

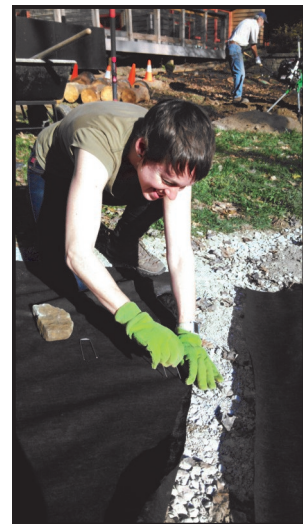
Audubon at Home Demonstration Garden and Natural Playscape

This fall, GIAC began transforming an area of lawn into an Audubon at Home (A@H) demonstration garden and children's natural playscape. The goal is to provide a way for visitors to connect with nature through a learning garden that will detail the many ways people can make a difference in their own backyards. The playscape will provide a place for children to gather and have creative nature play opportunities.

As urbanized areas such as Columbus grow, it becomes crucial to manage them as habitat to benefit wildlife and people. Generally, the typical yard in the United States consists of a



mowed grass lawn, often bordered by an assortment of grasses, shrubs, trees, and flowers. These plants are often exotic to the region and may not provide any benefits to native wildlife. Our Audubon at Home garden showcases the alternative. It features native plants that provide food, water, and shelter to wildlife while reducing pesticide and water usage. The garden also has a bird feeding station, water sources, demonstration bird houses as well as lawn area.



By spring, along the garden walkways we will have a series of 3-4 interpretive and interactive signs. The overall take-home message: in every property, whether an apartment, a suburban house, or a rural farm, there is potential to create sustainable habits and natural habitats. This message is then continued throughout GIAC's A@H Backyard Refuge Program, where participants can commit to managing their properties in a similar manner.

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

The garden will connect via a child-only tunnel to the natural playscape, designed using natural materials to provide a highly creative, interactive play experience. The natural playscape will help instill the magic of outdoor play for today's kids and help grow future advocates for the environment while also building healthier bodies and minds. Features include an outdoor chalk board, hopscotch, a labyrinth, sand area, hill with tire steps and slide, climbing stumps and a natural balance beam. Two amazing discovery tables were designed and

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Wanted: Your Thoughts and Your Help

As a member-based organization, Columbus Audubon needs your input to be sure we are offering services, programs and information that you value and that represent what Audubon means to you. In the coming year we invite you to share your thoughts and opinions in surveys on a variety of topics.

Our first survey topic is the *Song Sparrow* newsletter. We want to know what you value and enjoy. Please take a moment to fill out the survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LBLTD5B>.

CA Monthly Programs

January Program – Ohio’s Timber Rattlesnakes



Tuesday, January 27 in the GIAC multipurpose room

7:00 - 7:15 pm: Short Program by Kendra Wecker, wildlife diversity coordinator at Ohio Division of Wildlife on history and impact of the Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp.

7:15 - 7:30 pm: Refreshments and social time

7:30 pm: Main Program by Doug Wynn, retired high school ecology teacher, naturalist, and author.

Doug’s topic is “Ohio’s Timber Rattlesnake: Are we documenting their extirpation?”

The Timber Rattlesnake is Ohio’s largest venomous snake. Timber Rattlesnakes were listed as an endangered species in Ohio by the Ohio Division of Wildlife in 1992 and are protected in about two dozen other states. Present management plans by the Ohio Division of Forestry include an increase in logging and the use of controlled burning. Research published in scientific journals indicate that Ohio’s forestry plans will likely be devastating to our Timber Rattlesnake.

February Program – Prelude to the Concert of Birdsong



Tuesday, February 24 in the GIAC multipurpose room

7:00 - 7:15 pm: Short Program by Professor Angelika Nelson, PhD, curator since 2009 of the sound lab at The Ohio State University (the Borror Laboratory of Bioacoustics, a treasure trove of sounds).

7:15 - 7:30 pm: Refreshments and social time

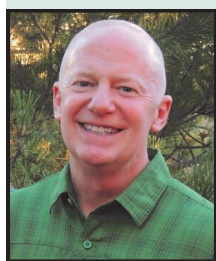
7:30 pm: Main Program by Lisa Rainsong, Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition from the Cleveland Institute of Music and is a member of CIM’s music theory faculty.

Lisa’s topic is “Prelude to the Concert of Birdsong: listening and identifying the singers.”

Learning bird songs can feel quite challenging at times, but there are ways to simplify what seems like an overwhelming number of options. Birds sing on different concert stages, and not everyone sings at the same time. Once we know the choices, we can then approach the songs as music. Techniques used in ear training and music appreciation classes can provide valuable tools for identification of avian musicians and their repertoire.

Message from Greg Cunningham, GIAC Stewardship Board

Winter Reflections



After fall cedes to winter and the holiday bustle is over, I always try to make time to pause and enjoy the subtle changes taking place in the natural world. I do my best in the warmer months to provide plants and cover for wildlife and like to see the fruits of my efforts as the season changes. Before the snow blankets my yard, many plants still have ample seed heads to supply finches and sparrows with nourishment. The nuts from oak and hickory trees are still readily available to Blue Jays and other wildlife.

