



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

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birds in the Chagrin River Valley over a 24-hour period as they can, come rain or shine. Our winning teams have found 70+ species each year, from the common crow to the gray-cheeked thrush.

This year it's "Bird Where You Are"—your backyard, a local park or wherever you happen to be. We only ask that you maintain a vulture's

wingspan (6') distance from other birders, and wear a mask if that's not possible.

For the 3rd year, Blackbrook Audubon is our partner in this event, providing much needed financial support and publicity.

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No pandemic or economic disaster can keep birders down!

Join us for a friendly, low-key team birding competition, September 11 – 12, from 4pm to 4pm.

Experienced and inexperienced alike, birders have risen to the challenge over the years of finding as many species of

"Our rapidly changing climate is changing, well, everything"

This special Zoom® presentation, September 8th at 8:00pm, is an extraordinary opportunity to hear a terrific speaker with outstanding credentials! Dr. Terry Root is Professor Emerita at Stanford and lead author of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change 4th Assessment Report in 2007 and was co-awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Vice President Al Gore.

Since the late 1800s, the average global temperature has increased about 1.8°F (1°C) and we are on track to surpass the Paris Agreement target of 2.7°F (1.5°C) by 2030. In response to this rapid warming, much is changing on our planet. It will cause innumerable people to suffer heatwaves, storm surges, and spreading diseases. Hundreds of thousands of species—including species we rely upon—will face extinction. We must stop our fossil-fuel addiction to avoid such problems. Thankfully, there are many things that

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Bird ID Challenge: Greater vs lesser yellowlegs

These tall (14" and 10"), slender wading birds are frequent visitors to the wetlands and muddy shorelines of NE Ohio from July to November. When found together it is easy to tell one from the other, but more often they are seen alone or with others of the same species.

Both have long, bright yellow legs (except when muddy!) and can be very active feeders. Plumage is



A rare sight: lesser and greater yellowlegs together.

Photo: M. Valencic

too similar to be a reliable tool for identification.

Their typical calls (*tew* or *tew tew* for lesser, and *tew tew tew* for greater) are helpful but they may use other calls as well. The best tool is the length of the bill relative to the head.

The greater's bill is almost one and a half times as long as the distance from the base of its bill to the back of its head. The bill is slightly upturned, lighter in color and thicker at

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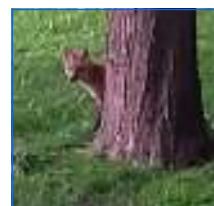
From the Nest...

Covid 19 has touched just about everything we do and everywhere we go. While following the stay at home advice, many of us have had the chance to notice and appreciate the wildlife literally right in our own backyards. I have been very pleased to receive phone calls, texts and emails from you sharing



what you saw out your window that likely was there all the time but you were at work and therefore did not have the opportunity to view those treasures.

Some folks have discovered our colorful gems, the wood warblers, some have said they never knew that scarlet tanagers were about and that Baltimore



orioles actually use their hummingbird feeders. One correspondent reported an indigo bunting at the finch feeder. I had a red fox family include my backyard on its patrols and for the first time I noted a juvenile ruby-throated hummingbird at my feeder.

With all of the inconvenience, frustration and sadness that Covid 19 induced,

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Bird Quest is a great opportunity to look for fall migrants such as this female black-throated blue warbler. Photo: M. Valencic

Bird Quest
(Continued from page 1)

As always, free t-shirts are provided to all Questers, and this year lunch is on us! Receive a free Subway gift card for every member of your team when you attend our Drive-thru Check-in on Friday, September 11th at 4pm.

And as always, we're celebrating with a party! Awards and more fun will happen September 12th at 7pm (via Zoom) after all the results have been tabulated.

Please register at www.clevelandaudubon.org, and click on Bird Quest.

Critter Corner



Photo: M. Valencic

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
(*Archilochus colubris*)

The only nesting hummingbird species in our area is this tiny but feisty emerald jewel. This family of birds includes the smallest bird or for that matter the smallest warm-blooded animal in the world. Ruby-throated hummingbirds on average weigh less than a nickel.

Hummingbirds are the only birds able to fly backwards. They can hover longer than any other bird. Their resting heart rate is 250 beats per minute but can go up to 1200 beats per minute in flight. This high rate of metabolism results in huge calorie consumption requiring almost continuous feeding while in flight. They do not suck nectar through their bill but lick 10 to 15 times a second with their long, forked, fringed tongue. Their main source of food is nectar from flowers but they will also eat insects and small spiders.

Their legs are so short they are unable to walk or hop effectively. But those legs and feet are nimbly used for preening plumage and scratching an annoying itch.

The amazing iridescent color is primarily from reflection and refraction of light in the crystalline structure inside the feather and the color can change instantly depending on the angle of the light hitting the feather.

Their tiny nest straddles a twig bound by spider silk and camouflaged by lichens 5-30 feet above the ground where they lay two tiny white eggs smaller than a jelly bean.

These beauties arrive in our area the last week in April and are still feeding at our feeders through the first week of October. Some stragglers may persist longer so don't take your feeders down too soon.

These fascinating mighty mites capture everyone's attention when they appear on the scene. Enjoy them now before they depart for the far southern U.S., Central and South America.

—Jim Tomko

the base.

The length of the lesser's bill is about the same as the distance from base of bill to back of head. It is straight and appears thin from tip to base.

Go ahead – take your ruler and check out the pictures!

