

Explore the Nature of Change this Winter



Winter can be a slow time. Many birds have migrated to warmer climates. Reptiles, amphibians, and many mammals spend the winter in hibernation. People often stay indoors and recover from hectic summer and holiday schedules.

But winter is a great time to appreciate the natural world around us. When we look closely, we see that the natural world really isn't asleep, but just resting and getting ready for spring. Last summer's seed heads still provide meals for our resident birds and migrants from the far north. Flowering trees and shrubs that burst into color in the spring now provide wildlife with berries. Bird boxes that are used to raise noisy broods in the summer serve as quiet roosting places on cold winter nights. And active mammals leave their prints in the snow, showing where they have traveled as they search the winter landscape for food.

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center is a great place to see winter in action. A walk around the park will reveal the tracks—and sometimes provide a glimpse—of deer, coyotes, and mink. The bird feeders and fields are visited by hungry birds, filling their bellies with fuel to keep warm. And open water on the Scioto River attracts waterfowl that haven't pushed south yet.

When I walk around the Center in the winter and see how wildlife gets by in the lean months, I get ideas for how to make my yard a better habitat for birds and other wildlife. Am I providing shelter from cold winter winds? Have I selected plants that provide food and nesting sites for birds? Have I made water available — not just in the summer, but in the winter, too?

We're lucky to have a great resource for making our homes bird and wildlife friendly. Whether it's through your own observations, something you learn at an Audubon Afternoon, or something you discover in the GIAC library resources, you'll find inspiration here. GIAC is a great place to appreciate the natural world: make plans for a bird-friendly habitat at home for this winter and in the spring. We invite you to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center to explore winter and the nature of change.

Greg Cunningham, Grange Insurance Audubon Center board chair

IN THIS ISSUE

Look for this icon throughout this issue for stories relating to New Year - Spring Prep



Monthly Programs	2
CA/GIAC membership	3
Creature Feature	4
GIAC News	5- 8
Monthly Calendars	9-10
Ohio Young Birders	11
CA Field Trips	12
CA News	13-14
CA & GIAC Leaders	15
New members & Donors	15

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



Columbus Audubon is Having a Birthday!

This year, 2013, is the 100th anniversary of the founding of Columbus Audubon.

We kicked off the celebration at the November program with the unveiling of a portrait of a Song Sparrow, commissioned by CA members Ken and Julie Davis and painted by noted wildlife artist Jen Brumfield. This original work will hang at GIAC and the image will appear on a Columbus Audubon commemorative poster in honor of our 100th anniversary.

Exciting plans are well underway for further celebration! June 9 marks the 100th anniversary of the very first meeting of Columbus Audubon, so we plan an appropriate event to honor that occasion. Our popular Art for Audubon silent auction is scheduled for November 10. Many other activities are in the planning stages as well. We hope you will join us throughout the year as we celebrate 100 years of conservation in our community.



Columbus Audubon Monthly Programs

January Program – On Fronts, Fallouts, and Finding Home: the Biology of Bird Migration with Andy Jones, PhD

Tuesday, January 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the GIAC multipurpose room

7:00 p.m.: Short Program: Calamus Swamp, Columbus Audubon's Wetland Jewel

CA has owned and managed this 20-acre preserve in Pickaway County for the past 12 years. Come and hear about the unique plants and animals of this little wetland and some of the challenges of management.

7:15 p.m. Refreshments and socializing

7:30 p.m.: Main Program by Andy Jones PhD

Most birders are aware that some of the most spectacular migration days are related to weather events. But when a longtime birder boldly predicts one of these events, what information are they using? This talk will cover the overlap between ornithology and meteorology, particularly focusing on how to understand the movement of high and low pressure fronts and their impact on migrants.

The most extreme interactions occur when hurricanes sidetrack migrating birds, and Hurricane Sandy's impact on migration this fall will be discussed.

Dr. Jones' talk will be in two parts: one focusing on the relationship between weather events and migration (including websites you will want to revisit), and the second focusing on the latest published research on the biology of migration. Technological advances have given us incredible peeks into the lives of birds, including tracking of individual songbirds for months at a time, and in some cases for multiple years.

Dr. Andrew W. Jones is the William A. and Nancy R. Kamm Endowed Chair of Ornithology and curator and head of ornithology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. For more information, visit www.cmnh.org/ornithology.aspx and to see photos visit www.flickr.com/photos/ornitholoco.



Monitoring Nesting Birds with the Power of Citizen Science with Jason Martin, PhD

Tuesday, February 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the GIAC multipurpose room

7:00 p.m. Short Program: Matthew Wiese of Dublin did his Eagle Scout project by rebuilding the bluebird and tree swallow trail containing 30 nest boxes in the Columbus Zoo's Safari Golf Course. Matt will share his day-to-day growth chart and the Android app he created to help age the growing chicks.

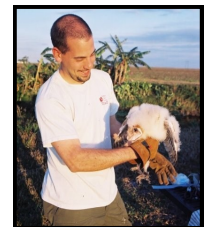
7:15 p.m. Refreshments and socializing

7:30 p.m.: Main Program by Jason Martin PhD

NestWatch is a nationwide citizen science program run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. Every year, thousands of volunteers monitor nests and report their observations online at www.NestWatch.org, where they are added to a continually growing database. This information is then used by researchers to study various aspects of nesting biology, including how it may be changing over time due to the influence of climate change.