But as soon as the freeze comes and snow falls, my role in making my yard part of a Bird Friendly Community changes. As the land starts to provide less, I try to make up the difference and provide more. Feeders are cleaned and positioned, and seed (purchased from Wild Birds Unlimited from the Columbus Audubon Bird Seed Sale) is selected and dispensed. I place my Christmas tree (and those of neighbors, stealthily scavenged from the curbside under cover of dark) in the yard near feeders to provide cover.

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Climate Change

Act Against Climate Change Locally and Nationally

In the last couple of issues of the *Song Sparrow* we have talked about climate change, computer modeling, and the projected impact of global warming on North American birds. Audubon's groundbreaking research shows more than half of the birds of North America (314 species) to be climate sensitive and becoming climate threatened or endangered by 2080. National Audubon's eight-year study looked at each species in relationship to its dependence on climate – precipitation, temperature, and seasonal changes. The conclusions are startling as birds attempt to adapt to ever-shifting ranges suitable to their survival.

What does this mean for Ohio and the Central Ohio region in the immediate future? How do we engage to make a difference? Grange Insurance Audubon Center and Columbus Audubon are joining forces with National Audubon's science, conservation, policy and climate teams to analyze and prioritize conservation projects to prepare and protect Important Bird Areas that are deemed strongholds in the face of climate change – that is, Important Bird Areas that will support climate sensitive birds in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

The National Audubon Team together with the local Center and Chapter are resources for actions that Audubon members can take both individually and as part of their local chapters. Individual and chapter action can take place both on the ground through conservation and in the policy arena by letting decision makers know how you feel about this critical threat to the birds we love. Join Audubon's Action Network on Audubon's website (<http://policy.audubon.org/take-action>) to receive policy updates and ways to voice your concerns, whether about getting the State of Ohio back on track with energy efficiency and renewable energy standards or to address and defend against national efforts to roll back current protections for birds and wildlife.

Not only is your voice important, so are your personal efforts to minimize your own greenhouse gas emissions and to restore habitat in your own backyard, neighborhood, local IBA, or nearby park. The Center holds volunteer work days in the Scioto River-Greenlawn IBA on a regular basis to pull invasives, plant natives, rid the riverine edge of trash, and create bird-friendly gardens. Watch for volunteer opportunities this spring through *Song Sparrow* or on the GIAC website at www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org. Columbus Audubon's own Service in the Preserves team works in natural areas and preserves throughout Ohio to restore habitat and improve public access. Watch *Song Sparrow* and the Columbus Audubon website at www.columbusaudubon.org/SIP for opportunities. Stay on top of current Audubon efforts and research by logging on to <http://climate.audubon.org>.

Christie Vargo

ACTION #1: Sign up to receive the *Song Sparrow* newsletter via email by contacting Jeff Yost at jyost@audubon.org.

ACTION #2: Take one step this week and each week going forward to reduce the number of trips you make with your car.

ACTION #3: Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count and become a citizen scientist in this worldwide effort to collect bird data instrumental in our understanding of the threats birds face and the adaptations they are making.

Don't forget to join Audubon's Action Network at <http://policy.audubon.org/take-action> to receive policy updates and ways to voice your concerns.

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created by Dennis Forrest, a long time GIAC volunteer who is a master woodworker. Denny also constructed three clear "walls" that will allow children to view an ant farm, earthworms, and plant root growth.

The design and installation of the garden and playscape could not have been accomplished without the help of a large number of volunteers. From planting to constructing walkways to digging (there has been lots of digging), over 80 have contributed time and labor to make the vision a reality. Special thanks go out to GIAC volunteers Nini and Zolt Balogh, Miranda Ciccone, Dennis Forrest, Bonnie Halchin, Jill Holl, Sacha Mikheidze, Pam Steck, Jim Estep and the volunteer groups from Accenture, Columbus State, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Jeni's, Limited, Mettler Toledo, and World of Beer. We couldn't have accomplished as much as we have without you!

Creature Feature

Creature Feature: Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*)

"The three small birds hung unobtrusively in the crabapple tree, and we probably wouldn't have given them much of a look if it wasn't a slow morning. "Hey, these don't look like your typical House Finches," said one birder. After giving them closer scrutiny, several of us replied, "That's because they're Purple Finches." Then I told them to look carefully, since they were looking at one of the most unpredictable birds in central Ohio; no telling when they might see one again. Here in central Ohio, Purple Finches have become true vagabonds with no easy spots to locate them. The best time to look for them is during their migrations, in October-November and in March-April, but even then you just never know where you might stumble upon a few.



Photo by Tom Sheley

Purple Finches come from an interesting background. They are part of the family Fringillidae, a group of finches noted for their seed-cracking ability. Within this family, they are part of the large group of rosefinches (*Carpodacus*), an Old World genus of finches that reaches its greatest diversity in Asia. Like other Eurasian birds such as pipits, horned larks, and creepers, the Purple Finch ancestor probably came across the Bering land bridge back in the Pleistocene before evolving into several related finches. In North America, Purple Finches are the northernmost of our three common rosefinches. The related Cassin's Finch is mostly a bird of the western mountains, and House Finches are grassland and desert birds of the southwest that were introduced inadvertently into the eastern US. Subtle differences in shape, bill size, and color pattern distinguish these three species, but their big differences are in diet and behavior.



