



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

P.O. Box 391037, Solon, Ohio 44139-8037 Ph: 216 556 5441

Volume XXXVIII, Number 1

Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

January, 2020

SPECIAL VOLUNTEER EDITION

Please join us for our
Volunteer Open House, January 19 at 2pm; Novak Education Center, 381 Townline Road, Aurora
All volunteers, past—present—future (or potential), are welcome!
RSVP at info@clevelandaudubon.org

What would you like to do?

If you were to volunteer some of your time with ASGC, what would you like to do? Do you have some specific knowledge or skills that you would like to share with others? Maybe what you do professionally, like teaching, marketing, advertising or accounting could be helpful to the chapter. Do you have communications skills (writing, public speaking, using social media) that could be applied to Audubon? Are you an avid birder or have a passion for plants or nature photography? Would you like to do some in-depth learning about nature that could be turned into a program a year from now? Or maybe you are a long-time naturalist, amateur or professional, looking for a 'home' to continue sharing your passion.

If you answered YES to any of the above, Audubon Society of Greater

Cleveland might be a 'good fit' for you. Our charge is to be responsible stewards of the environment and to educate the public to the wonders and sensitivity of nature, both plants and animals. To



Matt Valencic leads a Merit Badge program.

accomplish this requires the efforts of many, many dedicated volunteers – like you!

If you would like to consider volunteer opportunities, please come to the Volunteer Open House at 2:00pm on January 19th at the Novak Education Center, 382 Townline Road, Aurora. Representatives from all committees will be there to listen to your ideas and help you to realize them with ASGC. Four years ago they helped me use my passion for birding and bird photography to create several bird programs which I now share with area groups through our Speakers Bureau.

Who knows what awaits you and your passion for nature?

—Matt Valencic

What I do and why

I am co-chair of the Education Committee because I love to help facilitate programs for all age groups, especially our young birders.



Kathy Cochran at a Junior Birder (formerly Scout Day) event

I started to really enjoy bird watching when my girls were two and four. We took our lunch and lawn chairs to the very back of the yard to watch a northern flicker pop in and out of its nest. The girls were thrilled and soon could identify several birds at our feeder.

I started to become involved with the ASGC around 2013 or so by facilitating the Feathers station at the Scout Day program. It was a lot of fun to pass along the small bit of knowledge that I gained while learning about feathers to those 4th grade and below. When they learned that feathers are made of keratin just like their hair and nails, they were wide

(Continued on page 2)

From the Nest...

It's the New Year! Reflections of the past year and plans to turn over a "new leaf" for the upcoming year are in our minds. Most of us have made plans to be more in touch with our natural world marveling at its beauty and intricate connections while assessing Mother Nature's needs and how we can help.



Our chapter has many volunteer opportunities and we need your time and talents. You do not need to be an upper echelon naturalist. You just need to have a passion for a certain activity and the drive to schedule some time to devote to a project. You may have dreamed up an activity that has not ever crossed our desk or maybe you have participated in something that we

have programmed before. Whatever it is, we would love to hear from you. Please consider attending our Volunteer Open House on Saturday, January 19th. You will meet some welcoming, like-minded people willing to help you find a comfortable place in our volunteer force.

I wish you a wondrous year of birding and nature with exciting adventures locally and far afield.

—Jim Tomko, President

What will you do?

Educate



Volunteer Nicole Ryman helps a participant “walk like a duck” during Scout Day.

Count



Volunteer Kim Pease participates in the Christmas Bird Count.

Photo: K. Carter-Cohn

Critter Corner



Photo: M. Valencic

Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius* or *Circus cyaneus*)

When I began learning my hawks this one was known as the marsh hawk. Later the name was changed to northern harrier because it was very similar to the hen harrier in Europe. Now some authorities consider it the same species and some split it into two species.

Northern harriers are open grassland/marshland birds. They roost and nest on the ground, rarely perching higher than a fence post. These distinctive birds are unmistakable with a large white rump patch easily visible when they fly away from you.

