



# 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)

May, 2016

## 2016 Annual Meeting set for June 4th

Join us at the lovely Nature Center at Shaker Lakes for our Annual Meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup>. We will start with a short nature walk on the boardwalk around Shaker Lakes, followed by our Meet & Greet reception at four o'clock.



The boardwalk at Shaker Lakes

Photo: CKL

The chapter meeting follows and we have a special treat this year. We will be announcing the winners of our first ever photo

contest! The winning photos will be on display throughout the evening.

Following a buffet-style, catered dinner, welcome our special guest Jeffrey Hall, a writer and photographer from Franklin, Pa. Jeffrey's articles and photographs have appeared in *Living Bird*, *NJ Audubon*, *Underwater Naturalist*, and numerous other publications, as well as the Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology's website. His most recent presentation for ASGC was at last November's Backyard Naturalist program. Jeffrey retired in 2011 after 25 years of teaching biology. He is president of Bartramian Audubon Society and also active in Seneca Rocks Audubon Society.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes was founded in 1966 as the result of a grassroots community effort to preserve the Shaker Parklands from becoming the route for a new freeway connecting Cleveland's East Side to downtown. City and suburban residents found that they could enjoy the area along the Doan Brook, from Warrensville Center Road through

Rockefeller Park to Lake Erie, and stay in touch with the natural world.

The Nature Center is located at 2600 South Park Boulevard in Cleveland, OH. For directions, contact the Nature Center at 216-321-5935 or email [naturecenter@shakerlakes.org](mailto:naturecenter@shakerlakes.org).



For advance reservations (\$20, half price for seniors and children), send a check with your reservation information to our regular address at P.O. Box 391037, Solon, OH 44139, or pay via Paypal at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org) by May 30th.

## ASGC Annual Meeting June 4<sup>th</sup> 2016

### Nature Center at Shaker Lakes

3:00 Bird walk along the boardwalk

4:00 Meet & Greet Reception

5:00 Chapter meeting and awards  
Announcing Photo Contest Winners!

6:00 Dinner

7:00 Jeffrey Hall "The Galapagos"

Cost: \$20 in advance (by May 30)  
or \$22 at the door. Half price for  
seniors 65+ and children (15 and  
under)

Please make reservations at  
[info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org)



The textures of nature: can you guess what this is? (Hint: its owner is pictured on page 4)  
Photo: M. Valencic

## From the Nest...

Excitement abounds as our summer birds return and they, along with our year-round residents begin nesting. Migrants can end up anywhere if they get off course so we should all keep an eye out for odd species in unusual locations. You never know what will turn up. That is part of the great intrigue



of birding! I hope that you will be able to help us out on our annual breeding bird survey that occurs in

both the Novak and the Aurora Sanctuary in early to mid-June. Check the website for details as they become available at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org). We are on the trail at 6:00 am and finish in 2.5 -3 hours. It is great fun to discover who is living there!

Please join us for our annual meeting as we have an excellent speaker on the schedule at an excellent nature facility. Those who have visited Shaker Lakes Nature Center will look forward to a return trip. Those who have never visited will enjoy it immensely. An easy bird hike starting around 3:00 will get the festivities started. I hope to see you there.

—Jim Tomko, President

## 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Series of Spring Bird Walks

Walks are led by experienced birders and will be held on Sundays through May 15, 2016 at 7:30 a.m. at the following locations:

**Aurora Audubon Sanctuary** Parking lot east of Page Rd. on E. Pioneer Trail, east of routes 306 and 43, Aurora. 216-337-2202

**Bedford Reservation** Hemlock Creek Picnic Area parking lot, off Button Rd., Bedford. 330-715-6300

**Big Creek Reservation** Lake Isaac, Big Creek Parkway, Middleburg Heights. 440-891-1710

**Brecksville Reservation** Parking area at Station Rd. Bridge Trailhead, off Riverview Rd. south of route 82, Brecksville. 330-467-3664

**Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve** Lakefront Office parking lot, 8701 Lake Shore Blvd., Cleveland. 440-887-1968

**Geauga Park District** Various locations, Geauga County. 440-286-9516

**Hinckley Reservation** Bridge at the south end of Hinckley Lake, on State Rd., Hinckley. 330-625-5503

**Hiram** James H. Barrow Field Station (Hiram College), 11305 Wheeler Road, Hiram. 330-527-2141

**Holden Arboretum** Main parking lot off Sperry Rd., Kirtland. 440-946-4400

**Huntington Reservation** Lake Erie Nature & Science Center, 28728 Wolf Rd., Bay Village. 440-471-8357

**Lake Metroparks** Lake Erie Bluffs, 2901 Clark Rd., Perry Township. 440-256-1404, ext. 2112

### Gates Mills Bird Walks Sundays at 7:30 a.m.

Leaders: John Lillich & Buster Banish  
May 1  
Squire Valleeve Farm, CWRU,  
Use entrance on Fairmount Road