Photo by Tom Sheley

Purple Finches have an unusual biology. Like other finches of the family Fringillidae, they have stout beaks modified to crack and husk shelled seeds. They particularly use their large beaks to consume tree seeds such as those of firs, cherries, elms, ashes, and maples. They have also learned to consume a variety of tree buds in the spring, presumably to compensate for the scarcity of seeds at that time. These features allow them to both nest and winter further north than many other small birds. They are common nesters all across Canada and the far northern US; here in Ohio they only nest regularly in the northeastern part of the state, though occasional records are found down to central Ohio and the

Hocking Hills. In winter, they are irruptive seed nomads, wandering in small flocks looking for tree seeds and fruits such as cherries, hawthorns, and crabapples. This means that their migrations are unpredictable and occur during daylight. It also means that the numbers we see here in fall and winter often depend on the amount of tree seeds in Canada versus in Ohio.

Despite all their cool adaptations, Purple Finches are in trouble. Unfortunately, Purple finches are poster children for two of the great issues in ecology today: invasive species and climate change. Purple Finches took an unanticipated hit when House Finches (*C. mexicanus*) were introduced to New York in the 1950s. These desert rosefinches proved more adaptable than people expected and have spread throughout the eastern states, arriving in Ohio in the early 1980s. Many studies have documented how House Finches out-compete Purple Finches at feeders and in weed fields, so that here in the mid-west, Purple Finches have become rare in urban and suburban environments where House Finches are prevalent.

Climate change has been a more insidious problem for Purple Finches. Nesting Purple Finches had actually spread into Ohio and the middle Appalachians during the early 1900s, but their spread has halted and reversed in recent decades, and not just in urban areas. Even in rural and forested areas of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, Purple Finches have declined, and the warming climate has been implicated as a major culprit. The suspicion is that climate change has desynchronized the budding and fruit production of many forest trees, slicing into the food supply of these birds by making it more unpredictable. Both of the above problems have knocked back Purple Finch numbers, so now it's a good morning when you find a few of these neat birds. To see the impact of climate change on the Purple Finch, visit

<http://climate.audubon.org/birds/purfin/purple-finch>.

Rob Thorn

Citizen Science

Project FeederWatch-ing November through March



You are invited to participate in Project FeederWatch at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. FeederWatch allows *you* to become a citizen scientist. Come for relaxed backyard bird watching while you collect data for ornithologists to understand the distribution and abundance of birds in winter. We will be doing a series of two consecutive day counts from November through March. Relax and enjoy some yummy treats and warm drinks while you watch our feeders. Volunteers may come on designated days to conduct feeder watching from 15 minutes to multiple hours. Sounds fun, right? All ages and experience levels welcome! Please contact Anne at abalogh@audubon.org if interested.

Bird-friendly Design Challenge

Each year millions of birds, including species of conservation concern, migrate through the Mississippi Flyway. Many pass through urban communities and encounter deadly hazards like buildings and windows. Window films can make buildings safer for birds by reducing the reflection and transparency of the building's windows. However, films must meet specific criteria on the spacing of patterns to be effective at preventing collisions. Very few commercially available window film options meet these criteria, which has contributed to the common misconception that a bird-friendly building equals an ugly building.

Columbus Audubon is a partner in a new innovative project, the Beautiful and Bird-friendly Design Challenge, which will protect migrating birds in Columbus. The challenge will engage local artists in Columbus to design a window film that is both beautiful and effective at reducing collisions. The winning design will be printed and installed as a window film at a city building to show the community an innovative approach to making our city more bird-friendly.

The Bird-friendly Design Challenge exemplifies Audubon's priority to create bird-friendly communities across the US. Recently, the very bird-unfriendly design of the Minnesota Vikings Stadium has garnered a lot of attention for the concept of bird-friendly building design and mobilized the Audubon network to demand change (<https://secure.audubon.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=1717>).

This project explores the other side of the issue of bird-friendly design: how do we fix existing buildings that are dangerous for birds? The Bird-friendly Design Challenge will offer a model of the collaboration between designers and scientists that is needed to solve this problem. Although this project will take place in the Mississippi Flyway, the example created and the knowledge gained from this project can be used to directly improve bird habitat in the thousands of acres where birds and people live together across all flyways.

Amanda Duren

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While food and shelter are important for survival, water is also critical. My pond pump runs year-round, and I use fallen branches to provide access to open water. I also use a warmer for my birdbath to provide additional water.

And while winter can sometimes seem to drag on, I use the down time to learn and plan for the coming spring. How can I make my yard more attractive to birds and wildlife? What plants are best for attracting birds in my area? Luckily there are resources available to do just that. The Audubon at Home program is a great way to get answers to those questions. By enrolling your yard in the program, you'll get great information from our trained volunteers, and GIAC will be able to add your efforts to those of others who are making Columbus a Bird-Friendly Community.

Join me in celebrating the arrival of winter and all of the opportunities to work with Columbus Audubon and GIAC to help the birds in our community.

Rich Shank to Serve as Chair of the GIAC Stewardship Board

After a year as vice-chair of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center Stewardship Board, Rich Shank is poised to take on the chairmanship of the board beginning January 1, 2015. He replaces Greg Cunningham who served three one-year terms as board chair and who will continue on the board for the next 2½ years to fulfill his third and last term.

We applaud Greg for his leadership. Now his one wish is to pull honeysuckle and to that end he will lead efforts to engage more corporations and their associates in habitat restoration and clean-up work days, here at the Center

As the baton passes to Rich, we look forward to all he brings in the way of expertise and considerable experience in all sectors – government, non-profit, and corporate – working on behalf of the environment and sound environmental policy. Under his leadership and that of the Stewardship Board the Center will continue to grow and thrive.

Rich holds a PhD in environmental toxicology, a master's degree in zoology/aquatic toxicology, and a bachelor's degree in natural resources, all from The Ohio State University. In addition to his professional experiences, which include director of the Ohio EPA, executive director of the Ohio Chapter of the Nature Conservancy and senior vice president of Scotts Miracle-Gro regulatory and compliance processes, Rich has served and continues to serve on several non-profit boards such as the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, the Midwest Biodiversity Institute, and the Ohio Wildlife Center.



New GIAC board members

Aaron Pickrell

Aaron is a principal at the Remington Road Group, a strategic consulting firm based in Columbus that focuses on advocacy, business development, political campaigns, and strategic positioning. Aaron is a proven leader in developing campaigns to help companies expand their client base, broaden support for a legislative issue, and advocate for policy change.

Aaron has served as a leader in national, state, and local campaigns over the years. In 2012, *Politico* included him in "50 Politicos to Watch," and *Campaigns and Elections* magazine, the nation's leading trade magazine for campaign professionals, named Aaron as one of the top professionals and leading political influencers in the consulting business in Ohio. He is a graduate of Iowa State University and lives in Bexley with his wife and two daughters.

Maury Walsh

Maury Walsh has been involved in the management of environmental programs and organizations in Ohio for over 30 years. From being a hazardous waste site investigator to deputy director at Ohio EPA, he has helped to develop and implement programs and represented Ohio in national forums and negotiations with federal agencies. As an environmental business manager at Battelle and Science Applications International Corporation, he successfully led large organizations with hundreds of people and millions of dollars in revenue. He currently leads a team that provides program management support to the USDOE National Energy Technology Laboratory on alternative fuel vehicles and smart-grid projects. Maury and his wife Beth met in grad school at OSU in the entomology program and have three children who have followed them into the sciences.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Thank You for Making 2014 a Great Year

There is hardly a person among us who isn't regularly bombarded via television, radio, telephone, and in our mailboxes by nonprofits trying to raise funds. All are worthy in their respective missions and all believe sincerely in the work they accomplish. Real competition exists among nonprofits for the attention of a limited number of individuals, businesses, and foundations making charitable contributions. Some organizations have resources to conduct million dollar multi-media advertising campaigns while others must make do with mailing a few hundred appeal letters prepared by volunteers.

Where philanthropic dollars go is a matter of personal preference, experience, and interests. The best any organization can hope for is to earn the respect and passion of a community through its dedication, expertise, and hard work toward solving problems. Entirely self-funded through contributions from businesses, foundations, and individuals, Grange Insurance Audubon Center exists to protect, improve, and educate people of all ages about the benefits of a healthier environment and the inherent value of native wildlife. The degree to which we accomplish this task is completely dependent on the knowledge that GIAC's work has value.

It is with sincerest gratitude that we say thank you to the hundreds of people who chose to recognize Grange Insurance Audubon Center in 2014 with their financial support, volunteerism, and belief in the work we accomplish every day.

Great Backyard Bird Count February 13-16

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is happening Thursday, February 13 through Monday, February 16 at Grange Insurance Audubon Center. Join us on Saturday and Sunday, February 14-15 as we host this annual event that engages bird watchers of all ages and skills. Everyone is welcome--from beginning birders to experts. Warm drinks will be provided. Stop by for as few as 15 minutes on one day or stay and count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. You also can do the GBBC at home. For more information on our event, contact Anne at abalogh@audubon.org.

**Oh, the weather outside is frightful...
but summer will be so delightful!**

**Think ahead to those warm, sunny summer days and
register your child or grandchild for an experience they
will never forget!**



**Online camp registration begins February 15 at
www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org**

**Contact Allison Roush at 614-545-5482 or
aroush@audubon.org with any questions**



GIAC Featured Artist: Erica Ott

GIAC will feature an exhibition of paintings by Erica Ott on display from December through February. The exhibit will include works from *Birds*, a unique series that combines her love of abstract and realistic paintings; some are embellished with metal leaf to add interest and shine. Erica has always had a passion for oil painting but challenges herself by learning techniques that are highly uncommon but extremely rewarding. She appreciates the journey on which it takes her.

Erica is an award winning and full time artist living the good life in Columbus. She grew up in the small town of Defiance, Ohio and always had an interest in art. After getting her Masters in Higher Education and working at the Columbus College of Art & Design for four years, she decided to pursue a full time art career. Be sure to stop in to view these vibrant works while they are on display.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Audubon at Home: Backyard Conservation Program Series

GIAC will begin offering monthly instructional courses as part of the Audubon at Home conservation program. The series will be offered at 7:00 pm on the second Wednesday of every month. Program topics will include important backyard conservation practices and will include garden design, citizen science, lawn care, rain gardens, native plants, floral design with native plants, nest boxes, bird feeding, composting, pollinators, permaculture, backyard birds, edible natives, and more.

