



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

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Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

Dec, 2023—Jan, 2024

Beaver Deceiver, Part 2: Fulton Pond

For years people have enjoyed the trails and views around Fulton Pond in the Aurora Sanctuary. However, beaver have been slowly but persistently raising the water level of the lake. The boardwalks at the north and south ends of the lake are often submerged despite having been rebuilt and raised several times.

Building on the experience of the beaver deceiver that was installed at the Molnar Sanctuary earlier this year, the trail crew embarked on the deployment of another at Fulton Pond. Rather than constructing a cube as last time, the crew

Ban Twaddell, Steve Goodale and Don Voorhees assemble the enclosure cage.
Photo: K. Kohnke



created a cylinder about five feet in diameter and about four feet high.

Most of the work was done on the right-of-way at the north end of the sanctuary. The cylinder was then rolled

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Buckthorn Busters!

A huge *THANK YOU* to the 12 volunteers who answered the call to remove



Ornithology course at Tri-C

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) Eastern Campus is offering an Ornithology course (Bio 1815) this spring, January 17 to May 1, taught by Dr. Sean Williams (sean.williams@tri-c.edu).

In the classroom, learn about evolution, behavior, ecology, anatomy, energetics of flight and more. In the field, learn to identify more than 150 species by sight and sound, conduct biodiversity studies and collect behavioral data. Regular tuition fees apply for Cuyahoga County and Ohio residents. If you are 60 years or older, PROGRAM 60 may be available on a space-available basis (Tri-C Program 60 for Noncredit Courses: Cleveland, Ohio). Books and fees are separate from tuition.

Dr. Williams is a local birder and incorporates the eBird and Merlin apps into this course, as well as *Sibley's Guide to Eastern Birds*. Register soon to secure your seat.



Buckthorn pile after three hours of work.

Photo: M. Valencic *(Continued on page 3)*

From the Nest...



As the holiday season commences, I begin my holiday greeting card bird count. It is remarkable the number of species that get cover-model status. I usually see everything from cardinals and partridges to geese and swans. Please let me know the variety you get on your greeting card list this year.

Thanksgiving reminds us to be reflective on the past year seeking out the blessings and joys we enjoyed. As always, I am very thankful for the talented

and thoughtful members of our chapter's Board of Trustees. Without their expertise, passion, and time we would not have achieved such amazing accomplishments that benefit our chapter and our sanctuaries.

These feats include managing the invasive species in our wildlife preserves (thanks to the Matt Valencic team); the construction and transport of our self-made automatic pond levelers, affectionately known as a "Beaver Deceiver" (thanks to the Ban Twaddell

team); and the pilot program of Nature in Your Backyard (the Jane Ellison team).

My thanks go to you too for your generosity. We operate on memberships and donations. Membership dues do not cover our expenses. We rely on donations to allow us to meet our goals. In a few days you will be receiving an annual appeal for contribution. Thank you for remembering us with your year end donations. I hope to see you on the trails.

—Jim Tomko
President, ASGC

Beaver Deceiver

(Continued from page 1)

through the woods down to the lake edge and, along with other materials, transported by boat across the water to the edge of the beaver dam.



...and by boat.

Photo: K. Kohnke

The final assembly with the drain-pipe and bottom weights was completed on the edge of the dam. The whole assembly was then floated out to a spot over a relatively deep hole in the lake bottom.



Ban and Don position the cage.

Photo: K. Kohnke



Steve Goodale assesses the effluent after final deployment.

Photo: K. Kohnke



Don Vorhees transporting the cage overland...

Photo: B. Twaddell



Final assembly: Don Vorhees and Ban Twaddell

Photo: K. Kohnke

Gradually it was lowered into position, allowing the pipe to reach just over the dam's edge, at a height several inches below the current water level. A final extension of pipe took the water effluent well beyond the back of the dam and out of the beavers' area of interest, hopefully!

A week later the system was functioning properly and gradually allowing the pond to reach a new level about twelve inches below the current beaver dam and well below the boardwalks at either end of the lake.

