



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

May, 2017

40-year effort bears fruit

ASGC doubles size of Hach-Otis Sanctuary

The nonprofit Western Reserve Land Conservancy has partnered with the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC) to acquire and permanently preserve approximately 80.5 acres of land that will be added to the adjacent Hach-Otis Sanctuary and State Nature Preserve located on Skyline Drive in the City of Willoughby Hills. The extension project effectively doubles the size of the Lake County sanctuary, permanently protects critical riparian and upland forest habitat along the Chagrin River, and increases public access to the river.

ASGC President Jim Tomko remarked, "We can't imagine a more perfect match for our mission statement.

This sanctuary is an emerald gem and we feel so fortunate to add it to our Hach-Otis Sanctuary to be preserved forever in its natural state."

The Land Conservancy worked with three separate landowners to acquire the eight parcels comprising the extension project. The property was recently acquired and transferred to ASGC, which retains ownership and full responsibility for the maintenance and management of the expanded property. ASGC granted a conservation easement on the property to the Land Conservancy; the easement limits future development and ensures the property will remain a wildlife sanctuary. The permanent conservation of this property eliminates the threat of development at the site, safeguarding the Chagrin River from development-associated runoff, which in turn, helps to protect the quality of the Chagrin River watershed.

"The National Audubon Society has designated the Chagrin River Valley as an Important Bird Area," explained John Lillich, trustee of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland and manager of the Hach-Otis Wildlife Sanctuary. "The valley is part of National

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Everything on the left side of river and around the bend to the right is the Hach-Otis extension.

Photo: J. Lillich

Annual Meeting & Dinner Saturday, June 3rd, 2017

Western Reserve Land Conservancy
3850 Chagrin River Road
Moreland Hills, Ohio 44022
(Across from Polo Fields)

3:00 Choice of two nature walks, or tour the home of the Western Reserve Land Conservancy

4:00 Wine, Cheese & Fruit Reception

5:00 Chapter meeting

5:30 Dinner

6:30 Photo Contest Winners

7:00 "Regional Land Conservation" Brett Rodstrom, V.P., Eastern Field Operations, Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Cost: \$20 in advance (reservation made by May 30—please send advance payment to:

ASGC Annual Dinner, PO Box 391037, Solon, OH 44139)

\$22 at the door.

\$15.00 Seniors 65+ and children 15 and under

Please make reservations at:
info@clevelandaudubon.org

From the Nest...

Thanks to you, our donors, your Audubon chapter has purchased and forever protected 80+ acres of Chagrin River valley land contiguous with our existing Hach-Otis Sanctuary in Willoughby Hills, Ohio, doubling the size of our "emerald gem"!

The excitement is captured by former ASGC president and current board member, John Lillich, who has been



there from the beginning: "It is forty years this year since I agreed to become the volunteer caretaker of Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland's Hach-Otis Wildlife Sanctuary. That also was the year that it became a dedicated State Nature Preserve, giving protection under Ohio's Natural Areas Act. Shortly after that time, I began thinking about expanding the Sanctuary into natural areas to our north. The idea of a

wildlife corridor began to take shape in my mind. It has been forty years of optimism and disappointments. My original thoughts were to add about twenty-five acres to the Sanctuary. Now, with much help from The Western Reserve Land Conservancy, we have added eighty acres, giving Hach-Otis a total of one hundred and sixty-one acres. To hear the whole fascinating story, please attend ASGC's Annual Meeting

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ASGC hosts international birders

Matthew Cunningham and his wife are from London, England. They were visiting friends in Cleveland over Easter weekend and contacted ASGC for some advice on where they might go birding and if anyone might be available to bird with them for part of a day, as they did not have a car. Jim Tomko and Matt Valencic jumped at the chance. With the help of Rob Swaney, they gave Matthew and his wife 1 ½ days of birding in NE Ohio.

They helped them see over 70



Great horned owl with owlets.

Photo: M. Valencic

species of birds, including several “Lifers” (first time sightings). Matthew was keen to see owls and they found him a great horned on its nest with two owlets in Lake County, and an Eastern screech owl in Cuyahoga Valley Park. He was very excited to see his first-ever vireo (blue-headed) at The Rookery and said they have no vireos in England. Pine, yellow, yellow-throated and yellow-rumped warblers were Life Birds as were purple martin, yellow-bellied sapsucker and white-throated sparrow. They enjoyed the beautiful, rolling hills of NE Ohio and the abundant bird song that was present everywhere we birded.

