

Grange Insurance Audubon Center
www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org

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Columbus Audubon

Founded 1913
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Song Sparrow



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Send editorial submissions to
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at stefanie.hauck@gmail.com



Courtesy of GIAC

View of the entrance of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center showing the rain gardens.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center Putting conservation into practice

While the Grange Insurance Audubon Center is all about environmental and nature education, we also have a strong interest in conservation. While your home landscape may not be a former dump and brownfield site like the grounds of GIAC, there is still a lot you can do in the name of conservation.

Exotic, invasive plant species are prolific throughout central Ohio. On the surface these plants are pretty, bearing beautiful flowers and fruit.

However, they have a dark side as well. The dark side of these invaders is that they displace native species and frequently form massive thickets that do not provide the variety that healthy, functional ecosystems need.

Do you want to practice conservation on your site, but you are convinced that you have a brown thumb? Our Winter Landscape Series will get to the heart of finding success in your home landscape. Perhaps one of your three 3 P's (planting, pruning, and placement) is out of alignment.

Do you want a wildlife friendly yard, yet the only wildlife you get is squirrels and mosquitoes? Are your damselfs in distress or have your Cardinals moved out west?

The Winter Landscape Series will show you how native plant selection and invasive species removal can bring everything back into balance.

Our Conservation Boot Camp Series will cut directly to the core of habitat conservation. The opening session of the series will teach participants how to identify the invaders and the damage they cause.

Once you see the whites of their petals, you can then move on to strategies for defeating them. Cutting down all of the invaders with no follow-up will only strengthen their resolve. You will need help. Who will you call in for reinforcements? Learn it all at Boot Camp.

For the battle against invasive species to be successful it must be tackled on a broad scale.

Through our Winter Landscaping and Conservation Boot Camp series, you can acquire the knowledge that you'll need to bring your landscape back under control.

For more information or to sign-up for either of these series contact Chris Kline at 614-545-5486 or email ckline@audubon.org.



CA and OOS is proud to present a Waterfowl Symposium Feb. 26-28

Walk, swim, fly, or waddle your way to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center this February. Columbus Audubon, partnering with the Ohio Ornithological Society, will present a Waterfowl Symposium, the weekend of February 26-28, 2010 at GIAC along the Whittier Peninsula in downtown Columbus. Through lectures and speakers, we'll travel to the marshes of Iraq, visit the breeding grounds of the Arctic, flyover the stopover habitat of Lake Erie, and look inside nests to learn about the secret life of waterfowl.

The weekend swings into action Friday evening with a special performance by The Swinging Orangutangs. The band, featuring Julie Zickefoose, Bill Thompson III, and musical friends, is a special fundraiser. Question: will they play "Disco Duck"? Bring your dancing shoes, leave your hiking boots in the vehicle, and find out for yourself.

Saturday's line-up includes a day of great speakers. We're honored to present Dr. Alwash Azzam, the Chief Executive Officer of Nature Iraq, as our keynote speaker Saturday evening. Azzam, and NI's efforts to restore the critical Iraqi wetlands and marshes drained by Saddam Hussein, was recently featured on CBS's "60 Minutes". But folks in Ohio have long known about the good works of Dr. Azzam and efforts to restore Mesopotamian marshes deemed a Ramsar

wetland site of international importance. As you may recall, CA's Randy Rogers, while serving with the Ohio Army National Guard in Iraq, mobilized an armada of support for Iraqi environmentalists and ornithologists through his fundraising efforts on behalf of Nature Iraq. Randy also distinguished himself by providing crucial bird sightings from the Al Asad Air Base.

Two speakers from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will join us. Jessie Barry, the Assistant Curator of the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds, will share "The Secret Life of Ducks" highlighting fascinating and unique waterfowl life history traits through photos, audio, and video of courtship displays. Learn more about evolutionary adaptations, intriguing natural history, and the role waterfowl play in wetland conservation. Also from Cornell, Mr. eBird himself, Chris Wood, will talk about the roles birdwatchers can play in tracking duck populations to ultimately better conserve species. Wood is the project leader for Cornell's eBird database and a tour leader for the bird-watching tour company WINGS. GIAC also hosts a sculpture installation called "Lost Birds" by a Cornell professor of art: the display laments the extinct Great Auk, Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet, and Heath Hen through larger-than-life artistic versions.