Dr. Martin will discuss how citizen science and individuals participating in NestWatch make invaluable contributions to science while providing the opportunity to learn firsthand about the often secretive world of nesting birds.

Dr. Jason Martin joined Cornell Lab of Ornithology in 2011 as the project leader of the NestWatch program. Dr. Martin also coordinates the distribution of NestWatch data to researchers and serves on the research development committee of The Peregrine Fund's American Kestrel Partnership (Boise, ID) and is a research advisor for the Tracy Aviary (Salt Lake City, UT).



A look ahead at Columbus Audubon's 2013 monthly programs, fourth Tuesday of the month 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Mar. 26: Julie Zickefoose, artist and writer extraordinaire

Apr. 23: Kimberly Kaufman, executive director at Black Swamp Bird Observatory

May 28: Mary Maloney, director at Chadwick Arboretum

Audubon Membership Can Be Confusing

We here at Columbus Audubon and Grange Insurance Audubon Center try to keep your membership in local and national Audubon as seamless as possible. We want to make sure that you are getting your *Song Sparrow* newsletter, special offers or invitations, and other Audubon information in a timely manner so you don't miss any local or national Audubon news. We thought it might be helpful to give you some background information to better inform you about your membership.

There are several ways to renew or initially join as a member of Audubon. To become a local member and also to enjoy the full range of benefits at the national level, you can join through either the Columbus Audubon Chapter or the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. This is a joint Chapter/Center membership with a base rate of \$30 for individuals, \$45 for families, and \$75 for organizations. Columbus Audubon's web page has a link that allows you to make a payment through Pay Pal. The Center website has a pdf download for you to complete and send in by mail with your payment. A local membership entitles you to the bimonthly newsletter by mail, invitations to special local members-only events, and 10% discount in the Nature Store, in addition to the monthly *Audubon* Magazine.

You may also join through the National Audubon Society at a base rate of \$20. With this membership you receive the monthly *Audubon* magazine and an electronic version of the bimonthly local newsletter when email information is provided by you. If you join through National Audubon, you may upgrade your membership to include local membership and benefits for \$10 at the individual level and \$25 for a family membership.

National Audubon is currently operating under a subscription model, so regardless of how you join Audubon you will receive multiple renewal notices for the magazine. Magazine renewal also includes your membership, but the primary focus is your magazine subscription renewal.

When the Chapter or the Center receive your membership dues or gift over \$30, we record the check date as your start date for your annual membership. There is a lag between our receipt of your membership dues or gift and National Audubon's. When we receive word at the local level of the date National Audubon identifies as your start date, we then update our records to match. In the meantime, we have sent you a membership card acknowledging our receipt of your dues/gift with the original local date, because we want to be prompt in letting you know you are a member. Your actual renewal date will be later than what appears on your membership card and will appear on the mailing sticker of the *Audubon* magazine.

Many of you have expressed concerns and confusion regarding multiple renewal notices from National Audubon, as well as disruption in delivery of the monthly *Audubon* magazine subscription. We cannot help you with the multiple renewal notices at this time. However, if you experience a disruption in your subscription, please contact the Grange Insurance Audubon Center for assistance in restarting your magazine.

We are working closely with National Audubon to alleviate the confusion and appreciate your patience. We are the only Chapter/Center membership entity in the National Audubon network and there have been some growing pains. National Audubon, however, recognizes the potential of expanding the model we have created and is working very hard to address our unique concerns.

Christie Vargo, GIAC executive director

Hummingbird Fest at GIAC



Join us for a fun-filled, family day celebrating our smallest migrant, the hummingbird! On International Migratory Bird Day, May 11, 2013, we will be having Hummingbird Fest! There will be activities for all ages! Please save the date and check our website for further details!



Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolensis*)

“Something isn't right here,” the woman said with a perplexed look on her face. Our group was birding Greenlawn Cemetery, and we'd just looked through an apparent group of Grackles. Most of us had already moved on, but she looked back at the Grackles, a few of which had dropped to the ground and were tussling with leaves and tree debris. “They don't sound like Grackles,” she intoned. As it turned out, we had almost been fooled by the Midwest's stealthiest winter resident, the Rusty Blackbird. Her initial comment was also prophetic about the species as well.

Rusty Blackbirds (*Euphagus carolensis*) have long been an overlooked species. A medium-sized blackbird, they've never been as iconic as Redwings in the East or Brewer's Blackbirds in the West. Partly it's their lack of any signal feature like the Redwing's shoulder patches, but also it's their retiring habits. Rusties are not birds of roadside ditches, ponds, or parks. They much prefer more inaccessible swamps and bogs. They breed in spruce bogs all across Alaska and northern Canada, and then they re-create that habitat choice by wintering in riverine swamps of the coastal plain and the Mississippi Valley.

Rusties, as most birders call them, are not your typical blackbird in other ways. Rusties aren't summer breeders here like Redwings or Grackles; ours breed in Canada and migrate through. They also move south later (October through December) and return north earlier (February and March) than most blackbirds. Big flocks of fall migrants can show up at the Lake Erie marshes in November and December, long after other blackbirds have headed south. Formerly there were wintering flocks in central Ohio, but now they've become a rare, unpredictable part of our winter avifauna.



How do you know when you've stumbled on some Rusties? They look and sound different from Redwings and Grackles: be alert for a brown-tinged blackbird with a light eye and a soft “chuck” note. Winter birds often have brown or rusty tones in their plumage. They usually don't come in huge flocks; often they are in groups of 20 birds or less here in central Ohio. I really key on their behaviors: Rusties like to root around in puddles and wet leaf litter. If you see a blackbird wading around in a shallow pool, give it a second look. David Sibley gives a few more subtle marks at www.sibleyguides.com/2012/11/my-trick-to-finding-rusty-blackbirds.