It’s been said that for “those who have much, much is expected!”. We are fortunate to have much excellent birding in NE Ohio and especially in the Chagrin River Corridor IBA. It’s a pleasure to share that abundance with others through guided bird walks each spring and especially nice to share it with folks from another country.

—Matt Valencic

Hach-Otis expansion

(Continued from page 1)

Audubon Society’s world wide web of designated Important Bird Areas. Many wild species are making their last stand from extinction in these protected areas.”

Share this exciting adventure with us at our Annual Meeting June 3rd, when guest speaker Brett Rodstrom, vice president of eastern field operations for the Land Conservancy, will tell the whole story.

—From a Conservancy press release dated April 24, 2017

From the Nest

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on June 3, 2017.”

Consider taking John’s advice and reserve a place at our Annual Meeting!

I really cannot think of a better way to protect the environment, protect the Chagrin River IBA and put our funds to such good use. A ribbon cutting ceremony is being planned for early to mid-July and we hope that you can attend.

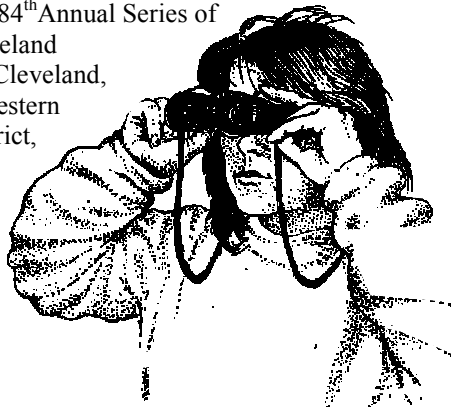
—Jim Tomko, President

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.**

For a complete list of locations, visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org and click on *Birding* and then *Bird Counts/Walks*.

Don’t miss the migration!



Critter Corner

Photo: M. Valencic



Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)

A brilliant, luminescent yellow-orange is carried on the head, throat, breast and belly of the male Prothonotary Warbler. If you glimpse him in a sunbeam you would think a powerful light has been turned on inside him. Prothonotary Warblers were named after the court clerks and papal clergy who wore brilliant yellow robes.

The back is an olive-green and the wings are a soft grayish-blue without any wingbars. Its large dark eyes are prominent against its yellow face.

This is the only wood warbler in our area that nests in cavities. The male adorns several abandoned woodpecker or chickadee nest cavities with moss and entices the female to inspect them by entering and exiting numerous times. If she approves she finishes the nest building by herself and lays three to seven brown-spotted creamy white to pinkish eggs which she alone incubates for 12 to 14 days. The nestlings fledge in about 11 days.

Because of its need for nesting cavities it will accept bird houses of proper size and in appropriate habitat, often 2-33 feet over water. Geauga County Naturalist, Dan Best, has developed a Prothonotary Warbler nest box program. Many of these boxes have been placed in the back waters of the upper Cuyahoga River and its tributaries with outstanding success.

Prothonotary Warblers glean insects, spiders, small mussels, snails, worms and other invertebrates from branches, tree trunks, and flotsam in the swamp.

Some of the problems facing this species in our area is draining of wetlands and cutting down dead trees. In its wintering grounds in Central and South America it is the removal of the mangrove swamps.

This amazing bird graces us with its appearance from May through September. Now is the time to get out to see and hear this handsome beauty!

—Jim Tomko

Backyard Naturalist: Warbler Warm-up!

Beautiful! Frustrating! Active! Confusing! All words that describe our most colorful group of songbirds – Warblers! Because they are ‘all the above’, we decided to share the beauty and reduce the frustration and confusion in a presentation we call Warbler Warm-up – the latest addition to the Backyard Naturalist Speakers Bureau.

Co-sponsored by Geauga Park District and Greater Cleveland Audubon Society, Warbler Warm-up is targeted for beginner to intermediate bird watchers and anyone interested in the beauty and complexity of nature. Matt Valencic and Kelly Kozlowski took turns describing the ‘field marks’ (colors, eye rings, wings bars, tail patterns), behaviors (tail wagging, walking on the ground or hiding in dense cover) and preferred habitats of each warbler – all information used for identifying different species. Handouts were provided so participants could focus on learning or just enjoying the many close-up photographs of these most beautiful songbirds.