Good Birding!

—Matt Valencic



Lesser: straight, thin bill.



Greater: extra long, slightly upturned bill.

Photos: M. Valencic



Did you know?

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are one of the many species that drink sap from the sap wells drilled by the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Some research shows that the arrival of the Hummingbirds is timed to take advantage of this food source when flowers in bloom are scarce.

—Jim Tomko

From the Nest

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there were some gifts if we took the time to look. I wish you good health and good nature observations. Please keep us in the loop as to what you are seeing

Stay tuned because Matt Valencic and his Education Committee have some excellent treats planned for you to continue on our chapter's mission.

See you on the trails,

—Jim Tomko, President



Climate

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we can do, collectively and individually, to decrease the emissions of CO₂. We just need the will to do it.

Dr. Root earned her undergraduate degree in Mathematics and Statistics from the University of New Mexico, her master's degree in Biology from the University of



Colorado and her doctorate in Biology from Princeton University. She was a professor at the University of Michigan for 14 years, and then at Stanford University for 15 years. She served on the National Audubon Board of Directors from 2010 to 2019, and is on numerous science advisory boards.

This program is sponsored by Lake County Audubon (Illinois) in cooperation with the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters (COAC).

To register for this Zoom® event, please visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org.

Update on the Hach-Otis Sanctuary

Hach-Otis was re-opened on May 15th and use of it has returned to a manageable level.

This is the third year in a row that ASGC has had an anonymous donation of \$10,000 that is earmarked for Hach-Otis. Some of this will be used to build trails in the new part of the preserve. 50 acres of the new part is now under ODNR protection.

Mowing of the Meadows last fall was very productive. We have lots of birds, five different varieties of swallows, different sparrows, lots of bluebirds and tree swallows.

We have an active coyote family somewhere in the hillside above the Meadows and they make themselves very well known. There are mown walking paths in the Meadows.

In addition to walking trails, there are tentative plans to build a chimney swift tower somewhere in the Meadows.

—From the Minutes, July 28

Enhance your Zoom® experience

If your laptop and TV have HDMI receptacles, you can connect your laptop to the TV and the whole family can enjoy Zoom® programs on the big screen. You can purchase HDMI cables in 6' and 10' lengths for \$10-\$20 (be sure both ends are 'male'). There are too many computers and TV's to get specific, but If your TV has more than one HDMI input, be sure you select the correct one to view the laptop. Also, if you have the correct HDMI input but still no picture, try the 'F8' key on your laptop. PRACTICE THIS WELL IN ADVANCE OF YOUR ZOOM PROGRAM!

To get a full-screen view of the Zoom® program, go to the top of your screen and click 'View Options'. For 'Zoom Ratio' select either 'Fit to Window' or '50%'. At the bottom of the View Options, be sure it says 'side-by-side'. To remove all the participant pictures, find the icons that let you select gallery view, and select the minus sign (-) which is the icon on the left. This hides all participant pictures so you only see the program.

—Matt Valencia



Photo: C. Lillich

Upcoming Events

Field Trips, Etc.

September 11 - 12

"Chagrin River Bird Quest"

Join us for our 6th annual 24-hour Team Birding Challenge. Share the day with family and friends, enjoy nature and compete for prizes such as Most Creative Team Name, Most Warblers or Most Species Overall.

Bird in your own backyard, a local park or anywhere you happen to be. New this year: have lunch on us! All participants receive a free Subway gift card!

Checklist totals due by 4pm Sept 12. Then join us for our Virtual Celebration! The Zoom® link will be provided after registering.

To register, or for more information, visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org and click on the Bird Quest button on the right.



Alex Burke at his 5th Bird Quest.
Photo: M. Burke

September 17 7:00pm

"Extraordinary Adaptations: The science and wonder of migration"

Via Zoom®

The migratory life is more than just an easy trip to the sunny tropics. Migration is a demanding and dangerous endeavor. Learn how migratory birds meet the challenges of life on the move and how scientists are uncovering their extraordinary adaptations.

To register for this event, visit www.clevelandaudubon.org and click on the event on the left-hand side. Then follow the link.


DATED MAIL

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A Wry Smile



You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

Third Thursdays with the Backyard Naturalist

One positive thing to emerge from the pandemic is the wide use of Zoom® for meetings, presentations, and family gatherings. COVID19 caused Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC) speakers to cancel 10 in-person educational programs from March through September.

But within a week we were offering a ‘virtual option,’ using Zoom®, to the libraries, schools and other groups that booked programs. Not everyone could take advantage of this option but enough did that now ASGC can comfortably offer our Backyard Naturalist programs to any groups using Zoom®.

We have a special surprise for ASGC membership. Because of our Zoom capability, every ‘Third Thursday’ at 7:00pm from September through May we will be presenting one of the Backyard Naturalist programs for you to enjoy.

You can register for each program on our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org and receive an email confirmation with a link for the program. We use Zoom’s ‘pre-

registration’ and ‘waiting room’ security features for all events. Programs will be listed under Events on the website and in our monthly newsletter.

The program for September 17th is “*Extraordinary Adaptations: The science and wonder of migration*”, presented by Dr. Sarah Mabey.

Please go to the website and click on the appropriate event on the left-hand side to register. See the complimentary article (page 3) in this edition for ways to enhance your Zoom® viewing experience.

—Matt Valencic



Common nighthawk Photo: M. Valencic