



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

September, 2015

Annual Meeting attendees vote in new president

Our Annual Meeting and Dinner was held June 6th at the Canalway Visitor's Center of Cleveland Metroparks. This location provided a built-in opportunity for a leisurely bird walk along the Towpath, with the chance to see scarlet tanagers, indigo buntings and Baltimore orioles.

Following the walk, the evening's planning committee led by Jim Tomko, determined to bring back the traditional wine and cheese reception. It was well-received, with a luscious, non-alcoholic punch available for those who preferred not to imbibe. Some even chose to mix the two with, admittedly, mixed results.

Then it was time for business, and Bud Shaw, membership chair, took the podium. The vote for officers came first, with Jim Tomko moving into the



New trustee Kathy Cochran (right) enjoys the meeting with her mother, Kay Petey.

president's position, Alison DeBroux taking up the VP's post, and Carol Lillich and John Weber returning as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Attendees then voted for the slate of trustees. John Lillich and Mary Salomon

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**Upcoming events
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Bob Salomon receives 2015 Seeley Award

This year the Seeley Award was presented to Bob Salomon for his service as an "unsung hero." He has been working behind the scenes contributing to our original



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ASGC launches new website



The ASGC has a new website! Same name, new look. For years, our website

has been designed and managed by the generous volunteer labor provided by Bob Salomon (see sidebar) and finally, the board decided it was time for a professionally managed, new site that represented the organization that we have become.

Then president Mark Demyan enlisted the services of consultant and web guru Sharon Swaney, wife of

former ASGC trustee Rob Swaney. Sharon is a retired Hewlett-Packard consultant and feeds her interest in computers by designing websites for non-profit organizations. To assist, an ad-hoc committee consisting of Mark, Jim Tomko, Carol and John Lillich, and Alison DeBroux was formed. Computer expert Stephen Cassidy was also

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From the Nest...

Thank you for electing me to the position of President of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC). I appreciate your confidence in choosing me as our leader and I will do my utmost to represent your best interest and alleviate your concerns. I realize that we cannot achieve our new goals without your help. The board of trustees has some big plans for the future of ASGC and there are many opportunities for



your volunteer help. We need the expertise of attorneys, computer programmers, landscapers, teachers, marketers, fund raisers, accountants, politicians, local lobbyists, engineers, birders, and many others. As you will note not all of these involve hiking and birding. Some are indoor, behind the scenes organizing and planning. Why not lend a hand so that together we can develop the ASGC into a powerful and influential group promoting wildlife and conservation of

our natural resources? We truly need your help! Please contact us to let us know how you can contribute.

—Jim Tomko, President

Board Meeting 7/28/2015

Board meetings will be changed from six a year to quarterly, with the idea that committees will meet more frequently, decide what needs to be done, and get board approval if needed.

The Sanctuary Committee reported that buckwheat is coming up in the

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Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

This is a bird of unmatched elegance! If you get a close look at our cedar waxwings, you will be hard pressed to describe the beauty of their plumage. With their suave, swept-back crests and their silky hues of tan, combined with a jaunty jet-black mask and chin, a lemon-yellow band on the end of the tail feathers and their namesake's red wax-like drippings on the tips of their inner wing feathers, these birds are regal beauties.

In our area, we can see these birds any time of year but in the autumn and winter they form large, nomadic feeding flocks. Cedar waxwings love fruit and a flock can strip a crabapple, hawthorn, or cherry tree in a matter of hours! Cedar waxwings are known for sharing fruit with each other. They can be observed sitting on a wire or a branch while passing a berry from one to another to another. They also eat insects and will sometimes take on the flycatcher's habit of sortieing out from a perch to catch an insect in mid-air before returning to its perch.

This is a highly sociable species that evidently does not establish and defend nesting territories. These birds are one of the few North American songbirds that nest in colonies. Cedar waxwings build a grass nest five to fifty feet above the ground lined with fine rootlets, grass, and plant down. Three to six pale bluish-gray eggs are incubated by the female for twelve to fourteen days. The male will feed the female as she incubates. The nestlings are ready to leave the nest when sixteen to eighteen days old.

If you go out right now and take a look at your fruit trees that are currently holding their fruit, you may be lucky enough to see a flock descend and gorge themselves!

