

Audubon at Home Enrollment Now Open

It is not too late to enroll your home in our pilot Audubon at Home (AAH) program. The program is a backyard habitat program with the premise that in every property, whether an apartment, a suburban house or a rural farm, has the potential to create sustainable and natural habitats. Participants commit to managing their properties in a way that restores the ecosystem, while also benefiting humans. The emphasis is on collective small steps that will have a large impact, from managing water consumption to reducing carbon emissions to providing wildlife habitat in yards.

The goals of the program are: increase food and water sources for wildlife, shelter and nesting opportunities, native plantings, and biodiversity while reducing the spread of invasive plants, lawn size, water and pesticide use, and polluted runoff.

Participants will get economic benefits in the form of incentives and rewards, as well as in the form of ecosystem services. Other benefits include access to community resources, technical assistance, and reduced garden maintenance; increased garden enjoyment, increased water quality, and an increase in beneficial insects and other wildlife. Participants will be requested to participate in Hummingbirds at Home citizen science program and other citizen science programs of your selections.

Enjoy benefits from our partners: Scioto Gardens, Wild Birds Unlimited (Sawmill Rd.), Natives in Harmony, Timber Book Press, Good Nature Lawn Care, Kurtz Brother Mulch and Natures Barn in Lithopolis.

Additional benefits include: Initial yard visits, Audubon membership, local plant resource guild, monthly education programs, workshops and lectures at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

To enroll go to <http://grange.audubon.org/audubon-home-23>. For more information contact Amy Boyd at (preferred) aboyn@audubon.org or 614-545-5486.

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

Save the Dates:

Audubon at Home Education Programs

Mark your calendars for the second Wednesday of each month at GIAC at 7:00 pm.

RSVP to Amy Boyd at aboyn@audubon.org or 614-545-5486.
Free and donations appreciated.

May 13: Amy Dutt with Urban Wild will share practices for landscaping for clean water.

June 10: Gale Martin with Natives in Harmony will discuss edible and historical uses of native plants.

July 8: Jim McCormac with ODNR will discuss pollinators and the importance of milkweed.

August 12: Sara Ernst with Franklin Water and Soil District will discuss the benefits of rain gardens.

September 9: Amanda Duren with Ohio Bird Conservation Initiatives will discuss Lights Out Columbus and bird friendly buildings.

Upcoming Events

Hummingbirds at Home Pilot Program at GIAC

Recent research suggests that changing bloom times of nectar sources pose a potential challenge for future success of hummingbirds. Hummingbirds at Home (HAH) engages volunteer citizen scientists to submit observations of hummingbird feeding behavior across the country to help us learn how climate change might be impacting hummingbirds.

During the third year of the program Audubon's national science team has partnered with five Audubon Centers around the country including GIAC to pilot an initiative to help people learn about healthy habitats for hummingbirds. Through customized, locally focused materials and outreach, volunteers learned how to improve their yards and private lands to benefit hummingbirds. Establishing these healthy habitats for hummingbirds will be an important benchmark for prediction based surveys we plan on conducting to measure the impact of climate change on hummingbirds.

The Audubon at Home pilot program incorporates HAH program as a requirement for the participants so that we can establish at least 30 sites documenting the benefits of native plants on the hummingbird population in Central Ohio.

GIAC volunteers will be introducing the program to Center visitors and showing folks how to use the online application (available at iTunes and Google Play), while visiting the new Audubon At Home demonstration garden. Anyone who is interested can participate in the program. If you would like to share the information that you gather with the Hummingbirds at Home app contact Amy Boyd at aboyd@audubon.org.



Photo by Tom Sheley

An Evening Lecture with Author Doug Tallamy

Presented by Grange Insurance Audubon Center, Columbus Audubon and Franklin Soil and Water District
Sunday, June 14 at 7 pm at Grange Insurance Audubon Center



Rebuilding Nature's Relationships at Home

Specialized relationships between animals and plants are the norm in nature rather than the exception. Plants that evolved in concert with local animals provide for their needs better than plants that evolved elsewhere. Author Doug Tallamy will explain why this is so, why specialized food relationships determine the stability and complexity of the local food webs that support animal diversity, why it is important to restore life to our residential properties, and what we can do to make our landscapes living ecosystems once again.