These programs are intended to help support homeowners enrolled in GIAC's Audubon at Home Backyard Refuge Program as well as for anyone interested in backyard conservation.

Audubon at Home

Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 7:00 pm

Learn 10 things that you can do in your yard to help it become a sanctuary for wildlife. This general talk is appropriate for those beginning to make their yard wildlife friendly. Anne Balogh, conservation manager at Grange Insurance Audubon Center, will also discuss the GIAC's pilot Audubon at Home Backyard Refuge Program.

Bird Feeding

Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 7:00 pm

Do you want to do some bird watching at home? Feeding birds and wildlife is the second most popular hobby in North America. Join staff from the Wild Birds Unlimited on Sawmill Road as they guide you through getting started or improving your existing set-up. They will also discuss providing natural and supplemental foods that are nutritionally responsible. Citizen science programs such as the Great Backyard Bird Count and Project FeederWatch will also be discussed.

Fee for each program: \$3 for members, \$5 for non-members

RSVP for each program: Anne at abalogh@audubon.org or 614-545-5481



Team Braves Cold and Coyotes

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center (or more precisely the Center's roof) played host to this year's Big Sit! bird count during a cold 24 hours which began on October 12 at midnight. A team of volunteers and board members from GIAC and Columbus Audubon braved temperatures that dipped into the low 30's and encountered one coyote, which the team viewed from their perch 25 feet above the unaware solitary animal.

Only birds seen or heard in a continuous 24 hour period while observers sit inside a 17 foot circle can be tallied. Our Columbus team logged a remarkable 61 different species of birds from the roof of the Audubon Center located less than a mile from downtown Columbus.

Among those tallied were rarities such as a Bobolink and a Clay-colored Sparrow. Raptors spotted included a Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Red-tailed

Hawk, and a Cooper's Hawk.

Live Facebook updates were posted throughout the 24 hour event and per-species pledges raised funds for Columbus Audubon and GIAC programs.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Environmental Advocate and Leader John O'Meara Retires

After a 35-year career in parks and conservation—16 years with Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks — Executive Director John O'Meara retired November 30.

A long-time member of Audubon, John was instrumental in creating the Scioto Audubon Metro Park and fostering the City-Metro Park-National Audubon partnership which led to the brownfield remediation, creation of the downtown Metro Park and implementing the dream of an Audubon Center on the Whittier Peninsula. Once the Center was built, he continued to support Audubon, both as an Audubon member and as a member of the Center's Stewardship Board.

John is passionate about the benefits of educating children about the importance of nature and the outdoors. He sees the Center and Audubon as advocates for the environment and environmental policy in ways that the Metro Parks cannot be.

While we lose John as a board member, we are not losing him as a friend. We wish him great adventures and many mountains to climb in his retirement.



New GIAC Educator



We welcomed Traci Weaver as a full time educator in October after serving in a part time role and as an Audubon Adventure Camp counselor this past summer. Traci had an adventure of a lifetime as she studied sustainable approaches to human-wildlife coexistence at the Maasai Mara National Reserve in the South Rift Valley of Kenya. Traci took the graduate course in pursuit of her master's degree from Miami University's Global Field Program and graduated this past December. Congratulations Traci!



Celebrate your child's next birthday at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center... in a unique setting where every birthday party is fun and exciting!

You'll receive:

Private party rooms for 2 hours

The great outdoors in the Scioto Audubon Metro Park

Sustainable tableware & serve ware

Set-up and clean-up

Choose the educator-led party option (additional price applies) and your child and guests will receive an hour of your reservation engaged in hands-on, thematic learning with a hike or adventure that is sure to inspire a connection with nature, stewardship, and change as your child grows!

Reserve a date for your child's birthday party today!

Contact Allison Roush at 614-545-5482 or

aroush@columbus.audubon.org

Book Review: Washashore

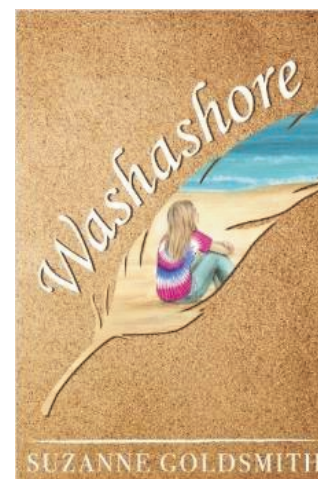
This book is about a girl called Clementine Harper, who recently moved in to a house on Martha's Vineyard. Due to her just moving on to the island, she is called a *washashore*, an outcast. Her mother works in Boston and comes home later in the day, while her father works in Ohio. Her old life is far away, as is her best friend Coco. Clementine regrets having moved onto the island. She doesn't really fit in at Martha's Vineyard—at least not at first. When she finds a dead bird washed onto the shore, she sees it has tags. This bird is an osprey, with the scientific name *Pandion*, from one of her favorite books. Clementine's curious about this bird and starts looking for the person who gave the bird its tags. It doesn't take long before she finds the person she's looking for. A boy in her class called Daniel, who isn't popular and seems different from the others, introduces her to the world of the Pandion, a world they fight together to save.