Where should you be alert for these tricksters? In fall migration they can appear anywhere—swamps, fields, farm feedlots—and can be mixed in with other blackbirds in huge flocks. But as the winter wears on, Rusties home in on their favorite habitats: wooded swamps. In states south of us, that usually means flooded river swamps. Rusties seem to associate with riparian swamps with lots of oaks, mostly because acorns are an emergency winter food for them if invertebrates become scarce. Here in central Ohio, such oak-dominated swamps have always been rare, so Rusties have adapted to human-created swamps. The areas around Buckeye Lake were formerly their local nirvana, and the swampy woodlands of the Hebron Fish Hatchery are still a good place to look for them. The wetland swamps of Big Island and Delaware Wildlife Areas are also good. Our own Calamus Swamp near Circleville is another very good spot for them, and I've seen a few at many of the small swamp forest remnants in parks from Grove City to Dublin, including Sawmill Wetlands.

Now for the bad news. Your chances for seeing Rusties are not good and getting worse by the year. Most of the reasons are summarized here: www.birdsource.org/gbbc/science-stories/past-stories/the-decline-and-fall-of-the-rusty-blackbird. These swamp blackbirds have seen declines of nearly ten percent yearly over the past several decades. We're not sure of the cause of this disappearance. Their habitat seems largely unchanged in both Canada and the southern US, but something subtle has shifted. Fortunately, human awareness of the problem is growing. Some conservation groups like Audubon are now focusing on Rusty Blackbirds, and there has even been a Rusty Blackbird Roundup, a semi-organized census of the birds across the eastern US in early-mid February. Now, that survey is expanding to cover most of the species' migration and wintering stages (<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/rubl-survey>). You want to keep an eye out for Rusties, since our observations may help biologists crack the mystery of its decline.

Rob Thorn

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Looking For a Great Opportunity to Give Back? Become a GIAC Volunteer This Year!



GIAC volunteers are an amazing group of people who give their time, talent, and treasures. Without volunteers, the Center wouldn't exist and we wouldn't be able to serve local students or the community. Volunteers provide assistance with conservation projects, visitor experiences, and support the mission of the Center. We are excited to announce that we have the opportunity to expand our volunteer corps this year.

A new volunteer orientation and training program has been created by the GIAC education team. This new program will give volunteers the opportunity to learn new things and expand their knowledge base about the Center, the LEED green features of the building, birds, environmental education, and conservation. Current and new volunteers will have a chance to get to know one another; meeting others who share common interests is one of the very special benefits of volunteering.

If you are looking for something fun to do this year, please join us for our new GIAC volunteer training program. GIAC is part of National Audubon Society and we follow their process for accepting volunteers, which includes an application and background check.

Those interested in becoming a volunteer please contact Paul Tankovich at ptankovich@audubon.org.

During January and February a monthly training opportunity will be available for both new and existing volunteers. We will offer a weeknight and weekend training on each topic. The January training will be an overview of the education programs at the Center and how volunteers can assist the education staff in program delivery. In February the training topic will be how to engage visitors in a more meaningful and hands-on experience at the Center.

January Training

Monday, January 14 from 6-8 p.m. OR

Saturday, January 19 from 12 noon-2:00 p.m.

RSVP to ptankovich@audubon.org by Jan. 11

February Training

Monday, February 11 from 6-8 p.m. OR

Saturday, February 16 from 10 a.m.-12 noon

RSVP to ptankovich@audubon.org by Feb. 8

All volunteers are invited to meet at the Center and join us for fun and fellowship at the Scioto Audubon Metro Park Winter Hike on Saturday, January 19 from 10 a.m.-12 noon. Chili will be available from Metro Parks after the hike.

Paul Tankovich Joins GIAC

GIAC is pleased to welcome Paul Tankovich as a full time educator, who started his new role on September 24. He earned his both undergraduate degree in environmental education and master's degree in science education from The Ohio State University. He recently moved back to Ohio after living in Washington state for 12 years, where he taught 8th grade science.

He recently participated in the Sister Mountain Project as a ranger at Mt. Rainier National Park and traveled to Japan to work with fellow teachers to develop mountain themed curriculum. At Mt. Rainier, Paul also worked as an instructor for A Volcano in My Backyard, the USGS professional development workshop for teachers.

Paul grew up in central Ohio and has an extensive background of working with the Boy Scouts, including serving as a summer camp program director at Camp Falling Rock near Newark. Paul enjoys photography and traveling to National Parks. He recently visited his 200th National Park. He looks forward to working with visiting students and further developing the education programs here at the GIAC.



**Bird Watcher's
Digest, Eagle
Optics, and GIAC**

are teaming up to host this unique event for birding and outdoor enthusiasts. This is your opportunity to sample outdoor optics in person—to "try before you buy" and get advice from the top optics and gear manufacturers in the world. Best of all, admission is FREE and all registered attendees will be entered to win door prizes.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
Sat. March 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sun. March 24 from 12 noon to 4:00 p.m.

To register, visit

www.birdwatchersdigest.com/expo.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Monthly GIAC Family Movie Nights

Starting in January, GIAC launches Family Movie Nights on the first Friday of the month. Grab a large blanket and maybe some pillows, pack up the family, and head to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. We'll start the year inside the Center and maybe move outside during the summer months.

