



The HOUSE WREN

Bulletin of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland

P.O. Box 391037, Solon, Ohio 44139-8037 info@clevelandaudubon.org

Volume XLIV, Number 3

Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

April, 2026

H2Ohio field trip

For the third year in a row we were privileged to provide the Aurora High School Environmental Science students with hands-on experience in wetland restoration at the Novak Sanctuary Beaver Pond. As part of their "H2Ohio Students Take Action" program, they learned about the problem of non-native invasive plants in wetlands and chose as their field project to remove buckthorn from the shoreline of the Beaver Pond at Novak.

During their three-quarter-mile walk to the beaver pond, they learned about buckthorn and multiflora rose, both of which are found along the trail, and used the iNaturalist app on their phones to identify willow midge gall, shagbark hickory and sensitive fern (the fruiting structure). As we approached the beaver



Aurora High School Environmental Science students at Novak Sanctuary.

Photo: L. Bell-Peters

pond we saw great blue herons flying on the opposite side of the pond and landing on two nests in the same trees. Many years ago there was an active heronry here, but the birds left when

(Continued on page 2)

April showers bring...mosquitoes



When it comes to dealing with insect pests and plant diseases, we want to look for 'minimal impact' solutions before reaching for chemical remedies. This is called Integrated Pest Management, or

IPM for short. The first step in IPM is to identify the pest/disease, then research its biology to find its vulnerabilities. With mosquitoes we would encourage communities that 'fog' for mosquitoes to first determine if disease-causing mosquitoes are present. There are 59 species in Ohio and only a few are carriers of nasty diseases. There are traps for sampling the insects and your health department will know how to obtain and use them.

All mosquitoes require standing water for their larvae to develop. This

From the Nest...

Happy spring!

If you're like me, spring means the resumption of yard work, the roaring of lawnmowers starting up, and screaming kids playing outside until all hours.

It also means the garden is coming alive with color, there's birdsong everywhere, and the temperatures are more conducive to taking a walk. By the



end of the month, there's a tinge of fresh green in the forest canopy.

Spring migration is in full swing. Now's a great time to add to your list—or start one. I sometimes hear from our members who are avid birders that finding that elusive bird you keep hearing about makes for a great excuse to put off doing yard work.

Whether you're out birding or

ASGC Annual Meeting and Dinner

June 6, 2026

Veteran's Legacy Woods

14085 Ravenna Rd

Newbury Township, OH

Schedule of events:

Nature Walk.....3:00pm

Social Hour.....4:00pm

Meeting & Awards.....5:00pm

Dinner.....5:30pm

Guest Speaker..... Jamey Emmert

The Avian Education Coordinator

with the Ohio Division of Wildlife

presents "The Lake Erie Birding

Trail."

Caterer: "Vinny's Italian Kitchen"

Cost: \$35 per person.

To RSVP:

Make check out to Audubon

Society of Greater Cleveland

and mail to:

ASGC Annual Dinner

P.O. Box 391037

Solon, OH 44139

includes things like old tires, pails, flowerpots, low spots in the yard that hold water, clogged gutters, plastic covers on pools, boats or RV's, and clogged drainage ditches. Anything holding water that does not contain fish or invertebrates that eat mosquito larvae

(Continued on page 2)

starting the season's yard work, please add June 6 to your calendar. Our Annual Dinner and Meeting never disappoints. It's a fun afternoon and evening with great food, good company, and this year's program is about a local birding trail that many of you may not be familiar with. Hope to see you there!

—Alison DeBroux

Editor, *The House Wren*

H2Ohio

(Continued from page 1)

houses were built above the pond. We told the students how fortunate we are to have the birds returning.

They cut and piled buckthorn for an hour, making a significant 'dent' in the forest of invasives. Before heading back to the Ed Center for lunch, I focused my spotting scope on the bald eagle sitting on her nest across the cattail marsh. The students looked and were impressed.

Our thanks go to



Matt Valencic leads Aurora students toward Novak Sanctuary beaver pond.

Photo: L. Bell-Peters

Mrs. Laura Bell-Peters, the Environmental Science teacher, for providing her students with a morning immersed in nature. And to our sanctuary volunteers who provided guidance to the students while working alongside them: Keith & Wendy Kohnke and Lee Deininger.

We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with any school groups, especially when they can use our sanctuaries for learning.

—Matt Valencic

Critter Corner



Photo: M. Valencic

Black and White Warbler

(*Mniotilta varia*)

It's the "zebra bird"! This is one of my favorite warblers which is common but easily overlooked. Actually it is not known as a zebra bird! That is just my affectionate nick-name for it. Its real name is the black-and-white warbler.

It is a medium-sized black warbler with two strong white wing bars, a white crown stripe, and a white eyebrow line. There are white stripes on the back and a white belly with black stripes. Males have a black throat while females have a white throat.

