

## A Perfect Place

Scioto Audubon Metro Park is the perfect place to experience nature and enjoy outdoor adventure without having to venture afar or spend any cash.

Birders know this 121-acre park quite well as it is home to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and recognized as an Important Birding Area. The park opened in 2007 and is a partnership between Metro Parks, the City of Columbus, and National Audubon. The three entities worked to transform this once blighted industrial wasteland into a green oasis where wildlife could again thrive and where central Ohioans can reconnect with nature and their community.

Connected to the Scioto/Olentangy Greenway Trail, the park is easily accessible by foot or bicycle. Metro Parks has restored about five acres of wetlands, and visitors walking along park pathways will see an abundance of wildlife. Birds and other waterfowl can be seen from several observation decks throughout the park. There's even a water tower that you can climb 40 feet to an observation platform and get a great view of downtown Columbus and the surrounding peninsula.

Scioto Audubon is home to the largest free outdoor climbing wall in the country: a 35-foot-high rock replica that features two overhanging arches and covers 7,500 square feet ([www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/05/19/outdoor-climbing-wall-a-big-deal.html](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/05/19/outdoor-climbing-wall-a-big-deal.html)). Two 12-foot rock structures near the wall are ideal for kids to climb on. Boating, canoeing, and kayaking along the park's western border on the Scioto River are also great ways to connect with nature. Anglers can catch bass, catfish, or muskies along the riverbank or from their boat. There is a boat launch area in the south end of the park.

There's plenty of room to enjoy a picnic in the park or just bring your lunch, sit on the deck overlooking the river and watch the ducks paddling by or a lone blue heron stalking its prey. Grills and two shelters are available on a first-come, first-served basis.



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



The park also features three sand volleyball courts, a one-acre playfield for baseball, kick-ball, soccer, or any other grass related sport. A slide, climbing nets, and spinning equipment are available for kids age 5 to 12, and a separate side and musical chime machine for kids age 3 to 5.

A two-acre dog park features separate areas for small dogs and large dogs, each with its

own agility course. The dog park is located just past the climbing wall in the central activities area. Leashed pets are allowed on the greenway trails, along the connector trails, and along the roadways.

Later this year, visitors to Scioto Audubon can enjoy an obstacle course featuring nine challenging stations thanks to the generosity of the Columbus Rotary Club. This course will be a great way for older kids and adults to have fun while getting fit.

Park hours are October to February 6:30 am to 8:00 pm and March to September 6:30 am to 10:00 pm. To see a map of Scioto Audubon Metro Park visit [www.metroparks.net/MapSciotoAudubon.aspx](http://www.metroparks.net/MapSciotoAudubon.aspx) and for more information visit [www.metroparks.net/ParksSciotoAudubon.aspx](http://www.metroparks.net/ParksSciotoAudubon.aspx).

*Peg Hanley, public information officer, Metro Parks*

# Columbus Audubon Monthly Programs

## November Program – Glaciers, People and Global Climate Change

Tuesday, November 19 in the GIAC multipurpose room

7:00-7:15 pm: Short Program by Christie Vargo and Suzan Jervey, “Taking Flight Together”

7:15-7:30 pm: Refreshments

7:30 pm: Main Program by Lonnie Thompson, PhD, Distinguished University Professor, School of Earth Sciences; Senior Research Scientist, Byrd Polar Research Center

Glaciers are one of Nature’s best thermometers, and perhaps its most sensitive and unambiguous indicator of climate change. In this presentation, Dr. Thompson will discuss the “inconvenient truth” of global climate change, how past climate changes have impacted Peruvian cultures, and evidence of the recent accelerating rate of glacier loss worldwide. He will also discuss some of our belief systems identified by behavior analysts to examine how humans respond to climate change issues and share his views on our options and the greatest challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Lonnie G. Thompson is one of the world’s foremost authorities on paleoclimatology and glaciology. He has led 60 expeditions during the last 40 years conducting ice-core drilling programs in the Polar Regions as well as on tropical and subtropical ice fields in 16 countries including China, Peru, Russia, Tanzania and Papua, Indonesia (New Guinea).

Dr. Thompson is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and was awarded the *National Medal of Science* in 2007, the highest honor the US awards to American scientists. In January 2013 he was awarded the International Science and Technology Cooperation Award of the People’s Republic of China by the President of China in the Great Hall of the People, the highest honor given to a foreign scientist.



## From Center Director, Christie Vargo

The November/December newsletter is usually when I comment on our accomplishments and need for your end-of-the-year contributions. Instead, I am dedicating this space to a group of energetic and enthusiastic students from Buckeye Middle School. They commemorated their honeysuckle removal experience in a rap and performed it at our *Fall in Love with Nature* luncheon on October 3. Thank you, Buckeye Middle School! You were one of the luncheon highlights. I give you excerpts the *Honeysuckle Poppin’ Rap*:



*Honeysuckle poppin’  
Ain’t no stoppin’  
We’re hoppin’  
We’re loppin’  
Bad for the birds  
Hear my words  
The berries are red  
And need to be dead  
We eat chips*

*And wipe our lips  
When birds eat these berries  
Y’all should be wary  
Cuz it’s not dietary  
For the aviary...  
...We’re here to save the planet  
From these bandits  
If we band together  
With Audubon forever*

OK, maybe I won’t relinquish this space altogether. I still ask that you consider the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in your end-of-year giving decisions. Your gift will support intense, repeat visit experiences for students like these from Buckeye Middle.

Thank you and have a great holiday season!

