



Juvenile Cooper's Hawk

Photograph by Carol Lillich

Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland



Annual Report to Members
For the Year 2021



Overview

The information in this report is based mainly on accomplishments, events, and activities during calendar year 2021. Exceptions to that timeframe, e.g., the listing of trustees and officers for the period June, 2022 – May, 2023, are noted. The individuals listed as chairs and members of the committees are also individuals who served from June, 2021 through May, 2022.

Reports from the following committees are contained in the pages that follow:

- Communications Committee
- Documentum Committee
- Education Committee
- Field Trips Committee
- Finance Committee
- Important Birding Area (IBA) Committee
- Sanctuary Committee

Interested in helping?

Reading through the attached reports will give you a sense of the many activities involved with meeting the mission of our organization (see boxed text to the right for our mission statement). We could use your help.

If you are interested in learning more about how to become involved with The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland please contact Jim Tomko, Board President, at 216/556-5441

The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC) promotes the conservation and appreciation of birds and other wildlife through habitat preservation and educational activities. ASGC, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, has over 1,400 member households throughout the Greater Cleveland area, owns over 500 acres of protected land, and is one of northeast Ohio's oldest continuously operating environmental organizations.



From the President



Since the global COVID pandemic restrictions have lessened and most masking mandates dropped, ASGC has begun ramping up to its traditional activities and more. We have maintained quarterly meetings virtually via the “Zoom” on line platform while many committee meetings have been in person.

I don't know how she does it but our secretary, Carol Lillich, through the pandemic has kept us on track with deadlines and details. Numerous times we have referred back to her accurate meeting minutes to clarify which way and how to progress according to the board of trustee's decisions. She has taken it upon herself to make sure thank you letters and other correspondence meets our usual protocol. We would be aimlessly wandering without her attention to detail and her ideas to make our organization run smoothly.

Our Vice President, Mark Demyan has successfully gathered the exact right group of volunteers for sanctuary maintenance and improvement. He also somehow finds the time to serve as Chairman of COAC the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters. We thank him for his commitments on behalf of ASGC.

Matt Valencic and his Education committee have made sure that we have maintained contact with our members though numerous activities that are highlighted in the Education Committee report. This committee is the main connection providing activities to satisfy our mission statement. Matt has also gathered a dedicated platoon to do battle with invasive plant species that have overtaken sections of the sanctuaries. His passion for restoring the native vegetation came just in time. He is out in all seasons with his loyal followers removing Buckthorn and Barberry among other invasives. Already there is a major improvement where many would think that it is an impossible task.

Ban Twaddell has sparked a crew of trail improvement workers. Areas of perpetual mire are now easily passable and the Beaver Pond observation deck is a favorite spot to mend one's psyche that has been injured by the trials and tribulations of today's world.

Alison DeBroux, and her Communication's Committee have informed and entertained our membership with an excellent newsletter the *“House Wren”* in addition to the on-line communiques of Face Book, monitored by Cathy Green, Constant Contact emails, and other connections. Sharon Swaney, our Webmaster has kept our website easy to navigate and up to date. Alison has persevered through frustrations of printer and USPS delays. This committee, without fail, keeps our membership up to date on all our activities.

Jim DeBroux and his Documentum committee are up and running again. They function much like archeologists sifting through layers of documents in order to find the treasures that represent our long history. I am pleased that our interested members will be able to study who we are and where we came from.

Our treasurer, Stephanie Demyan, has meticulously maintained accurate records of our finances. She is one of those unsung heroes working in the background. Due to her clear and precise accounting there is rarely any further explanation or description required. I applaud her for being willing to accomplish these ongoing tedious tasks.



John and Carol Lillich treat our Hach-Otis Sanctuary as if it were their own backyard and the wildlife that lives there as if they were part of their own family while the flora is their own garden. They have great ideas for continued maintenance and improvement of this spectacular place.

We owe Mark Magree, the caretaker of the Novak Sanctuary, a great debt of gratitude for keeping the grounds and education center in the best condition possible. He is always on alert for problems and offers ideas on how to remedy any situation that develops.

The IBA Committee may soon have some new breath breathed into it. New members of the committee hopefully will make this committee more active. Although almost all of our activities aid in the preservation and education about the Chagrin River IBA new ideas may be forthcoming.

I give my deep appreciation to all our board members and others who offered their expertise, professional opinions, and experienced advice. Without their assistance we would be in a struggle to accomplish our goals.

Thank you to all those who have generously contributed time, talent and funds. With their assistance we have met our mission of education and conservation of our natural resources.