Steve Goodale, Keith Kohnke, Don Voorhees, Mark Demyan, and Ban Twaddell all contributed to the project.

—Ban Twaddell

Did you know?

Redheads are notorious for nest parasitism. This means that they often lay eggs in another duck's nest. There is one documented case of a redhead laying an egg in a northern harrier's nest! (A northern harrier is a hawk!)

—Jim Tomko

Critter Corner

Photo: M. Valencic



Redhead (*Aythya americana*)

I love redheads! Don't you? They are migrant ducks that are abundant in our area right now!

Drakes have a wonderful chestnut/rufous head with a vermiculated gray body and a black breast and stern. They appear to have a very rounded head that seems a bit too large for their body. The drakes have a tricolored bill that is bluish gray changing to white near the black tip. Also, drakes have captivating, orangish-yellow eyes!

Redheads are diving ducks that often act like dabbling ducks. They prefer shallow lakes and bays diving less than 10 feet deep. They also do tip-ups to feed as is the case with mallards and other dabblers.

They nest north of us and rarely in the western Lake Erie marshes. The nest is a saucer of woven grass up to two feet in diameter in the dense emergent aquatic plants near the shore of a lake or reservoir. Eight to ten eggs are laid and incubated by the female. She often lays some eggs in other duck's nests especially canvasbacks, mallards, and gadwall.

They will stay along the Lake Erie shoreline until freeze-up. Most winter along the gulf coast of Texas and Mexico.

This species may be the most "vegetarian" of all our ducks eating submerged aquatic plants, pondweeds and duckweeds. During breeding season, they do occasionally round out their diet with a few aquatic invertebrates such as snails and insects.

These beauties are moving south through Ohio right now. As these gregarious ducks gather for migration huge flocks of thousands may form. If you visit a shoreline, you may have the pleasure of seeing them diving and feeding as they prepare for further migration.

—Jim Tomko

In case you missed it!

"Turkey Trek"

Our record continues! Once again, we did not turn up a single wild turkey on our Turkey Trek.

My birding buddy, Kim Pease, did find a turkey feather on the trail a few days before. She left it where it was and enjoyed examining it and imagining the bird it belonged to. We did prove that we do have turkeys even though we did not see a turkey.

We had seven hikers on our outing to the Molnar Sanctuary in Aurora. Each of us helped to point out and sort out the identity of plants and animals that we encountered on our way.

Buckthorn

(Continued from page 1)

invasive buckthorn and autumn olive trees around Fulton Pond on November 11th. They included several veterans of invasive species removal who worked side-by-side with four students from Aurora High School's Interact program. The students worked as hard as the adults and certainly had more stamina than some of us (that would be me!). After three hours of hard work, we removed an impressive pile of trees from about 1,500 square feet of hillside, allowing sunlight to reach the soil so native herbaceous plants can prosper once again.

If you would like to help with future invasive plant removal projects, please send your contact information to trail-crew@clevelandaudubon.org. We will email you as future events are scheduled.

—Matt Valencic

A special surprise was that Mike and Lenore Molnar's niece, Cheryl Kozar, joined us. It was fascinating and great fun to learn where the "beach" used to be. We saw where the Molnars put up sheds for storage and housing and where the campfire ring was. Cheryl described where the apple orchard and the blueberry patches were located. Thank you, Cheryl, for filling in the history.

It was an awesome weather day for us to enjoy the beautiful seasonal changes in nature.

—Jim Tomko



Buckthorn crew at Aurora Sanctuary on Nov. 11th.

Photo: M. Valencic

Christmas Bird Count

The annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count is our nation's longest-running community science bird project! It is a 'snapshot' of winter bird populations across the country, and you can be part of it. All you need to do is contact a nearby compiler (someone who organizes the count in an area and reports the results) and see if they need your help counting birds the day they do their count. Each area is a 15-mile diameter circle on the map, and it is divided into sections for birders to visit that day and record every bird they see. You can use eBird to help record your observations.

