

There are 47 million birdwatchers, but there is only one David Sibley

Save the date: Friday, October 7

David Sibley knows every North American bird by its shade, tilt, habitat, gender and juvenile plumages. Don't miss the opportunity to pick Sibley's brain when he comes to Columbus on Oct. 7 for a book signing at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Sibley was only seven when he began drawing birds. It's a habit he never shook. As an adult, Sibley merged that encyclopedic knowledge with his skills as a self-taught artist to become one of America's best-known field guide authors.

The National Audubon Society is immensely fortunate to partner with David Sibley for our online field guide to North American birds.

Released in 2000, *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds* was a New York Times bestseller. Sibley was immediately compared to renowned birder and artist Roger Tory Peterson, placing him in a long line of naturalist artists that leads straight to our namesake, John James Audubon.

Sibley released a second edition in March of 2014. According to sibleyguides.com, the second edition (2014) is essentially an entirely new book, created by revising every element of the first edition, adding some new material, and assembling the updated parts into a new guide. Over 100 new species have been added, and over 600 new images.



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

Celebrate the World of Birding in One Place



The Grange Insurance Audubon Center and Scioto Audubon Metro Park will be buzzing with birders and birding products, services, destinations, experiences and organizations Sept. 16-18.

In 2015, more than 2,500 attendees and 85 exhibitors joined us for the first expo. It was monumental fun, and now we're gearing up to do it all again!

We will have more than 100 exhibitors from all over the world selling and promoting everything a birder could want: Birding tours, optics, cameras, gear, clothing, bird feeders and houses, artwork, gift items, books, destinations, festivals, conservation organizations and more. While, entry into the expo is free, we are asking for a voluntary \$5 donation which will benefit the American Birding Expo Conservation Fund.

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Upcoming Events

September Program: Birding In Outer Space

7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 27, in the GIAC Multipurpose Room

6:45-7:00 pm Refreshments, Bird Quiz and social time

7:00 pm Welcome and Announcements

7:15 pm Conservation Spotlight: Stephanie Malinick, OSU Museum of Biodiversity

“Good Samaritan Salvaging for Museums: Learn what information is useful to museums and the who, what, when, where, why’s to salvaging avian specimens in museum work.”



Featured Speaker: Kenn Kaufman

What is the future of birding? Brave souls who try to make predictions are often tripped up by reality, because the future arrives sooner than we think it will, and always with surprising twists. Kenn Kaufman decided to take a new approach, going to the extreme in futuristic birding — pursuing birds in outer space! — and then working his way back to earth. Kenn assures us that (1) “This talk isn’t about what you think it is,” and (2) the perspective from out there in space is really valuable, and it can affect how we look at birds (and birders, and all of nature) today and tomorrow.

Kenn Kaufman is a writer, artist, and naturalist, with a focus on birds. He has written a dozen books, including his own series of Kaufman Field Guides; the latest title in the series is a guide to nature of the Midwest, published in 2015. His other books include *Kingbird Highway*, *Lives of North American Birds*, and *Flights Against the Sunset*. He lives in Oak Harbor, Ohio, where his wife Kimberly is director of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory.

October Program: Beyond Cedar Bog: Birding the Ohio History Connection’s other great nature preserves

7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 25, in the GIAC Multipurpose Room

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

7:00 pm Welcome and Announcements

7:15 pm Conservation Spotlight: Dawn Tabata, Executive Director, Grange Insurance Audubon Center



Meet the new director of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and learn what’s in store for the upcoming year!

Featured Speaker: Erin Cashion

Did you know that the Ohio History Connection is a really an entire network of historic sites, nature preserves, and ancient earthworks? Some of these fascinating places offer rich nature appreciation opportunities in addition to their historic or archaeological significance. OHC Natural History Curator Erin Cashion will give a brief overview of OHC’s site network and focus on OHC’s 8 Nature Preserves that include significant natural areas and birding opportunities.