Having volunteers such as we have, we are assured of having another successful year.

Submitted By Jim Tomko, President



Communications Committee

Alison DeBroux, Chair

The Communications Committee encompasses five aspects of ASGC's efforts to communicate with members, the public, and the Board of Trustees. These are: the monthly newsletter *The House Wren*; the website www.clevelandaudubon.org; mass email campaigns via Constant Contact; Facebook; and the U.S. Post Office.

The House Wren

Editor: Alison DeBroux

Contributing writers: Jim Tomko, Matt Valencic

Photographer: Matt Valencic

Many thanks to the following for their submissions during the 2021/2022 season: Ban Twaddell, John Lillich, Jim DeBroux, Mrs. Samelko, Carol Lillich, Barb Philbrick, Bob Bartolotta, Stephanie Demyan

The newsletter is published nine times a year, from September through May. During this past year, however, there were so many delays during the holiday season that the Board of Trustees, at the editor's request/suggestion, agreed to publish it just eight times a year moving forward, combining the December and January issues into one.

The printed version is produced by Minuteman Press, 33528 Aurora Rd., Solon, OH 44139. Phone: (440) 543-5547. Our contact is Sheila Boros, sheilab@minutemanpress.com averaged \$603 per month during the 2021-2022 season.

Our mailing list comes partly from National Audubon and partly from a list of local members who are not NAS members. This list varies between 1100 and 1300 recipients per month.

Webmaster: Sharon Swaney

ASGC Liaison: Alison DeBroux

The website is the “face” of ASGC, often the first introduction someone has to our organization. Audubon members and the general public can find out about upcoming events, issues concerning birds and wildlife, and read a web-version (low resolution) of *The House Wren*. Through the connected email address (info@clevelandaudubon.org)

Set-up of new web pages, changes to existing ones, or addition of registration forms and photographs are done by the *webmaster*. The *Liaison* adds new events that cycle automatically through the calendar.



Email monitor, designer: Alison DeBroux

Our email address is not only our members' and the public's primary contact with the organization, it is also the portal through which we connect with them via Constant Contact (CC), a mass email distributor. Their fee is based on the number of email contacts we have. Once a month or as often as we wish, CC will send out our email “campaign” that may include upcoming events, a link to the web-version newsletter, general information about birds and wildlife, and progress on various ASGC projects like the Trail Crew. These campaigns act as supplements to *The House Wren*. They are designed and edited similarly to the newsletter. Contributions are welcome.

Facebook

Monitor: Cathy Green

ASGC has had a Facebook page since 2011. Content is currently handled by member Cathy Green.

U.S. Post Office

Donations and communiques still require “snail mail” capability. ASGC currently has a post office box at the Solon, OH, Post Office. Our mailing address is: P.O. Box 391037, Solon, OH, 44139. There are two extant keys to this box, currently held by Alison DeBroux and Mark Demyan. Incoming mail is forwarded to the appropriate Board member or distributed at our quarterly meetings.

Submitted By Alison DeBroux, Chair



Documentum Committee

Jim DeBroux, Chair

Members: Mark Demyan, Carol Lillich, John Lillich, Mary Salomon

We had our first meeting since the pandemic curtailed our activities Aug 2 at 1:30 PM at the Novak Education Center. This meeting was a bit of a reboot meeting, re-orienting ourselves concerning what needed to be done. Going forward from there the committee met numerous times during August, September and October, logging about 140 man-hours of on-site work and meeting.



One of the issues that was dealt with was the sheer scope of our task. Nearly 100% of the time we spent doing a “first level filtering.” Fortunately, one of the mornings we worked, we had the assistance of Jim Tolan and his crew of Hiram College interns. These young men worked for close to two solid hours bringing boxes of documents, file cabinets and other assorted stuff down from the “attic” of the Ed Center. Documentum cleaned and sanitized the file cabinets, upright cabinets and a desk. Mark, Jim Tolan and a member of his crew spent a morning cleaning the up-stairs, bringing more stuff down, then returning the file cabinets, vertical cabinet and some shelving back upstairs.

We determined that appropriate material for archiving would be separated into different subjects during the first two phases of filtering. We have chosen the following groups:

- *Legal*
- *Financial*
- *Sanctuary*
- *Meeting Records*
- *History*
- *Other*

Further divisions within each group are likely, including but not limited to date.

