



Hammon Pond, Aurora Sanctuary

Photograph by Jim Tomko

Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland



**Annual Report to Members
For the Year 2017**

Annual Meeting

June 2, 2018



Overview

The information in this report is based mainly on accomplishments, events, and activities during calendar year 2017. Exceptions to that timeframe, e.g., the listing of trustees and officers for the period June, 2017 – May, 2018, are noted. The individuals listed as chairs and members of the committees are also individuals who served from June, 2017 through May, 2018.

Reports from the following committees are contained in the pages that follow:

- Communications Committee
- Education Committee
- Field Trips Committee
- Finance Committee
- Important Birding Area (IBA) Committee
- Sanctuary Committee

Interested in helping?

Reading through the attached reports will give you a sense of the many activities involved with meeting the mission of our organization (see boxed text to the right for our mission statement). We could use your help.

If you are interested in learning more about how to become involved with The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland please contact Jim Tomko, Board President, at 216/556-5441

The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (ASGC) promotes the conservation and appreciation of birds and other wildlife through habitat preservation and educational activities. ASGC, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, has over 1,400 member households throughout the Greater Cleveland area, owns over 500 acres of protected land, and is one of northeast Ohio's oldest continuously operating environmental organizations.



From the President



Our mission is to promote conservation and appreciation of birds and other wildlife through habitat preservation and educational activities. We have accomplished these goals with the indomitable energy of a number of key people. I deeply appreciate all the time and activities that they have contributed.

Alison DeBroux and Kathy Cochran, with their dedicated crew on the education committee, have produced and carried out some fantastic programs for us both at the Novak Education Center and on the road.

Matt Valencic has continued his gift and passion for educating us about nature through his service on the education committee and has taken our Speaker's Bureau to nonpareil highs. He is sought after for his excellent presentations on birds, birding, and e-Bird.

John Weber has continued on as our treasurer providing clear, concise and accurate reports. His loyalty to ASGC is remarkable. Even though he has requested a replacement and none have stepped forward he presses on. He does not want to leave us without a treasurer. We are hoping a candidate will step forward.

Mary Salomon and Penny Orr are sprucing up the grounds around the Education Center with native blooms and plants. They are doing the grueling work of amending and dressing up the soil. The result is amazing.

Ken Kresina is almost a one-man maintenance crew working regularly in our Sanctuaries. He is assisted by Rob Swaney and Mark Magree with certain tasks and projects.

Carol Lillich keeps us all on track and on time as our secretary. She often anticipates what I need even before I request help from her. Without her attention to detail and protocol we would be lost.

There are other professionals on our board of trustees and in our membership who contributed with their expertise in various ways and I thank them also.

Our Important Bird Area Committee is active in education about birds and birding and also doing surveys of species in living in our IBAs.

There is a move afoot to reactivate the defunct Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters so that all Ohio chapters can stay in touch and help each other out in any way that is possible.

I am honored to serve with these skilled volunteers and I am very proud of the goals they have achieved in meeting our mission.

Jim Tomko, President



Communications Committee
Alison DeBroux, Chair

Newsletter: *The House Wren The House Wren*

Editor: Alison DeBroux

Contributing Writers: Jim Tomko, Alison DeBroux, Matt Valencic

Guest Contributors: Kathy Cochran, Diann Rucki, Mary Salomon, Barb Philbrick, Heidi Harris,
Sharon Swaney, Carol Lillich, Mark Demyan

The House Wren is published nine times a year, September through May. It is printed in black-and-white by Excel Printing, 17800 Chillicothe Road, Chagrin Falls, OH, and is mailed to all members unless requested otherwise. Printing and mailing costs are approximately \$550 per issue. Members' addresses are downloaded from National Audubon's database, with approximately 150 chapter-only addresses added. A low-resolution color version is available on our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org.

Starting in May, 2018, *The House Wren* added "An Audubon Moment," a new column that will feature short anecdotes and photos from members who have a unique or memorable experience with nature they'd like to share. Email submissions to info@clevelandaudubon.org or mail to our regular address at P.O. Box 391037, Solon, OH 44139.