Free admission Doors open 6:30 p.m. and movie begins at 7:00 p.m. Light snacks and beverages available for a small cost. Join us at our upcoming movies:

Friday, January 4

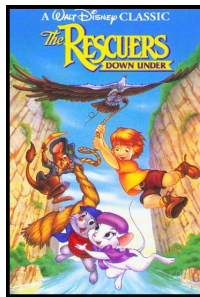
Mr. Popper's Penguins (PG)



The life of a businessman (Jim Carrey) begins to change after he inherits six penguins. As he transforms his apartment into a winter wonderland, his professional life starts to unravel.

Friday, February 1

Rescuers Down Under (G)



Two Rescue Aide Society agents, Miss Bianca and Bernard, race to Australia to save a boy and a rare golden eagle from a murderous poacher.

Friday, March 1

Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole (PG)



When a young owl is abducted by an evil owl army, he must escape with newfound friends to seek out the legendary guardians to stop the menace.

Have a favorite movie about our fine-feathered friends, other animal, or conservation to recommend for a future movie night? Contact Allison Roush at aroush@audubon.org to let her know. We hope to see you at one of our fun new family movie nights!

Audubon Afternoon Adventures

Join us every Saturday and Sunday from 1-3 p.m. for Audubon Afternoons, led by naturalists who will help you explore the Scioto Audubon Metro Park. Come to learn about birds, conservation, and just enjoy nature!

Audubon Afternoons for Winter 2013

Date Topic

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| January 5/6 | Animal Winter Adaptations |
| January 12/13 | Bird Feeders: which work for which birds? |
| January 19/20 | Nature Journals: create your own |
| January 26/27 | Project Feederwatch – become a citizen scientist! |
| February 2/3 | Animal Tracks |
| February 9/10 | Birds of Prey |
| February 16/17 | Great Backyard Bird Count |
| February 23/24 | Reptiles and Amphibians |
| March 2/3 | Art in the Park |



GIAC Preschool Story Time!



Children ages 5 and under are invited to a special story time every Wednesday from 10-11 a.m.

January's theme is Birds of a Feather Flock Together: Stories about Families.

February's theme is Love Birds: These Birds Have Heart! Each story time will consist of songs, books, and crafts. Admission is free.

Join us!



Grange Insurance Audubon Center

New Bridal Show Event at GIAC

Invite your friends, family, and loved ones (especially those who got engaged over the holidays or will during Valentine's Day) to the GIAC Bridal Show on Sunday, March 10 from noon to 5:00 p.m. The \$5 admission benefits the Center's programs. Register by March 1 at the Nature Store and receive 2-for-1 admission (2 for \$5).

Attendees can explore food tastings, product shopping, and ideas to spark your planning. GIAC's approved caterers will be onsite, along with other types of vendors and service providers needed for planning a wedding: photographers, DJs, bakers, photo booths, and others.

Weddings and receptions are a unique way to support GIAC and our mission. Revenue from Center space rentals provides funding for science education, conservation efforts, and GIAC's free-admission programs.

Other ways weddings and receptions support the Center's mission:

Meeting a Need: GIAC is close to many churches and other venues at which couples can hold their ceremony but cannot hold a reception. Our close proximity to downtown includes parking and saves time, travel, and gas. A great blend of pizzazz and nature, our space offers both indoor and outdoor areas and an incredible Columbus skyline view (especially at night) with nature and scenic river and park views all around.

Matching a Passion: The most successful events here seem to be those in tune to the Center's mission and a nature lover's passion. Brides and grooms often comment it meets their checklist to have a place at which they feel comfortable, that matches their love of nature and environment, and is unique for their special day.

Raising Awareness: All nonprofits and Audubon centers are charged with getting the word out. Special events are an ideal way to market the Center to new guests. A meeting, party, or celebration just might be their first exposure and first step in supporting our mission and getting involved.



Giving Back: One of the biggest satisfactions we hear from wedding rentals is that the reasonable price at the Center enables the couple to have the reception they dream of while supporting a good cause.

Whether you come to check out the Center's space or are planning a wedding elsewhere, you're invited to join us for this year's Bridal Show to get information and ideas to help in your planning!

Vendors interested in participating should contact Sarah Selhorst at 614-218-2412.

SAVE THE DATE

Wine and Warblers 2013

Wednesday, May 15, 2013 at GIAC

General Event 6pm – 9:00 p.m.

Top Flight Level 5:30-7:00 p.m.



General Tickets \$50 (early purchase discount rate \$40 if bought by Sunday 4/28/13) Look for ticket sale release and on-line purchase, regular updates at www.giac-events.org/ww, and more details in the next *Song Sparrow* issue.

Do You Like to Plan a Party?

GIAC is looking for volunteers to join the Wine and Warblers planning committee.

From set-up and décor, silent auction, birding, marketing, to food and wine – we've got a spot for you to get involved.

Regular committee and sub-committee meetings start in January.

Contact Jeff Redfield, jredfield@audubon.org, 614-545-5479 or Julie Davis, GIAC vice chair, at greenheron58@insight.rr.com

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Holiday Shop Around Succeeds All Around

It must be true what they say about the third time is a charm. On November 10, GIAC's 3rd Annual Holiday Shop Around tripled in participation over the previous year. Increased awareness through advertisement in print media, more marketing materials, a call out for vendors and attendees on social media, and building on another year of excitement and opportunity to participate in this unique event all contributed to the success. An extremely warm weather day in November didn't hurt either!