The “first level filtering” consisted of separating ASGC material from everything else. This resulted in a large pile of material that Kenny Kresina (Thank You Kenny) sorted into recyclable and trash. In addition, roughly two dozen boxes of books were filtered for appropriateness. We ended up with thirteen boxes of books to be taken by Mark Demyan for donation to various institutions and/or disposal.

The “second level filtering” consisted of finding redundant material and additional material that is not needed for ASGC purposes. At this level we slow down at places when an interesting artifact surfaces and we spend some time reviewing for many different reasons. This has been the slowest activity so far. Once this level is completed, we will start on the actual archiving and sorting of the historical documents.

There were some needs identified by the committee and each has been addressed by the appropriate committee/individuals:

1. We requested shelving for our voluminous collection of books. John Lillich designed shelves for the front of the Ed Center and has made arrangements for them to be built by his contact in Amish Country.
2. The committee made a request for a computer and scanner for the archiving of the documents but to also be made available for the rest of the committees to use if they have a need or desire. Eventually the computer is to be used by anyone to retrieve our archived documents for research or other



purposes. Jim De Broux volunteered to build this computer and install the necessary software to meet our needs. The computer cost ASGC about \$1200 to build and configure, including the scanner. As of April 15th, the computer has been installed in the Ed Center and has been demonstrated to several of the Documentum committee.

3. We have purchased a scanner for the Ed Center computer, it is a flat-bed scanner. Consequently, if we have a lot of bulk scanning to do, it may be more time and resource efficient to find a sheet-feeder scanner. But our scanner does work just fine, especially for some documents that are old and fragile.

In December we received eight boxes of books from the estate of Frank McConoughey, via his granddaughter. All of these books have been cataloged. We will not keep them all but some are quite useful.

One of our goals will be to catalog all of the rest of our books.

Submitted By Jim DeBroux, Chair



Education Committee

Matthew Valencic, Chair

Members: Julie Albrecht, Laura Bell-Peters, Kathryn Craig, Alison DeBroux, Joan Demirjian, David Factor, Cathy Green, Sarah Mabey, Barb Philbrick, Betsy Siman, Andrea Story.

The Education Committee is committed to the mission of promoting the conservation and appreciation of plants, birds and other wildlife through educational activities for adults and children in the Greater Cleveland community. The backgrounds of our members in science and education is varied and impressive, which contributes to the success of the programs and events offered. It is a privilege to work with such a talented group.

During calendar 2021 we offered 33 programs and events that reached 919 adults and children:

22 Backyard Naturalist Speaker's Bureau talks, via Zoom and in-person. 352 people participating

- 20 by Matt Valencic (5 were Science Olympiad talks, via Zoom, for Medina Schools)
- 1 by Sarah Mabey
- 1 by Jim Tomko



8 'Third Thursday' programs via Zoom – 391 people viewing

- Programs presented by Ami Horowitz (1), Andy Jones (2), Sarah Mabey (1), Jim Tomko (1) and Matt Valencic (2).

Chagrin River Bird Quest in September – 130 people participating with several ASGC volunteers helping

2 Owl Pellet Programs – July and October, involving 46 students

- Aurora Library, July 6 – assisted by Alison DeBroux and Dave English (20 students)
- Chagrin Falls Park Community Center, October 22 – assisted by Dave English and Barb Philbrick (26 students)

DISCUSSION

All of the above programs and events have been discussed in my Quarterly Board of Trustee Reports during the year.

COVID 19 pandemic restrictions eased in the second half of the year and in-person presentations and programs started coming back. However, Zoom presentations continue to have their place. We still have not brought back the February Junior Birders Day and am not sure when it will be appropriate to do so. Also, some of our volunteers have concerns about COVID and have limited their involvement.

The number of Speakers Bureau talks are getting back to pre-pandemic levels as various organizations resume in-person meetings. Thanks to Sarah Mabey, John Lillich and Jim Tomko for continuing to be available for talks.

Third Thursday talks remain popular, depending on topic, and will continue during 2022 and 2023. Some people like the convenience of watching and learning from home but we are also reaching people who cannot physically attend a presentation for a variety of reasons. We often see more than one person watching the screen.

Bird Quest gets bigger and better each year. It also involves the most ASGC volunteers to make the 2-day event happen. In 2021 we saw some new faces from our Board of Trustees helping our active committee members with registration and hospitality. Approximately 50 people attended the after-birding gathering at West Woods Nature Center. We reserved West Woods again for this year's event (September 9 -10, 2022).

All of our programs and events will continue in 2022. We also hope to find new ways to engage the public, adult and students, in our sanctuaries to discover new things and experience nature up close and personal.

