

Audubon at Home



We are excited to be coming to the end of our pilot year of Audubon at Home (AAH). Much has been accomplished and it was an exciting year. We had 30 homeowners enroll in the program last spring: properties ranged from tiny yards in German Village to acres of land in the country. Some folks were enhancing their yards with native plants and others were starting from scratch. Each family enrolled in the program made a commitment to place native plants in their gardens to help attract and sustain birds and other wildlife. One homeowner shared that she and her husband had been interested in changing their suburban property into a more bird and wildlife friendly habitat. It was nice to show someone what have done so far and get some feedback and suggestions on what we can do next.

The highlight of the year was the presentation by Doug Tallamy, the guru of the native plant movement. Doug's talk, Rebuilding Nature's Relationship at Home, shared his message of why specialized food relationships determine the stability and complexity of local food webs that support animal diversity, and why it is so important to restore life to our residential properties and what we can do to make our landscapes living ecosystems once again. Many people were inspired to take action after hearing Doug and praised his ability to take a complex topic and make it simple to understand.

As we heard from our friend Doug Tallamy, birds must have insects to feed their babies and the insects must have native plants to survive and thrive. Shelby Conrad, a volunteer naturalist said, "The thing about Doug Tallamy's talk is that he filled in a major missing link for me. I have heard for years about what to do for birds and our neighborhood critters... but when Doug tells you, it brings the natural good stock into focus. Of course a mama bird needs to feed her chicks a caterpillar, just like we give our babies mushy food that is easy to digest."

Monthly workshops were presented for those enrolled in the program and the general public. Over 300 attended the programs. Topics included bird feeding 101, organic lawn care, nest boxes and hummingbirds at home, landscaping for clean water, edible and historic uses of native plants, pollinators and milkweed, rain gardens, and bird friendly buildings.



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

A patch of grass
out the backdoor

of the Audubon Center was transformed into an Audubon At Home demonstration garden thanks to the generous support of the Crane Family Foundation and Beth and Paige Crane. "The garden was installed by volunteers and it was truly a labor of love. It has been such a blessing to have the beautiful garden to talk to folks about how they can transform their yards into an amazing habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife," said Amy Boyd, director of outreach and engagement. On the other side of the boardwalk a nature play scape and more native plant gardens were planted where people can come and relax and enjoy the new gardens, watch their children play, and get great ideas about what they can do in their own yard.

Next year the program may take a different approach to engage more neighborhoods so that we can realize a larger impact. We will also be offering a course called Landscape for Life, a five week course meeting once a week beginning in the spring. Stay tuned for more info.

Upcoming Events

November Program: Audubon's Birds & Climate Change Report: The Threat, Our Response and What You Can Do

Tuesday, November 17, 2015 in the GLAC multipurpose room



6:45-7:00 pm: Refreshments and social time

7:00 pm: Conservation Spotlight on Ohio's Statewide Climate initiative Update

Hear from Marnie Urso, Senior Program Manager, National Audubon Society, about the Ohio Climate Initiative and a recap of the recent Audubon *Conservation Conference - Protecting Birds in a Changing Climate* hosted here in Columbus.

7:30 pm: Audubon's Birds & Climate Change Report by Lynsy Smithson-Stanley, Deputy Director, Climate & Strategic Initiatives, National Audubon Society

Lynsy will discuss Audubon science showing that climate change is the number one threat to North American birds, provide an overview of Audubon's organizational response, and highlight ways that you can help protect Ohio's birds from this danger.

Lynsy came to Audubon in June 2014 after three years with Climate Nexus, a nonprofit focusing on climate change communications. Her role is to oversee national and state campaigns, to work with science and communications team to raise the visibility of this research, and to help activate Audubon's network around this challenge. Her background is in journalism, where she covered health and environmental issues and completed a master's degree in mass communication research.



November & December Field Trips

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

Birdwatching for Beginners at Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Saturday, November 7 from 10 am to 11:30 am

Saturday, November 14 from 10 am to 11:30 pm

Saturday, December 5 from 10 am to 11:30 am

Saturday, December 19 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 or improve upon a fun hobby. Weather permitting; we'll go on a short hike or 'arm chair' bird watch. For more information, contact Suzan Jervey at sejervey@gmail.com or 614-546-7857.