*Christie Vargo*

## From Columbus Audubon President, Bill Heck



Have you ever wondered how scientists know how many birds there are? Or whether bird populations are up, down, or holding steady? Or where our birds go in winter? Part of the answer comes from citizen science: the efforts of ordinary people like you and me who participate in large-scale data collection.

Individually, we might think there are fewer cardinals or more wrens this year, but these lone observations are useless for scientific purposes. But when we combine our observations in a systematic way through the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, or the Great Backyard Bird Count, it's magic: our anecdotes become data that scientists can use to learn more about our feathered friends.

# Art for Audubon / Holiday Shop Around

## It's Time: Buy Your Tickets NOW for Art for Audubon

There are treasures that will catch your eye and you can take home at our fourth Art for Audubon on Sunday, November 10 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Buy your tickets online now at [www.columbusaudubon.org/art](http://www.columbusaudubon.org/art)—single, couple or consider an individual sponsorship to support CA's education and conservation projects.

A collection of works by international wildlife artist and conservationist, Robert Bateman (1930-), and painter and naturalist Carl Brenders (1937-), are part of the auction items (see page 14 for a few of their works that will be included in the auction). Other items will include works by international, national and local artists, and other surprises for your consideration.

We're especially grateful for our sponsors: The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Cardinal Health, and Andy's Frame Setting, and Jan Rodenfels, Certified Health Counselor, AADP.



Jan Rodenfels,  
Certified Health Counselor, AADP



## Fourth Annual Holiday Shop Around

Saturday, November 16 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

It's that time again! The days are shorter and colder, ushering in the season of cozy sweaters, cheerful fires blazing in the fireplace, warm comforting drinks, and brisk outdoor walks. It is a time to prepare for the coming holiday season when we gather with loved ones to celebrate. It is also a time to start thinking about that holiday gift list! To find a gift that is meaningful and special, please join us for an enjoyable day at the 4th Annual Grange Insurance Audubon Center's Holiday Shop Around on Saturday, November 16 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.



Are you looking for that unique gift? Do you enjoy quality, handmade arts and crafts? We will showcase a number of vendors, including arts, crafts, gifts for gardeners, bird lovers, books, and more. Past vendors included photographers, painters, jewelers, Wild Birds Unlimited, fabric artists, and sculptors. We will have a warm crackling fire in the fireplace, warm drinks, fun educational activities for the kids, and maybe even a food truck...and admission is FREE!

Please come support these local businesses and share in this community gathering place. As always, GIAC and Columbus Audubon members get a 10% discount in the Center's own Nature Store that specializes in nature field guides and nature inspired gifts, fair trade jewelry, children's books, and activity guides for homeschoolers. Treat yourself, treat your loved ones, and support the work we do at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center at the same



## Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*)

The little flock ran down the water's surface, buzzing away on a flurry of wing beats. We had surprised them in the little bay, and they had quickly taken flight but not before we had seen their flat flight profiles and the slicked-down white hoods on a few of them. Hooded Mergansers. They're one of the glories of central Ohio waterfowl, and they're probably on a pond or lake near you right now.

Hooded Mergansers are ducks with some weird evolutionary twists. They're part of the merganser tribe, a group that split off from other ducks quite a long time ago as they specialized in fast diving. They dive underwater and catch small fish and shrimp with one of the oddest bills in duckdom – a slim serrated affair that looks more like a piece of kitchen cutlery than a duck's bill. To pursue these swift prey, they've become like little avian torpedoes – short, bullet-shaped, with strong rear-positioned legs. This is great for swimming fast underwater, but has compromised their flying ability a bit. They need an expanse of water to run down, like a runway, in order to get airborne. And airborne is almost an exaggeration, since their wings need to flap in a blur to get their chunky little bodies just a bit off the water. Their flight is very direct and not very nimble as a result.

Hoodies do have the typical duck dichotomy of the sexes: the drake is brilliantly colored, with a boldly-patterned body and an especially striking head with a black-edged white crest, while the hen is a drab little duck with subtle shadings of brown and gray. The males use their colors in energetic courtship displays, where they flare their crest and heave out of the water. Oftentimes a small pack of 3-5 males will follow a female, juking and displaying intensely, as much to intimidate their rivals as impress the female. They will pair up in late winter as wintering flocks break up, and this is the time to see their displays. In spring, they'll migrate to small streams and ponds to search out nest sites.



Photo by Tom Sheley



Photo by Tom Sheley

Their differences with other ducks again come to the fore during reproduction. They're cavity-nesters, choosing hollow snags next to streams and ponds. The mother lays about 9-12 eggs up in the cavity and incubates them for over a month before the precocious chicks hatch out. Shortly afterwards, they're coaxed to jump from the nest by mom, who leads the whole flock onto the nearby pond or creek. Sometimes you'll find a mom trailing this flock of zipping and darting little fuzzballs along the shallows of the creek. Sadly, they often have more energy than sense, and predators typically reduce the number to just a few. It's much more common to find this flotilla later in the season, when mom is accompanied by only 2-4 larger juveniles that look just like her.

One of the great things about Hoodies here in central Ohio is that you can find them year round. We have a few nesting pairs usually found around isolated streams or ponds. However, they're a more common migrant and wintering duck here. They seem to like our reservoirs and large ponds, and you can often find little flocks all over central Ohio starting in October. But wait, there's more! These flocks will coalesce into big wintering groups in some places, and the premier local place is Hoover Reservoir. By November, the shallow areas of north Hoover start to accumulate lots of Hoodies, and it's not unusual to find flocks of hundreds around Oxbow Island or up near Galena. As these areas freeze in darkest January, the birds seem to move south, with some lingering in open water below local dams. They reappear as the ice breaks up in February, often in pairs and small flocks feeding around the edges of lake ice. There's hardly a month when you cannot find these handsome little ducks somewhere around central Ohio.