Harriers are a long, broad-winged, long-tailed hawk that usually hold their wings in a shallow “V” shape as they erratically fly, tilting side to side as they lazily course over a field. Some think the flight manner is moth-like or bat-like.

Unlike other hawks northern harriers use their keen sense of hearing to hunt their prey of voles, mice, rats, snakes, frogs, and birds. If you examine their facial plumage up close you can see the feather arrangement around their ear openings are much like an owl’s, allowing faint sounds to funnel into their ears.

The male is grayish on top while the underside is clean white with black wingtips. Females are mottled and striped brown, beige and white.

The nest is concealed in a thicket of vegetation on a platform of thick reeds, rushes, and willow or alder twigs that they lay on the ground with an interior finishing of fine grasses.

These interesting birds rarely nest in our area but are common winter visitors. Be on the lookout for them in farmers’ fields, extensive marshes, relict prairies, and airport runway areas.

Now is a good time to get out and hunt for an adept hunter—the northern harrier.

—Jim Tomko

Build/Maintain



Students from Hiram College help clear a trail at the Hach-Otis Sanctuary.

Photo: J. Lillich

Organize



The Annual Dinner is just one of several events each year that require organizational talents.

Mary Salomon judges checklists at the Chagrin River Bird Quest.



Donate



Members of the “Bird Nerds” model new sweatshirts purchased with help from an ASGC grant.

Photo: Buster Banish

What I do

(Continued from page 1)

eyed!

My daughters are now 17 and 19 and have been assisting with the stations at Scout Day for several years. It’s a great thing to be able to teach a lifelong skill to your children and others. I became a trustee in 2015. I am grateful for the friendships and contributions I have been able to make while being involved in such a wonderful, thriving organization.

—Kathy Cochran

In case you missed it

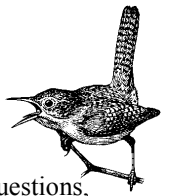
Winter Solstice Celebration

The December night was perfect for a hike with a temperature around 28 and no precipitation. There was a very light coating of snow which had a bit of a crunch each time we took a step. With no leaf cover in the canopy, the night sky light reflecting off the snow allowed our passage without turning on our flashlights. Although we did not see or hear any critters except the ubiquitous Canada goose, there were several tracks

in the snow with a set likely belonging to a southern flying squirrel. We also saw white-tailed deer and gray squirrel tracks. We immersed ourselves in the deep muffled silence of the winter woods free of insect and frog song and the babbling of tributaries frozen on their way to the Aurora Branch. We warmed ourselves to some cocoa and kolacky treats after the walk. It was a pleasurable way to celebrate one of the longest nights of the year.

—Jim Tomko

The Squawk



Send your comments, questions,
or complaints to
info@clevelandaudubon.org

I have a horrible problem with a large woodpecker causing significant damage to my house in Solon, Ohio. ...When I'm not at home, nothing stops it from boring holes all over the exterior of my house and scaring my two cats. I'm getting really nervous over the damage it's causing, and I don't have the money to get these holes repaired. Can you help me to catch and relocate this woodpecker? ... I'm at my wit's end. I hope you can help! Amore

Dear Amore,

That is a tough problem. It is actually illegal to capture and transport song birds such as this one. There is something attractive about your house. I wonder if there is an infestation of carpenter ants that the bird is detecting. If they are feeding holes (small diameter holes) you need to eliminate the food source. If it is excavating roosting holes (several inches in diameter) then the bird needs to be frightened away. Shiny Mylar strips, garlands, aluminum foil tacked over the holes is sometimes effective. I would contact a pest control service as they have the license and training to rid your house of this nuisance bird.

Thank you for contacting us.

—Jim Tomko, President

What draws me to ASGC

I have always loved my time in the field and forest. I find the exquisite inter-connections of species to be fascinating and how the slightest disturbance by humans can derail the whole system.