Service in the Preserves: Davey Woods SNP

Saturday, November 21 from 7:45 am to 5:00 pm

Davey Woods State Nature Preserve in Champaign County is one of the best woodlots remaining in Central Ohio, yet it, too, is being invaded by honeysuckle and multiflora rose. Our task will be to remove large patches of this so the wildflowers can once again rise to their full beauty in the spring.

All skill levels are welcome. Please call Katryn Renard by the preceding Wednesday at 614-261-7171 for details and to sign up, re-serve space for transportation, and to help us determine tool requirements. Bring your lunch, water, work gloves and appropriate foot gear. You will need to complete the Dept. of Natural Area's volunteer form to participate in this activity.

Citizen Science Means Getting Involved

We each bring our own special talents and gifts to this world. Would you like to share yours with our beautiful birds and other creatures? Each year there are many projects that you can get involved in at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. Citizen Science (CS) is just that, citizens who do science and then share it with the professional scientists. There are many things in our natural world that need to be observed, counted, and documented and there are not enough scientists to do all the work. That is where you come in. Do you like to watch the birds at your feeders? Then FeederWatch and the Great Backyard Bird Count are just for you. Both CS projects are administered by Cornell Ornithology Lab but you can participate here at the Center.

There are other CS projects that you can participate in by using your smart phone. Hummingbirds at Home is tracking hummingbirds with the purpose of determining if the little gems are arriving early or late and if the flowers they are need are in bloom or past their prime.

We can't forget the Christmas Bird Count as that is the longest running documentation of species ever recorded. That long history of information that has been gathered for 116 years was instrumental in the groundbreaking work done by the science team at Audubon regarding how climate change is going to affect the range of birds in the future. So you never know how the science will be used in the future, but what we do know is that it is very important. *For more information on CBC's, please see page 5.*

Exhibit of Window Film Varieties that Reduce Bird Strikes

While many of us love our picture windows overlooking our bird feeders or patch of woods, the glass in our buildings and windows is a serious threat to birds. Each year, more than 500 million birds die in the US from flying into buildings and windows. Most birds don't perceive glass as an obstacle and will fly toward it to reach what lies on the other side or what is being reflected, such as vegetation or sky. Although some of these collisions happen at high-rise buildings in urban centers, it is estimated that most bird collisions actually occur at low-rise buildings and homes.

In a new partnership with the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative and funded by the Green Funds of the Columbus Foundation, Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC) will be offering resources for home owners to take steps to prevent window collisions at their homes. There are a number of emerging products that homeowners can apply to their windows to help prevent collisions, but many home owners are hesitant to purchase and apply these products without knowing what the final application will look like or how effective it will be.

Starting this fall, GIAC visitors will be able to view examples of four different window treatment options installed on the Center's windows. Signs at each installation will let visitors know the name of the product, as well as where to go to learn more or purchase it. In addition to being a resource for homeowners, the project has the added benefit of reducing bird collisions at the Center's windows as well.

If you would like more information about how to make your home windows safer for birds, contact Amanda Duren at 614-432-8489 or visit GIAC today.

Give the Gift of NATURE for the Holidays!

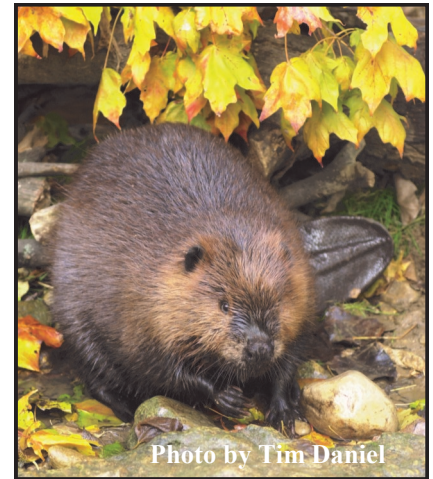
Columbus Audubon's annual EcoWeekend is one of the BEST nature events in our community. EcoWeekend is a family-friendly, programs-food-lodging "all-inclusive" nature-education group experience. EcoWeekend is reasonably priced and packed full with over 40 programs to choose from for nature-lovers from 4 to 94 yrs old. Special Saturday programming for youth. COME JOIN US! Give your loved ones the gift of a Nature Retreat. Our 44th year event will be held April 29-May 1, 2016. Mark Your Calendars! And look for registration information in early February. Contact Maura Rawn for more information and to buy your Gift Certificates: 740-653-8574.



