



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

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A voice for birds

As the voice of birds, Audubon has worked to protect funding for the places birds need for 111 years—with Democrat and Republican presidents and across party lines in Congress. And in the coming weeks and months, we will work harder than ever with our elected representatives on both sides of the political aisle to make sure we continue to protect the clean air, clean water, and stable climate birds and people need to thrive.

It's clear that this administration, left unchecked, will fundamentally step back from all of those protections in the name of reducing the role of government. While it's the nature of bureaucracies to need an occasional pruning, other agendas are at work, serving special interests like big oil and coal as well as the super-wealthy.

Audubon's leadership chooses to engage with this administration as we have with 28 that preceded it. We simply won't stand aside while the future of the Arctic Wilderness or Endangered

Species Act gets decided. But we're under no illusions about how hard the fight will be in the face of many in the administration who equate caring conservation with economic hardship. That cynical and, some would say, blasphemous world view is a complete distortion of the values that drove Republicans from Teddy Roosevelt to Richard Nixon to create national parks and bedrock environmental protections.

You, our diverse members, make us an effective organization—in the communities we call home and in Washington D.C. Your representatives need to hear why funding conservation work is so important to you and to Audubon's efforts across the country. You can be confident that in the coming weeks and months we will offer you opportunities to raise your powerful voice at the crucial points when it matters most.

—Excerpted from a letter by David Yarnold, CEO and President National Audubon Society



Annual Dinner
Saturday, June 3rd, 2017

Time: 3:00 pm
 Starting with a Nature Walk
Location:
 Western Reserve Land Conservancy
 3850 Chagrin River Road
 Moreland Hills, Ohio 44022
 (Across from Polo Fields)
Guest Speaker: Brett Rodstrom, VP,
 Eastern Field Operations
 Western Reserve Land Conservancy
[More details to follow.](#)

The Fresh Water Bubbler

Many years ago when I lived in Columbus working on my Master's Degree, I regularly birded the fantastic Blendon Woods Metropark where they have a blind overlooking a large pond. I spent a good deal of time in there studying the ducks and geese that

migrate through Columbus. They have posted pictures of the various species that use that wetland so it is very easy to learn their characteristics and behaviors. I overheard the naturalist quietly talking to a patron about the fresh-water-bubbler. Well, another birder was

getting all excited to see this fresh-water-bubbler because she had never seen one before and was eager to add it to her life list. It was kindly explained to her that a fresh-water-bubbler is a device that is used to keep a section of the pond ice free in the winter and is not a bird at all!

—Jim Tomko

From the Nest...

Even though our winter was extremely mild the warming temperatures feel awfully good! This is getting hikers out on the trails to enjoy the onset of spring. Migration is well underway with a large variety of waterfowl migrating through, bald eagles are incubating eggs, woodcock are singing on their "dancing ground", other birds are proclaiming their



territory and frogs are calling for attendance at the ponds and pools. It is an exciting time to immerse yourself in the wondrous transformation of the fields and forest. See if you can include a spring bird walk, an amphibian night hike, or walk through a natural area to get yourself and your family back in touch with our natural world.

—Jim Tomko, President

Snowy egret, Hilton Head, South Carolina.
Photo: M. Valencic



eBird Tutorial

Do you enjoy seeing bird pictures or videos posted in eBird checklists?

Go to www.ebird.org and select **EXPLORE DATA**. Then select **Search Photos and Sounds**. What you see are the very latest pictures attached to checklists **from around the world!** Click any picture for a larger image PLUS valuable information below the picture. If you click on the data in the lower right you can explore the checklist or find that pictures file in the Macaulay Library at Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

To view a specific species, go to the top of the page and type the species name (e.g., American Kestrel) in the search box and click **Search**. As you scroll through pictures you can click any one for a larger image as discussed above. For **audio recordings** or **video**, click on the appropriate icon below the green box containing the word **Species**.

Good Birding! —Matt Valencic

84th Annual Series of Spring Bird Walks

Enjoy the return of spring migrants during the 84th Annual Series of Spring Bird Walks. Co-sponsored by The Cleveland Metroparks, The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society, Geauga Park District, Lake Metroparks, and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, walks are led by experienced birders and will be held on **Sundays, April 16 through May 21 at 7:30 AM** at the following locations:

Cuyahoga County

Cleveland Metroparks

Bedford Reservation - Hemlock Creek Picnic Area, off Button Rd., Bedford.
Big Creek Reservation - Lake Isaac, Big Creek Parkway, Middleburg Heights.
Brecksville Reservation - Parking area at Station Rd. Bridge Trailhead, off Riverview Rd. south of Route 82, Brecksville.
Hinckley Reservation (Medina County) - Bridge at the south end of Hinckley Lake, on State Rd., Hinckley.
Huntington Reservation - Beach parking lot, 28649 Lake Rd., Bay Village.
North Chagrin Reservation - Sunset Pond, off Buttermilk Falls Parkway, Mayfield Village.
Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation - Visitor Center parking lot, Whittlesey Way off E. 49th St. south of Grant Ave, Cuyahoga Hts.
Rocky River Reservation - Rocky River Nature Center parking lot, 24000 Valley Parkway (¼ mile north of Cedar Point Road), North Olmsted.
South Chagrin Reservation - Jackson Rd. parking lot, off Chagrin River Rd. (between Miles Rd. and Chagrin Blvd.), Moreland Hills.

Additional Cuyahoga County locations

Gates Mills - Various locations. Call 440-338-4923 for details
Shaker Lakes - The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes parking lot, 2600 South Park Blvd., Shaker Heights.

Gauga County

Gauga Park District

Various locations, Geauga County. Call 440-286-9516

Lake County

Lake Metroparks

Lake Erie Bluffs, 3301 Lane Rd., Perry Township.

Additional Lake County locations

Holden Arboretum - main parking lot off Sperry Rd., Kirtland.
Mentor Marsh - parking area on Headlands Rd., Mentor.

Portage County

Aurora Audubon Sanctuary - parking lot east of Page Rd. on E. Pioneer Trail, east of routes 306 and 43, Aurora.
James H. Barrow Field Station (part of Hiram College), 11305 Wheeler Road, Hiram.
Novak Audubon Sanctuary - parking lot north of Rt. 82 on Town Line Rd., Aurora.

Don't miss the migration!

Critter Corner



Black & White Warbler
(*Mniotilta varia*)

It's the "zebra bird"! This is one of my favorite warblers which is common but easily overlooked. Actually it is not known as a zebra bird! That is just my affectionate nick-name for it. Its real name is the black-and-white warbler.

It is a medium-sized black warbler with two strong white wing bars, a white crown stripe, and a white eyebrow line. There are white stripes on the back and a white belly with black stripes. Males have a black throat while females have a white throat.

This warbler has some un-warbler like habits. In fact it acts more like a nuthatch or brown creeper with the way it hitches its way up and down the trunk and along limbs. It has extra-large feet and an exceedingly long claw on its rear toe to aid in this bottoms-up climbing. It can even walk on the underside of tree limbs. Another name for it is black-and-white creeper. They are the single member of their genus, which translates in English to moss picker.

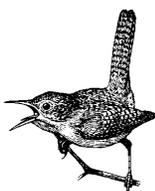
The black-and-white warbler gleans insects, spiders, worms, and other invertebrates from crevices in tree bark for their daily sustenance. It is a bird of a limb in search of their next meal.

Most wood warblers nest north of our area but the black-and-white warblers do nest in our deciduous woods. The female constructs a well woven cup nest on the ground at the base of a tree, shrub, rock or fallen log hidden by a drift of leaves. Here she lays four to five creamy white eggs speckled with various shades of brown to purple densest at the large end of the egg. The female incubates for about 10 days and the hatchlings fledge in about 20 days.

These are one of the earliest warblers to arrive in the spring with some arriving in our area as early as mid-April. Go out, take a look, and then let me know when you find your first one of the season.

—Jim Tomko

The Squawk



Jim, in the latest ASGC newsletter, you reminded folks to keep their eyes open for unusual birds, now that migration is in full swing. As I type this, I am spotting a red-breasted nuthatch at my feeders!

—Diann R.

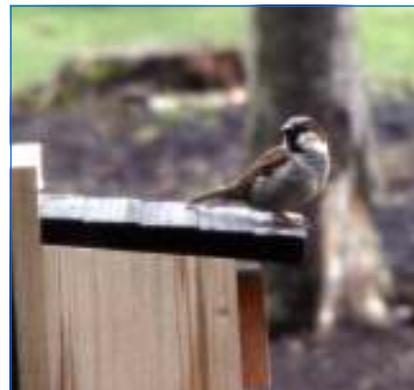
Awww man I love those pretty little acrobats. They are among a group of birds that I refer to as my "mighty mites"! I have not heard or seen a single

one this year! Thanks for the vicarious joy!
—Jim Tomko

Jim, I saw a pair of bluebirds checking out my bird house this morning; unfortunately, a house sparrow had taken possession. He spent most of the morning calling for a mate. How do I discourage him?

—Alison D.

You have to physically evict him by opening the box and removing the nest contents each day and sometimes twice a day! If you have a birdhouse up, ethically you should not allow a house sparrow to nest in there. But that and starlings are the only nests that you are permitted (by federal law) to disturb. So get a



little pushy and toss out that house sparrow nest!