Parula warbler at Magee Marsh.

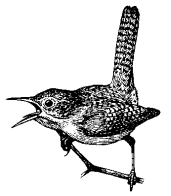
Photo: M. Valencic

Approximately 90 people attended the one-hour presentation in the West Woods Oak Room.

To review the different programs in the Backyard Naturalist Series visit www.clevelandaudubon.org then click on the gray button on the right side of the screen.

—Matt Valencic

The Squawk



Subject: cardinal continuing to crash into our window!

Worried about this bird - what is going on? He keeps flying deliberately and intensely into our front window—cannot see anything he is getting out of this.

—Roberta P.

Dear Roberta,

That Cardinal is defending his nest territory from a "rival" Cardinal. He sees his reflection in your window and cannot figure out why this "rival" is matching his attacks and moves one for one without backing down. In fact they can injure themselves. I have seen bloodied bills and streaked windows. His hormones are in full throttle and he does not want any competition for food, water, shelter, and his mate. He will continue to do this until he is distracted by some other instance to defend. The best treatment is to try to get rid of the reflection by covering the window with fabric or soap during the day for 4 or 5 days. Let me know what happens. And good luck.

—Jim Tomko

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting

June 3 3:00 pm
Western Reserve Land Conservancy
3850 Chagrin River Road
Moreland Hills

See page 1 for complete details.

Save the Date

September 16
“Beginning Birding”
Two convenient locations

September 22-23
“Chagrin River Bird Quest”
West Woods Nature Center

Our team birding challenge returns!

Field Trips

May 5 8:30 pm
“Frogs!”
Aurora Sanctuary

The evening’s seasonal concert is in full swing! Among the performers are Green Frogs, Leopard Frogs, Gray Tree Frogs, and American Toads. There may be a late Spring Peeper or an early Bullfrog joining in. Often we hear a Barred Owl or a Great-horned Owl. Coyotes may be singing under the almost full moon. This is a symphony that you should not miss! Meet at the Bretschneider Park parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Road in Aurora.

June 3 3:00 pm
“Annual Meeting Hike”
Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Join us for a hike around the grounds of the beautiful Western Reserve Land Conservancy in Moreland Hills prior to our Annual Meeting. This river valley has a variety of habitats and a rich diversity of bird-life. Meet at the Western Reserve Land Conservancy 3850 Chagrin River Road, Moreland Hills, OH 44022

Make your reservations today!
Email
info@clevelandaudubon.org
before May 30 to take advantage of our advance payment price!

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A Wry Smile

The bird, the bee, the running child are all the same to the sliding glass door.

—Demetri Martin



Annual Meeting
June 3, 2017
Reservations:
info@clevelandaudubon.org

Notes from a Newbie

What's the best placement for both birds and bird watching? A good rule of thumb, according to Cornell and Audubon, is to either place the feeder *within 3 feet of* or *further than 30 feet from* your window. Why? Bird crashes into windows account for a large number of avian casualties each year. Feeders closer than 3 feet won't allow the bird to get up enough speed to really hurt itself if it flies into your window, while feeders further than 30 feet away can deter birds from seeing your window as a gateway to another part of your yard. Using window decals can also help, though this may obscure your view.

Another way to attract birds to your yard is by providing clean water. If you're watching your budget (or spending money on that seed mix!) you can create a bird bath with an old cake pan and a few rocks.

Growing native plants in your yard will also help birds. Hummingbirds thrive on nectar, so consider growing some fuschia or salvia in hanging baskets or planting some honeysuckle to climb up your wall or trellis. (I planted Major Wheeler Honeysuckle (Lonicera



Photo: M. Valencic

two summers ago and the ruby-throated hummingbirds just adore it!) Be careful, though—if the plants aren't native you may be unwittingly contributing to the invasive species epidemic. Check the native plants database at www.audubon.org/native-plants before you buy.

Be a better birder by supplying food and water to your feathered visitors. They'll appreciate the extra nutrition and you'll get tons of chances to watch and learn more about them. Truly a win-win.

Have a terrific summer, and until next time—keep looking up!

—Heidi Harris

DATED MAIL