The Shop Around brought visitors to the Center and park to enjoy nature, and attendees were thrilled to take advantage of early holiday shopping, fun activities, and yummy refreshments.

Thank you to all the Shop Around vendors, workshop presenters, speakers, and food vendors for supporting our nature center in terms of booth fees, donated products and time, and your own efforts in advertising the event. The nature-inspired, environmentally conscious, and recycled/repurposed art and products are so important to our mission and are wonderful examples of sustainability for our community and city. This was also a great event to showcase the products in our own Nature Store and to kick off the holiday season with a profitable day, and the proceeds go right back into education programs that are so important for the naturalists, biologists, and scientists of the future. We hope everyone—you, vendors, and supporters—will join us for next year's Shop Around!

Thanks again to the staff, volunteers, park rangers, shoppers, and visitors for making this Shop Around such a bustling success. Special thanks to our vendors listed below:

A Class Act	Garden Glances	Recycled Style
Avian Expressions	Global Gallery	Robert Patricy
BDKreations	Horkover Glass	Simple Design
Becoming 31	Jenna Balogh Photography	Snapped By Nicole
Caricature Artist	Markgraf Clayworks	The Wrist Bandit
Cicada Valley	Out of the Moon	Tribal Stone
Coreroc	Potbellies	Wild Birds Unlimited
Eco Assist	Rainy Roots Studio	(Riverside Drive)

ODNR Wildlife Diversity Conference: A Conservation State of Mind

Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife will host the 2013 Wildlife Diversity Conference on March 13 at Aladdin Shrine Complex in Columbus.

Keynote speaker Steve Pollick, retired outdoor writer with the *Toledo Blade*, will compare Ohio with world travels. Additional topics for the day will include:

- Breeding birds in Ohio – how many are there?
- Ticks – information you need to know if you spend time outdoors
- How to become a Certified Volunteer Naturalist
- Aquatic algae and how it impacts wildlife
- Bats – and their struggle with the disease White Nose Syndrome
- Social media – what does it mean for conservation
- Eastern box turtle – everyone's favorite



Bruce DiVaccaro

The newest Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp will be available at the conference for \$15. The stamp features a black capped chickadee with proceeds supporting wildlife diversity conservation, research and education in Ohio.

The conference will provide opportunities to ask questions, share ideas and network with others interested in natural resource conservation and management. For information after January 7, please call 1.800.WILDLIFE or visit www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife.

Schedule of Events

GIAC events are in black text.

Columbus Audubon events are in green text

New Year Hike at Walnut Woods Metro Park
Tuesday, Jan. 1 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GIAC Preschool Story Time
Wednesday, Jan. 2 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

GIAC Family Movie Night
Friday, Jan. 4 at 7:00 p.m. Featuring the movie
Mr. Popper's Penguins

Audubon Afternoon Adventures:
Animal Winter Adaptations
Saturday, Jan. 5 AND Sunday, Jan. 6 from 1:00
p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GIAC Preschool Story Time
Wednesday, Jan. 9 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Service in the Preserves - Siegenthaler-Esker
Saturday, Jan. 12 from 7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Audubon Afternoon Adventures:
Bird Feeders
Saturday, Jan. 12 AND Sunday, Jan. 13 from 1:00
p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GIAC Preschool Story Time
Wednesday, Jan. 16 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.



A Day with the Avid Birders
Saturday, Jan. 19 at 5:30 am (all day)

Scioto Audubon Metro Park Hike and Chili Lunch
Saturday, Jan. 19 6:00 a.m. - Noon

Chillin' at Hoover Reservoir (meet at Hoover Dam)
Sunday, Jan. 20 from 18:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

GIAC Preschool Story Time
Wednesday, Jan. 23 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Audubon Afternoon Adventures:
Project Feederwatch
Saturday Jan. 26 AND Sunday, Jan. 27 from 1:00
p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 	2 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building to a.m. Call for Resv.	3	4	5
6	7 GIAC is closed	8	9 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building to a.m. Call for Resv.	10	11	12
13	14 GIAC is closed GIAC Volunteer Training 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.	15	16 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building to a.m. Call for Resv.	17	18 	19 GIAC Volunteer Training Noon - 2 p.m.
20	21 GIAC is closed	22	23 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building to a.m. Call for Resv.	24	25	26
27	28 GIAC is closed	29	30 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building to a.m. call for Resv.	31		



GIAC Preschool Story Time
Wednesday, Jan. 30 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
**CA monthly program - On Fronts, Fallouts
and Finding Home with Andy Jones, PhD**
Tuesday, Jan. 22 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Schedule of Events

GIAC events are in black text.

Columbus Audubon events are in green text

GIAC Family Movie Night

Friday, Feb. 1 at 7:00 p.m. Featuring the movie *Rescuers Down Under*

Birding Green Lawn IBA

Saturday, Feb. 2 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Audubon Afternoon Adventures:

Animal Tracks

Saturday, Feb. 2 AND Sunday, Feb. 3 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GIAC Preschool Story Time

Wednesday, Feb. 6 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

A Day with the Avid Birders

Saturday, Feb. 9 at 5:30 a.m.

Audubon Afternoon Adventures:

Winter Adaptations

Saturday, Feb. 9 AND Sunday, Feb. 10 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Winter Birds of The Wilds

Sunday, Feb. 10 from 12:00 noon to 7:30 p.m.