*Rob Thorn*

## Project FeederWatch

Fall has wrapped up and so has our fall banding season. We banded from late-August to the end of October and had a lot of fun. If you would like to see bird banding up close or volunteer, check back in mid-April when we start up again.

Now winter is here, and there is a lot going on at Grange Insurance Audubon Center. We will be monitoring our feeder stations from November through April as a part of Project FeederWatch, a program through Cornell's Lab of Ornithology. This winter-long survey helps scientists track movements and long-term trends in winter bird distribution and abundance. The massive amounts of data collected by FeederWatchers across the continent has helped scientists understand the timing and extent of winter irruptions of winter finches and other species, expansions or contractions in the winter ranges of feeder birds, the kinds of foods and environmental factors that attract birds, and how disease is spread among birds that visit feeders.



Become a citizen scientist and come spend a cozy morning watching GIAC feeders and recording data on what birds we attract. All ages and skill levels are welcome, and it is a great family activity. We'll even throw in the coffee and hot chocolate! We will conduct the count over two consecutive days every two weeks. You can come and watch the feeders as much or as little as you like, be it 15 minutes or all day. We will count birds that appear in the count site because of something that we provided (plantings, food, or water). Project FeederWatch surveys winter birds that visit all feeders, so if you have a feeder in your backyard, you can participate at home as well! We also will be conducting bi-weekly surveys of birds to assess which species occur in our park during winter, so if you are interested in watching our feeders, or a nice morning walk with the added bonus of some bird-watching, please contact Anne Balogh at [abalogh@audubon.org](mailto:abalogh@audubon.org). Learn more about ProjectFeederWatch at [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org).

*Anne Balogh*

## Columbus Audubon Conservation Grantees Announced

Columbus Audubon has awarded our first conservation grants. Four worthy proposals were received and the selection committee was challenged to make an appropriate decision. Two proposals were funded: Bluebird and Tree Swallow Nestbox Trail Upgrades to Dawes Arboretum and Gosnell Preserve Conservation Demonstration Site Enhancement to Appalachia Ohio Alliance (AOA).



The Dawes Arboretum project was awarded \$1525 to fund new poles, PVC baffles, and necessary hardware to make the existing 100 nestbox trails exemplary to the public. The trails have been in existence since the 1970s but in many cases poles are too short and there are no baffles so that nesting bluebirds and tree swallows are easy pickings for predators such as raccoons and snakes. The project goal is to make the native species safer and to show the visiting public the correct way to mount the nestboxes.

The AOA proposal was awarded \$3500 toward undertaking development and procurement of interpretive materials and signage to support the establishment of a conservation demonstration site along US Route 33 just south of the entrance to Clear Creek Metro Park. The site is intended to serve as a "one-stop shop" where visitors can experience a variety of natural habitats typical of the central Ohio region and observe and learn from a range of conservation management activities and demonstrations including restored prairie, vernal pool, pond, wetland, and riparian habitats. AOA is building on support from numerous conservation organizations and Columbus Audubon is pleased to become a partner in this effort.

Special thanks to the selection committee: Tom Bain, Amanda Duren, Dave Horn and Matt Shumar.

# Columbus Audubon



## COLUMBUS AUDUBON 2013 Bird Seed Sale Order Form



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailed orders must be received by December 15.

Order online at [www.columbusaudubon.org/birdseed](http://www.columbusaudubon.org/birdseed) through December 20.

Item	Code	Unit	Price (includes tax)	Quantity	Total
Audubon Select Blend	AA	20 lbs	\$15.00		
WBU Deluxe Blend	AB	20 lbs	\$17.00		
WBU Supreme Blend	AK	20 lbs	\$20.00		
WBU Choice Blend	AC	20 lbs	\$21.00		
WBU Choice Plus Winter Blend	AJ	20 lbs	\$24.00		
Ohio No Mess Blend	AL	20 lbs	\$ 23.00		
Black Oil Sunflower	AD	20 lbs	\$16.75		
Safflower	AE	20 lbs	\$21.00		
Sunflower Chips	AF	20 lbs	\$32.00		
Nyjer ("Thistle")	AG	10 lbs	\$15.00		
Nyjer ("Thistle")	AH	20 lbs	\$28.00		
Peanut Pieces	AM	10 lbs	\$16.00		
Peanut Pieces	AN	20 lbs	\$30.00		
Whole Peanuts (In Shell)	FA	10 lbs	\$18.00		
Ear Corn	AI	6.5 lbs	\$7.00		
WBU Peanut Suet Cakes	FB	11.75 oz	\$1.75		

Subtotal \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution to Columbus Audubon: Help support our  
conservation and education programs. Contributions are tax deductible. \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **Columbus Audubon** and mail to Columbus Audubon, 877 Mohawk St,  
Columbus OH 43206. For phone inquiries, please call Wild Birds Unlimited at 614-766-2103.

**Please pick up your order between December 1 - 31  
at Wild Birds Unlimited  
5400 Riverside Drive, Columbus OH 43220**



# Columbus Audubon



## November & December Field Trips

For complete descriptions of all trips, visit our web site: [www.columbusaudubon.org/calendar](http://www.columbusaudubon.org/calendar)

### **Bird Hike at Blendon Woods**

*Sun., November 3 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon*

We will meet Bruce Simpson at the nature center and then explore Thoreau Lake and other trails. Bring binoculars or borrow ours. For more information call Blendon Woods Metro Park at 614-895-6221.