Legendary birder, author, and duck

stamp supporter Paul Baicich, will share the inside scoop on 75 years of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, better known as Duck Stamps. More than \$750 million dollars has been raised since 1934 in Duck Stamp sales supporting 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge system. Other speakers include Dr. Gwen Myers, Associate Veterinarian from The Columbus Zoo & Aquarium, will share her research on Spectacled Eiders.

Keith Lott, Ohio Division of Wildlife, will reveal what's currently being discovered about concentrations of migratory waterbirds via Lake Erie aerial surveys and how this information relates to future installation of wind turbines.

Sunday morning, we'll travel independently to Central Ohio's reservoirs, rivers, and ponds including Hoover Reservoir, Deer Creek Wildlife Area, Pickerington Ponds, Slate Run Metropark, the immediate vicinity of GIAC (the Grange-Scioto River area and Greenlawn Cemetery), and more! Watch for details and registration on the OOS website (<http://www.ohio-birds.org/index.php>) and on Columbus Audubon's website (<http://www.columbusaudubon.org/>)

Ann Oliver is the editor of the Cerulean, a quarterly newsletter of the Ohio Ornithological Society and the Southwest Regional Director, OOS.

GIAC wish list

If you have a donation for the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, please call Christy Smith at (614) 224-3303.

- Garden gloves
- Increment borer
- Gardening tools
- Spotting scope
- Telescope, any type or magnification
- Laminator
- Diameter tape
- Desktop color printer
- Hip waders
- Fishing tackle and boxes
- Rain ponchos or jackets for children
- Binoculars, any type and magnification

facebook

Follow CA on Facebook and Twitter

Become a fan of Columbus Audubon on Facebook by searching 'Columbus Audubon.' Post photos to our fan site, report bird sightings and more! Follow us on Twitter at @columbusaudubon for up to the minute field trip changes and news.

Also, be sure to check out the Columbus Audubon Web site at columbusaudubon.org for Avid Birders information, full issues of the newsletter, complete calendar of events, blogs and web only features.



Coming Up

Columbus Audubon activities are for nature enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels. We invite you to join us for a field trip or program to learn more about birds and their central Ohio habitats, as well as other natural history topics. Our activities are free and open to the public and there is no need to register unless otherwise noted.

Note: Field trip times, dates and locations are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. If you plan on going on a trip, please contact the trip leader 24 hours ahead of time to make sure the trip has not been changed, postponed or cancelled. Also, check the Columbus Audubon Web site at www.columbusaudubon.org for any changes or additions to the field trip listings. If you have suggestions for field trip locations or want to lead a field trip please contact field trip chair, Earl Harrison at eharrison@ehe.osu.edu.

Field trips

New Year's Day Nature Hike Glen Helen Ecology Institute

Friday, January 1, 2010, 12 noon.

Leader: Mike Flynn

What are you doing on New Year's Day? On this first day of the year, take some quiet time outdoors and find some of the season's peace and serenity. That's what this trip is about. We will walk through the woods of Glen Helen, looking and listening for any creature or natural feature as we make our way through this special place. For those who wish, we will follow our hike with dinner in nearby Yellow Springs. Meet at: 12 noon at the Bob Evans parking lot on Hilliard Rome Rd. Take 1-270 on the west, to 70 W.; Exit at Hilliard Rome Rd.; then drive SOUTH to Bob Evans. Or meet us at the parking lot at Glen Helen at approximately 2 p.m. For more information, contact Mike Flynn at: mflynn.wildandfree@gmail.com or (614) 769-1681.

Wednesday walk at Scioto-Audubon

Wednesday, January 6, 7:30 a.m.

Leaders: Paul Gledhill and Heather Raymond

Note: Walks are always held the first Wednesday of the month. Join Paul Gledhill and Heather Raymond for a short walk around Whittier Peninsula to view wildlife as well as to watch the latest developments of the park and nature center. Meet at Lower Scioto Park in the boat ramp parking lot (west of Front Street and south of Whittier Street) Please contact Paul Gledhill at (614) 848-7666; gledhillpaul@yahoo.com, or Heather Raymond at (614) 785-0342; heather_columbus_audubon@yahoo.com for more information.