If you would like to help, here are a few nearby 'circles' and the compilers to contact:

Portage County – Mantua/Ravenna Circle. December 16, 2023. Rebecca Rodhe, compiler.

Rrhodhe@portageparkdistrict.org

Eastern Cuyahoga County – December 16, 2023. Laura Gooch, compiler. lgooch@alum.mit.edu

Lake County – Mentor Circle. December 30, 2023. Dan Donaldson, compiler. Danook057@yahoo.com

Western Cuyahoga County – Lakewood Circle. December 30, 2023. Nancy Howell compiler. nancyhowell@wcaudubon.org

Geauga County – Burton Circle. January 1, 2024. Linda Gilbert, compiler. Lgilbert@geaugaparkdistrict.org

—Matt Valencic

Upcoming Events

Field Trips

December 22 7:00pm

"Winter Solstice Night Hike"

Novak Sanctuary

Help us celebrate one of the longest nights of the year one night after the winter solstice with a night hike in the Novak Sanctuary. The sights, sounds, and aromas of a night hike in the woods give a very different experience than the same trail in the daytime. Let's see what we discover. Meet at the Novak Sanctuary parking lot on the east side of Townline Road about a mile north of State Rt. 82 on the Aurora/Mantua border. Please wear waterproof footwear.

January 13 9:30am

"Winter Track Walk"

Aurora Sanctuary

It is fascinating to discover what other creatures use our trails when we are not there. Let's hope for a thin coating of new fallen snow for them to register their marks on the path. Meet at the Bretschneider Park parking lot on the north side of Pioneer Trail a few hundred yards east of Page Rd. in Aurora. Please wear waterproof footwear.



Programs

January 4 7:00pm

"Migrating Waterfowl & Winter Birds"

Stow-Munroe Falls Library

Meet the waterfowl and songbirds that will be migrating north through NE Ohio in February and March, on their way to breeding grounds in Canada and the arctic circle.

February 11 2:00 to 3:30pm

"Entangled Life"

Novak Education Center

See Page 4 of this newsletter for more information.

RSVP for this event at
info@clevelandaudon.org

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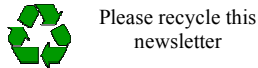
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To contact an individual trustee, send an email to info@clevelandaudubon.org

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Volunteer opportunity

Do you have about two hours twice a year and an interest in auditing our treasury records? As we begin 2024, we are looking to establish an audit committee that will meet only twice a year with the treasurer to audit the books. This is to assure that the chapter’s treasury meets all good fiduciary standards. Training and all supplies will be provided. If you ever wanted to see what goes on behind the scenes in a non-profit organization, this is a great opportunity. Contact info@clevelandaudubon.org if you are interested.

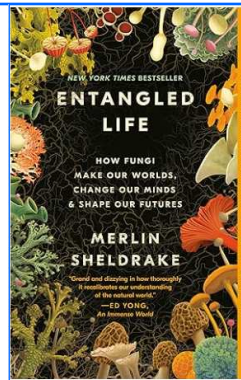
Special event

February 11 2:00 to 3:30pm

“Entangled Life”
Novak Education Center

Winter is made for reading, especially about nature! The Education Committee invites you to join us in reading *Entangled Life: How fungi make our worlds* by Merlin Sheldrake this winter. We'll gather over warm beverages and snacks at the Novak Education Center to discuss this fascinating book about the important role of fungi in sustaining nearly all living systems on earth.

**RSVP for this event:
info@clevelandaudubon.org**



Winter bird-feeding tips

1. Offer suet and other high-energy foods.
2. Toss seed on your deck or patio if you can't get to your feeders.
3. Provide fresh water like a heated bird bath.
4. Fill feeders daily if you can.
5. Spread feeders around in various heights and locations.
6. Clean off snow and ice to keep food accessible.

*Excerpted from
www.birdsandblooms.com*

A Wry Smile

Q: What do you call a crate of ducks?

A: A box of quackers.