Tallamy is currently professor and chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware where he has written more than 65 research articles and has taught insect taxonomy, behavioral ecology, and other subjects. He is the author of *Bringing Nature Home* and co-author of *The Living Landscape*. The program is free; donations at the door are appreciated.

Correction: In our April program description, we said that Bernard Master was a key leader in supporting the purchase of Calamus Swamp. In fact, Calamus Swamp was donated to Columbus Audubon by Percy May family members Ada May Burke and Sally V. May. We apologize for the error.

Birdathon

Birdathon 2015: Do Something Birdy!

COLUMBUS AUDUBON BIRDATHON



like to sponsor a team, look for the team roster posted at www.columbusaudubon.org/birdathon. You can contact a team member to make a donation and sponsor your favorite team online.



Your support helps fund the Owl camera project, which is also a great way to connect the public with Columbus Audubon's mission and programs. Wouldn't you like to tell your friends that you helped install the Owl Cam, as they watch the daily routine inside an owl nest from the comfort of their home computer?

Join Today! There is still time to form a team and get outdoors to raise funds for Columbus Audubon by counting birds! Everything you need to know can be found at www.columbusaudubon.org/birdathon.

And there is always time to be a donor! Proceeds from this year's Birdathon will enable us to fund a Barn Owl & Wildlife Camera at Pickerington Ponds Metro Park. Funds will pay for video equipment and the connections needed to stream video from the nest. Schools, kids at home, and adults all will be able to watch the resident Barn Owls as they raise a family from eggs to fledglings. We're delighted to be working with the Ohio Division of Wildlife and Columbus Metro Parks to make this happen, and we hope that you will be just as thrilled as we are about supporting the effort through the Birdathon.

Sponsors are just as important to the CA Birdathon as our team members. If you would



Sign me up to be a Birdathon Sponsor!

Sponsor your favorite team. Go to www.columbusaudubon.org/birdathon, click Pledge Now, and follow the instructions, OR send a check to Columbus Audubon Birdathon, c/o Elaine Smith, 4420 Jennydawn Place, Hillard OH 43026. Be sure to note if you want to sponsor a specific team or individual. For any pledge over \$35, please give your address for tax purposes. Your generous donation is tax deductible.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)

I leaned over the footbridge railing and looked where she was pointing. At first all I could see was a tangle of zig-zagging sycamore branches, but then a movement caught my eye. A tiny wing flick revealed a tiny bird: a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird, squeezed atop a tiny lichen-covered knob that could only be her nest. We collectively held our breath, amazed and awed by such a small bird.



Photo by Earl Harrison

Ruby-throats are the only regular hummingbird over vast stretches of eastern North America, including Ohio. They are a northern outlier of a huge family of tropical flower-feeding hoverers that includes over 330 species, mostly in the flower-rich forest-edges of Central and South America. Over a dozen species have adapted to the seasonally-changing flower regimens of deserts and mountains of the southwestern US, but that's as close as hummingbird diversity gets to us. Only the rugged little Rufous Hummingbird of the western mountains penetrates further north.

Why aren't hummers more common in our flower-rich spring and summer seasons? Hummingbirds are 'metabolic monsters' whose metabolism is the fastest of any endothermic animal. They beat their wings at over 50 times per second and can have a heart rate exceeding 1000 beats per

minute, all to power a hovering flight that is more like an insect than a bird. Their tiny size allows them to survive on flower nectar, but just accentuates their heat loss and helps to drive this extreme metabolism. In the tropics, they have co-evolved with a host of flowers, developing strategies to forage adeptly enough to consume their weight in nectar every day. At night, they dial down their torrid metabolism as much as ten-fold, entering a torpor to save energy.

