



# The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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Visit our website at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org)

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“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 an expert birder for a guided bird walk...”

In the five years since that invitation went out to NE Ohio birders and ASGC members, we have hosted more than 225 birders at the Chagrin River Bird Quest, our fall team birding challenge. More than 80 people have taken part in our pre-

event workshops, presented by Matt Valencic and Sarah Mabey. We've given away more than 200 t-shirts.

Experienced and inexperienced alike, birders have risen to the challenge of finding as many species of birds in the Chagrin River Valley over a 24-hour period as they can, come rain or shine. Our winning teams have found 70+ species each year, from the common crow to the gray-cheeked thrush. Our “non-winning teams” may not find the most birds, but have won other awards like Most Creative Team name (2018 winner: “Beasts of Birdin”) and Farthest Distance Traveled (2017 winner: the “Blue Footed Braunies” who came from Cincinnati to participate). Everyone has a chance to win one of our many door prizes and the food at the Celebration is second to none!

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## Kingfisher's story

For many years I have contributed wood carvings and wood turnings to various non-profits, most notable was The Holden Arboretum, to be used in their fund-raising events. This is the first time I have sponsored a piece to our own Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland.

The piece is a full-size Belted Kingfisher, titled “Fisher King,” carved from Butternut and mounted on a branch carved from Black Cherry. In 2016 it



won second place in the 3D Artwork category, “[unveiled] 24<sup>th</sup> Lake County Art

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“Fisher King” by John Lillich

## 2019 Annual Meeting and Dinner held June 1 at Lake Farmpark

The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland held its Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 1, 2019 in the Machinery Barn at Lake Farmpark in Kirtland, Ohio. This is one of the more unique places that we have held a meeting. The barn is where the Farmpark keeps, and displays, a lot of their antique tractors, and when they have an event the tractors are moved outside of the barn, which gives attendees an opportunity to walk around and get a better look at them.

The day was muggy and overcast,

but the weather did cooperate and the thunderstorms that were predicted held off until after our event was over.

Our day started at 3:00 p.m. with a nature walk around the Farmpark for those that wanted to participate. A wine and appetizer reception followed.

There was a brief chapter meeting shortly after 5:00 p.m. Jim Tomko, ASGC president, welcomed all the attendees and gave the group a little history lesson on Audubon, a brief overview of our activities for the past year, and an update on the progress

being made by the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters (COAC). He then thanked our board members for all the work they do and a special thanks for the work done to put the annual report together. John Lillich was asked to tell the story about the juvenile Red-shouldered hawk, named Otis, that was the picture used for the annual report. Ken Kresina was given a special thank you for all the work that he does to maintain the sanctuaries and was presented with a gift certificate for a

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## From the Nest...

Do you hear that? Yes! It is the sound of applause for the excellent job Carol Lillich did in planning and preparing for our Annual Meeting. Carol took care of everything we wanted and also some things we didn't even know we wanted. I hope you had the chance to see the wonderful Annual



Report that she put together for us. It was excellently done. Next

time you see her give her a pat on the back for all she did for the annual meeting and for all she keeps doing for our organization. Thank you Carol.

Believe it or not, autumn migration is underway. Shorebirds and terns are arriving with the songbirds soon to follow. Keep an eye out for our summer

birds to begin staging for their flight south in order to create an endless summer for themselves.

A fun and great way to get into the “spirit” of migration is to join in on our annual Bird Quest event. You may form your own group or team up with others to participate in this friendly competition while adding to our knowledge of what birds pass through our area and when.

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## Confusing fall warblers

Birds' feathers get pretty beat up in the normal activities of searching for food, defending territories and evading predators. Since feathers cannot be repaired (they are basically dead tissue like hair and fingernail), nature has provided a solution called *molting* – the shedding and replacement of feathers – that generally happens twice a year. The molt could be complete (all feathers replaced) or partial (only some feathers replaced). Warblers undergo both – a complete molt after nesting (change into their 'basic' or 'fall' plumage) and a partial molt in the spring (into their 'alternate' or 'breeding' plumage). Many warblers in basic plumage look similar at first glance, hence the title *Confusing Fall Warblers*. Let's look at two that are particularly challenging in basic plumage – the Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warblers.



Bay-breasted warbler, fall plumage



Blackpoll warbler, fall plumage

Photos: M. Valencic

What's similar? Both are yellowish-green above, have dark stripes on the back, white wing bars and are considered 'short-tailed' (long, undertail coverts). What's different? Blackpoll: distinct eyeline; light streaking on flanks and belly; legs can be orange or dark, but the soles of their feet are always orange.

