New Speaker's Bureau program available

About 60 people braved the cold and snow of January to attend the first showing of *Migrating Waterfowl and Winter Birds of NE Ohio* at South Franklin Circle in Chagrin Falls.

This is the third ASGC Speakers Bureau program at this community for older adults, all of them relating to wild birds or NE Ohio. Following the first talk (*Birds of NE Ohio*) the residents decided they wanted to get out and see the birds for themselves, so the Activities Director coordinated several trips to The West Woods Nature Center in nearby Russell, OH. The Nature Center has a large, indoor viewing area where they could sit.

(Continued on page 2)

Bob Bartolotta joins ASGC Board of Trustees

Bob Bartolotta has been a resident of northeastern Ohio his entire life, and has loved every second of it.

He graduated from Case Western Reserve University with a biology degree and then from The Ohio State University with a masters degree in Plant Taxonomy, the classification of plants.

Working for local park districts, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History for thirty-four years and regional environmental consulting companies, he has seen much of northeastern Ohio's beautiful landscape. In his days at the museum he taught classes using live animals and dinosaur skeletons, all unforgettable experiences. He has led over 1,000 field trips, mostly in northeastern Ohio.

He enjoys being a resident of northeastern Ohio and looks forward to sharing his experiences with the members and friends of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland.

From the Nest...

This month will be the 21st Great Backyard Bird Count! In 1998 the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology sponsored a citizen science project that took place in the United States. Then in 2013 it went global with people from over the world reporting. In 2015 over half the known bird species in the world were reported.

This is a four-day event in which all levels of observers can participate. The idea is to count all the birds seen in as little as 15 minutes or for as long as you desire. You may do this by simply looking out the kitchen window or going on a hike. Then you report your findings to birdcount.org.

The data collected gives a “snap shot” in time of bird populations so that researches can get the pulse of any changes. It is very interesting to see the reports registered in real time at their website. Last year there were over 160,000 participants. Please join in for some easy, fun birding and you will be contributing to our knowledge of bird populations.

The count begins Friday, February 16th and goes through Monday, February 19th. Good luck counting!

—Jim Tomko, President
Working the year-end numbers

Every January I would look at the year-to-year changes in my business and try to explain them to my boss. Sometimes I could and sometimes I couldn’t! Today I am retired but still fascinated with changes in ‘the numbers’ and eBird provides me a treasure trove of data to examine.

Using eBird’s EXPLORE BAR CHARTS feature, I look at the total number of species reported in Geauga County for each of the last 10 years. In 2007, 168 species were reported. In 2017, 228 species were reported. That’s a difference of 60 species.

Are there more species of birds in Geauga County today than in 2007? Probably not.

Have the number of birders increased in the county during that time? Probably, but how many is not certain.

Are more people reporting their sightings to eBird today than in 2007? Absolutely!

Are there some birders today obsessed with finding and listing species in eBird? You bet there are, and generally that’s a good thing for the birds and their habitats.

I know many eBird ‘Listers’ and all are dedicated to the well being of habitat and birds. They will tell you that the more habitats we visit and report on, the more data is available for professional Ornithologists and Land Managers to make sound decisions for birds. Some individuals and groups have been

(Continued on page 3)

Storm damage update

All of our sanctuaries are still being evaluated and trails where our visitors travel are being looked at.

Again, our Resident Ranger Ken Kresina has been working hard and for many hours (50+ so far) on completing the job of opening trails and paths.

Rob Swaney, ASGC member and volunteer, took a day to help KK finish opening the trail in the Aurora Sanctuary. As the story goes a large oak tree engulfed the trail for approximately 150 feet…. so they started at one end and slowly and painfully cleared it away. Some of it was lengthwise along the trail and many of the branches were in a tangled MESS! Paul Bunyan style, these two woodsmen cleared the trail.

New Speaker’s Bureau

(Continued from page 1)

and watch birds at the feeders. They could also enjoy the displays indoors or walk around outside on the well-groomed trails.