—Jim Tomko

Bird surveyors up against 4th wettest June in history

The ASGC held our annual nesting bird count at the Novak Sanctuary this year at 6 am, Sunday June 7th, and at the Aurora Sanctuary (after being rained out for the first time in eleven years) at 6 am Wednesday, June 24th.

At the Novak Sanctuary, the team led by Jim Tomko with Steve Zabor recording, surveyed the section to the east of Townline Road while the other team, led by Kim Pease with Kathryn Craig recording, worked in the section to the west of Townline Road. Participants included David Platt, Kenny Kresina, Marty Sickinger, Laurenda Messer, Mary Salomon, Barb Philbrick, Elain Murtugh, and John Scenderak.

On the west side, two species were observed for the first time, a fly-over of six ring-billed gulls and a turkey vulture. Unusually large numbers of grey catbirds, chimney swifts, and red-

winged blackbirds were seen. After an absence of many years, a blue-winged warbler, a magnolia warbler, and an American woodcock were found. Great blue heron numbers continue to be very low and there were no ovenbirds, but we'll all be happy to know that our bald eagle continues to be in residence. In total, the second highest number of individual birds (220) and number of different species (49) were reported.

On the east side the number of individual birds (129) and number of different species (34) continues to decline. The American goldfinch, Northern cardinal, and Acadian flycatcher were well represented, but there hasn't been an ovenbird reported there since five years ago, when there were six of them.

Jim Tomko (lead), Laurenda Messer
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Seeley Award

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website from its design years ago to continuing as "Webmaster" with its ongoing maintenance. Bob personally financed the original website from its inception. We thank Bob for his time, energy and contributions. We wish him a well-earned retirement from his webmaster duties.



Flora or fauna? White egret orchid.

From the Nest

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Molnar field. Not all of the seedling trees that the committee planted are surviving, but some are and hopefully they will survive through the deer season. The buckthorn is also coming back, but it is still small and tender and the committee is thinking of not mowing

this year as this will provide cover for snakes, rodents, salamanders, etc., and will mow next year.

The Education Committee reported on an upcoming new event, the Chagrin River Bird Quest, and a new committee member, Janice Slife.

—From the minutes, Carol Lillich,
Secretary

Annual Dinner

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resumed their trusteeships after a short hiatus, and Kathy Cochran was voted in for her first term. Congratulations to everyone!

Outgoing president Mark Demyan took the podium next to present awards. Sarah Mabey and Joe Malmisur received awards for special service to the organization. Bob Salomon, long-time webmaster, received this year's Seeley Award (see sidebar).

Dinner was casual buffet-style, and everyone agreed it was one of the finest

spreads we've had in recent memory. Rave reviews go to the caterer, Dab of Class in Aurora, for their pork medallions in cherry sauce, chicken Marsala, and most especially, their lemon bars for dessert!

A last minute change to the evening's program brought in photographer Chuck Slusarczyk, whose specialty is birding along Lake Erie for gulls and other shorebirds. He treated the assembly to an array of photos depicting the amazing variety of gulls and other birds that fly, feed and live along Lake Erie's shores.

An enjoyable evening was had by all.

In case you missed it!

On June 20th we explored the former Aurora Country Club which was purchased by the City of Aurora and is currently being restored to its natural state.

An intrepid group of hikers began the hike under a mostly cloudy sky, then withstood an almost constant drizzle that turned into a couple of downpours causing us all to get thoroughly soaked. Fortunately it was a warm day.

Our theme was “Finding Fledglings”. Well, all self-respecting fledglings were invisible while sheltered from the rain. We were impressed with

the thousands of native trees, wild flowers and grasses that have been planted throughout the property. This area will become an excellent birding spot due to the variety of habitats. We can anticipate that the owls that spend the day roosting in the Pine grove on Audubon property will have an excellent place to hunt at night on the recovering golf course property.

—Jim Tomko

Bird Count

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(recorder), Kenny Kresina, and Rob Swaney surveyed the Aurora Sanctuary on June 24th. Some of the highlights of the count are: 22 red-eyed vireo, 4 scarlet tanager, 8 wood thrush, 1 wild turkey, 1 rose-breasted grosbeak, 1 willow flycatcher, 1 least flycatcher, 5 Acadian flycatchers, 3 great-crested flycatchers, 1 indigo bunting, 1 swamp sparrow, 1 common yellow throat, 4 hooded warblers, 5 yellow warblers, and 2 cedar waxwings. On the whole, the numbers in the Aurora Sanctuary count appeared to be about normal.