Creature Feature

Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)

Imagine an Ohio awash in wetlands. Every stream with slow, willow-choked meanders, most rivers with meadows and pools, all without human intervention. This was how the state must have appeared during the early 1700s, when beavers were widespread. Most of Ohio's watercourses would've looked more like those in Canada or the northern Rockies, where the terms beaver swamp, beaver pond, and beaver meadow have a meaning more than just historical. Such beaver-managed wetlands are tolerated there because all of their benefits outweigh the loss of some trees on mostly state- or federal-owned land. Beaver ponds are the original rain gardens, slowing and filtering rain- and floodwaters, as well as providing habitat for rare aquatic plants and animals (see www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/natl4.sci.lifsci.benefits/benefits-of-beaver-ponds-and-lodges). Most of Ohio's land is private, however, and many owners are not impressed by felled trees or submerged fields. As a result, the re-population of our state by these industrious rodents has come with some controversy.



American beavers (*Castor canadensis*) are remarkable animals in many ways. These large (up to 10 pounds), long-lived (up to 20 years) aquatic rodents are one of the few animals besides man to form stable, long-term families that cooperate to manipulate their environment. Their favored habitat is slow-moving water. Clumsy on land, beavers are good swimmers, with webbed paws and a flat tail that can be used like a whale's fluke. They also have a thick, water-repellent pelt that helps them with buoyancy and warmth while they are in the water.

To make their world safe and food-rich, beavers dam up streams. They use their huge front incisors to gnaw down trees, then drag the trees across a stream, forming a scaffold for a dam. The cracks between trunks are sealed with mud and grasses, backing up the stream flow to form a pool behind the dam (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJjaQExOPPY). This pond is safer for them than the original stream, and the reeds and small trees that grow on its marshy edges are a tasty treat to beavers. Beavers still do much of their foraging and dam maintenance at night in order to avoid predators. This has forced them to evolve acute senses of smell and hearing, while vision has languished.

To further protect themselves against predators, beaver families build lodges. Usually these are mud and stick structures in the middle of beaver ponds, with hollowed-out chambers inside, but occasionally they will dig out an elaborate burrow system in a steep stream bank. The lodges usually have an ingenious underwater entrance that discourages most predators from entering. In the lodge, beavers raise their kits and socialize with older children and one-year olds (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuMRDZbrdXc). A Beaver pair is monogamous, but often has older children staying on to help maintain the pond and the lodge, especially when suitable habitat nearby is crowded. Food, in the form of cut water plants and small trees, is stored underwater near the lodge or in the nearby dam. These storage areas become especially dense during the fall, when the Beaver family “packs the larder” for the upcoming winter.

Extensive fur trapping effectively exterminated Beavers here by the 1830s. Beavers are nothing if not resilient, however. Small groups eluded capture in isolated areas of Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, and these started to recolonize the Midwest once beaver fur was replaced by synthetics. The first ones reached eastern Ohio in the late 1930s, and they've gradually spread back across the state. But it wasn't the same state, with forests largely replaced by farms and suburbs. Unfazed, beavers have started to make homes in our parks, greenbelts, and watercourses.

Here in Columbus, they've penetrated even our most urban parks, but are still not yet common. The Metro Parks frown on Beavers because of their habitat manipulation, but water conservation areas like Hoover Reservoir and upper Alum Creek Reservoir and upper O'Shaughnessy Reservoir tolerate them. Delaware Reservoir has quite a few. To find Beavers, look for their characteristic triangular gnawings on the bases of trees, then return in the evening to attempt observing them. Your smell will give you away, but if you patiently sit, the Beavers will learn that you're not a threat and will come out to work (though this may take several evenings). Nature author Hope Ryden famously insinuated herself into a Beaver family's nightly routine this way. Perhaps you can learn something about how beavers are adapting to central Ohio.

Rob Thorn

Columbus Audubon

Special Art, Special Guests at Art for Audubon 2015



Curious giraffes and romping zebras greeted attendees at Columbus Audubon's Art for Audubon on Sunday, September 27. If you hadn't guessed, our event was held at the new Africa Event Center at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.

Guests mingled amongst the silent auction items, enjoyed watching the African animals out on the savanna, and had up close encounters with a variety of Zoo animals who visited indoors, too!

Again this year the talented and entertaining Larry Woods served as our auctioneer and was quite successful at pitting guests against one another to raise the bid on many items. Bidding was brisk on OSU football tickets, paintings by a flamingo and a cheetah, as well as naming rights for the Columbus Audubon bird feeders at Green Lawn Cemetery.