### **Waterfowl and Other Birds of West-Central Ohio**

*Sat., November 16 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm*

Dr. Jackie Augustine studies bird behavior and teaches biology at The Ohio State University at Lima. She will lead this trip to visit reservoirs in west-central Ohio including Grand Lake St. Marys or the reservoirs of Lima (Ferguson, Metzger, and Bresler). We will focus on ducks but unusual gulls and shorebirds are possible. We will start our search at Indian Lake. Meet at the McDonalds (431 E Main St., Russells Point, OH 43348) on the south side of Indian Lake at 9:00 am. Bring a sack lunch and your scope if you have one. Moderate walking may be required. Columbus carpool rendezvous is The Shops at Worthington Place (aka Worthington mall) at 8:00 am sharp. To register or to confirm carpooling, call or email Mike Flynn at 614-769-1681 or [mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com](mailto:mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com). Contact Dr. Augustine at 567-712-4155 or [augustine.63@osu.edu](mailto:augustine.63@osu.edu).

### **Service in the Preserves: Prairie Road Fen State Nature Preserve, Clark County**

*Sat., November 16 at 7:45 am*

Prairie Road Fen State Nature Preserve is the finest prairie fen remaining in Ohio. Please join us as we raise the boardwalk that is slowly sinking into this age-old fen. Meet in the parking lot inside the gate house at the ODNR Complex, 2045 Morse Road, to travel in the ODNR van. Registration required; call Katryn Renard by the preceding Wednesday at 614-261-7171 to register and reserve space for transportation. No special skills are required; bring lunch, water, work gloves and appropriate foot gear.

### **Sandhill Cranes of Jasper-Pulaski, Indiana**

*Sat.-Sun., November 23-24 (overnight trip)*

Come thrill to the sights and sounds of thousands of Sandhill Cranes as they stop at this refuge to feed, rest, and socialize before continuing on their southward migration. This is a spectacular experience!

Carpooling encouraged. \$25.00 trip fee plus your own expenses. For more information and to reserve your space, contact Mike Flynn at 614-769-1681 or [mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com](mailto:mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com).

### **Avid Birders**

*Sat., November 23 at 5:30 a.m.*

The Avid Birders meet to carpool from the southeast corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot. 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!

### **Bird Hike at Blendon Woods**

*Sun., December 8 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon*

We will meet Bruce Simpson at the nature center and then explore Thoreau Lake and other trails. Bring binoculars or borrow ours. For more information call Blendon Woods Metro Park at 614-895-6221.

### **New Year's Day Hike at Chestnut Ridge Metro Park**

*Wed., January 1, 2014 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm*

Celebrate the New Year with a quiet walk in nature. This is a good time to see many natural features and to be renewed outdoors. From I-270, take US 33 east toward Lancaster; drive about 11 miles and turn right on Winchester Rd. (at the Carroll, OH traffic light). The park entrance is about three miles on the left. Follow the main park entrance road to its far end, by the second pond, and park near the shelter house and the restroom. For more information, contact Mike Flynn at 614-769-1681 or [mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com](mailto:mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com).

### **Service in the Preserves: Crabill Fen State Nature Preserve, Clark County**

*Sat., January 11 at 7:45 am*

Winter is a great time of year to remove honeysuckle. Join us as we travel to Crabill Fen to clear out this invasive species so the native plants can once again thrive in this remote fen community. Meet in the parking lot inside the gate house at the ODNR Complex, 2045 Morse Road, to travel in the ODNR van. Registration required; call Katryn Renard by the preceding Wednesday at 614-261-7171 to register and reserve space for transportation. No special skills are required; bring your lunch, water, work gloves and appropriate foot gear.

## Christmas Bird Count Time

So, you've thought of doing a Christmas Bird Count (CBC) but just aren't sure? Check out the top five reasons to participate in a CBC.

5. You see more than everyone else. Others see trees, fields, ponds, and maybe snow. You see woodpeckers, sparrows, and ducks. There now, you probably feel superior already.
4. You can be alone. A CBC is the perfect excuse to avoid the mall and wander through a park or just look out the kitchen window. If anyone interrupts, you just say, "Can't talk now. I'm doing citizen science." Sounds pretty important, so they'll leave you alone.
3. You can be with others. In the mood to spend some quality time with loved ones? Walking around outdoors somehow leads to real conversations. We don't know how it happens, it just happens.
2. It's addictive. Just ask some of us who do four and more counts per year.
1. It's fun! Walk around, look at birds...nope, doesn't sound like much fun at first. But at some point, finding the next bird to run up the count is a challenge. Maybe the competition heats up. Or maybe you see something incredible: a bluebird against the snow or a Pileated Woodpecker banging on a tree right over your head – suddenly it's an amazing day. And don't forget the celebration after you're done.

With all these reasons to join a CBC, how do you go about it? Easy: go to [www.columbusaudubon.org/cbc](http://www.columbusaudubon.org/cbc), pick one (or more) counts in your area, and contact the count coordinator. The coordinator will help you decide where to go, who to go with (if anyone), whether you need help, and so on. See you out in the field!



## New Introduction to Ornithology Workshop Series

Columbus Audubon is excited to offer Introduction to Ornithology, a new workshop series taught by Dr. Angelika Nelson from The Ohio State University.

This seven-week workshop will offer an overview of the diversity, ecology, evolution, and taxonomy of the birds of North America, with an emphasis on identifying the birds of Ohio. No prior knowledge of birds or identification skills is required. The schedule includes a two-hour talk and museum lab weekly, followed by four field excursions in spring.

Dr. Nelson is curator of the Borror Laboratory of Bioacoustics and Tetrapod Research & Teaching Collection at The Ohio State University. She regularly teaches Ohio Birds to college undergraduates.