Submitted By Matt Valencic, Chair



Field Trip Committee

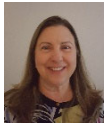
Jim Tomko, Chair

Members: John Lillich, Carol Lillich

As restrictions caused by the COVID 19 pandemic have eased and our comfort level of outdoor social distancing has increased, we began offering monthly field trips in our wildlife sanctuaries in September. The field trips held to a theme based on the season. Our January winter track walk was canceled due to -12 degree temperatures and windchills driving the cold down to dangerous levels. Our May field trip was cancelled due to severe thunder storm warnings accompanied by high winds and a tornado watch. This is the first time in many years that a field trip was canceled due to severe weather. We hope for agreeable weather at each of our monthly outings in the upcoming year.

If anyone has an idea for a field trip or would like to lead one, the request will happily be considered.

Submitted By Jim Tomko, Chair



Finance Committee

Stephanie Demyan, Chair

Members: John Weber, Jim Tomko, Steve Zabor, Mark Demyan

Expenses in 2021 were higher due to much needed repairs and improvements in our sanctuaries, and for the purchase of supplies and equipment. An observation deck was built on the pond in the Aurora sanctuary, bridge repair was completed, boardwalks were installed, and an ATV was purchased to transport the materials needed to make repairs within the sanctuaries. Eradication of Buckthorn, which is an invasive species, was started and we applied for, and received, a grant from the Shaker Heights Garden Club. These expenses are reflected in this year's financial reports.

We maintained our 501 (c)(3) organization status and completed all Federal and State Annual Reporting on time. The public has access to our complete Federal 990 reports via www.irs.gov.

The Profit and Loss Comparison for the year 2021 had an increase in contributions. Supporters of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland have provided Estate Bequests, Memorial Donations, and Matching



Funds that have benefitted the Society significantly, providing \$12,942 in 2021. The Annual Appeal together with contributions from National Audubon continues to be our primary source of income providing \$16,623 in 2021. At the bottom of the Profit and Loss statement is the income from investments which increased in value during 2021 by \$74,633. We are grateful for the many contributors to our society.

Education expenses for the year were reduced during 2021 due to not having any in person programs and providing Zoom educational sessions at no cost to the general public. The Bird Quest held in the fall of 2021 was our largest educational expenses providing shirts, supplies, and lunches to all participants at no charge.

Our Newsletter costs for the year were comparable to previous years. Web design expenses were slightly higher as the importance of electronic connectivity increased during the pandemic.

Due to very high investment returns, prudent spending, and support of our donors, we ended the year with \$548,410 in KeyBank, Vanguard and Merrill Lynch, an increase of \$84,051 compared to December 31, 2019 primarily attributed to the market gains.

Submitted by Stephanie Demyan, Chair

For further information on the financials, please contact the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland at: 216-556-5441.



Important Birding Area

Jim Tomko, Acting Chair

Members: Sarah Mabey, Mary Salomon, Matthew Valencic

Almost all our activities support our effort to educate, protect and promote our assigned IBA (The Chagrin River IBA) which we share with Blackbrook Audubon Chapter. We conduct field trips, have speaking engagements, preserve property, and have birding events that inspire others to act in a way to conserve this wonderful river corridor. Due to the global pandemic of Corona Virus, some of our events were held virtually but some have returned to “in person”. Our BirdQuest was a success and continues to gain in attendance and popularity attracting participants from many areas from as far away as Columbus. We will continue to seek ways to study our IBA and educate the public about this important system of natural resources.

Submitted By Jim Tomko, Chair



Sanctuary Committee

Jim Tomko, Chair

Members: Mark Demyan, Ken Kresina, Carol Lillich, John Lillich, Rob Swaney, Matt Valenic, Steve Zabor

Since the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions have relaxed, our Sanctuaries have seen less traffic as people return to other forms of entertainment. The lower traffic volume can be a boost for the wildlife that call the sanctuaries home.

Ban Twaddell has organized work crews to maintain trails and repair bridges, stairs, and blinds. An observation deck has been constructed on the beaver pond at the Novak Sanctuary and has been an amazing spot for studying woodland pond wildlife.

Matt Valenic has raised a platoon of “soldiers” to do battle with invasive species that are taking over the Aurora sanctuaries. A new philosophy is to move away from strip mowing and to attack everywhere the invasives, European Buckthorn in particular, are growing and expanding. The technique is cutting, spraying with an approved herbicide, and mowing. It is an enormous job but the Matt and his crew are making excellent headway.

