



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

September, 2018

Fun for the whole family!

4th Annual Chagrin River Bird Quest set for September 14 – 15

Share the day with family, friends, co-workers and classmates! Get your team together and explore the Chagrin River Valley from Lake Erie south to Audubon's bird sanctuaries in Aurora in search of year-round residents and fall migrants. Start in your own backyard, bird on your own, or join one of our expert birders for a guided bird walk. How many species can your team check off in 24 hours?

Schedule of Events

September 8th: Register early and attend our FREE introductory Birding Workshop. 9 to 11am at the Holden Arboretum Corning Visitor Center.

September 14th: Team Check-in and final registration.

Pick up maps, checklists and t-shirts (new design this year!) Two locations! North: 4 to 6pm at The West Woods Nature Center and South: 4 to 6pm at the Novak Education Center in Aurora.

September 15th: Quest Celebration! Checklist turn-in, awards and door prizes. Hearty refreshments. 4 to 6:30pm at The West Woods Nature Center.

All Bird Quest activities and materials are free, but registration is required! Registration is open at www.clevelandaudubon.org.



The "Little Spotted Kiwis" team took home a unique bird feeder donated to our door prize table.

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Native plants bloom at Novak Education Center

More native plants mean more choices of food and shelter for native birds and other wildlife. To survive, native birds need native plants and the insects that have co-evolved with them. For example, native oaks support more than 550 species of butterflies and moths, while the non-native ginkgo tree supports just five. Caterpillars are an essential food source for both migrant and resident birds. In the 16 days between hatching and fledging, a clutch of chickadee chicks can down more than 9000 caterpillars! Recognizing the importance of native plants, the National Audubon Society provides information and a tool to help the gardener and bird enthusiast. Entering a Cleveland zip code in their on-line native plants database yields the names of 126 species that will flourish in our area.

Trustees Penny Orr and Mary
(Continued on page 2)

Ready for September! (and Bird Quest)

Have you noticed the birds got really quiet in August? Where did the cacophony of bird song we enjoyed in June and July go? Did the birds leave?

No, the birds did not leave, but many of them switched from singing to calling as they finish rearing their last brood and go through molt. Many calls are distinctive while others just sound like 'chips' and 'chirps'. If you have a bird

app on your smart phone listen to some of them (wood thrush and veery are good examples). You can also go to www.allaboutbirds.org to learn some of the calls. If you are anything like me you will be saying to yourself "Oh! That's what I have been hearing but unable to place!"

According to the AllAboutBirds site,
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From the Nest...



This past June we had one of our best Annual meetings yet. I want to thank and recognize John and Carol Lillich for all the planning and preparing they did to pull it off. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Alison and Jim DeBroux for their help especially with the photo contest. Jim McCormac gave a fantastic presentation with spectacular pictures of sights to see right in our own state of

Ohio. Dab of Class by David Buss was our caterer and he was able to provide his usual delectable hot meal with no kitchen facilities on the premises! I hope you can join us next June for a fun and interesting afternoon.

Our next exciting birding event is Bird Quest. This is an outing where we register in teams and count and list as many birds as we can see or hear in a 24-hour period. It is a friendly competition

for new and experienced birders to find the birds living in or migrating through the Chagrin River watershed. The afternoon culminates with a get together to share how we did with some refreshments and awards. This year we are partnering with Black Brook Audubon chapter of Lake and Geauga county. Join us for a great way to enjoy the autumn migration.

Good Birding to you.

—Jim Tomko, President



Perennials bloom profusely in the showcase Native Plants Garden designed by ASGC trustees Mary Salomon and Penny Orr at the Novak Education Center.

Photo: M. Salomon

Native plants garden

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Salomon have worked hard to develop a beautiful and educational native plant display garden adjacent to the ASGC Education Center surrounding the storage structure immediately north of the center. Penny, who is owner of the Mayfield Road Perennials Preferred garden center, which has a strong emphasis on native plants, donated the plants. Local resident Mark Magree provides critical watering of the garden. Particular attention was paid in 2017 to renovate and expand the garden. Several trees were removed and the soil was amended with compost. This has paid off in 2018 with beautiful displays of perennials. The appearance of the garden changes continuously from May through November, as different flowers come into bloom. Over 70 plant species are now in place in this garden, which measures 36' by 24'. Examples of plants include multiple species of milkweed, aster, sage, monarda, coneflower, heuchera, grasses, penstemon, bee balm, and sunflower.