—Laurenda Messer

Website Launch

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recruited.

As the new site's “architect,” Sharon instructed the rest of us in how to build a website from the ground up. Seemingly small decisions, such as how the logo would be configured and where it was to go, assumed elephantine proportions. Using the colors from the logo seemed obvious, until we realized they didn't work as backgrounds or font colors. Where should events go? Should we

have an FAQ page? How would the sanctuaries be presented? These questions and many more had to be answered. So many things to consider, it seemed like it would never get done!

But Sharon had confidence. “I worked with a dream team to gather and arrange data about the society,” she says. “The philosophy for the new site was to start simple and grow as interest and involvement in the site (by members and visitors) dictates.”

So we started “simple,” and only a

little lost sleep later, we are up and running. Please visit www.clevelandaudubon.org and let us know what you think!

The Squawk



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

Upcoming Events

The Backyard Naturalist

Field Trips

September 12 3:00—5:00pm

“What Is Audubon?”

John Lillich, Jim Tomko & Harvey Webster

Join ASGC experts as they try to answer who and what we are. Explore some history and our current sanctuaries—where they are and what you can find in them. Then get answers to the age-old questions: What does it mean to be a chapter of the National Audubon Society? Why do I get so much mail? Where do my donations go? Who runs this organization, anyway? Bring your own questions—stump our experts and win a prize!

September 26 3:00—5:00pm

“Introduction to Birding”

Dr. Sarah Mabey, Hiram College

Join us for this special edition of The Backyard Naturalist, presented in conjunction with our new Chagrin River Bird Quest. Learn birding tips and tricks, what birds are to be found in October, what is an IBA, and register for the October event (and get a free t-shirt!).

The Backyard Naturalist is held at our Novak Education Center, 382 Townline Road, Aurora.

September 26 3:00pm

“Amazing Blues of the Season”

Aurora Sanctuary

You have to see the spectacular blue of the Bottle Gentian and the more unusual and rarer Fringed Gentian which will be in fantastic bloom along with an orchid relative, Ladies Tresses, and other fall wildflowers adding yellows, purples, and white. Be dazzled by the beauty and diversity of our native local flora. Hope for a sunny day so that the blooms will be wide open and soaking up the rays as our days shorten and autumn begins. Meet at the Bretschneider Park parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail, a few hundred yards east of Page Road in Aurora

Chagrin River Bird Quest

October 17 3:00pm

“Nature's Own Palette and Brush”

Aurora Sanctuary

4pm Friday, October 9 to 4pm Saturday, October 10

Join our first ever team birding event in partnership with Cleveland Metroparks! Get your team together and have a really BIG DAY—of birding! Beginners encouraged to participate. Team check-in and awards at the incomparable Look About Lodge. See page 4 for details, or visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org.

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER
CLEVELAND (S 70)
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Alison DeBroux <i>Vice President</i>	Penny Orr
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Or send an email to
info@clevelandaudubon.org

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A Wry Smile



Sign in a Laundromat:

Automatic washing machines:

Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

—Anonymous

Chagrin River **BIRD QUEST**

4 pm Friday, October 9th to
4 pm Saturday, October 10th

Join the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland and Cleveland Metroparks for our first team birding event! Get your team together and explore the Chagrin River Valley from Lake Erie south to Audubon's bird sanctuaries in Aurora in search of fall residents and migrants. Start in your own backyard, bird on your own, or join naturalists for a guided hike. How many species can your team check off in 24 hours?

Teams

Share the day with family, friends, co-workers and classmates! Teams can be two or more, young or old, experienced birders or never birded before! One team member must be 18 or older with a valid driver's license. Win a prize for the most creative team name!

Schedule of Events

September 26

Attend our FREE introductory birding workshop. 3-5 pm at the Novak Education Center, 382 Townline Road in Aurora.

October 9

Team check-in and final registration. Pick up maps, checklists, t-shirts (free with early registration!), and talk strategy with teammates and naturalists. 4-6 pm at Look About Lodge, South Chagrin Reservation.

October 10

Checklist Turn-in 4-5 pm and
Awards and refreshments 5-6:30 at Look About Lodge.

Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org for a list of optional guided hikes and registration information.



Go for an Owl Prowl!

DATED MAIL