Migrating Waterfowl and Winter Birds contains hundreds of photos of Ducks, Geese, Swans, Grebes, Hawks, Owls and other birds that come to or through NE Ohio from November through March. A little natural history is presented with each bird as well as personal anecdotes from the presenter (we all have our birding stories!). More than 50 species are featured.

If there are any other woods-men or -women out there who would like to VOLUNTEER to help clean up our sanctuaries please contact us at info@clevelandaudubon.org. You will be added to our list for when we have work days in our sanctuaries or for other events and activities that may interest you. Your name and contact information will not be shared. Your help and suggestions are appreciated whether you can do a little or a lot.

A BIG thank you goes out to KK and Rob. A monumental task well done!

May 2018 be as successful as 2017 and may everyone who is interested in helping come forward.

—Mark Demyan

To request a Speakers Bureau program, visit the ASGC website at www.clevelandaudubon.org and look under the EVENTS tab.

—Matt Valencic

Winter Wren (Troglodytes hiemalis)

As you may know, we had an extensive pine tree blow-down in the Aurora Sanctuary during November. Even though the extensive tree damage is sad, it does create new habitat for different species. Even though the extensive tree damage is sad, it does create new habitat for different species.

It got me thinking about winter wrens. These birds love to nest in a cavity created in the upturned roots of a toppled tree.

It would be rare to have winter wrens nest here although they do nest in the cool, deep, hemlock gorges of Lake County and Mohican State Park. Most winter wrens nest in the coniferous and mixed deciduous forests north of Ohio.

The male will build several nests and then try to convince his mate that each one is surely good enough to raise a family but she analyzes and complains about each one. She finally decides on one that they put the final renovations on until it is acceptable to her!

One to nine reddish-brown speckled white eggs are incubated for 14-17 days. The nestlings fledge in 15-17 days.

Winter wrens hop around the forest floor intensively inspecting twigs, stumps, roots, leaves, and any sort of crevice, nook or cranny for insects, spiders, mites, millipedes, and other invertebrates to make their meal.

You would need the big box of 64 Crayola Crayons with the sharpener to color these wrens which are a study in shades of brown and beige. They are our darkest wrens with the shortest, most upright tail, and the smallest at three to four ounces and four inches in length with a five and a half inch wing span.

But their beautiful, astounding territorial breeding song fills the forest lasting up to 10 seconds and containing an over-enthusiastic bubbling cascade of up to 100 notes that is beyond description with words. It is said that

(Continued on page 3)
Upcoming Events

Field Trips

February 18 9:00am
“Great Backyard Bird Count”
Aurora Sanctuary

Join the fun of this international event where all levels of birding experience can participate either on this winter bird survey or in your own backyard. The idea is to identify and record as many species as you can recognize in as little time as 15 minutes or for as long as you desire beginning Friday, February 16th through Monday, February 19th. Then you report the list of species on an “online” checklist at www.birdcount.org and watch a real time map as reports from around the world come in. This citizen science information is collected by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. Meet at the Bretschneider Park parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Road in Aurora.

March 18 9:00am
“Waterfowl Wander”
LaDue Reservoir

I am constantly astounded by the blazing colors reflected in the resplendent breeding plumage of the drakes as they head north to their breeding grounds. This is a caravan style birding tour where we will stop at several favorite lakes and ponds in southern Geauga and northern Portage counties. Have a full tank of gas and bring some lunch money as we will end with a stop at a restaurant to tally, compare notes and share stories.

Meet at the boat ramp parking lot at the end of Washington Street off of St. Rt. 44 in Auburn Corners.

Speaker’s Bureau

February 18 3:30pm
“eBird: Everything you wanted to know”
West Woods Nature Center

Begin with 10 Cool Things you can get from eBird to enhance your learning and your birding experiences. Set up an account, enter a bird list, and watch how people learn from each other. eBird offers something for every birder – beginners and veterans – while increasing the overall knowledge base for everyone.

