



# 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](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org)

May, 2018

### Annual Dinner set for June 2nd at West Woods

Join us for our 2018 Annual Meeting and Dinner at the gorgeous West Woods Nature Center, 9465 Kinsman Road (Rt. 87).

Arrive early for a guided walk in this 902-acre park protecting the historic sandstone ledges of Ansel's Cave, Silver Creek and its watershed, extensive wetlands and mature forests. Its name comes from a story published in 1885: A.G. Riddle's *The Young Sugar Makers of The West Woods*, which takes place at this very location.

Return to the Nature Center for refreshments and take a moment to enjoy the large wildlife feeding area and hands-on interpretive displays.

We'll do our annual chapter business at 5pm including voting in officers and trustees and giving out our yearly awards. Dinner follows and you can be



The West Woods Nature Center, 9465 Kinsman Rd.

sure it will be delicious!

The photo entries are in! After dinner we'll announce this year's winners and give out awards. All entries can be viewed throughout the afternoon in a rotating display.

The pièce de résistance of the evening is our program, **A Romp through Ohio's Flora and Fauna** by Jim McCormac.

This program will be a pictorial  
*(Continued on page 3)*

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#### **Quick Reference ASGC Annual Dinner**

**When:** Saturday, June 2, 3pm

**Where:** The West Woods

**Program:** A Romp Through Ohio's Flora and Fauna, by Jim McCormac

**Cost:** \$28 adults, \$23 seniors

### ***The House Wren* introduces "Audubon Moments"**

New column starts this month!

We are introducing a new monthly column to *The House Wren* titled AUDUBON MOMENTS. Members may submit their personal Audubon Moments in 300 words or less, with pictures if they have them.

Matt Valencic, who came up with this idea, says, "I learned this phrase several years ago from a retired

University of California Santa Cruz professor, Dr. Todd Newberry. He took Patti and I birding for half a day in 'his backyard' – the University Arboretum and nearby Pacific coastline. He had a story for every new bird we encountered and to this day Patti says it was her best birding experience. He wrote a small book called *The Ardent Birder – On the*

*Craft of Birdwatching* – and I purchased a copy before our trip hoping he would autograph it, and he did: 'For Matt & Patti – Wishing you Audubon Moments!'"

Audubon Moments are simply special encounters with nature, with friends or alone. See this month's  
*(Continued on page 2)*

### ***From the Nest...***

Our Annual Meeting's keynote speaker is giving a program you will not want to miss! After 31 years as a professional naturalist for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources specializing in wildlife diversity projects, Jim McCormac has accumulated innumerable tales of Ohio's wildlife. He has co-authored six books and maintains a nature column for the



*Columbus Dispatch* in addition to continuous updates to his on-line natural history blog.

His presentation will be a pictorial whirlwind tour through Ohio's varied habitats highlighting flora and fauna great and small from the common to the rare and obscure. Some of these you likely have never heard of before. Jim will show how all "cogs" in the ecological wheel are important and need

protection. Being an avid photographer, he will be showing us some spectacular photographs.

I look forward to seeing you on Saturday June 2<sup>nd</sup> and out on the trails this summer.

—Jim Tomko, President

## Spring bird walk schedule

Join us as we watch migratory birds return or travel through our area toward their summer breeding grounds during the 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Series of Spring Bird Walks. Walks are led by experienced birders and will be held on Sundays through May 20, 2018 at 7:30 am at the following locations:

**Aurora 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 Hts. 440-891-1710

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

**Gauga Park District** - Various locations. Call 440-286-9516 for details

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

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

**Holden Arboretum** - Corning Visitor Center parking lot, 9500 Sperry Rd., Kirtland. 440-946-4400

**Huntington Reservation** - Huntington Beach parking lot by water tower, 28649 Lake Rd., Bay Village. 440-808-1970

**Lake Metroparks** - Lake Erie Bluffs, 3301 Lane Rd., Perry Township. 440-256-1404, ext. 2112

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

**North Chagrin Reservation** - North Chagrin Nature Center parking lot, 401 Buttermilk Falls Parkway, Mayfield Village. 440-473-3370

**Novak Sanctuary** - parking lot north of Rt. 82 on Town Line Rd., Aurora. 330-388-9279

**Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation** - CanalWay Center parking lot, 4524 E. 49<sup>th</sup> St., Cuyahoga Hts. 216-206-1000

**Rocky River Reservation** - Rocky River Nature Center, 24000 Valley Parkway (¼ mile north of Cedar Point Road), North Olmsted. 216-924-0188

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

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

Don't miss the migration!