Website: www.clevelandaudubon.org

Webmaster: Sharon Swaney

ASGC Liaison: Alison DeBroux

With the help of web guru Sharon Swaney, our website is a dynamic, continually changing source for all things ASGC. If you haven't visited lately, you can find us at www.clevelandaudubon.org.

The site features easy-to-navigate pull-down menus to all of our various programs and information about who we are and what we are doing. On the left side is an interactive list of upcoming events that links to the complete calendar of goings-on. On the right side are a variety of buttons that link to information and registration forms for special events such as the Annual Dinner, Photo Contest and the Chagrin River Bird Quest. Through our site, people from as far away as Great Britain have contacted us to find local birding hotspots, answers to bird-related questions, and information about special events.

Please visit often as things are continually changing to represent all the things your ASGC is up to!



Email Marketing

Manager/Designer: Alison DeBroux

We use Constant Contact for our email marketing efforts. With this service, we are able to send mass emails with information about what's new with ASGC, including dates, times and details about our field trips and other events. The cost for this service is based on the number of email contacts. We have approximately 630 email contacts (as of May 2018). Anyone interested in receiving these emails can contact us at info@clevelandaudubon.org or visit the *contact us* page at www.clevelandaudubon.org. There is always a *safe unsubscribe* link at the bottom of every email.

Submitted by Alison DeBroux, Chair



Education Committee

Alison DeBroux, Chair

Kathy Cochran, Co-chair

Members: Laura Bell-Peters, KC Carter-Cohn, Kathryn Craig, Sue Graham, Sarah Mabey, Joe Malmisur, Laurenda Messer, Penny Orr, Barb Philbrick, Mike Roberto, Betsy Siman, Bud Shaw, Andrea Storey, Matt Valencic, and Harvey Webster.

The Education Committee remains committed to our mission of promoting the conservation and appreciation of birds and other wildlife through educational activities focusing on the greater Cleveland community.

During the 2017-2018 season, we offered the following programs:

Speakers' Bureau

Formerly known as the Backyard Naturalist, our Speakers' Bureau has racked up some impressive numbers, mostly due to volunteer Matt Valencic. His programs on Birds of NE Ohio, eBird, Summer Birds of Ohio, and the popular Warbler Warm-up have attracted audiences at venues from Westlake to Chagrin Falls and many places in between. Check our newsletter, *The House Wren*, or www.clevelandaudubon.org under Events for upcoming programs open to the public. To schedule a program for your group, contact us at info@clevelandaudubon.org.



Chagrin River Bird Quest

Volunteers: KC Carter-Cohn, Kathy Cochran, Kathryn Craig, Alison DeBroux, Sue Graham, Laurenda Messer, Barb Philbrick, Mike Roberto, Mary Saloman, Andrea Storey, Jim Tomko and Matt Valencic.

The 3rd Chagrin River Bird Quest was fun for the youngest birders and old hands alike. Twenty-four teams registered to participate in this year's Bird Quest and Birding Workshop and seventeen turned in checklists for judging. Approximately 60 people enjoyed refreshments, awards and door prizes at Geauga Park District's West Woods Nature Center at the Quest Celebration on September 23rd, the conclusion of the event. The winning team racked up 71 total species seen. The rarest bird seen was a gray-cheeked thrush. The youngest team had an average age of 11.2 years and also won for Longest Distance Traveled, having journeyed from Cincinnati to visit family and decided to participate in Bird Quest while they were here. The teams all reported unseasonably hot and dry weather for the third weekend in September. But that didn't stop a lot of good birding!

Please join us for the 2018 Chagrin River Bird Quest, scheduled for September 14-15, and/or our Birding Workshop on September 8. Check www.clevelandaudubon.org for more information.