Ruby-throats carry all this baggage north when they head up to Ohio every spring. Firstly, they make a staggering 400-500 mile direct flight over parts of the Gulf of Mexico just to reach North America, a flight that no other hummer makes. They need to double their weight prior to this flight, packing on the grams for the non-stop ordeal, probably adding a healthy dose of soft insects and spiders to their diet to do so. Once they arrive, they are keen to search out flowers and feeders; they are fiercely territorial around reliable nectar sources. The Midwest has few hummingbird-specific flowers, so the birds focus on tubular flowers and compete with bees, moths, and butterflies, revisiting productive flower patches over a series of days until the nectar wanes.

Breeding just adds to their stress. Males become hyper-territorial and will display to females and rivals with an 8-foot dive display. Nest-building and young-rearing are female tasks: she weaves the tiny elastic cup from spider silk, lichens, and bud scales, lays 1-2 eggs, and rears the nestlings alone. The cozy little nest helps by conforming to the nestlings and insulating them while they develop control of their metabolisms; still, the mother bird must feed them every 15-30 minutes and brood them during rain and night. After 18-21 days of this, the young fledge; the presumably exhausted females rarely try to get off a second brood.

So how does this affect when and where we see them in central Ohio? In April and May, look for them around large flower patches, especially if there are red or purple tubular flowers present. During nesting, the females don't stray too far from their nests, but the males will wander all over. By late July, when most nesting is over, look for both sexes around large patches of flowers or feeders, as they try to recover from the ordeal of nesting and territory defense. Large public gardens, like Whetstone and Inniswood, are excellent places to look for them. Or you can just put up a feeder – then, they'll find you, and you can prepare to be amazed.



Photo by Tom Sheley

Rob Thorn

Leadership Letters

From Columbus Audubon President Barbara Revard



If you haven't yet visited a state nature preserve, now is the time! With well over 100 natural areas and preserves, you are sure to find one of these gems nearby.

The State Nature Preserves range from wetlands to remnant glacial kettle lakes, prairies and intriguing geologic formations.

When planning a visit, first check the ODNR website: <http://naturepreserves.ohiodnr.gov>. Also, be prepared! The state nature preserves generally do not have facilities beyond a small parking area and a trail. Many do include some interpretive signage to help guests understand the unique nature of the area. You could also participate in our Service in the Preserves program for an active work day in a preserve. The next one is Saturday, May 30; see the Field Trips page for details.

Two of my favorite preserves are Bigelow Cemetery near Plain City, a small patch of tall-grass prairie, and Stages Pond near Circleville. Bigelow Cemetery is only 1/2-acre but it packs a lot into that small space! Visit mid to late summer and you will walk among beautiful prairie plants growing higher than your head! Stage's Pond is known to many Columbus Audubon members as a wonderful site to observe waterfowl during migration.



From Audubon Center Director Christie Vargo

Dear Members and Friends of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center,

Today is April 8, 2015, as I write this. We are in my very favorite time of year. Not so much because of the birds and spring migration, but because of the wildflowers. They are my passion, and every year I try to get out and renew my friendships with each of them for the fleeting moments they are in bloom.

I've already missed the skunk cabbage and, I fear, the coltsfoot. I will try to discipline myself to get out this weekend, or I may miss the hepatica...my favorite of all spring wildflowers.

Life intrudes, work becomes all-consuming, family and friends beckon, and too frequently I miss this favorite time of year altogether. What are we as Audubon all about if not sharing our joy and connection with nature? I owe it to myself, to my colleagues, to our schoolkids and volunteers to take time out to "smell the roses" and rarely allow myself that luxury because I see it as just that – a luxury. How, though, do I impart the excitement and wonder of it all if I don't make the time to immerse myself in it and the things I most enjoy?

My actions and what I do with my time is a choice. Some of our students do not even have the choice. Hilltonia Middle School visited GIAC at the end of March for three sets of activities tied to their classroom learning: aquatic macro-invertebrates, conservation action through honeysuckle removal, and birds. Here are some of their comments:

Dan's favorite activity: "Pulling honeysuckle because of the accomplished feeling afterwards. I see that we haft [sic] to protect the environment. I would have had the trip end with us planting a tree."