Proceeds from the event will support the John Wilson Memorial Education Fund. This fund has provided assistance for young birders in the form of camp scholarships and other environmental projects for individuals in central Ohio.

We wish to thank our generous business sponsors: Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Cardinal Health, Crown Eurocars Dublin, Andy's Frame Setting, and Larry Woods Auctions. Also, a big thanks for a special evening goes out to the Art for Audubon planning committee. *Photos by Tim Daniel*



Auctioneer Larry Woods, gets the bidding going with help from Tamara James

*Art for Audubon committee (l-r)
Back row: Amanda Duren, Nadya Bennett,
Suzan Jervey, Tamara James, Bill Heck. Front
row: Barb Revard, Julie Davis, Lindsey Deering*



Christmas Bird Count

Like other holiday traditions, it's time for the annual Christmas Bird Count. This is the 116th year for what is probably the longest-running citizen science project in the world. The CBC provides vital data to help scientists assess the current health of bird populations. The same data, collected by people like you, forms the basis for long-term studies such as Audubon's ground-breaking work on the future of birds in a changing climate (www.audubon.org/climate).

Christmas Bird Counts offer you, your friends and family a chance to experience the crisp December air, take a break from overindulging (in shopping or snacking), and make a contribution to science. Advanced birding skills aren't required—just enthusiasm and warm clothing!

Our local 2015 CBC runs from December 19 through January 1. No matter where you are in central Ohio, you will find a count fairly close. Here are some of the Christmas Bird Counts in our area.

Saturday, December 19, 2015 at [Hoover](#)
Lee McBride: leemcbride50@yahoo.com

Sunday, December 20, 2015 in Columbus
Rob Thorn: robthorn@earthlink.net or 614-471-3051

Sunday, December 20, 2015 in [Delaware County](#)
Rich Bradley: bradley.10@osu.edu

Sunday, December 27, 2015 at [Killdeer Plains](#)
Ed Lux: luxe22@msn.com

Thursday, December 31, 2015 at [O'Shaughnessy](#)
Darlene Sillick: azuretrails@columbus.rr.com or 614-288-3696

Friday, January 1, 2016 at [Kingston](#)
Brad Sparks: birdmansparks@yahoo.com or 614-751-6622

For more information on the Christmas Bird Count, including purpose, history, photos, and more, see <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

From Center Director Christie Vargo: 2015 in Review

The 2015 New Year started with a jolt in the necessary right-sizing of Center staffing and programs. Hard decisions led to opportunities to rethink, retool, reinvigorate, and focus on the essential. Out of that came new and stronger partnerships, and energy, heightened volunteer engagement and greater connection with the entire Audubon network. With new clarity around goals to reach inner city kids with conservation experiences and to expand bird habitat through community involvement, the Center leadership set out to achieve success in very creative and collaborative ways. Our long-standing partners were equally creative and collaborative. Here are some snapshots:

- Hosting for the first time Columbus City Schools' administrators, principals, special program planning and training meetings, and teachers, the Center had new access to promote Conservation Classroom. The program is filled with a waiting list. Our goal of serving 625 individual students in four sessions this 2015-16 school year will be achieved.
- Over the summer nearly 1,500 campers with social service agencies, rec centers, and other organizations made extended visits to the Center and enjoyed curriculum that supported the science core standards... in a fun way, of course.
- Together with the City of Columbus and Metro Parks, the Grange Insurance Audubon Center successfully lobbied ODOT to reopen the Scioto Greenways Trail between the Center and downtown Columbus.
- Metro Parks Greenways Team of rangers, patrollers, and educators has moved into the vacated store space of the Center and created a Greenways Hub, complete with exhibits, paper maps of all of the Greenways, and a bike repair station.
- With the help of the Greenways Team, the Center extended open hours into the evenings July through October.
- Volunteer workdays supported by corporate associate groups, United Way Day of Caring, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and even tour groups from out of state have more than doubled since last year. Volunteers have weeded, planted, prepared beds, pulled honeysuckle, picked up litter, cleaned and organized equipment, and cleaned the river.

And our hopes and wishes for 2016...