May 8  
White/North Property, 3160 Chagrin River Rd. Park next to garages on right side of property

May 15  
Squire Valleeve Farm, CWRU  
Enter through Valley Ridge Farm, off Chagrin River Road, 0.7 miles north of Fairmount

**Mentor Marsh** Parking area on Headlands Rd., Mentor. 440-257-0777

**North Chagrin Reservation** Sunset Pond, off Buttermilk Falls Parkway, Mayfield Village. 440-473-3370

**Novak Audubon Sanctuary** Parking lot north of Rt. 82 on Townline Rd., Aurora. 440-543-6399

**Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation** Visitor Center parking lot, Whittlesey Way off E. 49<sup>th</sup> St., Cuyahoga Hts. 216-206-1000

**Rocky River Reservation** Rocky River Nature Center parking lot, 24000 Valley Parkway, North Olmsted. 216-924-0188

**The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes** 2600 South Park Blvd., Shaker Heights. 216-321-5935

**South Chagrin Reservation** Jackson Rd. parking lot, off Chagrin River Rd. (between Miles Rd. and Chagrin Blvd.), Moreland Hills. 440-473-3370

Co-sponsored by Cleveland Metroparks, The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society, Geauga Park District, Lake Metroparks, Lake Erie Nature and Science Center and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

Fledgling great horned owl.  
Photo:  
M. Valencic



### Did you know?

Brown-headed cowbirds lay their eggs in other birds' nests including the American goldfinch's. Many birds will not recognize the cowbird egg or hatchling as foreign and raise it as their own at the expense of their own offspring's survival. Most songbirds feed their young insects, spiders, and worms on which the cowbird baby thrives and out-competes its adopted family's young. Since American goldfinches feed their young almost exclusively a vegetarian diet of seeds the cowbird chicks almost never survive. What a great strategy to defend your young against this bully!

—Jim Tomko

### Critter Corner



### American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*)

They have returned! Actually they never left! Many people ask where the bright yellow “wild canaries” have gone in the fall not realizing that the males have molted from their summer breeding plumage into the more somber olive-brown winter dress.

In full breeding regalia with bright yellow back and breast sharply contrasting with their black wings, tail and cap they cannot help but brighten the day. For small birds at about five inches long with a nine-inch wingspan they cannot be missed. They have a distinct, undulating flight and a distinguishing flight call that sounds like “potato chip, potato chip, potato chip”.

American goldfinches are primarily seed eaters and are especially fond of niger. Nijer seed is not commonly eaten by squirrels so that feeder is left exclusively to the birds.

These birds love bushy, weedy places and woodland edges. They build a tightly woven, thick-walled nest that can even hold water! The incubating female has to cover the nest opening and the hatchlings to guard against the potential flood! The nest is lined with thistle down and therefore this species is a late nester, often not nesting until August or September when the thistle-down is available. The nest site is one to 60 feet above the ground in a shrub or tree. Usually four to six bluish-white eggs are laid and incubated by the female for 12-14 days. The young are fed a diet of hulled and pre-digested plant seeds allowing all the young to be fed at once instead of one or two at a time.

Enjoy this lively species by leaving a section of your yard un-mown and weedy providing food and cover. “My” goldfinches are in my garden all winter as I leave the spent plants and stalks standing until spring. What a treasure these golden nuggets are!

—Jim Tomko

## The Squawk



"I work downtown on 9th Street. Saturday, there was a deceased long billed bird on the sidewalk in front of the Ohio Savings Plaza on the corner of 9th and Chester. On Sunday, in front of the Huntington Bank Building, I saw a similar long billed bird but this one was clearly alive, but just huddled up near the edge of the building on the sidewalk. I suspected it was the mate of the bird that passed away. Later in the afternoon, it was no longer there. This morning, however, it was located near 4th Street and Euclid where the Corner Alley is, on the Euclid side. It's plumage is unlike any I've ever seen, blonde, gold, black, some brown. Its feathers remind me of a butterfly. I have a picture that I could email to you. I feel badly for this bird and would like to get someone to help it or get it out of harm's way downtown. It is clearly heartbroken."

