



The HOUSE WREN



Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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

Volume XXXI, Number 8

Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

December, 2013

Students make use of ASGC sanctuaries

Alex Cameron, a student at John Carroll University and a recipient of a \$500 ASGC grant, has been studying the effects of Asian earthworms on red-backed salamanders.

In healthy forests, partially decayed leaf litter creates a layer of organic soil crucial to overall ecosystem function. It's home to millions of invertebrates that serve as prey for many forest floor predators like terrestrial salamanders. When earthworms invade forests, the organic layer disappears, causing soil compaction, drying, and large temperature fluctuations. This results in the loss of litter-dwelling organisms that predators rely on for food.

Most of our understanding of how earthworms affect forests comes from research on European earthworms. We know much less about how Asian worms compare with regard to rates of litter loss and overall effects on forest floor organisms like red-backed salamanders.

A local study found that red-backed salamanders make up more than 99% of the salamanders in upland woodland habitat in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. So it is feasible to assume that Asian earthworms are interacting, both directly and indirectly, with the salamanders.



Alex Cameron looks for earthworms at the Molnar sanctuary.

This potential interaction between worms and salamanders is the focus of Alex Cameron's research. Alex spent time this past summer surveying the Molnar, Novak, and Aurora sanctuaries. He has identified approximately 20 species of earthworms from his samples, and the Asian variety is present in forested areas at all three localities. Alex is also conducting a controlled laboratory mesocosm study to examine the effects of this earthworm on body condition, activity, and microhabitat of red-backed salamanders.

This experiment is ongoing at JCU. Look for Alex to present the results of his research to the Audubon Society next spring or summer.

—Cari Hickerson
JCU Biology Dept.

SEE INSIDE THIS EDITION
"Aerial View"
columnist coming to SABN

Research grants up for grabs

For the third year, the ASGC is offering two research grants of \$500 each. The grants are awarded to college students doing research in the biological sciences, with preference going to projects involving the ASGC's sanctuaries.

Interested applicants must fill out the full application which will be available at www.clevelandaudubon.org starting in January. A project proposal and faculty references are required. The application deadline is March 15th, with awards announced approximately two months later. Grantees will be asked to submit a report of their research, either in person or in writing, at the ASGC's Annual Meeting in June.

Previous awards have gone to earthworm research, avian DNA sequencing, and geographic variations in songs of the veery.

From the Nest...



Please note that our programming survey is still available! We are collecting surveys for one more month. If you have not filled it out yet, you still have time to let us know what kind of programming you would prefer to attend, and where.

You can also visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org and fill out the survey there. Thanks again for all your help.

The board would like to extend condolences to Kathy Cochran on the loss of her father. Kathy is a volunteer on the Education Committee and a local Girl Scout leader. If you would like to send Kathy and her family a message, please email thehousewren@gmail.com and I will forward it.

—Alison DeBroux, Editor

President's Post

The Audubon Society would like to wish you and yours a Happy Holiday!

As the seasons change and fall colors transition to winter snow, take a child out to explore and enjoy a walk in the woods at one of our sanctuaries. Mark your calendar for Jim's "Winter Solstice Hike" on December 20th. Visit our website for other events planned. We are still on the hunt for members, "Friends of the Audubon Society," and a few dedicated trustees. Please consider volunteering your time, talents and energy to a great cause. Take care and enjoy the beauty of nature.

—Mark J Demyan, President

The saga continues...

Hach and Otis properties donated to create second sanctuary

Following the purchase of the Aurora Sanctuary in 1941 (*see archives, October 2013*), Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hach decided against subdividing their 26-acre home along the Chagrin River in Willoughby Township. They could not bear the thought of the area being destroyed by bulldozers. With encouragement from a local naturalist, C. M. Shipman, the land was donated as a nature preserve to the ASGC's forerunner, the Cleveland Bird Club, in 1944.

Adjacent to the Hach home, there were just over 54 acres owned by the Otis family. Harold T. Clark (to whom the Clark Library at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History is dedicated and after whom the Clark Tennis Courts along the lake front are named) purchased the land and in 1946 donated the tract to the Bird Club. This formed the Hach-Otis Sanctuary just off US

Route 6 in Willoughby.