Scout Day, Bird Buddy & All About Birds programs

On August 3rd, 2017, the Education Committee produced a test run of our new All About Birds program, designed for young birders in the 10-14 age range. The four participants did an art project, learned about binoculars and field guides, and took a bird walk to practice their new skills with volunteer Matt Valencic.

Our usual February Scout Day was postponed until March 3rd, 2018, due to icy conditions. The rescheduled program attracted 17 boys and girls, aged kindergarten through 3rd grade. They learned that it's the feathers that make a bird a bird, then saw how birds adapted to various habitats and food sources by changing the shapes of their beaks and feet. They saw what owls eat for lunch and they learned how an eagle makes its nest bigger and bigger every year. They tried out binoculars and microscopes, made a bird mask and bird feeder, and every Scout went home with a bird sticker book and a miniature field guide. This is a very volunteer-intensive program, and we'd like to thank our legion of loyal volunteers who made it possible: Kathy Cochran, Kathryn Craig, Sue Graham, Matt Valencic, Barb Philbrick and son Henry, Betsy Siman, Nicole Ryman, Madison Proctor, Katie Cochran and Sarah Cochran.



On April 5th, 2018, Alison DeBroux, Kathryn Craig and Sue Graham took a modified version of our Bird Buddy program to a group of preschoolers at the Early Learning Center in Shaker Heights. These children had been watching a house sparrow build a nest outside their classroom window and were very excited to learn more about birds. They looked at feathers under a microscope, tried to “Fly like a bird” (with cloth wings) and “Walk like a duck” (with swim flippers), and learned where birds live and what they eat.

Home School program

On April 27, 2018, the Education Committee attempted to put on a program for the wide age range typically found in a Home School co-op. Twenty-two students, age 3 – 14, participated. They started with a short history/art lesson, trying to draw birds like John James Audubon did. Next came a leaf litter project. Bins of leaf litter were dumped on each of four tables and the students attempted to find and identify what was in it. This was a good activity for all ages—every kid likes to get their hands dirty! (Actually they didn't—we gave them craft sticks to search and stir with, and not a single kid actually used their hands.) They also explored beak adaptations and dissected an owl pellet, all part of the idea of the connectedness of nature. Then everyone went on a bird walk. Many thanks to volunteers Kathy Cochran, Kathryn Craig, Laurenda Messer and Matt Valencic (and Sue Graham in absentia) for helping make this program possible.

BIRDay Parties



Stephen Agafonov

Several years ago, the Education Committee designed and began offering children's birthday (or *BIRDday*) parties. For less than a parent would pay for a Chuck E. Cheese or Cinemark birthday party, we provide a personalized, bird-centric experience. On November 11th we hosted a BIRDday party for two children, 8 and 10; and on January 6th, we hosted another party for a 6-year-old. The birthday boys and girls and their friends dissected an owl pellet, did a craft project, played bird-orient games and and ventured outside for a scavenger hunt.

Please visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org for more information about our BIRDday parties. To schedule a party, send an email to info@clevelandaudubon.org.

Boy Scout Bird Study Merit Badge

In March, 2018, volunteer Barb Philbrick with help from Matt Valencic and Jim Tomko led a Bird Study Merit Badge program. Twenty-five Scouts signed up and thirteen completed all the requirements to earn the badge. Over three sessions, the Scouts learn about different aspects of birding. In the first session, they learned some history of DDT, then sketched and identified different parts of birds.



In the second session, they learned about binoculars and field guides. In the third session, they hiked through the Aurora school campuses and discussed the habitats (meadow, woods, pond, and edge). They also discussed the purpose of bird song and the boys listened for and tried to identify bird songs. In addition to the classwork, the boys have to build a bird feeder, bird house, bird bath, or backyard sanctuary. Most of the boys built bird houses. Overall, they were a receptive group and we hope they carry their interest and enthusiasm to help support birds and habitats in their future endeavors.

High School Scholarship

Following a three-year review in the summer of 2017, this program is temporarily on hiatus while the committee explores other ways to support young people in furthering their education.