GIAC Preschool Story Time

Wednesday, Feb. 13 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Service in the Preserves - Clifton Gorge

Saturday, Feb. 16 from 7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Audubon Afternoon Adventures:

Great backyard Bird Count

Saturday, Feb. 16 AND Sunday, Feb. 17 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GIAC Preschool Story Time

Wednesday, Feb. 20 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area

Saturday, Feb. 23 from 12:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.




Audubon Afternoon Adventures:

Reptiles and Amphibians

Saturday, Feb. 23 AND Sunday, Feb. 24 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Black Hand Gorge Birds and Geology

Sunday, Feb. 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						
3	4 GIAC is closed	5	6 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m. Call for Resv.	7	8	9
10	11 GIAC is closed GIAC Volunteer Training 6 p.m.-8 p.m.	12	13 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m. Call for Resv.	14 	15	16 GIAC Volunteer Training 10 a.m.-Noon
17	18 GIAC is closed	19	20 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m. Call for Resv.	21	22	23
24	25 GIAC is closed	26	27 Tour of LEED Gold GIAC building 10 a.m. Call for Resv.	28		
						
<div> <p>Monitoring Nesting Birds with the Power of Citizen Science with Jason Martin, PhD Tuesday, Feb. 26 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.</p> <p>GIAC Preschool Story Time Wednesday, Feb. 27 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.</p> <p>Family Movie Night Friday, March 1 at 7:00 p.m. Featuring the movie <i>Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Gd'Hoole</i></p> <p>Audubon Afternoon Adventures: Art in the Park Saturday, March 2 AND Sunday, March 3 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.</p> </div>						

Columbus Audubon

Sixth Annual Ohio Young Birders Conference



The sixth annual Ohio Young Birders Conference was one for the record books! Nearly 140 people were treated to 11 outstanding young presenters. Topics included camps and career opportunities for young birders, the value of citizen science, and why bird conservation matters. Our keynote speaker was Benjamin Van Doren, a freshman at Cornell University. Benjamin's presentation on nocturnal migration and morning flight of migratory birds was exceptional. In addition to the presentations, participants also constructed

40 Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes for a service project the OYBC central Ohio chapter is doing at Hoover Nature Preserve.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity for young people to see their peers in conservation leadership positions. Attendance continues to grow, and the conference has received national accolades for the innovative approach to having young people give all of the presentations. Now that we have active chapters forming across the state, an additional benefit of the conference is that it brings everyone together throughout Ohio to celebrate birds and conservation.

Enormous thanks to Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm for hosting the conference and to all of our speakers, sponsors, and volunteers who make the conference possible. We can't wait for next year!

Kimberly Kaufman, executive director of Black Swamp Bird Observatory

OYBC was founded in 2006 by Black Swamp Bird Observatory.



Upcoming Adventures for Central Ohio OYBC

Plunging temperatures, snow, and ice won't slow down the central Ohio chapter of the Ohio Young Birders Club! In January, the students will head to The Wilds (Guernsey County) in search of raptors and waterfowl; the trip in this unique birding area will be led by a professional guide. In February OYBC-ers will celebrate "Winter Blues Blowout" at Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area (Wyandot County); we hope to spy Short-eared Owls and warm up with a delicious potluck lunch. In March our chapter will bird in the Mohican State Park area (Ashland County), and in April young birders will work on a conservation service project at Dawes Arboretum (Licking County) to install nest boxes and enjoy amazing birding opportunities amid a treasure trove of trees. OYBC is for ages 12-18. Want more details? Go to www.columbusaudubon.org/oybc and click "Upcoming Events" or "Join Us" for membership info and forms. Winter weather? OYBC says: Get out and bird!

Gerry Brevoort, central Ohio OYBC advisor

Happy Birthday to CA Benefactor Ada Burke

Ada Burke celebrated her 90th birthday this year at her farm with a large crowd of family, friends, and neighbors. They gathered at the Circleville home she was born in on the farm where she has spent her entire life.

On her farm is Calamus Swamp, the only naturally vegetated and undisturbed

kettle lake existing in central Ohio today. In 1999, this precious wetland was donated to Columbus Audubon by Ada May Burke and Sally V. May. Their stewardship ensures the protection of this beautiful habitat for future generations to enjoy. You can read more about Calamus at www.columbusaudubon.org/calamus.

Ada is pictured here at her birthday party with Jan Rodenfels, former president of Columbus Audubon. Happy 90th year, Ada!



Columbus Audubon



January and February Field Trips and Programs

For complete descriptions of all trips, visit our web site: www.columbusaudubon.org/events

New Year's Day Hike at Walnut Woods

Tuesday, Jan. 1 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

New Year's Day finds many wanting to begin the year outdoors. That is what this trip is about. This new year we will travel to the newest of the Columbus Metro Parks, Walnut Woods, to discover its features. This 1000-acre park is located just southeast of Columbus. Rendezvous at Tall Pines parking area, see www.metroparks.net. For more information contact Mike Flynn at 614-769-1681.

Avid Birders

Saturday, Jan. 19 at 5:30 a.m.

The Avid Birders meet to carpool from the southeast corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot. As usual, the destinations will be chosen and announced a few days before the trip, depending on reports of birds to be seen across Ohio. All birders are welcome! Bring water, lunch, and snacks, and dress appropriately for the weather. For more information, contact the Avid Birders team at avidbirders-leads@columbusaudubon.org.

