



# The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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Visit our website at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org)

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## The strange case of the disappearing ornithologist

In 1913, Charles J. Pennock left a meeting of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club (DVOC) and disappeared. A missing persons bulletin described him as age 55, wearing a dark suit with gray stripes and standup collar, with close cropped whiskers and somewhat gray hair.

He is important to our story because in the late 1800s he purchased from a Philadelphia print shop a crate of almost 300 John James Audubon prints. These were 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition original lithographs, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen, also of Philadelphia. They were the small octavo prints, and the family



One of the 235 Audubon prints donated to the ASGC.

often framed one or two and gave them as gifts.

Pennock's granddaughter, Mary Scarlett Arth (86) of Aurora, recently donated the remaining 235 prints to the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland. She says they are part of our legacy, and she wants to see them with an organization that will appreciate

them.

Born in 1857 in Kennett Square, near Philadelphia, Charles Pennock nurtured a love of birds from an early age. He joined the DVOC in 1895, serving as its president from 1901 to 1903. He was appointed Ornithologist of the Delaware State Board of Agriculture and later became the Curator of the Oological Collection of the Academy of Natural



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## Exotic birding in Chile

I went on a three week Chile birding adventure this past fall (Chile's spring), traveling with Field Guides under the leadership of Peter Burke and Willy Perez. Chile is an amazing country – over 2000 miles north to south and around 300 miles east to west. First we visited the far south, including the famous Straits of Magellan and the island Tierra del Fuego. It was VERY windy! We saw a group of 50 three-foot-tall king penguins. They are so different than other birds—just hanging out



King penguin and chick.  
Photo: M. Salomon

socializing!

A bit further north we visited Torres del Paine National Park – famed for its mountain beauty, glaciers, and lakes. As we headed north, we encountered a group of Andean condors, with the biggest wingspan

in the world. As they were soaring, landing and taking off, we had excellent views of this legendary bird.

The capital Santiago is at the midsection of the country. We did pelagic birding in the Humboldt Current, seeing many species including smaller penguins as well as traveling inland to ski areas in the Andes. Each habitat features specialty birds. We were also awakened by a 6.8 magnitude earthquake near Santiago – no damage in the capital but over six million people

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## From the Nest...

Many thanks to those of you who have added the ASGC to your charitable donations this year. Your generosity helps us with our new IBA initiative and allows us to continue our educational programming.

Speaking of generosity, we have received a very generous donation from Mary Scarlett Arth of Aurora (see above article) of her family's collection of John James Audubon prints. To the best of



our knowledge (and hers), they are original 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Octavo lithographs, from around 1840-1871. Each measures about 6 1/2 x 10 1/2 inches. There are 235 of them in various conditions ranging from good to ripped to shreds.

Mrs. Arth insists she wants us to “make some money” from the prints, but depending on the bird depicted, some are worth more than others. Meanwhile, we have yet to determine what we will do with them. We may try to sell them

and “make some money,” or we may give them away as prizes for winning our photo contest or other event. If you are interested in knowing more, please check back or email us at [info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org) and we will share information as we get it. Thank you again, Mrs. Arth!

—Alison DeBroux, Editor

## President's Post

We extend our deep gratitude to those of you who donated to our Annual

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## Disappearing ornithologist

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Sciences, Philadelphia, where he made an effort to build a representative collection of eggs and nests. His research notes were published extensively in *The Auk*, one of the foremost journals in ornithology, and *The Wilson Bulletin*.

By all accounts, he was a respected businessman and ornithologist. What happened in 1913?

His family was baffled. By 1918, he was presumed dead and his wife donated his book, egg and bird collection to the Academy, including specimens of the now extinct Carolina parakeet, passenger pigeon and ivory-billed woodpecker.

But Charles was not dead. As he explained later, he wandered aimlessly about the southeastern United States, studying nature, watching birds and earning money from various odd jobs. He continued to write and publish under the name of John Williams from St. Marks, Florida. In late 1919, ornithologist Witmer Stone thought he recognized the writing style of Charles Pennock and contacted the family.

Six years after his disappearance, Pennock came home. His return was noted in *The New York Times* on January 1, 1920: "Suffering from a nervous disease, he had become victim of a

delusion that he had to leave everyone and bury himself. He was discovered ... buried in the forests of Florida where his only solace in his self-enforced exile was the companionship of the birds."