Submitted by Alison DeBroux, Chair



Field Trip Committee

Jim Tomko, Chair

Members: John Lillich, Carol Lillich



Each month of the year we celebrated the change in seasons and wildlife with a hike through one of our 4 sanctuaries. Attendance varied from 2 to 14. The most popular are evening hikes listening to and seeing the Woodcocks dance in April, hearing the owls call in September and enjoying John Lillich's fall leaf color hike in October. We will continue to offer guided hikes in our sanctuaries on a monthly basis following a seasonal theme.

The Field Trip Committee requested and spent no funds in the past year. The committee has no plans to request any funds in the upcoming year.

If anyone has an idea for a field trip or would like to lead one, the request will happily be considered.

Submitted by James W. Tomko, Chair

The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland



Hach-Otis Expansion Dedication At The John & Carol Lillich Meadows July 11, 2017



Tom Majeski & Pete Mortensen



Attendees



Bret Rodstrom, WRLC and Bill & Marian Kennelly



Jim Tomko & Mayor Robert Weger
Presenting City Proclamation to ASGC



Jim Tomko & Kevin Malacek,
Former Lake County Commissioner



John & Carol Lillich, Rich Cochran, President & CEO
Western Reserve Land Conservancy



John & Carol Lillich

Photos by Carol Lillich, Alison DeBroux, ASGC
& Emily Bacha, WRLC



Fall Color Walk at Hach-Otis – October 21, 2017

Photos by Carol Lillich

All About Birds – August 3, 2017



Learning to use binoculars



Bird walk with Matt Valencic



Photos by Alison DeBroux

Scout Day, March 3, 2018



Photos by Alison DeBroux



Chagrin River Bird Quest – September 22-23, 2017



Photos by Alison DeBroux



Finance Committee

John Weber, Chair

Members: Jim Tomko, Steve Zabor, Mark Demyan

Financial Report Highlights Year ended December 31, 2017

Income Statement (12 months ended 12/31/2017)

Income Items

Annual Appeal – So far the current year's appeal has raised \$11,500 since 11-1-2017
Rental Income - 451 Townline Road -Wilbur realty said the tenants have not been paying on time.

Expense Items

Scholarships – same as last year – 5 @ \$1,000
Web design - \$1,925 vs \$3,579 last year
Maintenance – Water pump and septic treatment system
Property Taxes – we paid new property taxes which will be refunded by Lake County
Property purchase - \$300,000 (\$60,000 to Western Reserve Land Conservancy)
IRS penalty – 990 late filing penalty \$3,000, after several calls to the IRS they removed the penalty in October, 2017

Other Income & Expense

Total Investment income - \$57,383 vs 52,517 last year.

Balance sheet as of 12/31/17

Cash at year end increased to \$36,901 primarily due to withdrawal from investments to pay for the new property and \$40,000 to the general fund for expenses related to the new property and other continuing expenses.

Investments had a good year – Vanguard increased \$12,900 and Merrill increased even with the withdrawal of \$340,000 Merrill increased by \$46,000.

We also have \$3,000 in gifts for improvements at our new property.

For further information on the financials, please contact the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland at: 216-556-5441.

Submitted by John Weber, Treasurer



ASGC Trustee, Dr. Sarah Mabey, & her Hiram College class at Hach-Otis on October 7, 2017



WRLC Hosted Hike at Hach-Otis May 19, 2017





Important Birding Area (IBA)

Jim Tomko, Acting Chair

Members: Sarah Mabey, Mary Salomon, Jim Tomko, Matt Valencic

The IBA committee has continued toward its goal of educating the public on the value of preserving good birding habitat and how it benefits other wildlife and also human-kind. We have done several educational programs, participated in speaking engagements, led birding tours, and completed surveys of bird species in our Important Bird Areas.