Classroom sessions are Thursdays from January 9 through February 20, 2014 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Field trips are March 1 and 22 and April 12 and 26, 2014. You must be registered for the class to attend the field trips. Classroom sessions will be held at the Museum of Biological Diversity, The Ohio State University, Auditorium Lecture Hall, 1315 Kinnear Rd, Columbus OH 43214. Field trips will take place in central Ohio.

Fee: \$100 for Columbus Audubon/GIAC members and \$130 for non-members (includes a CA individual membership). The fee includes handouts about information covered in class (notebook provided) and useful information for field identification. A course syllabus will be provided.

What a great Christmas gift for a birder eager to learn more or for beginning birders. Young birders encouraged to register!

Registration is required and limited to 20 participants. Deadline to register and submit payment is January 4, 2014. For more information and to register for this class please contact Darlene Sillick at [azuretrails@columbus.rr.com](mailto:azuretrails@columbus.rr.com).



## 2013 Prothonotary Warbler Activity at Hoover Reservoir



This was a very good year for Prothonotary Warblers at Hoover Reservoir. As April arrived water levels were up and all the areas where I have nest boxes had near perfect levels in relation to the placement of the nest boxes. The first male was observed on April 15 at Area N and then during the week of April 20 through April 26 they could be found in every area around the Hoover Nature Preserve. The males established territories that they defended aggressively, singing from strategic perches and chasing any intruders who encroached therein. Often this produced a mini version of the Battle of Britain as these small golden-yellow birds chased each other at breakneck speed through the wetland forests.

The male picks the nest site before the female arrives, and makes one or more "dummy nests" of fresh moss. The female builds the actual nest. Beginning about May 1 the females made their appearance in numbers and the Prothonotary Warblers began the nesting season in earnest. During this period I had the pleasure of hosting two field trips for Columbus Audubon, Ohio Young Birders Club, and several small groups of individuals. The Prothonotaries did not disappoint any of my visitors as they put on display after display collecting nest material, copulating, bathing, preening, or collecting caterpillars and other small insects. At times it almost seemed like they knew they had an appreciative audience and they wanted to show off for them.

Over the years many of my visitors to the preserve have become regulars. A visit to Hoover Reservoir is a spring ritual for them and many have become friends that I look forward to seeing. To date I am aware of visitors to the preserve from 20 states and 13 countries including the states of Alaska, Hawaii, California and Florida, and foreign nations including The Czech Republic, France, Sweden, South Africa, Brazil, Japan and Russia. All went home with treasured memories. One of the newest visitors is a young man (16-years old but 6 inches taller than me) from San Francisco. Logan has an aunt in Delaware who grew up about a mile from me in my Connecticut home town. In his three birding outings with me he has added many life birds to his list and 162 Ohio species.

In July the Ohio Department of Natural Resources visited the preserve to tape an interview for their media website. Tim Daniel and an intern met me at Oxbow Road and conducted their interview and taped the Prothonotary Warblers at nest box X-8. I was just so so, but the male Prothonotary decided to ham it up. He spent almost the entire time where the camera could take good pictures as he sang, preened, caught caterpillars and took them to the nest box and did a round of his singing perches. A great show with a five- star review.

Shaune Skinner launched the "USS Hoover", her boat that we use to monitor the islands and shore areas that cannot be accessed by land. We often took a guest along and none of them regretted going with us. Often we were in constant hearing of one or more singing Prothonotaries and occasionally we had a male fly out to and hover over the boat. This year the water level was higher than most years and we were able to monitor Little Walnut Creek north of State Route 3 for the first time ever. There we located 5 new Prothonotary territories, a female Hooded Merganser and a big surprise, a male Horned Grebe. Little Walnut Creek yielded 11 Prothonotary territories.

Once again Area N was the epicenter for Prothonotary Warblers with 33 nesting pairs. Our results for the year were 171 individual Prothonotary territories with a record seven producing a second brood. Logan Kahle, the 16-year old from San Francisco was with me when we discovered the latest breeding pair ever at the preserve. Along Old Sunbury Road on August 22 we discovered a female bringing caterpillars to a newly fledged brood hiding in a low button bush. The fledglings were only a day or so out of the nest.

The June 29, 2012 storm destroyed almost 50 nest boxes and recovery for the 2013 nesting season didn't look good. Then friends and the Ohio Young Birders Club came to the rescue. Fifty nest box kits were cut, the OYBC members assembled the kits and 35 volunteers from OYBC, Columbus Audubon and individuals (one from the Toledo area), showed up to help and in one day we installed all the replacement nest boxes. The new nest boxes were located further back in Area N in Galena as the storm had completely leveled the trees at the initial area. The destroyed area was one of my favorites as it was well placed for showing visitors Prothonotaries, had a mixture of cottonwood, box elder and

*Continued on page 13*

# Columbus Audubon and GIAC Events

## Schedule of Events

GIAC events are in black text.