—Jim Tomko



Waterfowl Caravan at LaDue Reservoir.

Photo: J. Tomko

WOOHOOO for Waterfowl!

Wow! We had 48 species of birds on our "Wheelin' for Waterfowl Caravan" field trip! There were 12 species of duck, one species of goose, one species of swan, two species of grebe, and one species of cormorant! It was a great day of duck

watching. Several of the drakes were displaying courtship behavior to influence the females into choosing them for the season. We had 11 cars in our caravan carrying 17 or 18 duck watchers of various ages and experience. That also is a new record. I saw my first Eastern phoebe and tree swallow of the year! The weather was perfect for birders with no rain, mist, wind or fog. The trip ended with a tallying of the species at Steak-n-Shake where we enjoyed sharing birding stories with our lunch. This was a pleasant bunch in great spirits!

—Jim Tomko

Non-ASGC Events

Friday, April 28, 7 pm

"Restoring Endangered Seabirds"
Cleveland Museum of Natural History
1 Wade Oval Drive, Cleveland, OH

Dr. Stephen Kress
Vice-President for Bird Conservation
National Audubon Society
Director, Seabird Restoration Program

Tickets:
Members (advance) \$10; (door) \$12

CMNH.org or call (216) 231-1177

Upcoming Events

Backyard Naturalist

Apr 9 2:00 pm

"Warbler Warm-up"

The West Woods Nature Center,
9465 Kinsman Road, Novelty, OH

A 1-hour program for beginners & novices. Learn (or recall!) how to identify spring Warblers by sight, habitat, behavior and song. Over 125 photographs. Handouts.

Light refreshments served.

Matt Valencic and Kelly Kozlowski, Presenters.

This Backyard Naturalist program is free and open to the public.

Photo Contest

Take your best shot!

Don't forget to submit your entries, now through April 14!

Categories:

- Birds of Ohio
- Nature
- Cell Phone Shots
- Youth

Cash prizes!

Visit www.clevelandaudubon.org for details!

ASGC Photo & Art Show

Going on now at the Solon Library
34125 Portz Pkwy
Solon, OH 44139

Field Trips

Apr 15 7:30 pm

"Woodcock"

Novak Sanctuary

The male woodcocks will be doing their courtship dance and flight display. If you have not witnessed this twilight ritual then here is your chance! As darkness falls we will hear the male begin his calling and then suddenly he will rocket upward in his flight display over the field. He will return to earth landing on his own little patch of dancing ground. The fields are wet this time of year so be prepared footwear wise! Meet at the Novak Sanctuary Parking lot on the east side of Townline Rd. a little less than a mile north of State Route 82 on the Mantua/Aurora line.

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A Wry Smile

Doctor: "You'll live to be 60!"

Patient: "I AM 60!"

Doctor:

"See! What did I tell you?"



Call for entries!
Photo contest runs thru 4/14/17
www.clevelandaudubon.org

Notes from a Newbie

With warmer times ahead, I think Lord Capulet's line: "When well-apparell'd April on the heel/Of limping winter treads..." sums up what we're all hoping – that soon our migratory friends will be flocking to our blooming foliage and backyard feeders! With that in mind, this month I'm going to share a few tips for keeping our feathered friends in fine shape for what I like to call the "baby-making season."

Keeping a well-stocked feeder is a great way to help our avian tourists, and natives, get healthy and ready for nesting and breeding. Types of feeders include everything from tubes for small songbirds to hoppers (which seem to work best for me) to elaborate - and expensive - contraptions with suet cages on the sides. If you're curious (as I was) about which birds eat what, and what kind of feeder will work

best for your visitors, check the Cornell Labs website at www.allaboutbirds.org.

And here's a tip I recently found: add empty eggshells to your feed. According to the folks at the Cornell Lab, adding crushed-up eggshells to your feed will help your birds build up their calcium levels. The birds use the shell bits in their gizzard (to help break down their food) and the calcium gets absorbed into their system. Simply boil the empty egg shells for about 10 minutes, allow them to cool, then crush them into bits the size of sunflower seeds and add them to your seed mix. An easy - and environmentally friendly - way to repurpose your shells! I don't recommend using any dyed shells (from Easter eggs, etc.) as the additives may not be good for the birds.

Photo: H. Harris

Keep looking up!

—Heidi Harris



This hooded warbler recovers his wits on a porch rug after crashing into a picture window. In our next newsletter, we'll discuss where to put those feeders to keep this from happening. Also the merits of bird baths and how a bit of gardening can help attract hummingbirds.

DATED MAIL

