



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

P.O. Box 391037, Solon, Ohio 44139-8037 Ph: 216 556 5441

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Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

September, 2017

Hach-Otis expansion officially dedicated July 11

A ceremony to dedicate the 80.5 acre addition to the Hach-Otis Sanctuary took place on Tuesday, July 11 at 3:30 p.m. at the field on Dodd Road, formerly known as the Riggin Orchard. Approximately 80 people braved the heat and humidity to attend, including Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC) trustees and members, the staff of Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC (ASGC's partner in this venture)), neighbors and near-by property owners, and donors. ASGC President Dr. Jim Tomko acted as emcee.

Speakers included Jim Tomko; Robert Weger, Mayor of Willoughby Hills; Paul Hach, a member of the Edward Hach family, the original land donor; Dan Troy, Lake County Commissioner; Kevin Malecek, former Lake County Commissioner; Rich Cochran, President and CEO of the WRLC; and John Lillich, Trustee and past president of ASGC.



Willoughby Hills Mayor Robert Weger presents a proclamation to ASGC President Jim Tomko.

Mayor Weger read a proclamation from the City and presented it to Jim Tomko. Katie Burger, representing the office of U. S. Congressman David Joyce, also presented a proclamation to Jim Tomko and Rich Cochran.

After the speeches, Rich Cochran and Jim Tomko announced that this 32-
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Registration now open for Bird Quest 2017!

The 3rd Annual Chagrin River Bird Quest is set for September 22-23 at the lovely West Woods Nature Center in Novelty, OH. This 24-hour team birding challenge helps us spread the word about the value of the Chagrin River ecosystem as well as collecting data on the birds that live there. Plus it's fun!

Share the day with family, friends, co-workers and classmates—win a prize for the most creative team name! Other prizes include most species seen and most habitats visited. Last year's top team identified 54 species. Can your team beat that number this year??

Register early and attend our FREE introductory Birding Workshop on September
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From the Nest...

We have had a fantastic summer and great things are happening!

The katydids are loudly and abundantly calling each night. They are so persistent that my friend Kim Pease said, "Okay we all agree Katy did it!"

The migration is on! Keep an eye out for northern visitors and youngsters that are way off course. Juveniles often get their "compass confused" and end up in



unexpected places. Please let me know what unusual sightings that you come across.

We had a wonderful ceremony dedicating our new addition to the Hach/Otis Sanctuary. Soon we will have a stewardship plan to maintain its pristine nature and construct some trails for protected and easier access.

We already have stewardship plans for our other three sanctuaries and will

Annual Meeting "best ever"

The 2017 Annual Meeting, held June 3rd at the Western Reserve Land Conservancy headquarters in Moreland Hills, was one of our best ever meetings, according to ASGC President Jim Tomko.

Early attendees could take a guided nature hike of the grounds and trails, and/or tour WRLC's historic building. A wine, cheese, and fruit reception started the evening festivities, followed by the chapter meeting led by Jim Tomko. Jim reviewed the Society's 2016 highlights and presented two awards.

This year's Seeley Award, presented to an outstanding member who has made a special contribution to the Society, went to Matt Valencic. The Award of Merit, given to a person or organization outside ASGC who has done something special for the environment, went to Ken Ostermiller.

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Jim Tomko presents the Award of Merit to Ken Ostermiller.

be looking for help to implement these plans. If you have energy and expertise to help in the stewardship project or any other aspect, send us an email.

We are still searching for an accountant to help our current treasurer who is ready to pass the baton.

Thank you for your continued support. We count on it and greatly appreciate it.

—Jim Tomko, President

“Do you know what this is?” read the morning text I got from my sister on July 1. I looked at the accompanying picture and replied that it looked like a wood stork, but I would get back to her.

My *Sibley Guide to the Birds* (©2001) indicated that it was a wood stork and, based on the light color of its bill, a juvenile. I texted her this information, along with the fact that it was a *long* way from home.

She said that wood stork was all she came up with, too, and her Tampa-based daughter-in-law agreed, as they are a common sight near Tampa. We were all amazed that it was standing in front of my sister’s chicken coop in Oak Harbor, OH, instead of wading in a lagoon in Florida.

Not knowing what could be done to help the bird, my sister called Mark Shieldcastle, a co-founder of Black Swamp Bird Observatory and expert in wetland wildlife. Mark thought the bird may be an escapee from somewhere nearby and advised her to look for a band or other marking.