Hach-Otis is a typical upland woodland with beech, oak, sassafras and maple with views of the Chagrin River Valley. There are trails maintained by the ASGC and it is open to the public during daylight hours. Please visit and recognize the love that created it.

—Ed Buckles

(Editor's note: As the ASGC's unofficial archivist, Ed has been spending many hours reading and organizing old articles, pictures, and records from the ASGC's past. From these, he is compiling a history of the organization, from the early days when it was the Cleveland Bird Club. For previous chapters in this series, please see The House Wren archives on our website, www.clevelandaudubon.org and look for the February, March and October 2013 issues.)

Critter Corner



Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)

The snowbirds have arrived! But they don't do well in deep snow.

Unassisted by feeders, the dark-eyed junco moves farther south if there is prolonged deep snow cover. That is exactly why they leave their northern range in late September.

These snappy-colored ground sparrows visiting our bird feeders each winter prefer the millet. They look like small gray birds dipped in the snow with pinkish colored bills. Our juncos have slate-gray wings, tail and back feathers, with snow-white bellies and, of course, dark eyes. Their trademark is their white outer tail feathers. Females are paler. There are several other races with different plumages in the west.

According to Peterjohn's *The Birds of Ohio*, juncos may have been common nesters here in the 1830s, but it is now rare to see a nesting pair outside of the

(Continued on page 3)



Autumn in Hach-Otis

(Photo by John Lillich)

ASGC Programming Survey

1. I am most likely to attend:
 - a) Monthly lectures with a local focus
 - b) 2-3 lectures per year with national speakers
 - c) A class (multiple lectures on a single topic)
 - d) Hands-on programs for my whole family
2. I am most likely to attend programs at:
 - a) Novak Education Center in Aurora
 - b) Cleveland Museum of Natural History
 - c) Local libraries
 - d) Other (please specify): _____
3. I find out about programs by:
 - a) Reading the newsletter
 - b) Looking at the website
 - c) Email announcements
 - d) Friends or word-of-mouth
4. I live in the following county:
 - a) Cuyahoga
 - b) Geauga
 - c) Portage
 - d) Other (please specify): _____

Please circle your choices and mail to:
Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, P.O. Box 391037, Solon, OH 44139
or click on the survey link at www.clevelandaudubon.org
Thank you for your help!

In Case You Missed It!

October 19--My commendations to the hardy souls who braved the continuous rain and 42 degree temperatures to attend the fall leaf color walk at the Hach-Otis Sanctuary! I



John Lillich leads Hach-Otis walk.

especially want to thank John and Carol Lillich for taking the lead after they had just led the same walk in the rain two hours earlier. John gave us some wonderful history of the area--both ancient (Ice Age) and recent (early - mid 1900s). We saw amazing examples of tall, old tulip trees, sassafras, hemlock,

hickory, beech, black gum and cucumber magnolia. The colorful vista across the Chagrin River gorge looking toward Chapin Woods and Little Mountain was spectacular. Squaw root was still evident along with some of the most amazing colored fungi (turkey tail and chicken of the woods). Most of the birds and other wildlife were "smarter" than we were as they all took shelter and made themselves scarce. We did see and/or hear blue jays, American crows, black-capped chickadees, tufted titmouse, white-breasted nuthatch and red-bellied woodpeckers. We saw evidence of pileated woodpeckers drilling foraging holes. The greatest bird find of the day for me was my first dark-eyed junco of the season! We all had a fantastic time despite the weather.

—Jim Tomko

Dark-eyed Junco

(Continued from page 2)

deep cool hemlock gorges of the Chagrin River watershed.

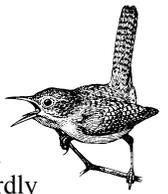
In early May, most depart for northern forests. Those that do stay conceal their nest under foliage, roots, or rock overhangs and lay 3-6 bluish-white

eggs with brownish blotches. They hatch in about 12 days after incubation by the mother only. The young remain in the nest for 10 to 13 days.

Enjoy these hardy winter visitors on the ground outside your windows!

—Jim Tomko

The Squawk



"My neighbor and I are both missing our birds! I have hardly anything coming to my feeders except goldfinches."

—Alison DeBroux

"It is because of the mild autumn weather and the abundance of insects about. Insects hold a higher desirability rank as food for birds except with goldfinches. As the autumn cools and the insects and berries dwindle they will be at your feeders."

—Jim Tomko

"Jim and John:

Thanks for the time you spend arranging [field trips]. What a beautiful woods with amazing trees of a surprising variety. I must come back [to Hach-Otis]. I was thinking that that nearly full moon that is shining tonight in the east must be an incredible sight from the bluff where we stood today."

—John Kropp

Send your comments, questions, or complaints to thehousewren@gmail.com or via snail mail to our regular address.

Upcoming Events

Saturday Afternoon Backyard Naturalist Series

Field Trips

December 14 3:00-5:00pm

"Gardening for the Birds"

James F. McCarty,

Plain Dealer Columnist

"The Aerial View"

Jim will take time from his great birding adventures to talk to us about planting native Ohio shrubs, flowers and trees to provide food and shelter to attract birds to your home. Winter feeding will also be included. Jim has worked at The Plain Dealer since 1991, primarily covering courts and legal issues and has written the birding column, "Aerial View," since 2004. He is a frequent speaker on WCPN-FM, at the Cleveland Home & Garden Show, and to garden clubs and Audubon Societies around the Cleveland area.

January 25 3:00-5:00pm

"New Years Gathering for Audubon

Neighbors and Friends"

Special Guest: Adam Wohlever, ODNR

February 22 3:00-5:00pm

"The Heronry at Bath Road"

Andrea Irland,

Volunteer citizen scientist for the

National Park Service

All SABN programs are free and held at our Novak Education Center, 382 Townline Road, Aurora.

Visit our website at

www.clevelandaudubon.org

for directions and more information.

December 20 7:00pm

"Annual Winter Solstice Hike"

Aurora Sanctuary

Join us to celebrate our longest night (close to it) of the year in the woods with the owls, southern flying squirrels, and coyotes. Most self-respecting wildlife will be cozy in their winter dens, but we foolish human creatures will brave the harsh weather for "fun"! Hope for a fresh cover of snow which will transform the woods into a magnificent, quiet, and beautiful natural cathedral! Meet at the Aurora Sanctuary parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail, a few hundred yards east of Page Rd. in Aurora.

January 4 9:30am

"Winter Track Walk"

Aurora Sanctuary

**AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER
CLEVELAND (S 70)
Board of Trustees 2013-2014
Mark Demyan, President**

Earl Biederman	Penny Orr
Sandy Buckles	Mary Salomon
<i>Chair-Education</i>	<i>Chair-IBA</i>
Alison DeBroux	Bud Shaw
<i>Chair-Newsletter</i>	Jim Tomko
Bill Kennelly	<i>Co-chair-Sanctuaries</i>
Andy Lihani	Harvey Webster
Sarah Mabey	<i>Chair-Programs</i>
Meagan Moore	Steve Zabor
	<i>Treasurer</i>

To contact an individual trustee, please leave a message at 216-556-5441
Or send an email to auduboncleland@hotmail.com

Like us on Facebook!



Please recycle this newsletter

Yes, Virginia, there is a turtle dove!

I am not sure if there are “French hens” or what species “calling birds” are referring to, or why a partridge would perch in a pear tree. But “turtle doves” really do exist!

Streptopelia turtur is a Eurasian bird related to our mourning doves that summers as far north as Europe and winters in southern Africa. We do not find these on our continent unless they are escapees from someone’s collection or a victim of some wayward migration path pushed by weather and winds.

See if you can spot them on some of your Christmas cards!

—Jim Tomko



Photo from www.esaudubon.org

A Wry Smile

Two vultures decide it's too much work to actually fly south for the winter so they get tickets to Miami on United Airlines. When they arrive at the ticket counter, the agent notices that each is carrying a dead raccoon.

Says the agent, "Do you wish to check those?"
"No," reply the vultures, "they're carrion."

—Contributed by Ed Buckles



COMING IN JANUARY

**Winter
Bird Feeding**

Send in your bird-feeding tips, questions and photos!
email them to thehousewren@gmail.com

DATED MAIL

P.O. Box 391037, Solon, OH 44139



**Audubon
Society
of Greater
Cleveland**