Stop by the Education Center on Town Line road in Aurora and enjoy and learn from this marvelous garden!

—Mary Salomon

Critter Corner



Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

To fly like a swallow! That would be amazing!

One of my favorite birds is the Barn Swallow with its deeply forked tail, its midnight-blue back, rusty throat and cinnamon belly. Its plumage is as appealing as its flight is exciting. Their flight style is darting to and fro, up and down, swooping this way and that capturing insects in flight. Often, they are seen following tractors in the field as the farmer flushes insects into flight. They also drink while on the wing, skimming the surface of the pond with their lower bill.

Today these birds are almost inextricably tied to human civilization nesting on ledges and beams of human made structures like barns, bridges, culverts, and under eaves. Prior to human settlements they nested under rock outcroppings on cliffs or in caves or other niches.

Barn Swallows build their nests out of hundreds of small mud pellets which they combine with grass and straw, gluing it to the structure one pellet at a time. It takes six or more days to construct the semicircular, pottery-style nest.

Both male and female incubate for 13 to 17 days and the young fledge after 18 -23 days. Many times the nest is then repaired and a second brood is begun.

These cheerful appearing birds are active in our area from late March into October. Hopefully you will catch a glimpse of them before they head south for the winter.

—Jim Tomko

Annual Photo Contest showcases Ohio talent



Grand Prize: a blue-winged warbler taken in the Shawnee State Forest by Sean Hallowell.

ASGC's third Annual Photo Contest provided a showcase for amateur Ohio photographers. Subjects ranged from an American avocet in California, a Puerto Rican crested anole in Florida, to a Coke bottle in Belize City. Plus many interesting and unique birds and nature shots from Ohio.

Photographers entered in four categories: Birds of Ohio, Nature, Fine Art, and Youth. Winners were announced at our Annual Meeting on June 2nd. Over \$600 in prize money was awarded.

The winners were selected by Ohio photographer and teacher Steve Manchook.

Grand Prize: Sean Hallowell from Beavercreek, OH; First Place, Birds: Jon Harford from South Euclid, OH; First Place, Nature: Michelle Becker from Burton, OH; First Place, Fine Art: Kathy Cochran from Aurora, OH; First Place, Youth: Sarah Cochran from Aurora, OH.

And new this year was our Viewers' Choice prize, awarded to Brad Imhoff from Granville, OH.

For a complete list of our 2018 winners, visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org.

Annual Meeting attendees peruse the 2018 winning photos on June 2nd.

Photo: C. Lillich



In case you missed it!

Twilight Walk

We enjoyed an exciting adventure at the Molnar Sanctuary on an amazing July evening. As we followed the trail on the beautiful moss-covered banks of the lake we saw beaver work and their

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In Case You Missed It

(Continued from page 2)

slides into and out of the water. This trail loops through a young forest and then into a large field interspersed with trees where the trail had been nicely mowed by Kenny Kressina.

Next the trail loops into a mature forest where the thick leaf canopy made it quite dark. As the sun set we lost the trail as this part is not well marked. We kept track of where the sun was and using that position as our beacon, navigated off-trail back toward the parking lot wading through several "seas" of poison ivy. Fortunately, everyone was properly attired for the trek and we did make it back to the parking lot in the normal allotted time frame.

—Jim Tomko

September birding

(Continued from page 1)

when birds molt they get quiet. Losing and replacing feathers may limit their flying to some degree, making them more susceptible to predators. The pretty feathers seen in May have taken a beating all summer and need to be refreshed. For some migrants like warblers the new feathers will look different, often less colorful. We call them 'confusing fall warblers' but technically this is their basic plumage. It is how they look for most of the year in their southern (winter) homes. Not all the



Bay-breasted warbler in fall plumage.
Photo: M. Valencic

warblers change appearance but enough of them do to challenge us during September birding.