Chillin' at Hoover Hotspots for Gulls and Waterfowl

Sunday, Jan. 20, 2013 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Join the search for birds on ice. Uncommon winter birds are found regularly on Hoover Reservoir. We'll hopscotch north along the west bank looking for open water and hardy birds. Meet at Hoover Dam. For more information contact Ben Warner at 614-361-5089 or waen2bb2@aol.com.

Birding Greenlawn IBA

Saturday, Feb. 2 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Join us as we fill the bird feeders and search for winter specialties in one of the oldest cemeteries in central Ohio. Meet at the cemetery office. For more information, contact the Darlene Sillick at 614-288-3696 or azuretrails@columbus.rr.com.

Avid Birders

Saturday, Feb. 9, 2013 at 5:30 a.m.

See description at January 19

Winter Birds of The Wilds

Sunday, Feb. 10 from 12:00 noon to 7:30 p.m.

We will be looking for wintering raptors and other wildlife at The Wilds. Rendezvous at noon for carpooling or caravanning from Cracker Barrel in Pickerington (1860 Winderly Lane at I-70 and Route 256) or meet the group at 1:00 p.m. at The Wilds entrance (State Route 146 and Zion Ridge Road). We will be close to our vehicles for most of the trip but dress warmly and wear good boots. Bring snacks and warm drinks, as there are no facilities. Spotting scopes will be very helpful. Carpoolers may stay until dusk and for Short-eared Owls. For details contact Earl Harrison at 202-361-2039 or Harrison.304@osu.edu or Rick Stelzer at 614-570-7597 or rstelzer@insight.rr.com.

Killdeer Plains

Saturday, Feb. 23 from 12:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

In midwinter, Killdeer Plains hosts raptors that are hard to find in Ohio during other seasons. Northern Harriers are common and Rough-legged Hawks, Long-eared Owls, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings are possible. As the light dims before the 6:15 sunset, Short-eared Owls may be on the wing. Much of our exploration will be by car, but we will check out woodland patches on foot. Dress warmly and wear boots suitable for fields and snow. Bring snacks and water. We'll meet at the SE corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot for carpooling for the 1.5 hour drive (or for caravanning for those who can't bird until after sunset). For more information, contact Bill Heck at Bill.Heck@gmail.com or 614-895-1940.

Black Hand Gorge Birds and Geology

Sunday, Feb. 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Join us for a frosty walk through Black

Birdathon 2013 is Coming!



It's not too early to start thinking about Columbus Audubon's annual **Birdathon**!

The committee has been hard at work to inject even more fun and excitement into all aspects of **Birdathon**.

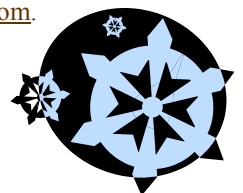
We invite you to visit the **Birdathon** page at www.columbusaudubon.org/birdathon for all the details.

The Columbus Audubon **Birdathon** 2013 runs from May 4 - May 19. During this time **Birdathon** teams hit the field to see as many birds as possible. But it's not just a birding event: it's the biggest fundraiser of the year for Columbus Audubon. The pledges collected by **Birdathon** teams go to support Columbus Audubon programs such as:

- Scholarships for environmental education
- Conservation projects in the Central Ohio area
- Public programs featuring nationally known speakers.

Interested in volunteering as an event planner for the celebration and awards event? Contact **Birdathon** committee leader Linda Benner at winter.wren@att.net.

Hand Gorge State Nature Preserve east of Newark. We will discover the geology of the gorge while looking for winter birds along easy trails. Meet in the main preserve parking lot on CR 273 near Toboso. For more information, contact Tom Bain at 614-312-7513 or bainnature@gmail.com.



Conservation Corner: No to Sawmill Wetlands Swamp Swap



One challenge of writing under an early deadline is that issues that are cutting edge on November 20 may be ancient history by January 1.

In the November 18 edition of the Columbus Dispatch (www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/11/18/sawmill-wetland-a-little-gem.html), we read of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' proposed wetland swap of the 7.5 acre wooded Sawmill Wetland for a larger parcel of constructed wetlands elsewhere. On first look this would seem a reasonable deal until one looks at the details, and a number of troublesome issues arise:

The Sawmill Wetland supports one of the few populations of Smallmouth Salamanders remaining in central Ohio (We know by now that amphibians are in decline globally.)

The wetland preserve was established partly for educational benefit; in fact the official name is the Sawmill State Wetland Education Center. The wetland does not currently enjoy much educational use, but that is for reasons unrelated to its quality.

Most disturbing is that the wetland was dedicated for preservation "in perpetuity" during the 1990s. Now just 20 years later, ODNR seems to have reversed their decision. If dedication can be reversed for this particular wetland, what about others and other conservation easements.

One of the main reasons for considering the proposed swap is, of course, economic. The land surrounding the wetland is worth millions. I can certainly sympathize with the developers, but in this case and others like it, we really need to hold the line.

To learn more and take action, visit www.theoec.org/WaterWetlands.htm. Columbus Audubon is a member of the Ohio Environmental Council.

Dave Horn



Invasive Species: Common Reed Grass

Common Reed Grass, sometimes called by its scientific name *Phragmites*, is an invasive plant found throughout the US. In Ohio it is especially abundant in the wetlands bordering Lake Erie and some large inland reservoirs. Its invasiveness is an enigma because it is apparently a native species that began to dominate and replace other wetland plants only recently. Researchers think that there has been some genetic interchange between native *Phragmites* and strains introduced from Europe resulting in a more aggressive hybrid. What we know for certain is that Common Reed Grass thrives best in disturbed wetlands that are exposed to chemical pollution (particularly salt) or to unpredictable changes in water levels. The plant outcompetes and replaces the vegetational diversity essential for many birds and other wildlife.