Isnino says, "I learned that a dragonfly nymph larva is not harmful. My favorite activity would be catching and touching the (aquatic) insects. I felt connected with nature today because I was allowed to touch it."

Phillip's favorite activity: "Catching bugs because I never did it before."

Haley learned "that tree swallows fly with their mouth open to catch insects."

Alexus' favorite activity: "Wetland area because I saw different kinds of bugs and touched dirty water without getting yelled at. I challenged myself by touching bugs and getting my shoes dirty."

Continued on page 8

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Birding Trips for All Levels of Birders

The early bird gets the worm and the early birder gets the bird. OK, I made up that last part up, but looking at Audubon field trips, many sure do start early in the morning and stay out for a long time. It is no wonder that some people hesitate attending field trips.

I've had a number of people pull me aside to admit they weren't sure they were good enough to go on an Audubon field trip. They didn't want to look stupid; they wondered if they could keep up with the hiking; and, they feared getting bored birding on a long, strenuous bird hike.

Nonsense! Most of our field trips are NOT endurance courses without stops for water or a bathroom. And, if your time is limited, it is often possible to break off from the group early. Get in touch with the contact person listed for a trip; they're happy to answer questions about the terrain, how much hiking is involved, or whether or not you can leave early.

Another great way to get started on birding trips is with our series of casual birding hikes. Scheduled on various Saturdays, they begin at 10:00 am and end no later than 11:30. We meet at Grange Insurance Audubon Center. Weather permitting, we hit some of the paved or gravel trails around Scioto Audubon Metro Park. If it is too cold or rainy, we bird from the Audubon Center.

We will help you with using your binoculars and answer any questions you might have. The only dumb questions are the ones you wanted to ask but didn't. We may have some experienced birders join us who will give us insight into how they bird, but mostly we'll share our individual interests and experience in birding. Since the hiking is minimal, people of any physical fitness are welcome. If you have questions, contact Suzan Jervey at sejervy@gmail.com.

Suzan Jervey

*Join us for an amazing evening at
Grange Insurance Audubon Center*



Dinner and Desserts by Bosc+Brie • Wine Tastings
Complimentary Wine and Beer Bar • Warbler Walks to
see Beautiful Songbirds during peak Migratory Season
Exciting Musical Entertainment • Memorable Activities
Unique items in Silent and Live Auctions

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2015

6:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
505 Whittier St. Columbus, OH 43215

RSVP by May 8, 2015

Visit www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org
or contact Jeff Yost at 614-545-5479 or
jyost@audubon.org

Presenting Sponsor: Grange Insurance Company



**YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS
YEAR'S**

**BANDS, BIRDS
& BEER!**

Friday, August 14, 2015

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS COMING SOON!

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Milkweeds, Monarchs, and More: the *Asclepias* ensemble

A special presentation by Jim McCormac

Wednesday, July 8 at 7 pm Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Milkweeds in the genus *Asclepias* are the primary hosts of the spectacular Monarch, an iconic butterfly whose numbers have crashed in recent years. Ohio is home to 13 species of milkweed, and Monarch reproduction has been documented on 12 of them. All of our milkweeds are eye-catching, and some are breathtaking. In addition to fueling Monarch caterpillars, the milkweed gardener will be supporting an entire ensemble of other obligate milkweed feeders: beetles, various bugs, and beautiful moths.

This program will be a visual ride through the magical world of milkweeds and their always interesting occupants. We'll also look closely at the various species and what conditions they require to flourish. The end goal? Plant a milkweed garden!

RSVP to Amy Boyd at aboyn@audubon.org or 614-545-5486. Donations appreciated.



FABULOUS FIREWORKS VIEW!

RED WHITE & BOOM!

at Grange Insurance Audubon Center
on the Whittier Peninsula downtown

REGISTER by VISTING:
www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org

or contact Jeff Yost to register or for more information
614-545-5479 / jyost@audubon.org

- Indoor Reserved Table for Ten
- Free Reserved Parking
- Picnic style cookout with all the trimmings
- Jugglers & Magicians before the fireworks
- Activities & Games for the kids

ENTERTAINMENT / FOOD / FIREWORKS

All proceeds benefit the programs of the Audubon Center

July 3, 6 pm – 11 pm
505 W. Whittier Street, Columbus OH

\$475 per table of ten

Wine, Beer & Soft Drinks additional

See registration page for details and choices!