This warbler has some un-warbler like habits. In fact it acts more like a nuthatch or brown creeper with the way it hitches its way up and down the trunk and along limbs. In fact another name for it is black-and-white creeper. They are the single member of their genus which translates in English to "moss picker."

The black-and-white warbler gleans insects, spiders, worms, and other invertebrates from crevices in tree bark for their daily sustenance.

Most wood warblers nest north of our area but the black-and-whites do nest in our deciduous woods. The female constructs a well woven cup nest on the ground at the base of a tree, shrub, rock or fallen log hidden by a drift of leaves. Here she lays four to five creamy white eggs speckled with various shades of brown to purple densest at the large end of the egg. The female incubates for about 10 days and the hatchlings fledge in about 20 days.

These are one of the earliest warblers to arrive in the spring with some arriving in our area as early as mid-April.

Go out, take a look, and then let me know when you find your first one of the season.

—Jim Tomko

Mosquitoes

(Continued from page 1)

should be drained. Bird baths and pet bowls should be emptied and cleaned weekly. Larval breeding sites that cannot be drained can be treated with an EPA approved larvicide product.

Any insecticide that kills mosquitoes will also kill beneficial insects like pollinators and night-flying moths that are critical for producing caterpillars that birds need to feed their babies. It does not matter if they are synthetically produced or come from 'botanicals' like chrysanthemums or are 'organic'. If they kill mosquitoes, they will kill all other insects. "Targeting Mosquitoes" does not prevent collateral treatment to non-

target insects.

Mosquitoes are part of summer! If you must be outside when mosquitoes are present, cover up exposed skin with light-colored clothing and use repellents on exposed skin (follow label instructions). Eliminate standing water in the yard. Repair screens to keep insects out. Minimize use of insecticides to help increase biodiversity of all insects.

If you want more information, send an email to info@clevelandaudubon.org and I will send you links to university fact sheets and more about dealing with mosquitoes.

—Matt Valencic

Be prepared!

Don't be afraid to venture afield this summer because of ticks. Rather, *Be Prepared* by using

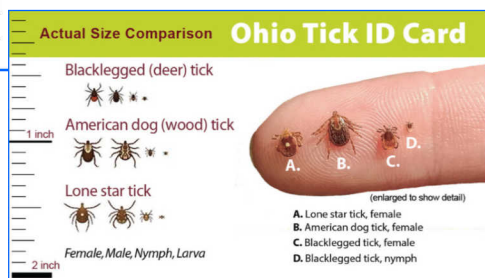
these recommendations from the Ohio State University Extension:

Apply a tick repellent, making sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Note that DEET formulations of at least 25% are needed to repel ticks.

Repellents containing permethrin should be applied **ONLY TO CLOTHING**; do not apply directly to exposed skin.

Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to find crawling ticks.

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Tuck pants into socks and tuck shirt into pants.



Perform tick checks frequently. Remove ticks immediately. Avoid tall grass and weedy areas; stay on paths.

Consider having one or two pair of lightweight hiking pants that can be treated with permethrin (spray can – apply outdoors and let dry completely before wearing). After treatment they can withstand several washings before needed retreatment. **READ AND FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS.**

For more information about ticks, type "Ohioline HYG-2073" into your browser to find the Ohio State tick factsheet.

—Matt Valencic



Missed any of NMB's "Brownbagging it in My Backyard" programs? Visit the archives at natureinmybackyard.ohionativeplants.org/programs/ to download videos from past presentations like "Tree Planting Best Practices," "The Totally Awesome Virginia Opossum," and "Spring Migration." More are added as they become available.

Volunteer Opportunity

Want to help out ASGC but not get your hands dirty?

We are searching for a Recording Secretary. This person attends quarterly Board meetings and takes notes of the proceedings. The notes are then typed and compiled with the Committee Reports provided by the individual committee chairs, and then sent in a single file via email to BOT members. Becoming a trustee is optional.

Meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of January, April, July and October at 7:00pm. Most are held in-person at the Western Reserve Land Conservancy in Moreland Hills, some may be via Zoom. A fifth meeting is held in June during our Annual Dinner, location varies.

Contact ASGC at info@clevelandaudubon.org if interested.

Did you know?

Black-and-white warblers have extra-large feet and an exceedingly long claw on the rear toe to aid in hitching its bottom up and down the trunk. —*Jim Tomko*

From the Archives

The birth of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland really began with the death of an individual, Mrs. S. Louise Patteson.

For many years Mrs. Patteson was a private secretary to John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and made her home on his estate in what is now the Forest Hills section of East Cleveland. She complemented her duties as a secretary with various avocations including nature study, authorship, and raising cats.