Erin grew up in southern New Mexico and earned a B.S. in Biology from New Mexico State. After 5 years of working as an avian field technician both domestically and abroad, she came to Ohio to study songbird migratory stopover in northwest Ohio and earned an M.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Science from Ohio State. She also played a large role in the writing and publishing of the Second Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas.

Columbus Audubon

2016 Columbus Audubon Birdathon

Team names as diverse as species seen

The team names were as colorful as the participants and their experiences during this year's Columbus Audubon Birdathon. Twelve teams participated in the annual event, in which the goal is to see a specific number of species during one day each May.

A few teams went the distance in the 24-hour birding marathon searching various habitats throughout the state. The Ben-annaquits, one of our new teams this year, tallied 144 species, while Archaeopteryx added 148 and Wild Birds Unlimited Sawmill logged the highest total of 160. Columbus Metro Parks and state lands were productive for long-standing teams such as the Metro Parks Stellar Jays (95 species), Swans and Coots (68 species) and Slate (Run) Colored Juncos (72 species). Another new team, Creekside Coots, far exceeded their prediction of 65 and landed a whopping 104 species in a single habitat.

Some specialized teams adopted different methods, such as the Low Carbon Footprint team which birded by bike and foot to the tune of 54 species. The Rawnderosa Robins took a casual approach, enjoying every moment of their time together afield gathering 37 species. Of course we can't forget the Deck Birds, who eschew field and forest to relax and bird in their own back yard, savoring their favorite beverages and foodie delights on the way to a perennial last place tally of one species.

While the Birdathon is of great benefit to Columbus Audubon, it is a blast for the participants, who enjoy a wonderful day afield in great company. And the stories are epic.

Dave Horn, who relocated to Massachusetts, rounded up a new team (Mass Audubon Renegades), and takes the prize for the most unlikely-for-Ohio species with Northern Gannet, Common Eider, Black Guillemot, Iceland Gull and Purple Sandpiper on their way to 98 species total.

The Slate (Run) Colored Juncos were buzzed by a Peregrine Falcon, and Archaeopteryx had a Greater White-fronted Goose drop out of the sky at Killdeer Plains in one of those "right place-right time" moments. The Wandering Warblers recruited an avid birder who had never been to Magee Marsh, and were treated to one of those rare and magical "dripping bird" days during migration on the way to 116 species.

No matter what the reason for participating, great fun was had by all, and we exceeded our goal of \$8,000 in funds raised for worthwhile Columbus Audubon projects. It is not too early to start planning for next year's CA Birdathon, so make a note in your May calendar, rustle up some friends and family, and join us on the birding trail in 2017!

Visit www.columbusaudubon.org/birdathon for all the 2016 team stats and for information on next year's event.

By Tom Sheley

Get ready for Columbus Audubon's annual bird seed sale

Fall migration is upon us and time is drawing near to think about stocking up for the winter bird feeding season. **Columbus Audubon's bird seed fundraiser** is a perfect way to provide quality seeds and seed blends and lend a helping hand to both birds and CA.

CA will be offering a seed blend for every budget and habitat along with peanuts and suet cakes to attract insect-eating and woodland species. Of course, traditional favorites such as Oil Sunflower, Sunflower Chips, Safflower and White Millet will be on the menu as well.

As we have done in the past, we will include the CA bird seed order form in the November/December issue of the *Song Sparrow*, after the new seed crop becomes available and we are able to offer the best possible prices.

Look for the new and improved online order form along with product descriptions at www.columbusaudubon.org/birdseed as soon as prices become available in late September. Many have found shopping online easy and convenient with credit card processing via PayPal.

Remember, all proceeds from the fundraiser go to Columbus Audubon to help fund our many projects.



Creature Feature

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*)

A sure sign of fall are the swirling antics of a tiny little bird with long wings as it dances around the opening of a chimney in a fantastic ballet with hundreds of its friends as the sun sets. The nightly ‘staging’ of these little creatures each August through the beginning of October can take as long as an hour or can be over in as little as 15 minutes.

The Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*), among the most aerial of birds, fly almost constantly except when roosting overnight and nesting. Instead of perching like most birds, they cling to vertical surfaces with their long claws. Chimney Swifts have long, narrow, curved wings and black to dark brown plumage. The birds are closely related to hummingbirds because they share similar wing structures which enable them to be extremely fast in flight.



Feeding on the wing, Chimney Swifts catch a variety of insects in their bills. They feed over urban and residential neighborhoods, fields, grasslands, shrublands, orchards, forests, and marshes, usually some distance away from nest sites. Swifts even bathe in flight by gliding down to the water, smacking the surface with their bodies, and then bouncing up to shake the water from their plumage as they fly away.

Chimney Swifts create a variety of calls. The most common being the chittering you hear as they hunt through the air. They utter a softer chittering as they socialize with one another in the roost, during nest-building or at night. The most audible sounds are those of the young which have two basic vocalizations: the feeding call which is a very loud, high-pitched "yippering" as they beg for food from the returning parents and a hissing alarm call which they make when disturbed or frightened.

Before European settlement brought chimneys to North America, Chimney Swifts nested in caves, cliff faces, and hollow trees. Today, swifts almost exclusively roost and nest in open (flue-less) chimneys. Chimney Swifts breed in urban and suburban habitats across the eastern half of the United States and southern Canada. They are most common in areas with a large concentration of chimneys for nest sites and roosts. Unmated swifts continue roosting together in the summer, sometimes in large groups. But breeding pairs nest exclusively in a single chimney, church bell towers, boathouses, garages, silos, barns, lighthouses, manmade swift towers or even under awnings of buildings.

Swifts usually have clutch sizes of anywhere from three to five eggs and usually have one to two broods per year. The incubation period lasts between 16 to 21 days. Sometimes an unmated swift helps the breeding pair rear the young. The young outgrow the nest after about two weeks and have to cling to the nearby wall. They fledge after about 30 days of feeding.

The nest is a usually a half-saucer of loosely woven twigs, cemented to the chimney wall with the bird's glue-like saliva. Both parents break off small twigs with their feet while flying through the trees, and return to the nest site with the twigs in their bills. The completed nest is two to three inches in circumference, four inches wide, and one inch deep.



Chimney Swifts perform aerial courtship displays within two weeks of arriving on their North American breeding grounds, forming monogamous pairs for the season. In one of the best known displays, two birds fly close together, calling; first the rear bird and then the leader snaps its wings into a V-shape and the two glide together in a downward curve.

At the end of summer they gather into large groups to migrate to South America. According to the Chimney Swift Conservation Association (CSCA), as many as 10,000 swifts may circle in a tornado-like flock at dusk and funnel into a roosting chimney to spend the night during fall migration to the upper Amazon basin of Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Brazil.

Chimney Swifts have been in a long-term, rangewide decline of about 2.2 percent per year from 1966–2010, with declines evident in 35 of 43 states and provinces, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. This annual rate corresponds to a cumulative decline of 65 percent. Partners in Flight estimates that there are still 7.8 million Chimney Swifts in the global breeding population, with 99 percent breeding in the U.S. and 1 percent breeding in Canada.

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Grange Insurance Audubon Center

From Audubon Center Director Dawn Tabata



GIAC: A bright future ahead

On a warm July morning, I have the distinct pleasure of writing my first piece for the Song Sparrow watching the erratic song and flight of purple martins catching morning insects over Lake Erie. I appropriately found this quote from John James Audubon, “Almost every country tavern has a martin box on the upper part of its sign-board; and I have observed that the handsomer the box, the better does the inn generally prove to be.” Apparently, I chose my lodging well!