Please, no outside food or drink

Audubon members get 10% off their table!

Warren Grody receives 2015 Song Sparrow award



Columbus Audubon's Song Sparrow Award was established in 1996 and recognizes outstanding contributions by Audubon members who promote our mission, often over the course of years.

Warren Grody, this year's Song Sparrow Award recipient, exemplifies the "if you need me, I'm there" dedication that our volunteers bring to us. Several years ago, Warren stepped in as Columbus Audubon treasurer at a time when we needed help, spending countless hours bringing our records up to date and working with the IRS and the State of Ohio to ensure that our tax returns and other requirements were in good order. Warren also has served two full terms on the Columbus Audubon board, bringing his wisdom and good sense to our discussions and decisions. And for the past several years, he has headed up the administration of our John Wilson Memorial Fund, which distributes awards to youth and adults for conservation education.

Warren has played a major role in Columbus Audubon's relationship with Green Lawn Cemetery, an Important Bird Area. No matter what the weather, he ensures that CA's feeders at the famous "pit" are filled, to the delight of the birds and birders alike. He has led numerous field trips at Green Lawn. And for the benefit of all who enjoy the serenity of birding in this oasis in the heart of the city, Warren and his wife Linda Vozel have even provided permanent seating near the bird feeders.

As if he has not done enough with the big tasks, Warren also has helped with countless little things—those seemingly small jobs that mean so much to an organization like ours. For example, if you have wondered about the identity of the smiling gentleman who helps register attendees at Columbus Audubon's monthly programs, wonder no more: it's Warren. When we need volunteers to help with special events, Warren's name always is on the list.

In honor of this work and so much more, we are delighted to present the 2015 Song Sparrow Award to Warren Grody.

The Song Sparrow Award was established to commemorate Margaret Morse Nice's groundbreaking scientific contributions on the life histories of Song Sparrows. Nice's pioneering work put Ohio on the map of the ornithological world.

Citizen Science Involves a Childhood Pastime

Many of us have fond memories of collecting fireflies (or lightning bugs) in jars to make lanterns. Even as adults, the fireflies are a wonderful delight. They appear just after dusk almost like magical lit sprinkles that finish off a beautiful summer day. Now you can combine a childhood fascination with an easy citizen science project.

Firefly Watch is sponsored by the Museum of Science in Boston. The goal of the project is to better understand the distribution of fireflies. There is also fear that backyard pesticides and lights impact populations of fireflies and the information collected may help understand this better.

Working in your own backyard, you register your site, describe the habitats, and record your observations. You can spend as little time as you have or observe for longer periods and more days. The absence of a species is as important as finding a species. All you need is a comfy chair from which to watch the fireflies' very distinctive flashing patterns.

The Firefly Watch website has wonderful information about fireflies and identifying them by light patterns. You can register there and report your findings. They promise updates through the summer on their findings. For more information, go to https://legacy.mos.org/fireflywatch/how_to_participate.

Suzan Jervey

Leadership letter continued from page 5

So this is permission to you, dear Audubon ambassador, to exercise your choice and to go outside. Do it for the kids in your life. Take the time to enjoy this magical springtime, fill your spirit, and share the inspirations and joy that it brings. I will make the commitment with you. We will be so glad we did.

Columbus audubon



May & June Field Trips

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

Birdwatching for Nestlings

Sat., May 2 from 10 am to 11:30 am

If you've wondered what birdwatching is about, but can't even see 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 sejervej@gmail.com or 614-546-7857.

Avid Birders

Sat., May 2 from 5:30 am to 5 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. For more info, contact AvidBirders-Leads@ColumbusAudubon.org.