In a decade when bird watching was not all that popular, she made a name for herself as the "Bird Woman." She belted the cats to protect the birds; she wrote several children's books; and most

important of all, she inspired respect and devotion among a varied group of friends and fellow nature-lovers.

Mrs. Patteson died in January of 1922. By April of '23 a group of her former associates organized as the "S. Louise Patteson Memorial Association." This morphed several times to what we now know as ASGC.

The group chose the establishment of a Bird Sanctuary and Memorial which they felt would be particularly suitable to perpetuate the name and interests of their late friend. The site they chose was at Coventry and North Park Boulevard, at the end of one of the Shaker Lakes. It lay across the ravine from the wild

flower garden which was developed concurrently with the Sanctuary.

During the next five years the group solicited funds from individuals and organizations, such as garden clubs; planned the landscaping and planting of the plot; and had occasional informal lecture program meetings. The original nucleus had expanded its number from a dozen or so to perhaps 50 members, and set about trying to recruit more residents of the greater Cleveland area who were interested in nature and birds.

To be continued ...

—*Edited from historical documents by Jim DeBroux*

Upcoming Events

Programs

April 7 7:00pm

"A Bird's Eye View"

Carlisle Reservation Visitor Center

Did you know that a bird's eyesight is more than seven times keener than yours? Birds experience the sights, sounds, and smells of the world in a radically different way than we do. Learn about some of the amazing ways birds make sense of their environment. Presented by Sarah Mabey.



April 12 2:00pm

"Warbler Warm-Up"

Westwoods Nature Center

Some of the prettiest birds on the planet are in NE Ohio from April through October. Learn how to identify them by their field marks and songs. Presented by Matt Valencic.

April 15 7:00pm

"Summer Birds of NE Ohio"

North Royalton Library

Did you know that more than 50 species of birds travel hundreds, even thousands, of miles each spring just to raise a family in NE Ohio? This one-hour presentation showcases 50 species of "Summer Visitors" through 180 photographs of adult birds, babies, nests and habitats. Presented by Matt Valencic.




Visit www.clevelandaudubon.org for additional program details and location maps.


DATED MAIL

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND (S 70)
Board of Trustees 2025-2026
Jim Tomko, President

Alison DeBroux	John Lillich
Jim DeBroux	Sarah Mabey
Mark Demyan	Ban Twaddell
Stephanie Demyan	Matt Valencic
Jane Ellison	Harvey Webster
Tracy Engle	

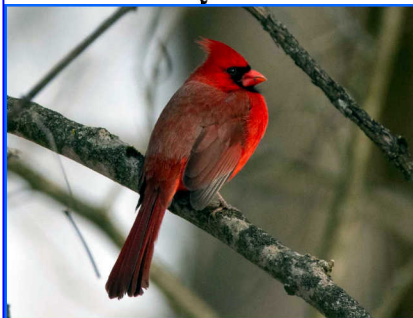
To contact an individual trustee, send an email to info@clevelandaudubon.org

 Like us on Facebook!

 Please recycle this newsletter

An Audubon Moment

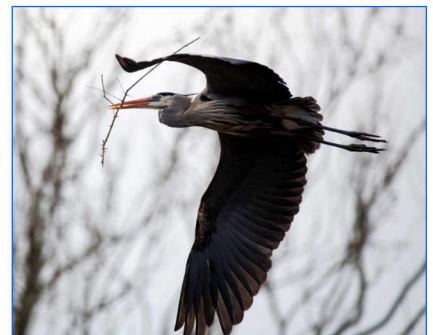
The red and blue



Red cardinal: On a cold, frosty morning, I went out with the goal of photographing birds. After a stop at one of the local parks without much luck, I drove to the Station Road Bridge area of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Normally, I walk towards the bridge in hopes of seeing the bald eagles. The path was blocked due to construction; therefore, I walked on the opposite side of the

path. Along the path, I noticed a few cardinals and a woodpecker. This cardinal perched low in a tree, allowing for a good image.

Great blue heron in flight: I cannot get enough of visiting the Bath Road Rookery at the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. I have never seen anything like the rookery, and I am fascinated by it. I have taken several photos of herons but never in flight. I went to the rookery at least four times in an effort to photograph a heron collecting sticks for its nest. After some practice, I was able to get a reasonably sharp image.



I have met people who are into e-birding, and listening to their deep understanding of different species, migratory patterns, etc. grew my interest. Bird photography is relaxing and meditative for me. It allows me to slow down and appreciate the natural world. Both images were taken with a Nikon D850 and Sigma 150-600 Lens.

—Ali Shah

A Wry Smile



Q: How do chickens get strong?
 A: Egg-cersize.

Do you have an "Audubon Moment" to share? Send photos and short text to info@clevelandaudubon.org.