In my first 60 days as director of GIAC, I have been considering the strengths and assets of the center. By far, the people are our greatest strength and asset. We have a small but mighty staff that keeps the center thriving with conservation education for school-aged children, nature programming and community engagement daily. All of this couldn't be accomplished, however, without our incredible volunteers. In addition to staffing our reception desk, they engage with visitors, provide tours, give presentations, fill our feeders and generally keep us sane. In addition to our center volunteers, we have a committed and passionate stewardship board that provides guidance and support, particularly as we look to the future. Finally, we are privileged to partner with the leadership and staff of the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks and the City of Columbus.

GIAC is at a pivotal point to take what we have learned over the past six years in order to position ourselves as a significant nature and conservation destination and resource for the central Ohio community. We need to fashion a vibrant center with dynamic and evolving exhibits and displays, grow and expand on our youth and adult programming, and maximize our community partnership to have greater impact on conservation.

I am honored to be the third executive director of GIAC and look forward to working with all of you on our next chapter. I hope you will join us for a reception on Sept. 22 as we kick off an exploration and dialogue as we chart our future. Details will be announced at <http://grange.audubon.org/>

Audubon at Home Monthly Program Series

Each month an educational session is offered to help inform the public on things that can be done to create a more sustainable landscape while creating habitat for birds and other wildlife at home. No registration is required. Donations appreciated. All programs are at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center.

Bonnie Halchin-Smith: Putting Your Garden to Sleep

Oct. 19 at 7 pm

If your coneflowers are collapsing and you're missing your Monarda blooms, then you know it's time to winterize your garden. When the cold winds blow and the snow piles up, you can rest assured that your flowers, shrubs and evergreens are happy, content and resting up for a spectacular show next spring. Join Bonnie Halchin-Smith to learn some great ways to winterize your garden.

Denny Forrest: Building Bird Feeders

Nov. 9 at 7 pm

Join Denny Forrest, a long time GIAC volunteer who is a master woodworker, as he leads us through the steps to construct your own bird feeder

Kristina Rawson: Holiday Nature Cards

Dec. 14 at 7pm

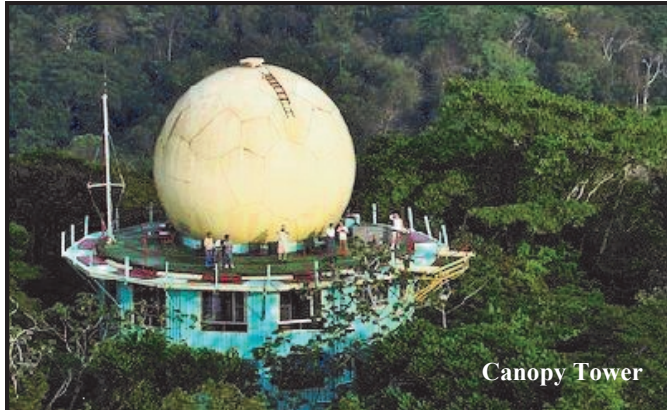
This workshop will feature holiday cards created from nature themed woodblocks and natural paper created from items found in your backyard. This will be a great addition to your holiday gifts, a card you created yourself. Join Kristina Rawson as she leads us through the card making process. Please RSVP to Kristina at krawson@audubon.org there is a \$5 supplies fee.

Columbus Audubon

Columbus Zoo partners with Columbus Audubon to offer birding safari to Panama in 2017

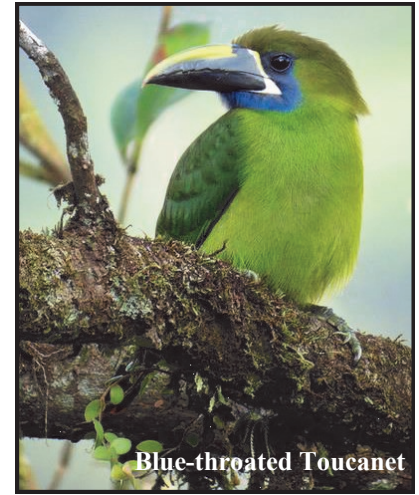


Columbus Audubon and the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium are teaming up to offer our members an exciting birding trip to Panama next June. Panama is hands-down one of the “must visit” places on any birders wish list. With more species of



birds than all of North America, in a country the size of South Carolina, this will be an amazing experience.