Spring at Slate Run Metro Park

Sat., May 2 from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon

Join us at the wetlands to look for migrants and possibly a few winter stragglers. Park Ranger and CA member Randy Rogers will lead us on a walk that may include a visit to the back ponds or up to the overlook platform (which requires a longer hike including a moderately strenuous hill). Hiking will generally be along generally flat trails, boardwalks, and levees, but may involve some uneven footing along the levees. This area may contain a variety of ducks, migrating warblers or shorebirds, raptors, and sandhill cranes have nested in the area for several years and are nearly always found by early May. For more info, contact randel_rogers@hotmail.com.

Bird Hike at Blendon Woods

Sun, May 3 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.

Spring Birding at Whetstone

Fri., May 8 from 8:00 am to 11:00 am

Join Donna Siple and Lynn Wearsch for a morning walk through Whetstone Park in Clintonville, where we'll explore a variety of bountiful bird habitats including the prairie, Adena Brook area and wooded ravine. This is for all levels – beginners are absolutely welcome. We hope to see indigo buntings, orioles, tanagers, gnatcatchers, thrushes, vireos, waxwings, various warblers and maybe even a nesting wood duck. After going over the small bridge, go past the picnic area parking lot to the Rose Garden entrance. We'll meet there just below the shelter house. For more information, email lmairie5436@gmail.com.

Spring Migrants at Scioto Audubon Metro Park & Green Lawn

Sun., May 10 from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon

Join us as we welcome back the first big waves of mid-spring neotropical migrants to the Scioto corridor and Green Lawn Cemetery. This should be peak time for warbler and vireo diversity and a great time for many other migrants. Meet at the Scioto Audubon boat launch -- the first left off Whittier St. as you drive into the Park at 8:00 am or arrange to catch up with us later in the morning. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at 614-551-0643 or robthorn@earthlink.net.

Migrant Traps of the Darby Plains

Sat. May 23 from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm

While we don't have Lake Erie to concentrate our migrants, we do have migrant traps in many locations of central Ohio. Some of the best involve the Darby Plains west of Columbus. We'll start at Prairie Oaks Metro Park that straddles the Big Darby and seems to funnel migrants in good numbers. From there we'll visit several nearby 'islands' to hunt up a variety of migrants. Meet at the Darby Bend Lakes section of Prairie Oaks at 8:00 am or arrange to rendezvous with us later in the morning. For more information, contact Rob Thorn at 614-551-0643 or robthorn@earthlink.net.

Service in the Preserves: Springville Marsh

Sat., May 30 from 7:45 am to 5:00 pm

Springville Marsh State Nature Preserve is a true Ice Age relic. A modern boardwalk meanders past the calcium-rich springs and past the plant species brought down by the glaciers, and our task for the day will be to repair the boardwalk. No special skills are required; bring your lunch, water, work gloves and appropriate foot wear. Call Katryn Renard by the preceding Wednesday at 614-261-7171 to register and reserve space for transportation.

Birding by Kayak

Sat., June 6 from 8:30 am to 11:00 am

Join us for birding by kayak at [The Adaptive Adventure Sports Coalition \(TAASC\)](http://TheAdaptiveAdventureSportsCoalition.org) on Twin Lakes in Powell. We hope to find many avian residents while we dip our paddles. Bring water, snacks, binoculars, and sun screen. The cost is \$20 per person, kayaks provided. Some tandem kayaks are available. Please pre-register with Darlene Sillick at azuretrails@columbus.rr.com (preferred) or 614-288-3696.

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Wahkeena Nature Preserve & its Connection to Columbus Audubon

Located six miles south of Lancaster and west of Sugar Grove on the edge of the Hocking Hills region is a natural area that may or may not be known to Columbus Audubon members. Wahkeena Nature Preserve is the creation of the late Carmen H. Warner. The “H” stands for Hambleton as in James Chase Hambleton, who was elected the very first president of Columbus Audubon in 1913. One of seven children, Carmen shared her father’s love of birds and the natural environment. In 1931, Carmen was given a unique wedding gift by her husband, Dr. Frank Warner. The gift: an eroding farm in southern Fairfield County! Most of the trees had been removed to create hillside pastures with a small crop field and no ponds. All that would soon change under Carmen’s guiding hand: 100,000 trees were planted to help stop erosion on vulnerable south facing slopes. Ponds big and small were created to help attract wildlife and natural succession was allowed to reclaim the bare hills and valleys.