This appears to be the same story; a couple of kids against unreasonable adults, striving to save endangered animals while struggling to fit in with society and developing a small romance. Although the characters themselves were new, the storyline seemed almost too familiar and the power of the adults seemed too huge, accentuating the children's powerlessness in a way that is never resolved as it is in the other books of this theme. This plot may not appeal to a young teen's sense of wanting to be like an adult. However, there is enough romance to appeal to an older teen.

The idea of this story, that kids fight to save birds, is already happening. Both children and adults are fighting to save birds and their habitats from extinction and endangerment. One of the key birds in this fight is Ospreys, and putting up an Osprey tower for an Osprey couple to nest in is quite common. The Ohio Young Birder's Club is only one example of a group of kids coming together to watch birds and gather data on them.

Izabella Little

Izabella Little is a member of Ohio Young Birders for the past three years. She is 14 years old and is a freshman at Linworth Alternative Program. She lives in Columbus with her parents, sister, cat, guinea pigs, and fish. She loves to bird watch and her favorite bird is the Black-capped Chickadee.



Washashore Wins 2015 Green Earth Book Award

On September 18, *Washashore* by Suzanne Goldsmith was named the winner of the 2014 Green Earth Book Award for Young Adult Fiction. It is the Bexley author's first novel.

The Green Earth Book Award is the nation's first environmental stewardship book award for children and young adult books. It was created in 2005 by the Nature Generation and more than 90 books have been honored.

Ohio Young Birders 2015 Field Trip Schedule

These field trips were suggested by the Youth Advisory Board and voted on to determine the most popular.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
January 24	Cleveland gull watching	Darlene
February 7	Killdeer Plains raptors	Tim
March	Constructing a chimney swift tower at Sawmill	Darlene
April	Springville Marsh with bird banding demo	Nina
May 23	Magee Marsh	Tim
June	Birding by kayak with archery and camping	Darlene & Tim
July	Lake Hope hummingbirds	Nina
August	Oak Openings	Susan
September	Shorebirds	Susan
October	Caesar Creek SP Saw Whet Owl banding	Nina
November	Annual Conference	
December	Christmas Bird Count	Darlene

Columbus Audubon



January & February Field Trips

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

Bird Hike at Blendon Woods

Thursday, Jan. 1 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Start your year off right with bird watching at Blendon Woods. Naturalist Bruce Simpson will lead. Meet at the nature center. Bring binoculars or borrow ours. For more information, call Blendon Woods Metro Park at 614-895-6221.

Birdwatching for Nestlings

Saturday, Jan. 3 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am

If you've wondered what birdwatching is about, but can't find a bird in a pair of binoculars, this is for you. Bring your binoculars or use ours. We'll teach you tricks to start a fun hobby. Weather permitting, we'll go on a short hike. For more information, contact Suzan Jervey at sejervey@gmail.com or 614-546-7857.

Avid Birders

Saturday, Jan. 10 from 5:30 am to 5:00 pm

Our deep winter targets this time will be gulls and sea ducks. Avid Birders meet to carpool at 5:30 am in the southeast corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot. For more info, contact AvidBirder-Leads@ColumbusAudubon.org.

Service in the Preserves: Stages Pond

Saturday, Jan. 10 from 7:45 am to 5:00 pm

Join us as we work at Stages Pond cutting honeysuckle and multiflora rose. Meet in the parking lot inside the gate house at the ODNR Complex to travel in the ODNR van. 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.

Green Lawn Birding

Saturday, Jan. 10 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Bring your binoculars for a leisurely hike through Green Lawn Cemetery. Meet at the cemetery office just inside the gate. For more information, contact Darlene Sillick at azuretrails@columbus.rr.com or 614-288-3696.

Birdwatching for Fledglings

Saturday, Jan. 17 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am

This is a slow-paced hike perfect for new birdwatchers. This month, meet at the shelter in Glacier Ridge Metro Park. We will be hiking with naturalist Chrissy Hoff in search of grassland birds. For more information, contact Suzan Jervey at sejervey@gmail.com or 614-546-7857.

Winter Birds of the Urban Scioto

Saturday, Jan. 17 at 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

We'll explore along the Scioto River, first around the Greenlawn dam and then visit nearby open-water sites, looking for congregations of gulls, herons, and waterfowl. If we have time, we'll visit the nearby Green Lawn Cemetery in search of its winter specialties like sapsuckers, pine siskins, and merlins. Meet at the Scioto Audubon Metro Park boat launch off Whittier Avenue west of Front Street and dress warmly. For more information, contact Rob Thorn, 614-551-0643 or robthorn@earthlink.net.

Winter at Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area

Sunday, Jan. 18 from 12:15 pm to 7:30 pm

Join us as we search for winter visitors, including hawks and owls. Much of our time will be in cars, exiting vehicles occasionally to scan fields, with one short walk through fields. Dress warmly; walking may be muddy and a little rough (but flat). Bring water and food as needed; none is available at Killdeer. Carpool from the Worthington Mall parking lot at 12:15 pm. We will look for Short-eared Owls around 5:30 pm, departing Killdeer about 6:00; those who need to leave earlier may do so. For more information, contact: Bill Heck at bill.heck@gmail.com or 614-859-2473.

Bird Hike at Blendon Woods

Sunday, Feb. 1 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Join Naturalist Bruce Simpson in search of Blendon Woods' winter residents. Meet at the nature center. Bring binoculars or borrow ours. For more information, call Blendon Woods Metro Park at 614-895-6221.