Submitted by Jim Tomko, Acting Chair



Sanctuary Committee

Jim Tomko, Chair

Members: Mark Demyan, Ken Kresina, Carol Lillich, John Lillich, Penny Orr, Mary Salomon, Rob Swaney, Steve Zabor

Our sanctuaries are well traveled as can be seen by the worn trails and the cars in the parking lots. Some folks are birding most just want to stay in touch with our natural world. We are striving to maintain these wildlife sanctuaries primarily for the plants and animals that live there but also to give access to those who want to enjoy undeveloped wild places.

Penny Orr and Mary Salomon continue to plant wonderful native plants around the Novak Education Center.

A stewardship plan was produced by a professional forester for the Hach-Otis and Molnar sanctuary with the theme of improvement for wildlife. Last year we received stewardship plans for both the Aurora and Novak Sanctuaries.

We are discussing our plans for maintaining the Hach-Otis addition and a trail through this wonderful property.



Mowing and brush hogging of fields in Aurora, Novak and Molnar were initiated as soon as the weather allowed. Full field mowing is stopped in mid-April to allow nesting birds and mammals to carry on undisturbed. Strip mowing will continue throughout the summer in order to control Buckthorn invasion. The strips mowed last year will be allowed to grow to provide proper field habitat for native flora and fauna. The plan is to maintain the fields with a 4 to 5 year strip mowing pattern. The strips that were mown in previous years show very good buckthorn control and good emergence of herbaceous plants and some woody natives.

Invasive species are being attacked by mowing, pulling, trimming and judicious spot spraying with an herbicide that has wetland approval.



River otters are being seen in the Aurora Sanctuary along with their middens of mussel shells and their “chutes” through the snow.

The Bald Eagles at Novak are busy raising a family.

Two Eagle Scout Projects were completed at the Aurora Sanctuary with one remarking the trails and putting up directional signs. The other was erecting a large 160-pound bat house.

A Flying Squirrel box was mounted to an Ash tree in the Aurora Sanctuary. An American Kestrel box and an Eastern Screech owl box were mounted at the Novak Sanctuary.

The Molnar Sanctuary is just about ready for another mowing. Currently the Buckthorn is being controlled with spot spraying.

All the sanctuaries are becoming very popular places to hike, rest and recuperate from the daily stresses of life which encourages us to continue to improve our properties for wildlife.

Submitted by Jim Tomko, Chair



2018-2019 Officers



President - Jim Tomko*: *Chair, Sanctuary and Field Trips Committees, Member of IBA and Newsletter Committees; Spring Bird Walk Leader.*

Vice President - Position is currently open



Secretary – Carol Lillich*: *Member of the Sanctuary, Field Trips, and Newsletter Committees; Schedule Gates Mills Spring Bird Walks.*



Treasurer - John Weber*: *Chair, Finance Committee, Member Newsletter Committees.*



2018-2019 Trustees



Bob Bartolotta: *Member Sanctuary and Newsletter Committee.*



Kathy Cochran: *Co-Chair Education Committee and member of the Newsletter Committee.*



Alison DeBroux: *Chair, Education and Communications Committee.*



Mark Demyan: *Member, Finance and Newsletter Committees.*



John Lillich: *Member Sanctuary, Field Trips, and Newsletter Committees, and Gates Mills Spring Bird Walk Leader.*



Sarah Mabey: *Member IBA, Education and Newsletter Committees.*



Joe Malmisur: *Member of Important Birding Area Committee; Education, Newsletter Committees and Ed Center & Rental House Maintenance Sub-committee*



2018-2019 Trustees



Penny Orr: *Member Education, Sanctuary and Newsletter Committees and Programs Subcommittee.*



Mary Salomon: *Member Important Birding Area, Sanctuary and Newsletter Committees*



Harvey Webster: *Chair, Programs Subcommittee, Member Education and Newsletter Committees.*



Steve Zabor : *Member Finance, Sanctuary and Newsletter Committees .*

Trustees are elected at ASGC's annual meeting (usually held in June) by the general membership. Terms are typically 3 years and trustees are elected on a rotating basis.

Annual Report Prepared by Carol Lillich, Secretary ASGC