Pennock resumed his life and research. He retired from the DVOC in 1929, and passed away in 1935. In his



Mary Scarlett Arth of Aurora posing with a small sample of her family's collection of Audubon prints

obituary, Witmer Stone wrote that his "enthusiasm in field work was as contagious as his personality was delightful."

Our thanks to Mrs. Arth, not only for her generous donation of her family's Audubon prints, but for turning us on to the fascinating story of her grandfather, Charles Pennock.

—Alison DeBroux

## Critter Corner



### Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)

This is a bird that will make your jaw drop each time (especially the first time) you see it. The crow-sized pileated woodpecker at a length of up to 19 inches with a wingspan of 29 inches is among our largest non-raptor forest birds and is the largest woodpecker in North America. It is believed to be the sixth largest woodpecker in the world!

The mainly black plumage with white cheek and neck-lines in addition to white wing patches visible only in flight make this long, red-crested bird unmistakable. When you hear its call it is reminiscent of the tropical jungle sounds that those of us from the Tarzan vintage will remember.

Following the clearing of Ohio by settlers, the pileated woodpecker's population sharply declined in the early 1900's. These birds require large tracts of forest (likely at least 100 acres per pair) with dead timber both standing and fallen in which to nest and forage. Due to their remarkable adaptation to younger forests and with many farms returning to forest, they now can be seen any day of the year.

The chips really fly when they go after their favorite meal of carpenter ants and wood-boring beetle larva. The cavities they create are used by wood ducks, hooded mergansers, screech owls, chimney swifts, bats, squirrels, snakes and many other animals needing shelter.

Nests are in large trees 15 to 70 feet above the ground in a cavity up to two feet deep where three to five white eggs are incubated by both sexes for 18 days.

These are non-migratory birds and can more easily be detected in a forest during the winter as there are no leaves to obscure our view. They are commonly seen in all four of our wonderful sanctuaries. Take a relaxing nature-reconnection hike and you will be rewarded with a sighting!

—Jim Tomko

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Andean condor.

Photo: M. Salomon

## Chile birding trip

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had their sleep interrupted!

We ended up in the north of the country, in the famed Atacama Desert, the driest place on earth. There are oases in the valleys with rare hummingbirds as well as high elevation specialty birds, viewed as we went to high elevations of 14,000 feet.

Overall this trip was very special, with great company, beautiful scenery, and over 150 new species for my Life List.

—Mary Salomon  
ASGC Trustee

## From the Nest

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Appeal. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. If you have not had a chance to contribute, there is still time as we can always put your funds to good use. These donations help us to fund special projects keeping our

conservation and education projects going.

The Christmas Bird Counts are a great time to learn a few tips or encourage a beginner. The camaraderie is great and the winter birds are out there. You never know what may make

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## In case you missed it!

**December 18 7:00pm**  
“(Close to) Winter Solstice Hike”  
Aurora Sanctuary

This splendid night began with extremely light powdery snow flurries hitting our faces. The overcast broke into partly cloudy skies with the winter constellations keeping us company and the moon-glow lighting our way helping us celebrate one of the longest nights of the year. The forest was quiet except for

the wind in the trees. We sensed some movement on Hamman Pond which turned out to be a flock of geese. When we entered the area bordered by the white and red pine forest we enjoyed the muffled sounds and quiet caused by the thick carpet of pine needles. The moon shadows along the trail were magnificent and the reflections of the moon on the ponds and creeks were shimmering with beauty. Night hikes make a familiar path seem brand new again. Give it a try sometime!

—Jim Tomko

## The Squawk



Send your comments, questions,  
or complaints to  
[info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org)

### From the Nest

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an appearance.

The next opportunity to participate in important citizen science is the Great Backyard Bird Count. It takes place on February 12, 13, 14, and 15. You can make it as big and extravagant or as simple as you like. Just take a minimum of 15 minutes (or as long as you desire) to count and record all the birds you see and hear in that time frame. All you need to do is look out the kitchen window or go on a bird hike then report them online ([gbbcbirdcount.org](http://gbbcbirdcount.org)). It is very interesting to view the reports coming in from all over the world and to realize that we are contributing in our own small way to further knowledge of our fine feathered friends.