And to make it even better, we will stay in the world-renowned Canopy Tower and its sister accommodation, the Canopy Lodge. Along with motmots, toucans and Harpy Eagles, a stay in the



Canopy Tower and birding on the famed Pipeline Road are must see for any avid birder.

What: Panama Birders Safari, organized by World Safaris

When: June 9-16, 2017

Cost: \$2,495 per traveler sharing double occupancy in standard rooms

Where: Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge, Soberanía National Park, Panama

Leader: Barb Revard, director of Program Planning, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium; past president, Columbus Audubon

Note: Complete trip itinerary, detailed descriptions, information and bird list can be found at:

www.columbusaudubon.org/panama or at <https://columbuszoo.org/home/discover/see-the-world/travel-with-the-zoo>.

EcoWeekend turns 45!

And what a great 45 years it's been providing the best family nature weekend in Ohio and beyond! To celebrate our birthday in 2017 EcoWeekend is holding a T-shirt design contest and we'd love to receive your submission. There will be cash awards and free T-shirts for the winners and runner-ups. Your art should be nature-themed but can be as fancy or silly or stylized as you want. Submission guidelines can be found in a downloadable/printable .pdf at www.ecoweekend.org. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Maura Rawn at 740-653-8574 or maurawr@yaho.com. T-shirts will be sold with registration to EcoWeekend 2017. Get started now on this great summer project – the submission deadline is Dec. 15, 2016!

Columbus Audubon



September & October Field Trips

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

Birdwatching for Beginners | Saturday, Sept. 3

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. Meet at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center at 10 a.m. Trip ends at 11:30 a.m. Contact Suzan Jervey at sejervey@gmail.com for more information.

Sawmill Saturday | Saturday, Sept. 3

Join the friends of the Sawmill Wetlands at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday of every month to explore and relax in the beautiful wildlife habitats at Sawmill Wetlands. Walk the boardwalk with your family or just relax and enjoy the break from the development that surrounds the Sawmill area. Volunteers from the Friends of Sawmill Wetlands can help you learn more about this Northwest Columbus gem.

Swift Night Out | Sept. 9, 10 and 11

Watch near dusk for the sound of chimney swifts twittering and dancing around the chimney at Sells Middle School in Dublin. Then count them as they enter the chimney till the last one disappears for the night. Meet in the parking lot of the school at 7 p.m. to hear about swift behaviors from Darlene Sillick as you wait for the show. Contact Darlene at azuretrails@columbus.rr.com for details.

Bird hike at Blendon Woods | Saturday, Sept. 10

Meet at the nature center at 8 a.m. Some binoculars available. Search the woods for migrating songbirds like warblers, vireos, tanagers, and more. Naturalists will guide separate beginner and intermediate/advanced groups, so all birders are welcome. Some binoculars available. Naturalist Andrea Krava will lead the beginner group, and naturalist Bruce Simpson will lead the intermediate/advanced group. More information can be found at www.metroparks.net.

Close-to-Home, One-hour Nature Hike- Glacier Ridge (Honda Wetlands) | Saturday, Sept 10

Encouraging everyone, especially young families with children. Come join us, and let's see what we discover. Meet at the main parking lot, at the separate Honda Wetland entrance, on Hyland-Croy Rd., at 10:30 a.m. Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 769.1681 or email mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com.