With all that quiet I am ready for some action in September! The southward migration will be in full swing and we get a second chance to see birds we missed in May. The birds may not be singing but they will be moving quickly through the vegetation, giving us a target for our

binoculars. Personally, I will be looking for gray-cheeked thrush, bay-breasted warbler and olive-sided flycatcher, birds I missed in May. I am also looking forward to migrating sparrows, particularly Lincoln's, white-throated, white-crowned, LeConte's and Nelson's. I have found the edges of wetlands most productive for these fall visitors. Wake Robin Trail in the Mentor Marsh (Lake County) and Frohring Meadows (Geauga County) have been good places in the past.

Take another look at those fall warblers in your field guide and get out and enjoy September birding.

—Matt Valencic

Speakers Bureau

Sept 8 9:00am

"Birding Workshop"

Holden Arboretum

Register at www.clevelandaudubon.org

Sept 24 10:30am

"Migratory Waterfowl and Winter Birds"

Willoughby Senior Center

38032 Brown Avenue, Willoughby

Sept 25 7:00pm

"Introduction to eBird"

Greater Akron Audubon

Sand Run Metro Park, Mingo Shelter 1300 Sand Run Road, Akron

Above programs presented by Matt Valencic

Upcoming Events

Field Trips

Sept 8 2:30pm

"Fringed Gentians"

Aurora Sanctuary

The rare Fringed Gentian is among our most stunning of the native wildflowers. They are also among the last to bloom for the season. We are fortunate to have a patch located in the Aurora Sanctuary and on a sunny September day they open their beautiful blue blossom dazzling all who view them. Join us to see these and other autumn wildflowers in full bloom. Meet at the Bretschnieder Park parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Road in Aurora.

Sept 14 8:00pm

"Owl Prowl"

Aurora Sanctuary

Explore Audubon's Aurora Sanctuary after dark for a chance to add a few night-flyers to your list. It is now safe to go owling as the owlets are out of the nest and learning to forage on their own under supervision of their parents. We may hear and see barred owls, great-horned owls, and Eastern screech owls. Meet at the Bretschnieder/Audubon parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Rd. in Aurora.

Sept 15 8:00am

Jackson Field

South Chagrin Reservation

This location is great because Forest/Field/Wetland/River all come together to offer a wide diversity of birds. It is easy walking on established dirt trails and we will always be within ¼ mile of the parking lot. Meet in the parking lot located on Chagrin River Road in Moreland Hills – 0.7 miles north of Miles Road or 0.7 miles south of Chagrin Blvd.

Sept 14-15

"Chagrin River Bird Quest"

Don't miss our 4th annual team birding challenge! Details on page 1 or visit www.clevelandaudubon.org.

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An Audubon Moment

Poking their heads out of the entrance to a cavity nest located in a skinny, long-dead tree, well-developed tree swallow nestlings were jockeying for the best feeding position when the one at the top leaned a little too far forward. Suddenly ejected, the surprised accidental fledgling flapped wildly, then gained enough control to land on a branch located a few feet below the hole. Gazing in the direction of the only home he (she?) had ever known, which was also the place to which Mommy and Daddy had always delivered the high-protein meals they had caught on the wing, the awkward aviator flew up to the opening and tried unsuccessfully to get back inside the nest. Perhaps noticing a sibling's gaping behavior (indicating that food was en route), the youngster clung to the bark and did an amazing head turn in order to be in contention for the next tasty morsel.



Photo: C. Conti-Entin

This unforgettable experience occurred at the beaver marsh north of the Ira Road trailhead in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. A boardwalk over the marsh is part of the Ohio and Erie Canal towpath.

Wishing you Audubon Moments—Carol Conti-Entin

Editor's note: Please submit YOUR Audubon Moment to info@clevelandaudubon.org.

Pictures are highly desirable but not required!

Did you know?

Barn Swallows are the widest ranging of all swallows, occurring in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia making the best known and most studied swallow species.

—Jim Tomko

Endangered Species Act threatened

The ESA is our nation's most powerful tool for protecting wildlife. Ask your members of Congress to oppose efforts to weaken the Endangered Species Act.

DATED MAIL