—Jessica (from an email)

Dear Jessica,

You have discovered an American

Woodcock. Their plumage is beautiful with the subtle shades of brown, black, gray and white. They blend into the forest floor perfectly. Woodcocks are migrating north right now and we have an amazing number in our area at this time. Some stay for the summer while some continue north. Downtown the usual cause of their demise is collisions with windows in the buildings. They perceive the reflection of the sky and trees in the window as a legitimate flyway and injure themselves or kill themselves with a hard collision. I feel very badly for them also. The "heart broken" individual may actually be stunned or injured from a collision. Woodcocks are not the type to mate for life or even a season. Males advertise their location with a song and dance then multiple females fly in to mate after which they go off on their own nest and raise their young with no male assistance. The only help you could give is to relocate the bird into some shrubbery or overgrown area and allow it to continue its migration.

Thank you for reporting this observation. We are trying to promote the "lights out" initiative so that the



American woodcock

Photo: M. Valencic

night lights on the buildings do not confuse the migrants during their journey.

—Jim Tomko



Fledgling GHO talons are still, well, talons...

Photo: M. Valencic

## Upcoming Events

### 2016 Annual Meeting

Our 2016 Annual Meeting will be **June 4th** at the Nature Center of Shaker Lakes. We will announce the winners of our first ever photo contest! As always, a bird walk will precede the festivities, which begin at 4pm.

Presentation by Jeffrey Hall: "A Galapagos Adventure." One of the most scientifically important and biologically outstanding places in the world, the Galapagos Islands are a "dream destination" for the devoted naturalist.



**Cost: \$20 in advance (by May 30) or \$22 at the door. Half price for seniors 65+ and children (15 and under)**

**Please make reservations at [info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org)**

### Summer Field Trips

**June (TBA) Saturday 5:45am**  
"Breeding Bird Survey"  
Aurora & Novak Sanctuaries

Help us count every bird we see and hear on this early morning survey. This event has been organized and compiled by trustee Mary Salomon for over 10 years. She has shown us trends in the number and kinds of species using our sanctuaries. The data has been added and will continue to advance our study of the Chagrin River Corridor Important Bird Area (IBA). We are trying to show how important our IBA is and why it needs to be preserved. The dates will be forthcoming and will be announced on our website as soon as possible at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org).

**July 8 7:30pm**  
"Twilight Hike"  
Novak Sanctuary

Twilight is a special time for wildlife when roosting activity is occurring for the diurnal (day-time) creatures and wakening activity is occurring for the nocturnal creatures. Of course the crepuscular (twilight) creatures are at their ideal time of day. It is a cooler time of day and the fading light and lengthening shadows allow more concealment so that animals move about more freely. Often we hear owls, coyote, fox, raccoon, and deer. Many birds will be singing their call to roost song. Let's see what we can turn up! Meet at the Novak Sanctuary parking lot located on the east side of Townline Rd. less than a mile north of St. Rt. 82 on the Aurora/Mantua border.

**August 27 9:00am**  
"Prairie Hike"  
Frohning Meadow Park

See website for details.

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Or send an email to [info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org)

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*A Wry Smile*



Ate salad for dinner! Mostly croutons & tomatoes. Really just one big, round crouton covered with tomato sauce. And cheese.  
FINE, it was a pizza. I ate a pizza.

—Everyone(?)



## Chagrin River Headwaters Preserve

The work being done at Chagrin River Headwaters Preserve (CRHP) falls within the first goal for the Chagrin River Corridor IBA

Project – “Assess avian diversity across the annual cycle and representative habitats within the Chagrin River Corridor IBA.”

There are areas within the IBA we know little about. These are mostly not available to the public or have been overlooked by the birding public. The headwaters of all three branches of the Chagrin River fall into this category. They are mostly on private lands or not open for public access.

Chagrin River Headwaters Preserve is the headwaters for the Aurora Branch of Chagrin River and is owned by

Portage County Parks. While physically close to Audubon properties, no specific bird data is available for this site. They have allowed us limited access to gather data about the birds and other animals that use the area for part or all of the year. In return we will share that information with them.

Progress as of April 6 2016:

- 9 bird surveys have been completed identifying 41 species of birds including some early migrants and probable breeding birds (Red-tailed Hawk and Eastern Bluebird)
- The broad habitats have been photographed, described and reported to the IBA Committee
- Some mammals and amphibians have been observed and recorded
- The first monthly report to the IBA Committee was submitted March 12, 2016

—Matt Valencic

### Annual Meeting June 4th!

Make your reservations today at [info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org)

DATED MAIL