Avid Birders: Migrants and Shorebirds | Saturday, Sept. 10

Yeah, we know that shorebirds are migrants, too. But this month brings plenty of those little woodland-loving migrants, so they have top billing. Shorebird searching will depend on the existence and location of appropriate habitat. The Avid Birders meet to carpool at 5:30 am, usually in the southeast corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot. We occasionally change the meeting location, so please check this Web site the day before the trip! Contact avidbirderleads@columbusaudubon.org for details.

Close-to-Home, One-hour Nature Hike- Battelle-Darby Creek Metro Park Wildflower Prairie | Sunday, Sept. 11

Encouraging everyone, especially young families with children. Come join us, and let's see what we discover. Come along with us on this one-hour hike to walk a short trail as we enjoy the beautiful native wildflowers that bring so much color this special place, and let's see what we discover. Meet at the Nature center at 1415 Darby Creek Drive at 4 p.m. Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 769.1681 or email mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com.

Preservation Parks BioBlitz | Saturday, Sept. 10

Our friends at the Preservation Parks of Delaware County are excited to invite you to participate in a BioBlitz at their new property! The parcel is approximately 58.5 acres overall, and contains a mix of wooded and open habitats, with tributary streams that flow through the mature woodland into Alum Creek. The property is not yet open to the public, the gate to the small entrance driveway on Bale Kenyon Road will be open on September 10 only. See the map below for the location. The goal of a "BioBlitz" is to document the variety of species — not just birds, but all plants and animals — at this location. In addition, participants get to experience the new addition to the Park District before it's open to the public. If you have questions or plan to attend, please contact Chris Roshon, Natural Resources Manager, Preservation Parks of Delaware County at (740) 272-2903.

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Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Marty McKew completes Eagle Scout service project at the GIAC

We would like to congratulate Boy Scout Marty McKew for the completion of his Eagle Scout service project at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center this summer.

The project is the culmination of a Boy Scout's leadership training and provides the opportunity for him to serve others by performing a project for the benefit of the community. The project must be completed successfully in order to achieve the Eagle Scout Rank within Boy Scouts of America.

McKew, who will be a senior this fall at Bishop Watterson High School, found the center through one of his hobbies – birdwatching! He attended the Bird Study Merit Badge program a couple of years ago and later returned to us to inquire about the possibility of a project here at the center.

McKew was very interested in designing and building a hummingbird garden. McKew met with GIAC and Columbus Metro Parks staff, researched native plants that attract hummingbirds, designed the garden, obtained materials and organized a workday for the completion of the project. As a wrap-up to the project, McKew also produced a reference book with information about the labeled native plants in the garden.

Be sure to stop by the center to see this beautiful new addition, learn about hummingbird attracting plants and get inspired to plant something similar in your own backyard. Congratulations again to McKew – he's well on his way to achieving his Eagle Scout Rank!



Trick or Tweet! @



GIAC's Halloween celebration for little ones Saturday, Oct. 29 10 a.m. – noon For ages five and under

Looking for a fun and safe Halloween alternative? Stop in for a seasonal family favorite! Join us for our fall event filled with stories, fun games, cool crafts, an outdoor hike, costume parade and a tasty treat or two.

Event is free but donations appreciated.

For more information, contact Allison at (614) 545-5482 or aclark@audubon.org

American Birding Expo continued from page 1

All of this stuff is awesome, but the expo means so much more to me than just a birding event. It's like a family reunion with all of my favorite people from all over the world. I've been so fortunate to get to travel the globe, seeing birds and meeting birders at some pretty far-off and fantastic places.

So, it's wonderful beyond description to be the host of an event that gathers the birding tribe from far and near to meet and connect with one another, to do some good for birds and the future of birding.

By the way, one of the three recipients of conservation fund monies is the Conservation Classroom program right here at GIAC. This program gives students from Columbus City Schools the opportunity to experience and connect with the natural world.

To learn more about the American Birding Expo, visit www.birdingexpo.com.

—Bill Thompson, III is the founder of the American Birding Expo.

September & October Field Trips continued

Birdwatching for Beginners | Saturday, Sept. 17

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. Meet at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center at 10 a.m. Contact Suzan Jervey at sejervy@gmail.com for more information.

Service in the Preserves: Hocking County | Saturday, Sept. 24

We'll be removing stiltgrass in several preserves in this beautiful part of the state. Meet at 7:45 a.m. in the parking lot inside the gate house at the Ohio Department Natural Resources Complex, 2045 Morse Road, to travel in the ODNR van to the site. Please call Katryn Renard by the preceding Wednesday at (614) 261-7171 to sign up, reserve space for transportation, and to help us determine tool requirements. No special skills are required, but bring lunch, water, work gloves and appropriate foot gear. You will need to complete the Dept. of Natural Areas volunteer form to participate in this activity. We will return to ODNR by 5 p.m. The Service in the Preserves program is a partnership with Columbus Audubon and Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Volunteers from CA go to various State Nature Preserves about once every six weeks during the school year. We work on projects that range from invasive species removal to building boardwalks. This is especially important now during these lean times of budget cuts throughout ODNR.

Sawmill Saturday | Saturday, Oct. 1

Join the friends of the Sawmill Wetlands at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday of every month to explore and relax in the beautiful wildlife habitats at Sawmill Wetlands. Walk the boardwalk with your family or just relax and enjoy the break from the development that surrounds the Sawmill area. Volunteers from the Friends of Sawmill Wetlands can help you learn more about this Northwest Columbus gem.

Birdwatching for Beginners | Saturday, Oct. 1

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. Meet at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center at 10 a.m. Contact Suzan Jervey at sejervy@gmail.com for more information.

Bird hike at Blendon Woods | Sunday, Oct. 2

Meet at the nature center at 8 a.m. Some binoculars available. Search the woods for migrating songbirds like warblers, vireos, tanagers, and more. Naturalists will guide separate beginner and intermediate/advanced groups, so all birders are welcome. Some binoculars available. Naturalist Andrea Krava will lead the beginner group, and naturalist Bruce Simpson will lead the intermediate/advanced group. More information can be found at www.metroparks.net.

Avid Birders: Sparrows and Waterfowl | Saturday, Oct. 8

Cooler temperatures will bring sparrows — we hope some rare ones — and perhaps some early waterfowl. The warming climate is delaying the waterfowl migration these days, but we can hope. The Avid Birders meet to carpool at 5:30 a.m., usually in the southeast corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot. We occasionally change the meeting location, so please check this Web site the day before the trip! As usual, we will announce more specific information on the Avid Birders mailing list a few days in advance. Contact avidbirders@columbusaudubon.org for details.

Close-to-Home, 2-hour Nature Hike- Blendon Woods, Walden Refuge | Sunday, Oct. 9

You are invited to join us on this autumn day's hike through a rich woodland as we keep our eyes and ears open for the wildlife that is here. After a short walk through this woodland, we will walk along a sweeping open field where bluebirds like to nest and wild turkeys are sometimes seen. We will explore the 10-acre Thoreau Lake and visit the nature center, which provides many wonderful exhibits. Meet at the nature center entrance at 3 p.m. Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 769.1681 or email mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com.

Birdwatching for Beginners | Saturday, Oct. 15

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. Meet at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center at 10 a.m. Contact Suzan Jervey at sejervy@gmail.com for more information.

Field trips continued on page 10

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

Grange Insurance Audubon Center welcomes its newest volunteers

Join us in welcoming Morgan Rupp, Joe Bricker, Frank Martens, Jack Roy, Dessie Kardaras, Marjorie Menaul, Patricia Watts, Samantha Sabolsky, Zachary Watson, Diane Whalen, Samantha Doerner, Andre Banerjee, Erica Szeyller, Garth Jacobs, Cathy Barger and Katelyn Shelton to our volunteer team!

We can't do what we do without you! We thank all of our dedicated volunteers who enthusiastically and willingly give of their time and talents!

Starting in 2017, be sure to look for our Volunteer Spotlight in each issue of the Song Sparrow where you'll get to know a little bit more about the faces you see moving our mission forward.

Interested in joining our volunteer team? Please contact our volunteer coordinator, Allison Clark, at (614) 545-5482 or aclark@audubon.org to learn how to join us.

Field trips continued from page 9

Close-to-Home, One-hour Nature Hike- Pickerington Ponds | Sunday, Oct. 16

Encouraging everyone, especially young families with children. Come along on this one-hour discovery and see this special wetland area from the comfort of an easy-to-walk short trail, where we will look through spotting scopes to see what birds and animals may give us a glimpse of them in this beautiful natural setting. Meet at 7680 Wright Rd, Canal Winchester at 3pm. Contact Mike Flynn at (614) 769.1681 or email mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com.

Service in the Preserves: Augusta-Anne Olsen SNP | Saturday-Sunday, Oct. 22-23

This month we travel all the way north to Huron County where we'll visit Augusta-Anne Olsen State Nature Preserve to move and rebuild a footbridge. Please note that this is an overnight trip. Meet at 7:45 a.m. in the parking lot inside the gate house at the Ohio Department Natural Resources Complex, 2045 Morse Road, Columbus to travel in the ODNR van to the site. Please call Katryn Renard by the preceding Wednesday at (614) 261-7171 to sign up, reserve space for transportation, and to help us determine tool requirements. No special skills are required, but do 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. We will return to ODNR by 5 p.m. The Service in the Preserves program is a partnership with Columbus Audubon and Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Creature Feature continued from page 4

Chimney Swifts have been in a long-term, rangewide decline of about 2.2 percent per year from 1966–2010, with declines evident in 35 of 43 states and provinces, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. This annual rate corresponds to a cumulative decline of 65 percent. Partners in Flight estimates that there are still 7.8 million Chimney Swifts in the global breeding population, with 99 percent breeding in the U.S. and 1 percent breeding in Canada.

The 2014 State of the Birds Report published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, listed them as a common bird in steep decline, and they rate a 12 out of 20 on the Partners in Flight Continental Concern Score.

This decline is mostly due to the lack of traditional brick chimneys and a design change in newer chimneys which tend to be unsuitable for nest sites due to the addition of caps and flues.

To prevent further decline, Boy Scouts, conservationists, businesses, parks and individual homeowners have been building swift towers to help stem the decline in swift population. Chimney Swift towers are new chimney-like structures constructed specifically for swift nesting.

For information about a Chimney Swift tower made specifically for nesting swifts, you can visit the CSCA website at www.chimneyswifts.org

By Stefanie Hauck

See page 11 for good places to view Chimney Swift staging

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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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 cross the bridge spanning the tracks, until you drive into the parking lot in front of the Center.

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Chimney Swifts Continued from page 10

Good places to see Chimney Swift staging

Sells Middle School in Dublin - Swift Night Out is Sept 9,10 and 11 (See our field trips page for details).

Dominion Middle School in north Columbus has a chimney that has hosted up to several hundred swifts in August 2013.

The chimney at Bishop Watterson High School hosted up to a thousand swifts in September, 2015. The best viewing is from directly across from the school on Foster Road.

Galena Village Hall (the old United Methodist Church) has a large, two-story chimney.

J W Reason Elementary School in Hilliard was found to have good numbers of swifts in August 2013.

Swifts also roosted at the Avery Lodge F&AM 493 in Hilliard. Pull into the alley just before Hilliard Cleaners and park and walk to the big open grassy area behind the lodge for a good view of the chimney.

The Blendon #339 Masonic Lodge in Uptown Westerville, has had several hundred swifts as of August 2013. This spot is just south of the Westerville Library.

If you see a chimney in your area being used by swifts for staging, please let Darlene Sillick know at azuretrails@columbus.rr.com.

Return in 5 days to

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505 W. Whittier St
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