Bay-breasted: faint eyeline; unstreaked flanks and breast; often some 'buffy' color on flanks that can extend to the undertail coverts; high-contrast black between the wing bars; legs & feet always dark.

When attempting your ID, rely on more than one characteristic. While most individuals of a species are similar, there is still some variability.

Both species should be plentiful during Bird Quest weekend at the usual warbler hotspots (refer to the list of suggested birding locations in your registration package).

(Thanks to *The Warbler Guide* (Stephenson and Whittle) and AllAboutBirds.com for information shared in this article.)

—Matt Valencic

## Annual Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

new restaurant.

Next was the election of officers and trustees and the following officers were elected:

Jim Tomko, President; Mark Demyan, Vice President; Carol Lillich, Secretary; John Weber, Treasurer; and Stephanie Demyan, Assistant Treasurer. The following trustees were elected:

Penny Orr, Mary Salomon, Steve Zabor, and Matt Valencic through May, 2020; John Lillich, Kathy Cochran, Sarah Mabey, Harvey Webster, and Bob Bartolotta through May, 2021; and Alison DeBroux and Claire Johnson through May 2022.

The Warner Seeley Award, which is



Kim Pease accepts Award of Merit from ASGC President Jim Tomko.

Photo: C. Lillich

given to an Audubon member who goes above and beyond for the organization, was presented to Carol Lillich. The Award of Merit is given to a non-member for their work in conservation and this award was presented to Kim Pease for all that she does.

We had a wonderful dinner catered by J&J Catering. After dinner we listened to a talk entitled "Biomimicry: A part of the Solution" by our guest speaker, Carol Thaler, who is Co-Director of Great Lakes Biomimicry.

We all enjoyed the food, the venue and look forward to our meeting next year.

—Carol Lillich

## Critter Corner

### Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

(*Sphyrapicus varius*)

The quintessential bird nerd bird. Often this is the species used to poke fun at us bird watchers as we don our pith helmets, khaki shorts and knee socks!

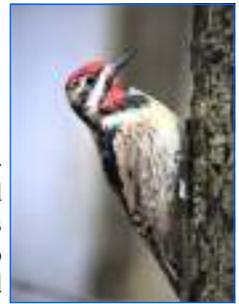


Photo: M. Valencic

Here is a fancy-looking woodpecker which is the only completely migratory woodpecker that passes through our area. A few may remain and nest in the north-eastern counties of Ohio but most fly south for the winter and north for the summer.

It is medium sized at eight to nine inches long, mottled black and white with a red crown and forehead. It has a buffy underbelly and an elongated white patch on its wings. Males have a red chin while females have white.

They are called sapsuckers because a large part of their diet is tree sap that leaks from wells that they drill in a tree trunk in a unique and perfectly horizontal row around the trunk. They drill their well fields in over 1000 species of trees and shrubs but prefer sugary sap in trees such as maple, birch and hickory. The holes they drill can introduce fungus into the heartwood which can eventually kill the tree and make it suitable for other species of woodpeckers. In fact, several hundred other creatures rely on these sap wells from insects to other birds and squirrels and bats. Sapsuckers also eat insects which they take in with the sap and will chase down insects on the wing flycatcher-style. They also eat fruit and if you are lucky, they may visit your suet feeder.

Yellow-bellied sapsuckers are easy to miss because of their furtive life-style and because a quick glance can make you gloss over it thinking it is a dingy downy woodpecker.

Their peak fall migration is from mid-September until mid-October. Be vigilant about checking those downy and hairy woodpeckers to make sure of their true identity! Yes, yellow-bellied sapsuckers do truly exist!

—Jim Tomko

## In case you missed it!

### Twilight in July

We had perfect weather for our walk this evening but since it had followed weeks of rain the trails were still quite muddy. I don't remember them being so wet and muddy this late in the season before. The fields and forest were fairly quiet until the sun began to set when a few green frogs and bullfrogs began a brief chorus. We heard crickets and other small insects singing away. The sky was so clear that you could easily see some of the moons around Jupiter with your binoculars but those with fine-tuned vision could even see them with their naked eye. Thanks to some mosquito repellent we did not provide too much food for those pesky flies. It was a very pleasant walk with some fine folks.