Today, Wahkeena is 150 acres that includes botanically rich mix mesophytic forest, conifer forest, ponds, and wetland habitats. A great diversity of plants and animals can be found throughout the preserve. In 1956, when Carmen passed away she offered to bequeath her beloved Wahkeena to the National Audubon Society. Audubon rejected the bequest, which I always thought was odd, until I discovered that it was earlier in 1956 that Audubon had accepted a gift of land from Mary Aull of Dayton, Ohio. Today you know that land as the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm. It is likely that having just accepted the Aull gift, it was not feasible at the time to try and develop two separate areas. Carmen’s second choice was the Ohio Historical Society (now known as the Ohio History Connection), which accepted the bequest. In her will, Carmen stated that Wahkeena was “to be used place for nature study and as a preserve for birds and other wildlife.” Thus Wahkeena Nature Preserve was created.

In 2012, the Ohio History Connection partnered with the Fairfield County Historical Parks, which is responsible for the daily operation of the preserve. One of the biggest benefits of the partnership was the elimination of admission fees. Admission is now free to all individuals and groups. Its quality education program is also free to all school groups.

If you are interested in good birding, then Wahkeena just might be the place for you. Just ask long time Battelle-Darby Naturalist Tim Taylor, who recorded 100 species of birds at Wahkeena during his 10 week student internship in the early 1980s. For more information about programs and hours of operation go to www.wahkeena-preserve.blogspot.com.

Tom Shisler, Naturalist/Site Manager at Wahkeena NP

Field Trips continued from page 9

Birding Tour of the Schiermeier Olentangy River Wetland Research Park

Sat., June 6 from 8:00 am to 11:00 am

Join professional photographers and experienced birders Nina Harfmann and Tim Daniel for a birding tour of this [52 acre urban research site](#) that is situated adjacent to the Olentangy River (at 352 West Dodridge Street). The area consists of two experimental wetland basins, an oxbow wetland and a bottomland hardwood forest. To register or for questions contact Tim Daniel at tdaniel123456@gmail.com or 937-578-3105.

Breeding Birds of Clear Creek

Sat., June 13 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm

Think that most bird activity stops with the end of migration here in central Ohio? Not if you explore the forests and valleys of the Hocking Hills. Join us as we hunt for the unusual breeding birds of Clear Creek Metro Park (roughly one hour south of Columbus). We’ll focus on forest birds not found easily around Columbus, including Red-shouldered Hawks, forest thrushes (Wood, Hermit, & Veery), vireos, tanagers, and the 18+ species of warblers that make this park an outstanding spot for breeding birds in south-central Ohio. Meet at the Starner Road parking area. Wear rugged footwear, as we’ll be on trails most of the morning; bug repellent, sunscreen, water and snacks are also suggested. For more information, contact RobThorn at 614-551-0643 or robthorn@earthlink.net.

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

www.facebook.com/columbusaudubon

614-545-5496

Twitter: @ColumbusAudubon

Officers

President: Barbara Revard, bsrevard@gmail.com, 614-580-4469

Vice President: Susan Jervey, sejervy@gmail.com

Treasurer: Maura Rawn, maura2garden@yahoo.com

Recording Secretary:

Past President: Bill Heck, bill.heck@gmail.com

Trustees (through June 30, 2015): George Arnold, Tim Daniel, Julie Davis, Lindsay Deering, Amanda Duren, Warren Grody, Tamara James, Susan Jervey, Barbara Revard, Christie Vargo (ex officio)

Additional chapter leaders

Birdathon: information@columbusaudubon.org

Conservation: Dave Horn, 614-262-0312

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

Field Trips: Tim Daniel, information@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.

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Facility Attendants: Linda FreemanWalker & Monica Johnson

Center hours: Mon & Tues - closed; Wed & Thurs - 10 am to 5 pm;

Fri & Sat - 10 am to 3 pm; Sun - 12 noon to 5 pm

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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