



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 4

Visit our website at www.clevelandaudubon.org

May, 2026

Annual Meeting promises good fun, good food



Please consider joining us for an informative and fun-filled afternoon at Veteran's

Legacy Woods in Geauga County on Saturday, June 6th, from 3pm to 8pm for our Annual Meeting.

I am excited to hear Ohio Division of Wildlife's Jamey Emmert present a spectacular update on Lake Erie Birding Trail. If you do not know what that is, when you learn about it, you will be eager to hike some or all of it!

Jamey is a Southeastern Ohio native and a graduate of Hocking College in Nelsonville, Ohio, with a degree in wildlife management. Hocking College

offers one of the very best wildlife management degrees anywhere! She has worked for Ohio Division of Wildlife for 22 years and is currently stationed at the Akron office to manage Northeast Ohio's district as the Communication Specialist. She is a fantastic speaker with amazing stories to tell about our avian friends and the things we humans do that affect their lives and where we can go to see them and how we promote them! This is a presentation you will not want to miss!

We will begin our afternoon with a walk in the woods followed by a social hour, a short meeting, dinner, and finishing with a fantastic presentation by the unparalleled naturalist, Jamey Emmert.

—Jim Tomko

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

Helping birds on the wing

Birds are on the wing overhead, making their long journey north to their nesting grounds, and now it is up to us to help them get there. "Exactly how?" you might ask.

Ohio is indeed a "flyover state" for migrating birds, but it's much more than that. It is a critical rest and refueling stop along the way. We could simply enjoy watching the show, or we could view our own yards as an important part of their journey and actively help send them on their way.

Even a few native plants can turn a

yard into an important stopover. When birds see that patch of green and decide to land, they're not just looking for shelter, they are looking for food. And that food comes in the form of insects and caterpillars feeding and living on those plants.

Those little holes in leaves? They are actually good news! They mean something small has been feeding, turning the sun's energy stored in green leaves into the protein birds need

(Continued on page 2)



Bobolink with caterpillar
Photo: M. Valencic

From the Nest...

I hope that you have had the chance to become mesmerized (as I always am) by the 17-mile-a-day march of spring northward across Ohio. It is extremely exciting to experience the changes and the rebirth of flora and fauna activity after winter's rest and dormancy.

The wonderful gems of wood warblers are making their fleeting



appearance, the masterpieces in beauty of the spring ephemeral wildflowers are blooming, the frenzied calling of the frogs and toads can be deafening, and the courtship rituals of all creatures from insects to birds and mammals are fascinating. I find there is never enough time to absorb the splendor of it all.

Please remember to register for our

Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 6th. We are fortunate to have ODNR Division of Wildlife's Jamey Emmert as our keynote speaker. She will regale us with amazing stories and information on our own Lake Erie Birding Trail!

See you on the trails,

Jim Tomko
President ASGC



Greater bee fly on trout lily.

Photo: M. Valencic

Birds on the wing

(Continued from page 1)

to survive their trip. Those insects are what power their journey.

It all adds up. If we want to support migrating birds, we need to support the

insects they depend on, and that starts with planting native species. There is a growing body of research showing that many of the insects birds rely on feed only on the plants they co-evolved with, our native plants, not decorative species from overseas.

So this May, as you plan your garden, consider helping migrating birds by adding native plants. When it comes to supporting birds, every yard can make a difference.

And as the saying goes, if you're not part of the solution, you might be part of the problem. Who knew?

Find native plant resources here: <https://ohionativeplants.org/>

—Jane Ellison

Nestle Earth Day



Six very dedicated Nestle employees chose to help remove invasive buckthorn from the Novak Sanctuary as their Earth Day project this year. Led by Sean McCleary,

who is also president of The Kirtland Bird Club of NE Ohio, the group worked alongside ASGC volunteers Rob Swaney, Wendy Konkhe and Rick Deininger for almost three hours, cutting and stacking invasive buckthorn.

Our primary focus was an area of especially large buckthorn trees south of the parking lot. They were too large for the brush hog last fall but were easily removed using our new Stihl chainsaw. Cut trees were piled high to become a 'wildlife pile' that small mammals and birds will use for cover. Everyone had their own lopper for cutting smaller trees and they soon formed teams of two or



three, working together to cut and create more piles. Rick latched on to our new FS91 Stihl trimmer with a fresh steel cutting blade and went to town cutting large areas of smaller diameter stems that would be back-breaking work with loppers.

After a couple hours Sean shouted for everyone to come to him. He had found an American woodcock sitting on her nest in the area where he was working. She was almost invisible with her brown stripes and speckled plumage. She never moved as all of us took pictures with our cell phones.

After almost three hours of work, Lee Deininger brought us lunch from Honey Baked Ham Company and we gladly retired to the Education Center where we exchanged stories and got to know each other better.

Thanks to Nestle for encouraging their employees to get involved with community service and even offering us a small grant to cover the cost of lunch and any needed equipment. The Earth, at least at the Novak Sanctuary, is better because of the hard work of these dedicated volunteers.

—Photos and text by Matt Valencic

Critter Corner

Photo: All About Birds/Macaulay Library



Olive-sided Flycatcher

(*Contopus cooperi*)

Have you ever been on a woodland path at the end of a long morning of birding on a hot, late spring day and you hear a joyful cry from a high limb of a tree pleading "Quick three beers"? It is almost as if the singer is asking to join in for refreshments! I love when a bird song can be distinctly identified by a memorable mnemonic. In fact, most birders remember many bird songs by mnemonic phrases. The olive-sided flycatcher (OSFL) is a great example.