—Jim Tomko

## Did You Know?

Hummingbirds will follow sapsuckers to drink from their sap wells. In certain parts of their range the hummingbird migration is timed to coincide with the sapsucker arrival which allows the hummingbird to survive before many flowers are in bloom.

—Jim Tomko

## Fisher King

(Continued from page 1)

Contest", "In Memory of Dorothy McNamara Maloney".

I am a self-taught carver and turner. My interest began about the age of nine and became more serious around the age of forty. One of my passions has always been wood. I love the texture, the look and the smell of wood. My carvings are done to best display patterns in the grain of the wood and to fit the subject into those patterns. I only do a few pieces a year. I do not wish this hobby to turn into "work".

Bird Quest has grown every year since its inception. It is my hope that "Fisher King" will help promote this event, as another of my passions is the Chagrin River Valley and the associated Chagrin River Important Bird Area (IBA).

—John Lillich

*Editor's note: Register for Bird Quest and a chance to win "Fisher King" at the concluding celebration on September 14.*

## From the Nest

(Continued from page 1)

All levels of experience are welcome from first timers to seasoned pros!

Enjoy this great month for outdoor adventures!

—Jim Tomko, President

## Bird Quest

(Continued from page 1)

Last year, Blackbrook Audubon partnered with ASGC for the event, providing much needed financial support and publicity. They are our valued partners again this year.

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Bird Quest promises to be bigger and better than ever. Early and extensive publicity has brought team registrations to a record level. If you haven't joined us before (or if you have) please help us celebrate five years of Bird Quest! It is a fun, friendly competition and you will be contributing valuable "citizen science" data about the Chagrin Valley, an Audubon-designated Important Bird Area.

Then we'll party!

**When: September 13 – 14 (Pre-event Workshop: September 8)**

**Where: The West Woods Nature Center (Workshop: The Holden Arboretum)**

**What does it cost: FREE! Please register at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org)**

## Upcoming Events

### Field Trips, Etc.

#### September 8 1 to 3pm

*"Pre-event Birding Workshop"*

The Holden Arboretum  
9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland

Impress your Bird Quest teammates with your improved birding skills!

Refresh your skills and learn new ones at this 2-hour workshop put on by our own Matt Valencic. All kinds of birding tips and tricks, videos and photos, and introduction to eBird.

FREE but registration is required for entrance to Holden. Use the registration form for **Bird Quest** at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org).

#### September 13 - 14

*"Chagrin River Bird Quest"*

The West Woods Nature Center  
9465 Kinsman Rd (Rt 87), Novelty  
(and assorted Birding hotspots!)

Help us celebrate 5 years of Bird Quest!

Check in Sept 13, 4pm to 6pm to pick up checklists, free t-shirts and then start birding!

Return to The West Woods Nature Center Sept 14, 4pm to 6:30pm for checklist judging, great food and prizes! Register your team at [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org).

#### September 21 2:30pm

*"Dazzling Fringed Gentians"*

Aurora Sanctuary

The Fringed Gentian is among the last native wildflower to give a boost to our spirits as we prepare for the cloud-cover and shortening days of what's to come. If you have not enjoyed the intricate detail of the flower or soaked in the amazing blue of an open Fringed Gentian, then join us to see these and other autumn wildflowers in full bloom. If we have a sunny afternoon, you are sure to be dazzled! Meet at the Brettschneider Park parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Road in Aurora.

**DATED MAIL**

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To contact an individual trustee, send an email to [info@clevelandaudubon.org](mailto:info@clevelandaudubon.org)

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**Novak Ed Center blooms**

Don't miss the perennial gardens at the Novak Education Center. With help and donated plants from Penny Orr's Perennials Preferred in Chesterland, OH, ASGC trustee Mary Salomon has put in hours and hours of work to create one of NE Ohio's garden showplaces.

*Photos: M. Demyan*



**Chagrin River Bird Quest  
 Sept 13-14**

Birding Workshop Sept 8

See page 3 for details or go to [www.clevelandaudubon.org](http://www.clevelandaudubon.org) to register

**Things to do at the Bird Quest Celebration!**



First things first: EAT!

Games for kids (and the young at heart): Bird ID matching game, Bird Cornhole, Bird Coloring books  
 For the old and tired: enjoy the birds at the Nature Center's viewing window, and there's always a photo or art display on the walls!

Two members of the Gorny family (Birders w/o a Cause) enjoy appetizers and coloring books at the 2016 Celebration!