As Mark arrived, the bird took off, but he was able to confirm that it was, indeed, a juvenile wood stork and neither he nor my sister saw any banding. Mark speculated that the bird had likely gotten blown off course by Tropical Storm Cindy, which had passed through the southern portion of the U.S. the week prior.

When the stork took off, it flew north, which is good, because that is where it was likely to find Crane Creek State Park, Magee Marsh, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and Black Swamp Bird Observatory: all good habitat for a wood stork.

I found out later that my brother-in-law had seen the bird the day before, hunting in a roadside ditch. Overall, that area is quite marshy, with a lot of open space, and the bird should feel right at home – albeit perhaps a bit lonely – at least until winter. Hopefully, it can find its way back south before then.

The *Birds of the Cleveland Region* (©2004) reports there have been only two wood stork sightings in the NEO region – one in 1879 (young male that was shot) and one in 2001. Shieldcastle told my sister there had never been a reported finding in Ottawa County before this one.

This situation illustrates two long-standing identification “rules” in birding: always rule in more common birds before believing you are seeing an exotic, and always remember that birds have wings that can take them to some very unexpected places. Sometimes, you just never know which it might be!

—Diann Rucki



An Ohio wood stork?
Photo courtesy of D. Rucki

Fall migration has begun

It’s hard to believe that Fall Migration has already started in NE Ohio! Shorebirds (sandpipers, plovers, dowitchers and the like) started arriving in early August and the variety and quantity will peak in September. Warblers, vireos and thrushes that nested in Canada will arrive in good numbers during September. I would spend my September birding time on these groups because by October most of them will be gone.

So, where do we go to see them? It’s all about habitat! Shorebirds and waders (herons and egrets) are going to be in the shallow water and muddy shorelines of lakes and wetlands. LaDue Reservoir (Geauga County) has been the Hotspot in August because the water level started dropping in July, exposing a lot of ‘mud’. Check your local lakes, rivers and wetlands for dropping water levels.



Stream habitat in West Geauga Commons.
Photo: M. Valencic

Warblers, thrushes and vireos will be easier to find but harder to identify. They will be in the same places you found them in April and May – on edges between habitats, in vegetation along streams, in shrubby cover next to fields and in wild grape tangles and climbing poison ivy. They are eating insects and berries and moving around a lot. Remember to look at the bird and describe it out loud before looking at your field guide. You may only get a 10 -20 second view so focus, focus, focus.

Plumages of some warblers and vireos will differ from springtime. First-year birds may be less colorful than adults and males sometimes look more like females in fall. Check your field guides for “fall plumage” and “first fall” plumages of your target birds.

Finally, remember to take your camera for birds, flowers, foliage and insects. Fall is an interesting and beautiful season in NE Ohio.

—Matt Valencic

Bird Quest

(Continued from page 1)

16. Update your skills and learn new ones with experienced birders as instructors.

Then join us at the Quest Celebration on the 23rd, 4-6:30 pm, for awards and refreshments. Find out how other teams measure up. There will be door prizes galore, and ASGC President Jim Tomko will lead the festivities.

Don’t miss the fun! Register at www.clevelandaudubon.org.

Hach-Otis Dedication

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acre portion where the ceremony was held would be named in honor of John and Carol Lillich, and called “The John and Carol Lillich Meadows.” A permanent sign will be installed at a later date.

John was also presented with a painting of him standing on a ridge



John and Carol Lillich

in the Hach-Otis Sanctuary while leading a nature walk. Thanks to Carol and John Lillich of ASGC and Emily Bacha, Megan Quinn and Brett Rodstrom of the WRLC who worked together to put on this event.

—Sharon Swaney

eBird tutorial – Bird Quest planning

If you are a planner, like me, you will find eBird very helpful for planning your 24 hours of Bird Quest this year.

Go to www.eBird.org, click on [Explore Data](#), then click [Explore a Region](#). Type in your county (e.g., Geauga, OH or Lake, OH) and hit [ENTER](#). The screen that appears is rich with the info you want. The main part shows the most recent sightings of all birds. To learn where that bird was seen just hover over the [gray teardrop](#) to the right of the name. On the right side of

the screen find [Recent Visits](#). If you see a lot of birds listed, [click on the date](#) to see that checklist with its location, notes and pictures. Also on the right is a list of the [Top Hotspots](#). Click on the name of the HOTSPOT to see the latest sightings at that location.