—Jim Tomko, President

### Did You Know?

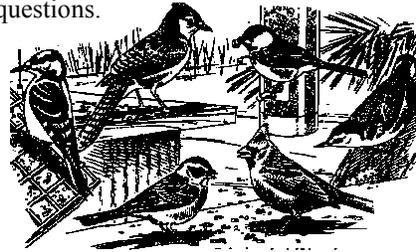
Since Pileated Woodpeckers require large trees in which to nest, the chosen tree is often the largest around making that tree a target for lightning. Due to the large nesting cavity the trees break at the level of the cavity excavation. There are photographs of a female pileated in the Everglades carrying her eggs lengthwise in her bill from the broken nest cavity to a new location!

Male pileateds can be distinguished from females by the male's red mustache! Next time you see one look for it.

—Jim Tomko

### Bird feeding program

ASGC Trustee John Lillich will present “Feeding Backyard Birds” on January 20th at 5:30pm at the Conneaut Public Library, 304 Buffalo Street, Conneaut, Ohio. Light refreshments will be offered. Call 440-593-1608 with questions.



## Upcoming Events

### Scout Day 2016

**February 27 Two sessions:**  
**10:00am - 12:00pm 1:00pm - 3:00pm**  
Novak Education Center  
382 Townline Road, Aurora

A Junior Birding Patch Program for scouts K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Boys and girls welcome. Participants learn about birds in a variety of hands-on activities, and receive a one-year membership to the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, a Junior Birder patch and some cool things to take home. Register individual scouts or troops at [education@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:education@clevelandaudubon.org). Space is limited, so sign up today!

If you don't have a scout, sign up yourself—we are looking for volunteer instructors for our program!



**January 16 9:30am**  
“Winter Track Walk”  
Novak Sanctuary

An inch of fresh snow will hold the impressions of footprints giving us the clues as to who or what has walked the trail before us. There are numerous possibilities from coyotes to wild turkeys. Many resident wildlife are so shy and retiring that we don't even know what species share the woods with us. Dramatic predator/prey life and death stories can be read by looking at the signs in the snow along the trail. Please join us at the Novak Sanctuary parking lot on the east side of Townline Road a little more than a half mile north of State Route 82 on the Aurora/Mantua border.

### Field Trips

**February 14 8:00am**  
“Great Backyard Bird Count”  
Aurora Sanctuary

Help us contribute data to the Great Backyard Bird Count by participating in our annual winter bird survey. We will be recording every bird we see or hear along the trail in the beautiful Aurora Sanctuary. This is a great time for beginning birders as it is easy to locate our quarry with no leaves to obscure and frustrate observation. Most winter birds in our area are easy to identify and there is a lower number of species so as not to overwhelm the new birder. Often an unusual species makes an appearance to add to the excitement. Meet at the Bretschneider Park parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Road in Aurora.

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## Report on Global Climate Change Agreement

When 195 world leaders approved the global agreement to meet a science-based target for reducing greenhouse gases, I thought: This is what the starting line looks like. In a big, messy process like COP21, getting started toward a common goal is the first hurdle and often the toughest. Nobody ever finished a marathon by starting at Mile 26, and my view is that the reporting out of Paris didn't give enough credit to the world leaders for just getting started. After all, this may well be the most significant environmental agreement in history.

Across America, Audubon's members and leaders helped create demand for this agreement. We've worked on renewable energy standards from New York to Ohio to California; we brought the impact on birds into the public conversation; chapter members from Florida to Seattle have used our science to raise awareness about sea level rise. And, of course, we're doing this work with like-minded partner organizations across the hemisphere, from the Garden Club of America to Calidris in Colombia.

In the lead up to the Paris talks, Audubon and BirdLife International published a report that showed that more than one-fifth of all bird species across the globe are threatened by climate change. We saw more than 220,000 visits online, and hard copies of the report made their way into the hands of negotiators – including France's President Hollande. Our #BirdsTellUs social media campaign was used nearly 10,000 times on Twitter.

While the Paris agreement is the floor and not the ceiling of what's needed or what's possible, it refills our reservoirs of hope as we continue to build out our local, state, national and hemispheric efforts over the next five years.

Thanks to each of you. You're what hope looks like to a bird.

*From a letter by  
David Yarnold, President  
National Audubon Society*

### *A Wry Smile*



Most of the time...  
When you're crying, nobody notices your tears. When you're happy, nobody sees your smile. When you're worried, nobody feels your pain.  
But when you fart just one time...

**DATED MAIL**