Year-end numbers
(Continued from page 2)

privately collecting data on specific habitats or species for 25 to 50 years. Their data shows changes in species diversity and numbers that can be correlated to changes in climate and other environmental factors. eBird provides a ‘home’ for their historical data, protecting it from loss while making it accessible to everyone for research.

eBird offers something for every birder – beginners and veterans – while increasing the overall knowledge base for everyone.

Learn more at www.ebird.org or ask a friend who uses eBird to show you how to get started.

—Matt Valencic

(Reader’s note: Learn all about eBird on February 18 at 3:30pm – see below)

The Squawk

Send your comments, questions or complaints to info@clevelandaudubon.org

Photo Contest
(Continued from page 1)

March 16, 2018 and will close at midnight on April 14, 2018. Photos must be submitted through our online form, and conform to the submission requirements stated in the rules. There is no fee to enter in the Youth category. Cash prizes will be awarded.

We are looking for ideas to make this the best photo contest ever. If you would like to be involved in the Photo Contest Committee, please contact Jim DeBroux at info@clevelandaudubon.org.

Winter Wren
(Continued from page 2)

this little sprite sings with 10 times more power ounce for ounce than a domestic rooster! In mild winters we occasionally discover them in low protected areas along streams but more commonly they are detected during their migration in April and October.

I am hoping our blow-down will attract a nesting pair this spring. Let me know if you see or hear one!

—Jim Tomko

In case you missed it!

Bobcats!
1/13/2018

It was a bitterly cold morning where few humans ventured out but due to snow cover our small but intrepid clan discovered evidence of many of the mammal residents in the Aurora Sanctuary.

We saw gray squirrel, red squirrel and Southern flying squirrel tracks. Deer mouse with their tail drag and snow footprints went from log to tree to rock. There were white-tailed deer tracks crisscrossing the sanctuary.

I was very pleased to see an abundance of cottontail rabbit tracks because we do not often see the rabbits themselves on our hikes. As it turns out, coyote like our paths as much as we do!

We began losing hope in our quest for bobcat signs but when we were on the last stretch leading toward the trailhead to exit the sanctuary we saw a trail of tracks that could possibly be in that category! It was old and the edges were eroded but there were no claw imprints and the tracks were about two inches in width. It about a five-inch stride. The pad imprint was badly deteriorated but had the trapezoid appearance typical of a cat rather than the trapezoid pad of a canine.

After enduring the cold and wind-chill we decided as our reward that it had to be a bobcat track unless proven otherwise. Therefore, as advertised, a bobcat may be using our sanctuary during the night shift!

—Jim Tomko

Year-end numbers
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(Reader’s note: Learn all about eBird on February 18 at 3:30pm – see below)
eBird: Everything you wanted to know (Feb 18, 3:30pm)

ALL BIRDERS will want to attend this live demonstration (on the big screen!) at The West Woods Nature Center, 9465 Kinsman Road (Rt. 87), Russell, OH 44072.

In conjunction with the Great Backyard Bird Count, join Naturalist Linda Gilbert and Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland member Matt Valencic for a primer on using eBird on your computer and your smartphone.

It begins with 10 Cool Things you can get from eBird to enhance your learning and your birding experiences. Then learn how to set up an account, enter a bird list, upload pictures to your checklists and more.

There will be an iPhone-produced video showing how to use the eBird app on the iPhone, including creating new personal locations and adding behavior and breeding bird data to your checklist on the phone.

Scout Day (Feb 10, 10am—noon)

Have a Scout in the family? This is a great opportunity for Scouts age K-3rd grade to learn a little bit about birds and have a lot of fun in the process.

Stations in our Novak Center are filled with information and activities about feathers, nests, beaks and more. Scouts will dissect an owl pellet and make a Bird Mask during this fun-filled two hours and there’s lots of stuff to take home!

Troops or individuals, boys and girls, are welcome. Cost is $5 per Scout. Space is filling up quickly, so reserve your child’s slot now!

Love kids? Love birds? We are also looking for volunteers to run a station or help set up.

Contact info@clevelandaudubon.org to register your child (or troop) or to volunteer. It’s chaotic, but a lot of fun for everyone!