- Audubon At Home will be restructured to work with neighborhoods, to include vacant lots, tree lawns, and personal property.
- An Audubon At Home resource lab will be created in one of the Center's classrooms for small group lectures, workshops and personalized planning support.
- Interactive exhibits to interpret the LEED aspects of the Center facility will be designed and accompanying STEM curriculum created, with installation in 2017.
- Habitat restoration will continue in the Scioto Audubon Metro Park with Volunteer Workdays at its core.
- With the reopening of the Scioto Trail and the location of the Greenways Hub in the Center, the Center will see a vast increase in traffic and visitation.
- The Center will continue to serve as a gathering place for environmental organizations and conversations.
- Programs and staff will expand at a sustainable rate as new financial resources allow and only around the core missions of the Center and Audubon.
- School-year and summer-camp-season programs will continue and perhaps expand as resources allow.
- Evening hours at the Center will begin again in the spring and go through early fall.
- The volunteer program will continue to grow and expand.
- Increased numbers and depth of partnerships will expand Audubon's reach and messaging into the Central Ohio community.

In this holiday season, we extend our sincere appreciation to our community, members, program participants, and volunteers. Audubon's education and conservation work happens ONLY through community engagement. We are inspired by your commitment and dedication. Thank you!

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: Suzan Jervey, sejervy@gmail.com

Treasurer: Maura Rawn, maura2garden@yahoo.com

Recording Secretary:

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

Trustees (through June 30, 2016): George Arnold, Tim Daniel, Julie Davis, Lindsay Deering, Amanda Duren, Tamara James, Suzan Jervey, Barbara Revard, Tom Sheley, 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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Newsletter Designer: Julie Davis, greenheron58@insight.rr.com

Programs: Darlene Sillick, azuretrails@columbus.rr.com

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

Website: Bill Heck, webmaster@columbusaudubon.org

Thank you recent GIAC Donors

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Christie Vargo
Lucy Venable
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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

Facebook: [GrangeInsuranceAudubonCenter](https://www.facebook.com/GrangeInsuranceAudubonCenter)

614-545-5475

Twitter: @grangeaudubon

Staff

Center Director: Christie Vargo

Outreach and Engagement Director: Amy Boyd

Education Manager and Volunteer Coordinator: Allison Roush

Finance and Operations Manager: David Chew

Development and Marketing Manager: Jeffrey Yost

Finance & Facility Assistant: Tina Starr

Facility Attendants: Linda FreemanWalker & Monica Johnson

Center hours: Mon - closed; Tues - 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.

GIAC Stewardship Board

Rich Shank, *Chair*

Greg Cunningham

Aparna Dial

Carol Drake

Belinda Jones

Jim McCormac

Sandra Nessing

Tim Maloney*

Lori Overmeyer

Aaron Pickrell

Steven Puckett

Barbara Revard*

Jamie Taylor

Maury Walsh

Christie Vargo,

ex officio

* appointees

Welcome new CA/GIAC Members

Barbara Ambos
Kendy Beers
Hallie Carroll
Elizabeth Clemens
Jim Davis
Stephanie Elder
Shirley Fischer
Pamela Ford
Stefan Gleissberg
John Hiberger
Jill Holl
Tyler Hughes
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Carol Robertson
Joseph Stefanko
Karla Strieb
Katie Walton
Richard Wells
Katherine Wright
Robert Zahller
Paula Ziebarth
Patti & Stephen Zonars

From Audubon Chapter Services: Audubon Bird Guide App

Audubon has released an updated version of the [Audubon Bird Guide app](https://www.audubon.org/app) and it's now FREE to bird lovers nationwide.

With 821 species profiles and 3200-plus world-renowned bird photos, Audubon's award-winning app instantly turns any mobile device into the most trusted field guide in North America.

To download the Audubon Bird Guide, go to: www.audubon.org/

Return in 5 days to
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Part of the Audubon Network in the Mississippi Flyway

Join now and receive individual and family benefits:

- Nationally acclaimed *Audubon* magazine
- *Song Sparrow* bi-monthly local newsletter
- Email updates and Action Alerts (as you choose: local and/or national)
- Free and discounted local programs and field trips
- Invitations to local member-only and special events
- Local citizen science and volunteer opportunities
- Ability to rent the Center for your special events
- Knowing you support education and conservation action in your community!

Join now at the organization membership level and receive associate benefits:

- Volunteer days and opportunities for associates and employees
- Knowing you are contributing to the quality of life in your community

☐ **Classic Membership \$100** (individuals, families and organizations)

Receive a free Grange Insurance Audubon Center ball cap

☐ **Premier Membership \$250**

☐ **Basic Organizational Membership \$75**

☐ **Basic Family Membership \$45**

☐ **Basic Individual Membership \$30**

☐ To help the environment
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