Service in the Preserves: Kiser Lake SNP

Saturday, Feb. 7 from 7:45 am to 5:30 pm

Help restore parts of the fen at Kiser Lake State Nature Preserve and see parts of the property not usually open to the public. Meet in the parking lot inside the gate house at the ODNR Complex to travel in the ODNR van. 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.

Winter Birds of Hoover Reservoir

Saturday, Feb. 7 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

We'll visit some of the Hoover hotspots, depending on where there is open water, looking for over-wintering loons, grebes, goldeneye, mergansers, and other diving ducks, as well as eagles, hawks, and the expected masses of gulls. Meet at the dam parking area along Sunbury Road and dress warmly since we'll be exposed to the wind along the shore. For more information, contact Rob Thorn, 614-551-0643 or robthorn@earthlink.net.

Birdwatching for Nestlings

Saturday, Feb. 7 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am

See January 3 for a description of this program.

Winter at Killdeer Plains: Encore

Sunday, Feb. 15 from 12:15 pm to 7:30 pm

See description for Killdeer Plains trip on January 18. Because sunset is later, departure from Killdeer Plains for those looking for Short-eared Owls will be about 6:45 pm.

Avid Birders

Saturday, Feb. 21 from 5:30 am to 5:00 pm

The Avid Birders meet to carpool at 5:30 am in the southeast corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot. Our likely quarry will be early spring waterfowl. As usual, we will announce more specific information on the Avid Birders mailing list shortly before the trip.

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Calamus Swamp Under Threat?



Photo by Pete Precario

Fifteen years ago, through the generosity of Ada Burke and family, Columbus Audubon was given Calamus Swamp, our own -acre nature preserve in Pickaway County. Calamus is a “glacial kettle,” a wetland created when a huge chunk of ice was left in a depression as the last glacier retreated. Today Calamus is still a wetland, to be enjoyed by anyone who cares about the outdoors.

Recently there has been concern that installation of a new electric transmission line would result in tree removal along a right-of-way including Calamus. Fortunately the power company has some sensitivity to environmental issues and the line is being rerouted, but threats to Calamus persist.

Foremost is an apparent drop in the water table, due (we think) to increasing residential and agricultural development in the surrounding area. In the past decade the wetland has become more seasonal than permanent, resulting in reduced habitat for some species (rails, wood ducks). The muskrats lack refuge from coyotes that eat them, allowing cat-tails to proliferate, further reducing open water. Then there is the emerald ash borer, already present in the county.

One-fourth of the trees on the property are ashes (mostly green ash) and could become dead snags in ten years. The woodpeckers and Prothonotary warblers are going to love it but Columbus Audubon is going to be dealing with the prospect of trees toppling onto our boardwalk and clobbering visitors.

Loss of Calamus as a true wetland is a continuation of natural ecological succession, and recent human activity has simply speeded it up. Loss of the ash trees is unfortunate and unnatural but probably inevitable. What we *can* do with Calamus and our other remaining wetlands is to continue to enjoy and protect them, and learn from them what we can about our environment.

Visit www.columbusaudubon.org/calamus for more information and updates.

Dave Horn



Photo by Pete Precario



Photo by Pete Precario

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For more info, contact AvidBirder-Leads@ColumbusAudubon.org.

Green Lawn Birding

Saturday, Feb. 21 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Bring your binoculars for a leisurely hike through Green Lawn Cemetery. Meet at the cemetery office just inside the gate. For more information, contact Darlene Sillick at az-uretrails@columbus.rr.com or 614-288-3696.

Birdwatching for Fledglings

Saturday, Feb. 21 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am

This is a slow-paced hike perfect for new bird-watchers. This month we will search for short-eared owls and snow buntings. Meet in the parking lot at the intersection of Kuhlwein and Darby Creek Dr. For more information, contact Suzan Jervey at sejervey@gmail.com or 614-546-7857.

Columbus Audubon

Birding by Ear: What you Should Know about Birdsong

Workshop: February 28 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm

Field trip: March date TBD

Instructor: Angelika Nelson, PhD

Location: 1315 Kinnear Rd. Columbus, OH 43212

Registration: \$20 fee; contact Darlene Sillick azuretrails@columbus.rr.com to register

In this three-hour workshop, Angelika Nelson, curator of the Borror Laboratory of Bioacoustics at the Ohio State University, will give an overview of what scientists have so far discovered about how birds acquire and use song. We will then look at how these findings may help in the field when trying to identify birds by their sounds. What should you be listening for? How can you describe and compare songs? How can you remember what a species sounds like? Join us for an end-of-winter morning of birdsong and find out about resources that will help you to prepare for the spring chorus.

Included in the workshop will be a tour of the avian section of the Museum of Biological Diversity from 12:00-12:30 pm.



Open House at the Museum of Biological Diversity

Saturday, February 7 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

1315 Kinnear Rd., Columbus, OH 43212

Plants and animals are the source and inspiration for the most potent poisons and medicines. The complexity of these chemicals is matched only by the complexity of behaviors, anatomies, and biologies that organisms have evolved to deploy these natural weapons.