Cosponsored by - Cleveland Metroparks, Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, Blackbrook Audubon Society, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society, Gauga Park District, Hiram College, Holden Arboretum, Lake Metroparks, Medina County Park District, and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

### Gates Mills Bird Walks

We will be out rain or shine. Children with adults are welcome. Sundays, 7:30am  
Leaders: John Lillich & Buster Banish

**May 6 Squire Valleevue Farm**  
CWRU 37125 Fairmount Blvd., Hunting Valley, OH 44022

Use entrance on Fairmount Rd.

**May 13 White North Property**  
3160 Chagrin River Road (Corner of River Road and Shaker Blvd.) Park next to garages on right side of property.

**May 20 Squire Valleevue Farm**

CWRU 37125 Fairmount Blvd.,  
Hunting Valley, OH 44022

Use entrance on Fairmount Rd.

### New column

*(Continued from page 1)*

inaugural submission from Matt Valencic on page 4.

Do you have an Audubon Moment to share? It can be experiences with animals, plants, people or the whole ecosystem – as long as it took place in nature. Please email your “moment” to *The House Wren* at [info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org) with the subject line Audubon Moment. Wishing all of you a multitude of Audubon Moments!



Eagles nesting at Bruce Yee Park in Eastlake, OH, right near Lake Erie.

Bruce Yee Park is just a baseball field and parking lot, ringed by trees on one side. The eagles have taken the place over, at least while nesting. Signs are posted that people are not to get closer than the parking lot to the nest (400' away – I measured on Google Maps). Nearly every day there are people watching from the fence that borders the field, many with cameras. There is a neighborhood on the other side of that nest!! Who would have figured the eagles would prefer that spot?

—Matt Valencic

## Critter Corner



### Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)

As a kid when I would peruse field guides and land on the page of the scarlet tanager my thoughts were, “naw those birds don't really exist! At least not here.” They looked like exotic jungle birds to me. How could I miss such a spectacular bird sporting a fiery scarlet red head and body with black wings and tail? My brother-in-law labeled them “Black-winged Red Birds.” As I got more into birding I learned that if you can recognize their call, you will find them regularly in oak-hickory forests with large mature trees. They winter in north-western South America and arrive back in our area in early May. Our inimitable sanctuary worker Kenny Kressina says when the woodland dogwoods are in bloom start looking for scarlet tanagers.

The territorial call of the male is said to sound like an American robin with a sore throat. It is burry and hoarse. Their contact call is a very easy to identify—“Chip-burr”—which is often repeated.

These are amazing insect eaters with one individual consuming 600 tent caterpillars in 15 minutes! They also are known to be fond of bees, wasps, and hornets. If insects are scarce they will stoop to eating earthworms on the ground. They also feed on berries, fruit and buds.

When the males arrive on their nesting territory they perch on a lower branch flipping their wings to expose their bright red backs while the olive colored females perch above them whistling their approval. The nest is a flimsy affair constructed far out on a branch up to 75 feet above the ground. Occasionally the eggs can be seen through the floor of the nest.

If you take a walk in a mature forest, listen for a raspy robin-like song or remember the sound of the “chip-burr.” Then look up into the canopy to see a neon fire blazing as the sun hits that scarlet plumage!

—Jim Tomko

## In case you missed it!

Timberdoodles!  
4/07/2018

This year's woodcock walk was one of the best we have had as the "performer" preferred the short mown strip from last season's mowing for the ground part of his courtship display. We were able to approach close enough to hear the quiet buzzing of his inhaling before blasting out the "PEENT PEENT PEENT". He kept very loyal to his "dancing ground," allowing us to see him again and again as he landed from his flight display. At the beginning of

Woodcock  
Photo: M. Valencic



the evening he had to chase a competitor off his stage so that he could have it all to himself. There was a nice variety of a dozen people from college age to my age. We were all very impressed and we are not even woodcocks!