Check out all the counties in our area to learn where the most birds are being seen, or just to explore a new park with your friends. Having fun watching birds is the #1 goal of Bird Quest.

—Matt Valencic

Annual Meeting

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Jim DeBroux, Photo Contest chair, announced the winners of the 2017



Photo Contest winner Sean Hollowell (2nd Place, Birds of Ohio) and his mother Pam.

Photo Contest. All the winners and their photos can be found on www.clevelandaudubon.org.

After an excellent buffet dinner served by local caterer Dab of Class, Brett Rodstrom, VP, Eastern Field Operations of WRLC told us about the work of the conservancy in our region and how they accomplish their goals, with a special focus on the recent expansion of the Hach-Otis Sanctuary.

ASGC would like to thank the WRLC and its staff, Catlin Layton, Megan Quinn, and Brett Rodstrom for the use of their headquarters for this event.

—Sharon Swaney

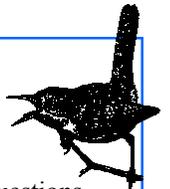
2017 Scholarship winners

For the third year, ASGC has awarded \$1000 college scholarships to five outstanding high school seniors. This year's awards went to: Nicole Eastman of Aurora HS, Madeline Sudnick of Twinsburg HS, Alyson Bergomi of Chagrin Falls HS, Abby Jacobson of Aurora HS, and Ian Ashton of Solon HS. Congratulations to all our winners! We wish all of you the best of luck in your college careers.



2017 Photo Contest Grand Prize winner: Michael Knoechel

The Squawk



Send your comments, questions, or complaints to

info@clevelandaudubon.org

Upcoming Events

Chagrin River Bird Quest

Our 24-hour birding challenge returns! Can your team beat last year's record 54 species seen?

September 16

"Beginning Birding Workshop"

9am Holden Arboretum

1pm Novak Education Center

September 22 4-6:00 pm

Check-in & final registration

West Woods Nature Center *or*

Novak Education Center

September 23 4-6:30 pm

Quest Celebration!

West Woods Nature Center

Register at

www.clevelandaudubon.org

Field Trips

September 24 1:00 pm

"Fringed Gentians"

Aurora Sanctuary

Join us for our annual autumn wildflower walk to check the status of our Fringed Gentian patch. Fringed Gentian are an uncommon native plant with the most beautiful color of blue pigmentation delicately toothed petals. Fringed Gentian are one of the last flowers to bloom in our area. We will also see the more common Closed or Bottle Gentian. If conditions are right, Ladies Tresses, which belong to the orchid family, will be in bloom. Pray for sunshine and we will have an unforgettable display! Meet at the Bretschnieder/Audubon parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a



few hundred yards east of Page Rd. in Aurora.

October 21 2:30 pm

"Autumn Color"

Hach-Otis Sanctuary

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Strategies for Bird Quest

Would your team like to see more birds during this year's Bird Quest? Visiting more habitats is the key and doing some homework will help you develop a plan for the day.

The major habitats to consider are: Forest / Field / Edge, (especially containing shrubs) / Wetland / Open Water / Sky. Yes, open sky is habitat for raptors and random fly-overs, like great blue heron, green heron, crows and others.

Next, decide where to find these habitats and how to cover them effectively during the competition. I see two choices here: move between several locations or, find two or three locations that each have maximum habitat diversity and spend all your time in those locations.

In the first case, locations should be close together to save travel time. You could start at Bass Lake for open water and lake edge, then drive to The Rookery for wetlands (two wetlands there!) and some open forest (warblers and thrushes), then stop at Pekin Road Marsh for swallows and maybe common gallinule, then off to West Geauga



Philadelphia vireo at West Geauga
Commons. Photo: M. Valencic

Commons for warblers and vireos in the edge habitat all along the Chagrin River.

The second strategy might be birding a place like Chagrin River Park (Eastlake) for half the day, then North Chagrin Reservation the other half. Both parks have excellent habitat diversity and can produce a lot of birds during fall migration.

Finally, consult eBird to learn where the birds are being seen. (See separate article in this newsletter). Remember, while you are chasing that unusual bird you will see lots of 'common' species that can fatten your list.

—Matt Valencic

Chagrin River
BIRD QUEST

3rd Annual 24-hour
Team Birding Challenge
Get your team together and register
at www.clevelandaudubon.org!

DATED MAIL