Come to the Museum of Biological Diversity's annual Open House as we explore venoms, poisons, and the organisms that make them. Come explore nature indoors with hands-on activities for kids and adults. Live animals, treasure hunt, special displays, tours of the collections. Lots and lots of fun!

Free admission. Open to the public. Free parking. For up-to-date information, please visit the website <https://mbd.osu.edu/open-house>.



EcoWeekend – Mark Your Calendars!

Get out those new calendars and save the dates for EcoWeekend: May 1-3. Join us for our 43rd year in the Hocking Hills.

Programs will include birding by ear, stream discovery, astronomy, geocaching, and great nature walks on Camp Oty-Okwa's beautiful trails. Our Saturday night program will feature Pat Quackenbush, a renowned naturalist with Hocking Hills State Park. Pat's presentation, Hock-Hocking Expedition, will include live animals, hands-on history, and storytelling to learn about the history and resources of the Hocking Hills.

Registration information for EcoWeekend 2015 will be mailed directly to all *Song Sparrow* subscribers in February. Online registration will be open February 1 at www.ecoweekend.org. See our website for a sample program and other EcoWeekend information. Questions? Please contact the EcoWeekend committee at 614-793-8843 or email us at ecoweekend@columbusaudubon.org.

Service in the Preserves Honored by DNAP



The Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves honored Columbus Audubon for its long-running Service in the Preserves (SIP) program at the annual DNAP conference at Mohican State Park on November 5, 2014. SIP coordinator Katryn Renard accepted the plaque from assistant chief Dee Hammel. Below is an excerpt from Hammel's remarks:

Ecologically minded and forward thinking, Columbus Audubon members have made a longstanding commitment to the preservation of high quality natural areas in Ohio. In 1982, a model program called Service in the Preserves was established in which Natural Areas pre-

serve managers and Audubon volunteers worked together to define projects at State Nature Preserves. Eight projects are selected around the state annually. They are typically one day projects and involve invasive species removal, boardwalk and bridge construction, and trail maintenance. Occasionally more labor intensive projects are needed which are scheduled over a work weekend. Recent projects like this include building four bridges, removing 200 tires from a preserve, and building and/or removing entire staircases.

This work is obviously not glamorous – but it is absolutely necessary to prevent the spread of non-native invasive species and provide preserve visitors a safe and enjoyable experience. And it is amazing to see the results of their efforts.

Columbus Audubon volunteers work in rain or shine, wind, and sometime bitter cold. In fact, on a work trip at Clifton Gorge this year, the weather ran the entire gamut of conditions – from sunshine to snow showers, sleet and of course wind. On the drive home a passing sign flashed the temperature of 18 degrees. Even though it was brutally cold that day, the volunteers enjoyed the solace of the preserve (they pretty much had it to themselves) and beauty of frozen waterfalls which looked like scenic postcards.

Founding members still participate in the “Service in the Preserves” projects, and a number of volunteers have 28 or more years of service.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, acknowledges the outstanding volunteer efforts of the Columbus Audubon Service in the Preserves program and thanks this group for their 32 year commitment to protecting Ohio's State Nature Preserves.

Congratulations to SIP leader Katryn Renard and all of our wonderful SIP volunteers who have given so much time and hard work to maintain and improve Ohio's most beautiful natural areas. (See page 11 for information about upcoming SIP worktrips.)

Take Flight 5k Crossed the Finish Line

Columbus Audubon's inaugural Take Flight! run/walk for 2014 is in the books. Seventy-five runners and walkers took advantage of a beautiful morning at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and Scioto Audubon Metro Park for the event. Special thanks go to our dedicated volunteers who made it all happen!

Congratulations to first place winner Jimmy Dunbar with a time of 21:13, followed by second place finisher Lemone Hammock with a time of 21:24 and third place finisher Matthew Shumar with a time of 22:12.

Denise McLain was the top female finisher with a time of 23:45 and came in seventh place overall. Thirteen year old C. Wolf was the top youth runner with a time of 25:00, finishing eleventh overall. The three winners received back packs from REI. Each race participant received a bag filled with Columbus Audubon information, a long-sleeve race shirt, and other goodies. Special thanks to our race sponsors: All Good Elemental Herbs, Columbus State Community College, Nicole Donnini, Formula Q, Goddess Garden Organics, Grange Insurance Audubon Center, Home Depot, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, REI, Sunology, Wellcoaches, Whole Foods, Wild Birds Unlimited.

Thanks to board member and photographer Tim Daniel for the photo album. You can review the results at <https://premieraces.org/component/raceresults/?view=results&Itemid=300&rname=Take%20Flight%205k&rsub=0&rdate=2014-11-08>.

Columbus Audubon (Founded 1913)

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

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Birdathon: Dave Horn, davehorn43@columbus.rr.com

Conservation: Dave Horn, 614-262-0312

Eco Weekend: Dale Brubeck, dbrubeck@columbus.rr.com; Lois Day, 614-793-8843

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

Web site: Bill Heck, webmaster@columbusaudubon.org

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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

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Center hours : Tues, Wed, Thurs. 10 am – 5 pm; Fri and Sat 10 am – 3 pm, Sunday 12 noon – 5 pm; 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.

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Deadline for proposed submissions for the March - April issue of the Song Sparrow is January 7. This newsletter is printed on 100% recycled stock with soy ink.

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