—Jim Tomko

## Why go birding in May?

Because EVERYONE is here! In our four-county area there were 244 species of birds reported to eBird for May during the last three years. Resident birds, migrants coming here to breed, migrants passing through for points north. The more habitats you visit the more species you will see. Just about every group of birds is represented here in May.

Go Birding ...  
Be Happy!

—Matt Valencic



Green heron and black-throated green warbler  
Photos: M. Valencic.

## Annual Dinner

(Continued from page 1)

adventure; a wander through Ohio's varied habitats with visits to flora and fauna great and small.

We'll look at well-known plants and animals, and obscure species that few have heard of or encountered. Overarching all is the importance of ALL the cogs of the ecological wheel, and the need to protect everything.

A recently retired ODNR biologist, Jim McCormac is a successful author and amazing wildlife photographer. He is a knowledgeable speaker who is sought after for his excellent presentations. You will not want to miss this one!

### Schedule:

3:00 p.m. Nature Walk  
4:00 p.m. Social Hour  
5:00 p.m. Annual Chapter Meeting  
5:30 p.m. Dinner  
6:30 p.m. Photo Contest Awards  
7:00 p.m. Program

**Cost:** \$28 (adults, 16+), \$23 (seniors, 65+), \$23 (children 15 and under)

**RSVP** at [info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org).

# Upcoming Events

## Field Trips

## Speakers Bureau

**May 11 8:00pm**  
"Frog Fugue"  
Aurora Sanctuary

As we approach the pond a silence settles in as if no souls were there. Then first one voice followed by another voice and another join in. Soon a full chorus of the entire symphony booms out its arrangement to delight our ears. I wonder how many species we will hear this year. One? Three? Five? Help us keep track of the songsters in and near our ponds desperately calling for company! Meet at the Bretschneider Park/Audubon parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Rd. in Aurora.

Visit [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org) for summer field trips and programs.

**June 8 8:00pm**  
"Call to Roost"  
Molnar Sanctuary

Many birds have a song they sing before roosting for the night. Most of you have heard American Robins singing at twilight. One of the most beautiful is the Wood Thrush. Let's see if we will be treated to his wonderful performance. There is a chance that we will hear the ethereal, downward spiraling call of the Veery. Meet at the Molnar Sanctuary parking lot on the west side of Page Road just a few hundred yards north of Mennonite Road in Aurora.

**May 3 10:30am**  
"Summer Birds of NE Ohio"  
Willoughby Senior Center  
38032 Brown Avenue  
Willoughby, OH

**May 24 11:00am**  
"Birds of NE Ohio"  
Jennings Center for Older Adults  
10210 Granger Road  
Garfield Heights, OH

**July 19 1:00pm**  
"Summer Birds of NE Ohio"  
Jennings Center for Older Adults  
10210 Granger Road  
Garfield Heights, OH

The above programs are presented by  
Matt Valencic.

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### *A Wry Smile*



Q: Why did the chicken cross the  
road, roll in mud, then cross the road  
again?

A: He was a dirty double crosser!

Q: What was the farmer doing on the  
other side of the road?

A: He was catching all the chickens!

### *An Audubon Moment*

I was walking in a nearby park recently when a black-capped chickadee emerged from an old woodpecker hole with a mouth full of *something*, flew away and returned within a minute to reenter the hole. I was watching the preparation of a nesting cavity and I had my camera to document it! For the next 10 minutes the bird excavated the cavity, removing unwanted material and taking it far



from the tree. It knew instinctively that if it just dropped all that stuff at the base of the tree, predators might see this as a sign that a meal was close by. It was getting a bit nervous after 10 minutes so I thanked it for sharing an “Audubon Moment” with me and took my leave.

If you have a dead tree in your yard that does not pose a threat to people or buildings, consider letting it stand. It just might become a condo for cavity nesting birds like chickadees and bluebirds.

*Wishing you Audubon Moments—Matt Valencic*

### **Did you know?**

Scarlet Tanagers are among our longest distance songbird migrants. They winter as far south as Bolivia and the males wear a demure olive-drab plumage much of the time while they are there.

**DATED MAIL**