OSFL make a fleeting appearance in our area for just a few weeks in May and a few weeks in September. They are a small and husky flycatcher grouped in with the pewees with a grayish-olive plumage but with a white v-shaped vertical breast/belly band making it look as if it is wearing a vest or waistcoat as in a formal three-piece suit.

It has a large and heavy flycatcher-style bill for the bird's size. Usually, I find them sitting on a branch in a tall snag sallying forth to capture an insect singing its victory song.

OSFL do not nest in our area. They prefer the northern boreal forests or mid-altitude in western mountain ranges where they build a small but bulky nest near the tip of a branch well away from the trunk from five to 197 feet above the ground. Sometimes they even construct it on a branch of a snag that was left from a forest fire.

Remember, it is that distinctive song that will allow you to unmistakably locate one and add it to your life list. They are here now! It is time to get out and listen. I hope you find one this spring.

—Jim Tomko

In case you missed it

“Woodcock Watch”

We set another record! Not in the number of woodcocks observed, not in the number of people participating in the event, but in the age of the attendees.

One was one month old! Not one year but one month old. It was a first for me (not counting my own daughter who was birding with me by that age as well). The young one made our number 15 on the hike or, as my friend Rob Swaney exclaimed, 14 and ½! The baby was so well behaved, all swaddled in a neat insulated front pack. She was a born

“birder”!

We heard at least two woodcocks if not three in the field we were working and could hear more proclaiming territory in other fields that surrounded us. Everyone was able to see the birds take off into the twilight sky then disappear into the darkness. When the bird returned to his dancing ground, we could hear the “chirp chirp chirp...” of his wings upon his descent and then silently land only to start the dance and “Peent Peent, Peent” love song desperately trying to attract a mate.

It was a chilly night but it seemed that everyone was dressed for the



Woodcock “Watchers.”

Photo: M. Valencic

weather and enjoyed the amazing courtship flight of the American woodcock.

—Jim Tomko

COAC gathering

This fall, the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters welcomes the Great Lakes Audubon Society for three days of conservation talk! Audubon Society discussions and small group breakouts. ASGC chapter members are encouraged to get involved!

October 1 to 4, 2026
Aullwood Education Center
1000 Aullwood Road
Dayton, Ohio
RSVP will start September 1st.

Contact info@clevelandaudubon.org for more information.

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?

Some Olive-sided Flycatchers make one of the longest migration flights of all species of flycatchers that nest in the United States. It is 7000 miles from central Alaska to Bolivia!

—Jim Tomko

Upcoming Events

Field Trips

May 10 & 17 7:30am unless otherwise noted

“Spring Bird Walk Series”

Various locations

The *Series of Spring Bird Walks* is one of the oldest community science partnerships between Northeast Ohio park systems, Audubon chapters, and other organizations now in its 93rd year. It is also a celebration of migratory birds. Walks are led by experienced birders.

Cosponsored by Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, Blackbrook Audubon Society, Black River Audubon Society, Cleveland Metroparks, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Gates Mills Birders, Geauga Park District, Hiram College, Holden Arboretum, Lake Metroparks, Lorain County Metro Parks, Medina County Park District, Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, and Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society.

PLEASE STAY ON TRAILS WHILE ATTENDING THE BIRDWALKS!

Visit www.clevelandaudubon.org for additional details and locations.

Programs

May 13 12:00 noon

“Lighting Up the Night”

Via Zoom

Elijah Crabtree will begin with an introduction on the fascinating natural history of fireflies across the globe, and here at home—where our eastern temperate forests host high levels of firefly biodiversity.

Elijah will then explain the current threats facing Ohio’s fireflies and how each of us can take action in our own backyard to not only protect them but even bring them back!

To register for the zoom program:
www.natureinmybackyard.ohionativeplants.org/programs

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
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Stephanie Demyan	Matt Valencic
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To contact an individual trustee, send an email to info@clevelandaudubon.org



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Please recycle this newsletter

From the archives: How it all started, Part 2

The vitality of the original small group of enthusiasts was maintained by having a common, worthwhile cause to work toward. It is interesting to compare the present ASGC activities, and note their same dual nature: service to the broad field of nature, conservation, and a lecture and field trip programs for the benefit and pleasure of the members and non-members alike.

This account of the birth of ASGC's progenitor is, necessarily, sketchy. The information included is based upon the few pages of minutes which have been preserved, supplemented by written recollections and written interpretations of the very few individuals that were active at that early date.

Included here is a "copy" of a brochure prepared by the Association and mailed to a selected list of prospective members, presumably in 1926. It states the interests and purpose of the group:

"To the true lover of nature in all its finest expression ...

"This 'Forest City,' famous for its charming homes and congenial home

life, would lose much were our songful [sic], useful bird friends to leave us....

"The preservation of our native birds is a topic that should interest us each ...

"The local movement for the birds has been carried on by the S. Louise Patteson Memorial Association, and has advanced to the place where Cleveland is to have a real Bird Sanctuary ...

"If you really love our birds, if you joy with them in their song, if you want the younger boys and girls to know the birds and through them get a fuller appreciation of nature, help us preserve and protect them by giving them a sanctuary and planning a fitting memorial to a real bird lover and a true friend of humanity—Mrs. S. Louise Patteson."

An application was included for active or junior membership in the Memorial Association. An "active" membership cost \$1.00.

To be continued...

Edited from historical documents by Jim DeBroux

A Wry Smile

Where did the Terminator find toilet paper?
Aisle B, back.



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