My greatest passion is to help preserve our natural world by introducing people to these wonders through first-hand experience so that they will in turn make decisions in their own lives to help preserve our natural resources. My hope



Jim Tomko communing with trees on a fall color walk at Hach-Otis.

Photo: C. Lillich

is that someday we will live in perfect harmony with nature rather than the idea of conquering it.

Our chapter of Audubon allows me to pursue several avenues toward that goal. Plus, the knowledge, experience and expertise on our board of trustees

is astounding. Our chapter is truly gifted.

—Jim Tomko

Upcoming Events

Field Trips, Etc.

"Migrating Waterfowl and Winter Birds of NE Ohio"

January 8 7:00pm

North Olmsted Library

January 18 7:00pm

St. Joan of Arc Church

496 E. Washington St., Chagrin Falls.

Admission: One or more non-perishable items for the Food Pantry

Visit www.clevelandaudubon.org for more information.

January 18 9:30am

"Winter Track Walk"

Novak Sanctuary

Winter is an excellent time to discover the wildlife that remains invisible behind the summer leaves of

green. It is also a great way to see the lay of the land, discovering ravines, ponds, and vernal pools that were hidden in the summer. Join us to read tracks in the snow or catch a glimpse of a cottontail bounding away. Meet at the Novak Sanctuary parking lot on the east side of Townline Road about a mile north of State Route 82 on the Aurora/Mantua border.

January 19 2:00pm

"Volunteer Open House"

Novak Education Center

Volunteers current, past and future: please join us for an afternoon of friendly chitchat. Meet fellow volunteers, birders and educators.

Snacks and beverages provided; bring a dish to share if you wish. RSVP at info@clevelandaudubon.org and pray for no snow!

February 8 10am-12pm & 1-3pm

"Junior Birder Day"

Novak Education Center

Our Junior Birder Day (formerly Scout Day) is for all children K thru 3rd grade. Participants will rotate through stations to learn about birds in a fun way. Craft and owl pellet dissection included. School groups and Scout troops welcome. \$5 donation per child requested. Sessions fill up quickly so reserve your child's place today!

Contact info@clevelandaudubon.org for reservations.

DATED MAIL

**AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND (S 70)
Board of Trustees 2018-2019
Jim Tomko, President**

Bob Bartolotta	John Lillich
Kathy Cochran	Sarah Mabey
Alison DeBroux	Penny Orr
Mark Demyan	Mary Salomon
<i>Vice President</i>	Matt Valencic
Stephanie Demyan	John Weber, CPA
<i>Asst. Treasurer</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
Claire Johnson	Harvey Webster
Carol Lillich	Steve Zabor
<i>Secretary</i>	

To contact an individual trustee, send an email to info@clevelandaudubon.org

Like us on Facebook!



Please recycle this newsletter

A Wry Smile



How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a camp fire?

Volunteer opportunities with ASGC

Chagrin River Bird Quest (September)
Assist with Introduction to Birding Workshop, check-in and hospitality.
Lead a bird walk.

Junior Birder's Day (February)
Plan, set-up, and/or teach a "station."
Teaching experience not necessary.

Breeding Bird Surveys (June)
Teams of 2 or more look and listen for breeding birds. Document findings.

Newsletter (September through May)
Create original articles, report on chapter events or activities. Photographs always needed.

Field Trips (Monthly)
Lead a field trip which may be inspired by seasonal changes in flora, fauna and weather.

Spring Bird Walks (April & May)
Lead a walk and/or help newer birders during the walks.

Advertising / Promotion

Promote upcoming activities. Social media expertise would be most welcome.

Sanctuary Committee
Various seasonal projects at our 4 sanctuaries (covering over 500 acres). Trail building will be done at Hach-Otis in 2020.

Speaker's Bureau
Create and present programs about wildlife, habitat, birding and issues important to the environment.

You're invited!

Volunteer Open House
January 19th, 2pm

Meet fellow volunteers, birders and educators.
Snacks and beverages provided; bring a dish to share if you wish.
RSVP at
info@clevelandaudubon.org