Mark Magree has been essential in keeping the Education center and the grounds around the Ed center in excellent condition. He has converted rough trails into smooth easily walkable routes.

Ken Kresina continued to maintain the Molnar Sanctuary and clear trails in all the Aurora Sanctuaries while doing regular field mowing at the Novak Sanctuary.

Hach-Otis Sanctuary under the care of John and Carol Lillich remains our “crown jewel”. Plans to extend a trail into the new section are under way as well as maintaining the trails we have.

A crew from ODNR-DNAP joined us to control the widespread Japanese Barberry at Aurora under the supervision of Adam Wohlever the DNAP supervisor for our area.

The First Energy power line right of way is complete. The right of way has been discovered by ATV and motorcycle riders who occasionally trespass on ASGC property. Signs are posted and more will be erected to discourage these vehicles from damaging our trails and disturbing the wildlife.

All the sanctuaries are providing a place for wildlife to thrive by adding to the quality of life for both flora, fauna, and human-kind. We hope to enrich these wild areas for the wildlife while offering a place of solace and peace for people who seek a connection to our natural world.

Submitted By Jim Tomko, Chair



2022-2023 Officers



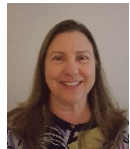
President - Jim Tomko*: *Chair, Sanctuary and Field Trips Committees, Member of IBA and Newsletter Committees; Spring Bird Walk Leader.* BA Zoology, Miami University, MS Environmental Biology, Ohio State University; OD Optometric Doctorate, Ohio State University;



Vice President - Mark Demyan*: *Member, Documentum, Finance and Newsletter Committees.* BS Civil Engineering, Tri State University; Construction Manager and business owner, of MDCC.



Secretary - Carol Lillich*: *Chair, Membership Committee, Member of the Documentum, Sanctuary, Field Trips, and Newsletter Committees; Schedule Gates Mills Spring Bird Walks.* Executive Assistant to the Chairman, President & CEO of The Lubrizol Corporation (retired).



Treasurer - Stephanie Demyan*: *Chair, Finance Committee, Member Newsletter Committee.* BS Chemical Engineer, Tri State University, and works in Solon, Ohio as a chemical engineer.

*Member of Executive Committee



2022-2023 Trustees



Alison DeBroux: *Chair, Communications Committee and Member of Education Committee.* I earned a BA in Communications from Colorado State University.



Jim DeBroux: *Chair, Documentum Committee; Member Newsletter Committee.* I have degrees in Math and Chemistry and retired from BASF in 2016 after 37 years of being a chemist, the last 10 years as a lab manager.



Jane Ellison: *Member, Education, IBA, and Newsletter Committees.* BS in Environmental Education from Cornell University School of Agriculture. I am a life-long outdoors person and a gardener.



John Lillich: *Member Documentum, Membership, Sanctuary, Field Trips, and Newsletter Committees, and Gates Mills Spring Bird Walk Leader.* Systems Analyst, The Lubrizol Corporation (retired).



Sarah Mabey: *Member IBA, Education, Membership and Newsletter Committees.* BA Bryn Mawr College, MS University of Maryland, and PhD University of Southern Mississippi; Assistant Professor and Co-Director of Environmental Studies Program at Hiram College.



Mary Salomon: *Member Documentum, Important Birding Area, Sanctuary and Newsletter Committees.* PhD Chemistry, University of Wisconsin; MBA, CWRU; Corporate Technology Portfolio Manager, The Lubrizol Corporation (Retired)



2022-2023 Trustees



Matt Valencic*: *Chair, Education Committee; Member Important Birding Area, Membership and Newsletter Committees.* AA, Cuyahoga Community College (1973); BS Forest Biology (1975) from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, NY, including an 8 week summer session at Cranberry Lake Biological Station, Cranberry Lake, NY.



John Weber: *Finance Committee and Newsletter Committees:* CPA; MA University of Missouri; BBA Cleveland State; Exec VP and CFO Chardon Rubber Company (retired).



Harvey Webster: *Member Education, Membership and Newsletter Committees.* BS Cornell University; Director of Wildlife Resources, Cleveland Museum of Natural History



Steve Zabor: *Member Finance, Sanctuary and Newsletter Committees.* PhD Economics, Northwestern, Emeritus Professor of Economics and Environmental Studies, Hiram College (Retired).

*Member of Executive Committee

Trustee terms are typically 3 years and they are elected on a rotating basis.

*Annual Report Prepared by Carol Lillich, Secretary
Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland*