

# The HOUSE TURKEY!

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

P.O. Box 391037, Solon, Ohio 44139-8057 Ph: 216 556 5441

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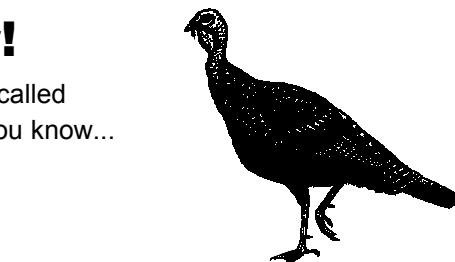
## Let's Talk Turkey!

In the first installment of a new series called *Critter Corner*, Jim talks about, well, you know...

What a surprise the pilgrims had when they disembarked from their ships with their treasured cargo of domestic turkeys, only to discover that the forest of the new world was rich with native wild turkeys (*meleagris gallopavo*). The domestication of wild turkeys probably took place in Mexico hundreds of years ago. When the early explorers returned to Europe they took some of these Mexican turkeys with them.

Ohio and its neighboring states once had a population of wild turkeys numbering in the millions, the densest in North America. By 1904, there were no more wild turkeys in Ohio due to habitat destruction and unregulated hunting. In 1956 ODNR began reintroducing wild turkeys into southeastern Ohio and continued for a number of years until now they are found in every county in the state.

These non-migratory woodland birds have an amazing array of wonderful iridescent browns, beige, and rust in their plumage while the skin of the head can be red, blue, and gray. Males, known as gobblers or toms, can stand up to 46 inches tall, have a 64-inch wingspan and weigh up to 20 pounds!



Turkeys prefer to run for cover rather than fly but can burst into flight if hotly pursued. Mixed flocks of 50 to 60 birds have been seen in autumn and winter but as spring breeding season approaches, a dominant gobbler will maintain a harem of 6 to 8 or more females. What a fantastic sight to see the gobblers in full strut attempting to impress the hens in April.

It is said turkeys will eat any food that they can swallow but prefer seeds, fruits, bulbs, insects, worms, acorns, and beechnuts. Hens nest in a leaf-lined depression on the ground under overhanging vegetation where they lay 8 to 16 eggs which hatch in 28 days. Toms provide no care for the nest or the young. All the poult are ready to follow their mother within 12 to 24 hours of hatching.

Now is the time to look for wild turkeys. When the leaves are down these big birds are easier to see—but of course they can see us too, and often escape before we know they're there!

—Jim Tomko

**SEE INSIDE THIS EDITION**

**Turkeys!**



Photo contributed by Sandy Buckles

### Fun Fact

When they need to, turkeys can swim by tucking their wings in close, spreading their tails, and kicking.

From: [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/wild\\_turkey/lifehistory](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/wild_turkey/lifehistory)

## From the Nest...

A big **THANK YOU!** to everyone who has taken the time to fill out our programming survey. With limited resources and competition with many other organizations for the same speakers, we would like our programs to appeal to as many members as possible. Your feedback is invaluable in making this happen. If you have not filled out the survey yet, it is on Page 2 of this



newsletter. Or, save a stamp and visit our website at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org) and click on the blue button. Thanks again for all your help.

### Board Meeting, 9/24

It was with great sadness that the board learned of the resignation of long-time board member and former president, Nancy Adams. Among her accomplishments, Nancy spearheaded

work to eradicate invasive species from our sanctuaries, especially the narrow-leaf cattail in the Novak marsh.

In other business, the Programming and Education Committees were merged. Sandy Buckles and Harvey Webster will share responsibility for selecting



(Continued on page 3)



Photo contributed by Sandy Buckles

Stuffing is evil. Stuffing adds mass, so it slows the cooking. That's evil because the longer the bird cooks, the drier it will be.

—Alton Brown

It is estimated that at maturity a turkey can have as many as 3500 feathers. These feathers are used as fly fishing ties, for craft projects and arrow making.

From: [www.ask.com/question/how-many-feathers](http://www.ask.com/question/how-many-feathers).



Photo by A. DeBroux

#### More Fun Facts

Egg Length: 1.9–2.7 in (or 4.9–6.9 cm)

Egg Width: 1.6–1.9 in (or 4.1–4.7 cm)

Egg Description: Pale yellowish tan, evenly marked with reddish brown or pinkish spots.

Condition of young at hatching: Well-developed and covered with tawny, brown, pinkish, and gray down.

Nest Description: A shallow depression in the soil, about 1 inch deep, 8–11 inches wide, and 9–13 inches long.

From: [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/wild\\_turkey/lifehistory](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/wild_turkey/lifehistory)



Photo by A. DeBroux

#### Yet another Fun Fact

Because of their large size, compact bones, and long-standing popularity as a dinner item, turkeys have a better known fossil record than most other birds. Turkey fossils have been unearthed across the southern United States and Mexico, some of them dating from more than 5 million years ago.

From: [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/wild\\_turkey/lifehistory](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/wild_turkey/lifehistory)

## Turkey in the woods

We enjoy wild turkeys here in our Bainbridge Township woods. We can't see them very well while the trees are still in leaf, but can sure hear them! And, when the trees are bare, they are very, very entertaining to watch.

Last year we had a flock of about 19 that were walking along the ridge line on the other side of our ravine. They decided that they were going to traverse over to our side and proceeded down the ravine – in single file. That was a delight to watch. They looked like school kids (better, really), their line was so perfect. They came over to our side of the ravine to eat acorns and seeds scattered beneath our feeders, which hang off the back deck. We were within feet of them. As they ate, they again began to line up singly and then walked the length of our deck and proceeded down the ravine again. This time, when they got to the bottom, a few of them decided to fly across ... another delight to witness.

With the leaves now coming down, I'm looking forward to again being able to see them in "full view" rather than merely catching glimpses of them from time-to-time.

—Diann Rucki

If you really love stuffing, wait until the turkey comes out of the oven, add some of the pan drippings to the stuffing, and bake it in a dish. That's called dressing, and it's not evil.

—Alton Brown

### 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](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org)

Thank you for your help!

## In Case You Missed It!

September 21—Our “Last Day of Summer” walk’s morning sun was missing and a cool rain fell, but then the sun burst out and we flushed a barred owl attempting to while away the day in secret peace. It was a good omen. We enjoyed the beautiful fall bloom of calico aster, white wood aster, blue-stemmed goldenrod, silverrod, great lobelia and ladies’ tresses. The icing on the cake was the amazing blue of both fringed and bottle gentian. A belted kingfisher swooped by to the calls of gray catbird, Eastern wood-peewee, black

-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, and tufted titmouse. We saw evidence of a “clam-bake” on the shore—piles of freshwater mussel shells. Who had the party? Could it be mink, river otter, or raccoon? Yes, some leaves were changing color: brilliant red poison ivy and Virginia creeper along with the yellow-orange sugar maple and others. As we walked out a barred owl called, “Who cooks for you!” What a great way to spend the last afternoon of summer!

—Jim Tomko

### From the Nest...

(Continued from page 1)

speakers at the Novak Education Center and/or the Museum of Natural History, depending on the results of our survey.

“Project Que” may have funds for two more years with ASGC to continue funding the day at Novak.

Current student research projects involve earthworm collection and identification, and DNA sequencing as part of the Kirtlandia Research Day at CMNH.

The Sanctuary Committee reported

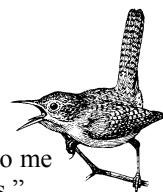
that repair of the Novak observation blind is underway. Vandals have removed a number of slats in the front of the building, opening an unobstructed view of the birdlife in the marsh.

If you are interested in participating in a committee, please call 216-556-5441, or email [auduboncleveland@hotmail.com](mailto:auduboncleveland@hotmail.com).

Finally, I would like to thank Jim Tomko, Sandy Buckles, Diann Rucki, John Lillich and Mark Demyan for contributing to this Turkey of a newsletter!

—Alison DeBroux, Editor

## The Squawk



“Look like chimney swifts to me with their short squared tails.”

—Harvey Webster

“Agreed.

Definitely chimney swifts.”

—Andy Jones

“They definitely [are] chimney swifts. I know of no other bird that behaves in that manner.”

—Jim Tomko



“UNCLE! You have convinced me. After looking at [the] photo in color, the ratio of bird to chimney looks more reasonable than what it did in black and white in the newsletter.”

—John Lillich

For the last word, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKR0Og5Cds> with Geauga Park District Senior Naturalist, Dan Best.

—Editor

Send your comments, questions, or complaints to [thehousewren@gmail.com](mailto:thehousewren@gmail.com) or via snail mail to our regular address.

## Upcoming Events

### Saturday Afternoon Backyard Naturalist Series

#### November 16 3:00-5:00pm

“Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge: Conserving the Future”

Jason Lewis  
Refuge Manager,  
Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge

Prior to coming to northwest Ohio, Jason spent 4 years at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri and 7 years at Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge in Indiana. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Ball State University. For his graduate thesis, Jason studied the nest-site selection and productivity of the Acadian Flycatcher in the Appalachian Mountains of southwestern Virginia. Jason is an avid birdwatcher and enjoys running, photography, and outdoor recreation.

#### December 14 3:00-5:00pm

“Gardening for the Birds”

James F. McCarty,  
Plain Dealer Columnist  
“The Aerial View”

#### January 25 3:00-5:00pm

“New Years Gathering for Audubon Neighbors and Friends”

Special Guest: Adam Wohlever, ODNR

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

Visit our website at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org) for directions and more information.

### Field Trips

#### November 9 9:30am

“Turkey in the Woods!”

Novak Sanctuary

With wild turkey on our mind (the bird not the bottle!), join our search of the Novak Sanctuary for these wary and amazing birds. At one time they were extirpated from our area but now can be found in almost every county in the region. Learn some interesting turkey trivia to banter around the Thanksgiving table as we hike this woodland that has been recovering since the 1950's. Meet at the parking lot on the east side of Townline, about a mile north of St. Rt. 82 in Aurora.

#### December 20 7:00pm

“Annual Winter Solstice Hike”

Aurora Sanctuary

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CLEVELAND (S 70)

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**To contact an individual trustee, please leave a message at 216-556-5441****Or send an email to****auduboncleveland@hotmail.com****Like us on Facebook!**

Please recycle this newsletter

***A Wry Smile***

Q: Why can't you take a turkey to church? A: They use FOWL language.

Q: What happened when the turkey got into a fight? A: He got the stuffing knocked out of him!

From: <http://www.jokes4us.com/holidayjokes/>

**Lake County dedicates new Metropark****Lake Erie Bluffs a lakefront gem**

It was a cool mid-September day. A breeze from the north with broken clouds made an almost perfect setting. Carol and I were there to participate in the opening of Lake Metroparks' newest park, Lake Erie Bluffs. While we waited, we were treated to bald eagles soaring and turning on the wind. It was an inspiring sight.

The new park boasts 600 acres of woods, wetlands and meadows. The shoreline consists of 1.6 miles of undeveloped sand, cobble and driftwood beach. I felt like I had been transported back at least 100 years. The only clue to our present time were the twin cooling towers at the Perry Power Plant on the distant eastern horizon.

Lake Erie Bluffs was first conceived some 20 years ago and took a wide range of partners to complete the conservation effort. Funding came from Clean Ohio Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cleveland Foundation, Ohio EPA, and many others. Dedicated support came from Western Reserve Land Conservancy and Trust for Public Land as well as co-operation and support



from public officials.

Lake Erie Bluffs is a place Lake County can be proud of. A development plan is in process. Items under consideration include a 50-foot observation tower, handicap-accessible overlooks, primitive camping sites, an all-season pavilion, and an additional 5 miles of walking trails. When completed it will be one of the premier lakefront parks in the Great Lakes region.

The Park is easily accessible from U.S. Route 20 and Interstate 90 through two entrances on Lane Road and Clark Road in Perry Township. Watch for Lake Metropark direction signs.

—John Lillich

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