve. From there we will proceed to slightly bigger challenges and remove trees along a drainage ditch. We'll use any extra time after that to explore the gorge. See Clifton Gorge above for directions.

Deadline to sign up can be found on [www.columbusaudubon.org](http://www.columbusaudubon.org).

## Green Lawn Cemetery Birding

*Saturday, January 14, 2012, at 8:30 am*

Join co-leaders Darlene Sillick and Warren Grody as they fill the bird feeders and look for the usual suspects plus a few surprises at one of the oldest cemeteries in central Ohio. Meet at the cemetery office.

Contact Darlene Sillick at [azuretrails@columbus.rr.com](mailto:azuretrails@columbus.rr.com) or 614-288-3696

## Winter Birds of Hoover Reservoir

*Saturday, January 28, 2012, at 9:00 am*

We'll visit some of the hotspots on the reservoir, depending on where there is open water.

Meet at the parking area by Hoover Dam along Sunbury Road at 9:00 AM, and dress

warmly since we'll be exposed to the wind along the shore. Trip should be over by 1:00 pm.

For more information, contact Robert Thorn at [robthorn@earthlink.net](mailto:robthorn@earthlink.net) or 614-551-0643.

## The Wilds with Al Parker

*Sunday, January 29, 2012 at 8:00 am*

Join Al Parker gifted naturalist and former conservation director at the wilds. We will spend part of the day with Al searching for the Golden Eagle that frequents the area in the winter and stay until dusk to look for Short Eared Owls. Wear warm clothes in layers, and bring water, lunch and a snack. Meet at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant in Pickerington at 1860 Winderly Lane. Contact Darlene Sillick at [azuretrails@columbus.rr.com](mailto:azuretrails@columbus.rr.com) or 614-288-3696

## Birding Blendon Woods Metro Park

*Sunday, February 5, 2012, at 10:00 am*

Please join 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](mailto:Simpson@MetroParks.net).

## Green Lawn Cemetery Birding

*Saturday, February 11, 2012, at 8:30 am*

Over 200 species of birds of birds have been recorded at Green Lawn and a winter wander around the pit and the bridge usually brings a few surprises. Join co-leaders Darlene Sillick and Warren Grody as they fill the bird feeders and search for winter rarities at one of the oldest cemeteries in central Ohio. Meet at the Cemetery office. Contact Darlene Sillick at [azuretrails@columbus.rr.com](mailto:azuretrails@columbus.rr.com) or 614-288-3696

## Winter Birds of the Urban Scioto

*Sunday, February 12, 2012, at 8:30 am.*

Along the Scioto River, a series of dam tailwaters and riffles stays ice-free all winter, and can attract a neat assortment of wintering herons, waterfowl, gulls, and unusual stray landbirds.

Meet at the Scioto Audubon boat launch, off Whittier Ave west of Front Street, at 8:30 am, and dress warmly. Trip should be over by 1:00 pm. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at [robthorn@earthlink.net](mailto:robthorn@earthlink.net) or 614-551-0643.

## Winter Birds at Killdeer Plains

*Saturday, February 18, 2012, at 12:30 pm*

In midwinter, Killdeer Plains hosts species that are hard to find in Ohio during other seasons, such as Northern Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings. Be sure to dress warmly and wear boots suitable for fields and snow. Bring snacks and water.

Meet to carpool in the SE corner of Worthington Mall. We will leave Killdeer just after sunset, so should be back in Columbus about 7:45. Contact Bill Heck at [Bill.Heck@gmail.com](mailto:Bill.Heck@gmail.com) or 614-895-1940.

## January/February Programs

**Join us on Tuesday, January 24 when Gwen Myers, DVM of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium will share her experiences using satellite telemetry to analyze the movement, distribution, and habitat of the Spectacled Eiders in Alaska.**

This is mission critical information for the management and conservation of the species. Spectacled Eiders are a medium-sized sea duck that nest in Russia and Alaska. Dr. Gwen Myers is the Associate Veterinarian for the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and has a passion for conservation research and fieldwork. She serves as a Volunteer Veterinarian for the United States Geological Survey in Alaska, and over the last seven years has participated in fieldwork projects there. The past three years she has spent time in the Arctic Circle working to help protect the Spectacled Eiders. Dr. Myers is an Adjunct Professor at the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine and a guest lecturer for the College's Preventative Medicine program.

**Please join us on February 28 to hear Richard Crossley, author of 'The Crossley ID Guide' tell his fascinating story.**

With humor and depth it highlights the thoughts behind the revolutionary 'The Crossley ID Guide' series. But is changing how we look at books and birds enough? 'Heck, no!' says Richard. Come listen to his past, perhaps it will change your thoughts on the future!

Richard Crossley is an internationally acclaimed birder and photographer. Richard has set himself a huge new goal - to popularize birding and the outdoors through books and multi-media. By making nature more fashionable, he hopes to encourage more of today's youth to become the game-changers of tomorrow. Constantly thinking outside the box and with five books, a TV series on the horizon and other business projects, he believes the future is an adventure - a busy one!



# Letter from Columbus Audubon president, Bill Heck

We have just finished the holiday season. For most of us, the holidays are a time of giving – giving presents to family and friends, giving donations to our favorite causes, perhaps giving our time to volunteer activities and organizations such as Columbus Audubon.

So let me suggest that now is the time for a season of taking.

No, I'm not suggesting that we take mindlessly without thought for others, for our children and their children. Audubon members aren't like that! But there are other kinds of taking.

You might want to take a break from the hustle and cacophony of traffic, business, and

shopping. Whether you are outdoors or relaxing inside while watching a bird feeder, you can take in the sights and sounds of birds and other wildlife. Take time to enjoy the simple pleasures that nature has to offer, whether it be casual observation or intense study.

You don't need to take a trip to some exotic land to take any or all of these things. Perhaps you will simply take a walk in your own neighborhood, watching the shrubs and trees and even just the sky to see the activity of birds coming and going. Or you can take a drive to one of our beautiful parks, where you can take a hike. The central Ohio area is home to many parks, be they state parks, city parks, township parks, Franklin County Metro

Parks, Delaware Preservation Parks – the list goes on and on.

As a reader of this newsletter, you probably support Columbus Audubon, the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, and the entire Audubon family. You might be a member, a financial contributor, a volunteer, or a friend. If you are any of these, you should take pride in your role. Your support makes possible so many good things: environmental education; citizen science that helps increase our understanding of the natural world; Columbus Audubon programs that bring us together to learn and to make friends; field trips that bring so many of us closer to the beauties of nature; and much, much more.

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Continued from page 2

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*Join us for our Second Annual Valentine's Day Celebration*

**I Birds & You!**

**Saturday, February 11**  
**11 a.m. to 10 p.m.**

*Enjoy a unique Valentine's Day Celebration like no other while learning how you and your valentine can get involved in the Great Backyard Bird Count 2012! For Singles & Couples!*

*Need more information? Visit [grangeinsuranceanduboncenter.org](http://grangeinsuranceanduboncenter.org)*

**RETURN IN FIVE DAYS TO**

Columbus Audubon/GIAC  
505 W. Whittier St.  
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**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 benefits

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
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- \* 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

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