[www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org](http://www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org)

Columbus Audubon events are in green text

[www.columbusaudubon.org](http://www.columbusaudubon.org)

**Audubon Afternoons: GIAC Tour/Scavenger Hunt**

Sat. and Sun., Nov. 2-3 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Bird Hike at Blendon Woods**

Sun., November 3 from 9:00 am - Noon

**Audubon Afternoons: Habitats -Forest, Field & Wetlands**

Sat. and Sun., Nov. 9-10 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Art for Audubon \***

Sun., November 10 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

**Waterfowl and Other Birds of West-Central Ohio**

Sat., November 16 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

**Service in the Preserves: Prairie Road Fen State Nature Preserve, Clark County**

Sat., November 16 at 7:45 am

**Shop Around**

Sat., Nov. 16 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

**Glaciers, People and Global Climate Change**

Tues., November 19 at 7:00 pm

**Family Movie Night - Furry Vengeance \***

Fri., Nov. 22 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

**Avid Birders**

Sat., Nov. 23 5:30 am

**Sandhill Cranes of Jasper-Pulaski, Indiana**

Sat.-Sun., November 23-24 (overnight trip)

**Audubon Afternoons: Nature Journaling**

Sat. and Sun., Nov. 23-24 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Audubon Afternoons: Creatures of the Night**

Sat. and Sun., Nov 30 - Dec. 1 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Parents Night Out - Polar Express \***

Fri., Dec. 6 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

**Audubon Afternoons: Tracking**

Sat. and Sun., Dec. 7-8 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Bird Hike at Blendon Woods**

Sun., December 8 from 9:00 am to noon

**Audubon Afternoons: Winter Adaptations**

Sat. and Sun., Dec. 14-15 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**Audubon Afternoons: Birdfeeders & Houses**

Sat. and Sun., Dec. 21-22 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

### November 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

### December 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**New Year's Day Hike at Chestnut Ridge Metro Park**

Wed., Jan. 1 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

**Family Movie Night - The Big Year \***

Fri., Jan. 10 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

**Service in the Preserves: Crabill Fen State Nature Preserve, Clark County**

Sat., Jan. 11 at 7:45 am



# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## Volunteers at GIAC Make an Impact

### Girl Scout Troop 1722

This summer the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and the Scioto Audubon Metro Park benefitted from a wonderful Girl Scout troop seeking their bronze award. Troop 1722 of the Northwest Service Unit were juniors at the time of their project and just recently bridged to Cadettes. The troop decided to adopt an area of grassland near the wetlands that was becoming inundated with young invasive honeysuckle, teasel, sweet-clover, and Canada thistle. The goal was to remove these plants in order to allow native plants to flourish. In order to tackle such a big area, they also enlisted parents, siblings, cousins, and grandparents to help, whose ages ranged from 6 to 67!

All in all, Troop 1722 and friends donated 197.5 hours and removed over 200 young honeysuckle bushes and 69 bags of other invasives. Wow! Along the way, the girls learned a lot. Grace said, "I discovered that I can do more than I thought I could." Isabella said, "It took strength, because I had to deal with being poked by plants and being SO hot. I discovered that if I do not focus on the hot weather it will be easier." Tyra said, "I'm glad I did something to help birds!"

They plan to return, appropriately enough, in October for Make a Difference Day to continue their efforts in removing invasives and planting native plants. So thank you Annie, Clare, Grace, Greta, Isabella, Jessica, Penny, Tyra and Zoe, as well as all those recruited to help, for truly making a difference. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

### United Way 5 Days of Service

The United Way of Central Ohio's 5 Days of Service in September was a county-wide collaboration that encouraged central Ohioans to help build a more inspired, proud, and engaged community through volunteerism. We at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center were thrilled to be a partner site for the event.

We want to thank the volunteers who took up the challenge. Thirteen volunteers participated in Family Weekend and dedicated their afternoon on Sept. 7. They were involved in the Scioto Audubon Metro Parks riparian forest restoration and removing invasive honeysuckle. They worked very hard and cleared a substantial area.

The fun continued on Community Care Day, September 10 with 105 volunteers from Alliance Data Systems, Inc. and wow, did they work! Despite the very hot weather, they tackled a number of projects including removing honeysuckle, riverbank clean-up, and clearing weeds and invasives from a native plant garden. All these efforts help fulfill GIAC's mission by improving the habitat for birds, wildlife and people. We especially thank Alliance Data Systems, Inc. for being a returning volunteer group.



### Call for Volunteers



As always, volunteers can help to improve GIAC. Before you know it, spring will be upon us and we have many fun projects planned including bird banding, bird point counts, and native plant garden design. As always, there are areas of the park that need to be restored.

We will be training for point count bird monitoring this winter. Point counts are what they sound like, you stand at one point for a set amount of time and count the birds you see and hear. These counts will give us a better understanding of the types and numbers of birds using our area. If you enjoy being outside and watching birds, this could be a perfect fit. All levels of bird expertise are welcome, though people with advanced birding by ear skills will be especially helpful.

Finally, we have the down and dirty work of removing invasive plants and planting native plants. Come and learn about all the green goodness in your park while working up a sweat. We would love to have you!

If you missed volunteering last year, now is your chance to join us and have a lot of fun! Please contact Anne at [abalogh@audubon.org](mailto:abalogh@audubon.org) if you are interested in conservation volunteer projects at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.



# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## Monthly Family Movie Nights

Admission is \$2 adults, \$1 children 16 and under. Doors open 6:30 p.m. and movie begins at 7:00 p.m. Light snacks \$1 each and free beverages. Join us at our upcoming movies:



Friday, November 22  
*Furry Vengeance* (PG)  
In the Oregon wilderness, a real estate developer's new housing subdivision faces a unique group of protesters: local woodland creatures who don't want their homes disturbed.



Friday, January 10  
*The Big Year* (PG)  
Two bird enthusiasts try to defeat the cocky, cutthroat world record holder in a year-long bird-spotting competition.

### WINTER HOURS at GIAC

Oct. 1, 2013 – April 1, 2014

Monday	closed
Tuesday-Friday	10 am – 5 pm
Saturday	10 am – 3 pm
Sunday	Noon – 5 pm

### HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

GIAC will be closed at 3 pm on:  
Wednesday, November 27  
Tuesday, December 24

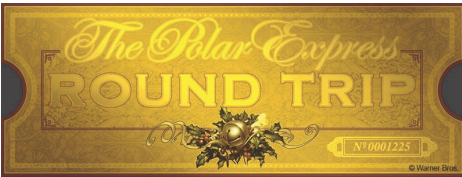
### GIAC will be closed on:

November 28-29  
December 25-January 1  
Happy Holidays!



## Holiday Parent's Night Out

Friday, December 6 from 6:30-9:30 pm



Parents, do you need a night out to get ready for the holidays? Purchase a golden ticket for your child and they can "hop aboard" the *Polar Express* at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center on Friday, December 6 from 6:30-9:30 pm. Dress your school-aged child in their pajamas and have them bring along a blanket and pillow for a three hour trip on the *Polar Express*!

We'll start the evening with a fun craft and game, sip some hot chocolate and then enjoy the *Polar Express*. The evening will conclude with a visit from the guy up North with a small gift. Cost per child is \$10. Pre-registration and permission forms are required. We'll send your child a golden ticket for admission. Please contact Allison Roush at [aroush@audubon.org](mailto:aroush@audubon.org) with any questions or to register your child.

## Bands Birds and Beer was a Huge Success

It was a perfect summer night enjoyed by all 220 guests and with two great bands: Sons of Gladys and Grassinine.

We wish to thank our fantastic partners and sponsors of Bands Beer and Birds. **Donatos** provided food, cups, advertising and pizza for a year as a raffle prize.



**WBNS-10TV** created and broadcast a great public service announcement with Tom Krouse and Angela Pace. The **Columbus Zoo** brought their animal ambassadors and zoo representative Suzi Rapp shared a message of conservation. And finally, the event would not have happened without our dedicated volunteers.

Thank you for a job well done and your support of the Center. We look forward to another lovely summer night for Bands Beer and Birds next year.



# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## IBAs and Ohio

The Important Bird Area (IBA) program is a global initiative started by Birdlife International in the mid-1980s that quickly spread to every continent. In the United States, the National Audubon Society launched the Important Bird Area program in 1995. The main idea: to identify, monitor and protect a strategic global network of IBAs that can focus bird management around priority sites.

The first step in the process is identifying these areas. To do this, a series of scientifically sound criteria were developed. In general, a site must have one of the following:

- It holds a significant number of high conservation priority species.

- It holds range-restricted species that are vulnerable because their populations are not widely distributed.

- The site holds species that specialize in one specific habitat type or biome.

- The site is important because it supports species that are vulnerable because they congregate in large numbers.

Once identified, IBAs are further prioritized as a Global, Continental or State level site. To date in the US, over 2,676 Important Bird Areas have been identified, equaling almost 370 million acres. Of these, 596 are of global significance and 13 are of continental significance. The Ohio IBA program began in 1999 and 66 state level IBA's have been identified.

Today, Ohio's IBA program is entering an exciting time. Audubon and partners are beginning to work to prioritize the IBAs identified across the state and raise awareness. All need additional information on the status of their bird species and involvement of ordinary citizens as advocates and citizen scientists.

This is a call to action. As the program grows, there will be many ways you can help. To learn more about Ohio's IBA's and to get involved, please visit the Grange Insurance Audubon Center or email Anne Balogh at [abalogh@audubon.org](mailto:abalogh@audubon.org).

*Continued from page 9 - Prothonotaries*

black willow trees that provided a great canopy over the water, and had one of the densest populations of Prothonotaries before the storm damage. The Prothonotaries have readily accepted the new nest boxes and nested in many of them and placed dummy nests in others.

The year had other ups and downs. On the positive side the Bald Eagle nest along the east shore raised a successful brood once again, we confirmed 14 pairs of nesting Red-headed Woodpeckers, I located an active Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest, and saw Brown Creepers multiple times but did not find this year's nest site. On the down side, boaters, kayakers, and fishermen distressed the Osprey at both platforms so much that neither nest was successful.

Now I am looking ahead to the task of cleaning all 250 nest boxes. With the water level high and the fallen trees from last year's storm this will be a challenge.

*Editor's note: read more about the collaboration of Charlie and OYBC at <http://nestwatch.org/connect/news/ohio-young-birders-club-and-the-prothonotary-warbler-nest-box-service-project>.*

*Charles Bombaci, Hoover Nature Preserve*

*Continued from page 2 - CA President*

The great thing is that you don't have to be a scientist or even a great birder. Whether hiking through the woods or just watching a backyard feeder, you and your family can join in, regardless of skill levels – or tolerance for cold weather. Check out the article in this issue of the *Song Sparrow* to learn more about why *you* should join a Christmas Bird Count.

We close on a sad note: Columbus Audubon and the entire central Ohio conservation community lost a true friend with the passing of Jane Ann Wells Ellis on August 17, 2013. She and her husband Bill were major contributors of both time and money to conservation efforts through the years. Their generous devotion led directly to results such as Pickerington Ponds Metro Park locally and the Crane Hollow Nature Preserve in the Hocking Hills. She was a regular EcoWeekend attendee, opened Crane Hollow for EcoWeekend programs, and hosted the annual party following the Hocking Hills Christmas Bird Count. Her generosity and friendship will be greatly missed.



# Grange Insurance Audubon Center

## Expiring Soon: IRA Charitable Rollover

If you are above age 70 and looking for ways to reduce your taxable income while still meeting your minimum required IRA distribution, donating from your IRA may be the perfect choice. Although you forego the usual tax deduction for your gift, there is no income tax paid on the distribution. Donors may give up to \$100,000 to one or more charities, from either a Traditional or a Roth IRA.

If you are a non-itemizer, this option provides you an opportunity to make a very generous gift and not be concerned about its deductibility and may also help you give above your deductible limit. If your required minimum distribution places you in a higher tax bracket, a gift will help offset that. And, you get to benefit Audubon with a meaningful gift.

Please contact Christie Vargo at 614-545-5476 or [cvargo@audubon.org](mailto:cvargo@audubon.org) as soon as possible to put your IRA gift in motion. You must authorize the gift only from your Traditional or Roth IRA, and the check must come directly from your account manager and be received by December 31 in order to qualify. The IRA Charitable Rollover provision expires on December 31, 2013.

## Art for Audubon

Columbus Audubon will feature some breathtaking artworks and exciting items on which to bid at Art for Audubon on November 10 from 4-7 pm at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. Buy your tickets now at [www.columbusaudubon.org/art](http://www.columbusaudubon.org/art) so you won't miss the chance to take home something fantastic.

In addition to works by Robert Bateman and Carl Brenders, there are works by Roger Tory Peterson and John James Audubon. The Columbus Zoo, a key sponsor, has donated an overnight package for 2 in a Nomad Ridge Woodlands Yurt at the Wilds, as well as art created by two zoo animals.

Come and support Columbus Audubon and our education and conservation programs.





## Columbus Audubon (Founded 1913)

**Mission:** To promote the appreciation, understanding and conservation of birds, other wildlife and their habitats, for present and future generations.

[www.columbusaudubon.org](http://www.columbusaudubon.org)

[www.facebook.com/columbusaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/columbusaudubon)

614-545-5497

Twitter: @ColumbusAudubon

### Officers

President: Bill Heck, 614-895-1940

Vice President: Suzan Jervey

Treasurer: Maura Rawn

Recording Secretary: Nina Harfmann, [nina.natureremains@gmail.com](mailto:nina.natureremains@gmail.com)

Past President: Julie Davis

**Trustees (through June 30, 2014):** George Arnold, Tim Daniel, Julie Davis, Amanda Duren, Warren Grody, Bill Heck, Dave Horn, Tamara James, Suzan Jervey

### Additional chapter leaders

Birdathon: Linda Benner, 614-237-7644, [winter\\_wren@att.net](mailto:winter_wren@att.net)

Conservation: Dave Horn, 614-262-0312

Eco Weekend: Dale Brubeck, [dbrubeck@columbus.rr.com](mailto:dbrubeck@columbus.rr.com)

Lois Day, 614-793-8843

Field Trips: [information@columbusaudubon.org](mailto:information@columbusaudubon.org)

Membership: Joe Meara, 614-430-9127

Newsletter Editor: Tamara James

Newsletter Designer: Julie Davis

Ohio Young Birders: Gerry Brevoort, [jbrevoort@columbus.rr.com](mailto:jbrevoort@columbus.rr.com)

Programs: Darlene Sillick, [azuretrails@columbus.rr.com](mailto:azuretrails@columbus.rr.com)

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

## Grange Insurance Audubon Center

**Mission:** To awaken and connect participants to the beauty of the natural world in the heart of Columbus and inspire environmental stewardship in their daily lives.

[www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org](http://www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org)

Facebook: GrangeInsuranceAudubonCenter

614-545-5475

Twitter: @grangeaudubon

### Staff

Center Director: Christie Vargo

Finance & Office Manager: Kristen Clark

Director of Education & Conservation: Amy Boyd

Conservation Manager & Educator: Anne Balogh

Education Program Manager: Allison Roush

Educators (part-time): Marci Lininger, Traci Weaver

SCA Intern: Adam McFadden

Facility Assistants (part-time): Ian Dowden and Monica Johnson

**Winter hours (beginning October 1):** Tuesday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Sunday Noon – 5 p.m.; closed Mondays

**Directions to the GIAC:** From High St. or Front St. turn west on Whittier (which runs along south end of German Village and Brewery District). Follow Whittier, making no turns, across the bridge spanning the tracks, until you drive into the parking lot in front of the Center.

### GIAC Stewardship Board

Greg Cunningham (Chair)

Frances Beasley

Jeff Chaddock

Julie Davis

Arpana Dial

Carol Drake

Bill Heck\*

Alan McKnight\*

Sandra Nessing

John O'Meara\*

Lori Overmyer

Steven Puckett

Jan Rodenfels

Milt Schott

Rich Shank

Leslie Strader

Christie Vargo, Ex Officio

\* Appointed

This newsletter is printed on 100% recycled stock with soy ink.

## Thank you recent GIAC donors (through Oct.4, 2013)

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## Welcome new & renewed members (Through September 2013)

Ayala Kehn  
Heather Kight-Isaly  
Karen King-Cavin  
Rick Kritzer  
Joseph Martineau  
Marsha Meager  
Christine Mitchell  
Brian Morgan  
Heather Nott  
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John & Marie Takacs  
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Michele Waters  
Stephanie West  
Lisa Westwater  
Roger B. & Madeleine Williams  
Molly Wilsbacher  
Francois Wilson  
Paula Ziebarth  
Serie Zimmerman

**Return in 5 days to**  
Columbus Audubon/GIAC  
505 W. Whittier St  
Columbus, OH 43215  
DBA-National Audubon Society

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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.**

\_\_\_ **Basic Family \$45.**

\_\_\_ **Organization \$75.**

\_\_\_ **Chickadee \$100.**

\_\_\_ **Great Blue Heron \$250.**

\_\_\_ **Bald Eagle \$500.**

----- **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 Center (electronic delivery only for basic membership)
- \* 10% discount at the GIAC nature store
- \* Discount on selected 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

\_\_\_ To help the environment check here to receive the Song Sparrow electronically, include email below.

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