The plant is a tall (10-15 feet) grass with tuftlike flower heads in summer. The plant has largely replaced native cattails around the Lake Erie marshes and in many other places.

The plant can be controlled by repeated cutting or pulling where this is practical;

extended flooding also works. Herbicide application is effective but of course may not be an acceptable option in wetlands. You can do a wetland a favor by pulling up *Phragmites* if you find an isolated infestation, if pulling plants is allowed. I have yet to see any at Columbus Audubon's Calamus Swamp.

For more information visit: www.invasiveplants.net/phragmites and www.ohiodnr.com/dnap/invasive/5reedgrass.

Dave Horn

Columbus Audubon

Mark Your Calendar!

EcoWeekend is May 3-5, 2013

Registration and information coming soon

Get out those 2013 calendars and save the dates for **EcoWeekend: May 3-5, 2013**. Join us for another spectacular weekend in the Hocking Hills!

EcoWeekend is an affordable opportunity to enjoy Ohio's beauty while learning about nature from experienced program leaders. Adult and family programs are offered Friday evening through Sunday noon, with special youth programs on Saturday. Come prepared to learn as our expert consultants share their knowledge about the natural world.

Registration information for **EcoWeekend 2013** will be mailed directly to all *Song Sparrow* subscribers in February. Watch for the green brochure. Registration information will also become available February 1 at www.ecowekend.org.

Questions? Please contact the EcoWeekend committee at ecowekend@columbusaudubon.org, Columbus Audubon at 614-793-8843, or visit us online at www.ecowekend.org.

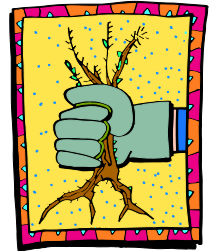


Service in the Preserves

Siegenthaler Esker State Nature Preserve

Saturday, Jan. 12 at 7:45 a.m.

Join us as we spend the day cutting and burning brush on the wonderful glacial relict, Siegenthaler Esker, in Champaign County. No special skills are required; bring your lunch, water, work gloves, and appropriate foot gear. Participants meet in the parking lot inside the gate house at the ODNR Complex, 2045 Morse Road, to travel in the ODNR van. Registration is required; call trip leader Katryn Renard by Jan. 9 at 614-261-7171 to register, reserve space for transportation, and learn more.



Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve

Saturday, Feb. 16 at 7:45 a.m.

We'll be targeting invasive woody species as we work to cut them out of specific areas of beautiful Clifton Gorge in Greene County. It's a great excuse to get outside this winter. No special skills are required; bring your lunch, water, work gloves, and appropriate foot gear. Participants meet in the parking lot inside the gate house at the ODNR Complex, 2045 Morse Road, to travel in the ODNR van. Registration is required; call trip leader Katryn Renard by Jan. 9 at 614-261-7171 to register, reserve space for transportation, and learn more.

Who Cooks For You, Who Cooks For You All?

When it comes to owls, the OOS does! Join us February 15-17, 2013 at Mohican State Park Lodge for this exciting event! The **Ohio Ornithological Society and Greater Mohican Audubon Society** are proud to present the Owls of North America Symposium, a spectacular weekend of fun, fellowship, and birding. You will hear great speakers, search for Ohio owls and winter finches, and catch up with birding friends. Events include talks by **Denver Holt**, founder of the Owl Research Institute; **Tom Bartlett & Bob Scott Placier** will share their research of banding Northern Saw-whet Owls in Ohio, and **Gail Laux** from the Ohio Bird Sanctuary will teach us the evolution and dynamics of Ohio owls. On Friday evening, enjoy snacks, drinks from the bar and music from members of **The Rain Crows!** Saturday afternoon, travel to one of our field trip locations to search for owls and other winter birds. Saturday evening, we will offer the chance to get up close and personal with one of the most adorable birds on the planet- a Saw-whet Owl. Enjoy owl banding with Tom Bartlett, Bob Scott Placier and Steve McKee. On Sunday we will wrap up the weekend with field trips in and around Mohican State Park. Go to <http://ohiobirds.org/site/owls.php> for more information and registration. Register by January 1 for a \$5 discount!

Columbus Audubon Founded 1913

www.columbusaudubon.org

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Past President: Julie Davis

Trustees (through June 30, 2013): George Arnold, Jackie Bain, Amanda Conover, Gerry Brevoort, Tim Daniel, Warren Grody, Bill Heck, Dave Horn, Suzan Jervey, and Darlene Sillick

Additional chapter leaders

Birdathon: Linda Benner, 614-237-7644, winter.wren@att.net

Conservation: Dave Horn, 614-262-0312

Eco Weekend: Dale Brubeck, dbrubeck@columbus.rr.com

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Service in the Preserves: Katryn Renard, 614-261-7171

Web site: Bill Heck, webmaster@columbusaudubon.org

Web/Social Media: Stefanie Hauck

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Marci Lininger, Samantha Pepper

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Winter hours (Oct 1-Mar 31): Tuesday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.;

Saturday 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Sunday 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.

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Basic Individual \$30.

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Great Blue Heron \$250.

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Great Egret \$1000.

Joint membership benefits are (all levels):

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

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