Bird walk at Blendon Woods

Saturday, January 9, 10 a.m.

Leaders: Bruce Simpson

Join park naturalist Bruce Simpson for a bird walk in Blendon Woods Metro Park. Meet at the Nature Center.

Kiser Lake SNP, Champaign County

Saturday, January 9, 7:45 a.m.

Leader: Katryn Renard

If you were going to an area that used to be called Mosquito Lake Bog, it seems like January would be the time to go. Instead of battling mosquitoes, we will be battling woody vegetation in the vicinity of Grandview Heights, which is a fen on the outskirts of Kiser Lake. This is an area of Kiser Lake State Nature Preserve that is accessible by permit only, so it is a privilege that we will get

see it up close and in person.

No training is needed, just a tolerance for the weather. Please call Katryn Renard by Wednesday, January 6 at (614) 261-7171 to sign up, reserve space for transportation, and to help us determine tool requirements. Bring your lunch, water, work gloves, and appropriate foot gear. Meet at 7:45 AM in the parking lot inside the gate house at the Ohio Department Natural Resources Complex, 2045 Morse Road, Columbus. Please complete the Dept. of Natural Area's volunteer form to participate in this activity (contact treaster.1@osu.edu for forms or fill one out on the morning of the trip). We will return to ODNR by 5:00.

Save the Dates: GBBC is coming

The next Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) takes place Friday, February 12 through Monday, February 15, 2010. The National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are calling on everyone to "Count for Fun, Count for the Future!" During last year's count, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded. We hope you'll join us again and help spread the word, since the success of the count depends on people tallying birds from as many locations as possible across the continent.

Avid Birders field trips

Avid Birders are interested enough in birding to get out of bed very early for day-long field trips. The only requirements to join us are enthusiasm, binoculars, and a reliable alarm clock. A spotting scope is often useful, but not required. Unless otherwise noted, participants should meet at the southwest corner of the Worthington Mall parking lot at the designated time. Worthington Mall is located on the northwest corner of High Street and Wilson Bridge Road, just south of I-270. Bring a sack lunch, and we encourage carpooling. Please reimburse your driver for travel expenses. Upcoming trips are:

January 9, 5:30 a.m. Cold-weather gullling, probably Cleveland lakefront.

For details, e-mail avidbirders@columbusaudubon.org.

Delaware County Bird Club

Monday, January 25, 7 - 9 p.m.

The January meeting and program will feature a lecture by Matthew Rhode on Teal migration and wintering patterns.

Most of us have seen our smallest ducks species, the teals, in Ohio. In Delaware County, we commonly find both Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal. Matthew Rhode will use Audubon Christmas Bird Count data to analyze the migration and wintering patterns of these lovely birds. Meetings begin informally at 7:00 p.m. with a chance to view mystery birds from the museum. Bring your field guide and puzzle over the identifications.

The formal meeting begins at 7:30 pm with brief reports of birds seen by members. Emphasis will be on birds seen in Delaware County. We then settle back to enjoy our featured speaker!

Parking is available in the lot beside the Conrades Wetherell Science Center or across Henry Street next to Selby Stadium.

Grange Insurance Audubon Center

GIAC January-February programs

Storytime

Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m.

Younger members of the family will especially enjoy themselves as we combine a storybook from our library with a walk, art project, or puppet show. Admission is FREE.

Winter Hike Series

Sundays, 1 p.m.

Join us as we investigate what's stirring on the Whittier Peninsula during the winter months. Bring binoculars and hand lenses if you have them! Admission is FREE.

Winter Landscaping Series

With this landscaping series, GIAC Education Director and former landscaper Chris Kline will take you from start to finish in redesigning your home landscape. The time for each class is 2 – 4 p.m., and cost for each session is \$10 for GIAC members and \$15 for non-members. Or better yet, attend the entire series for \$30 for members and \$45 for non-members.

January 30 – Landscaping Basics

This session will focus on the basics including proper planting techniques,

proper placement of plants, soil recommendations, and other valuable information.

February 6 – Landscaping with Natives

For every exotic species that you place in your landscape there is a native that can provide equivalent color, shade, wildlife value, and beauty. This session focuses on working with those natives.

February 13 – Landscaping for Wildlife

Landscaping can be a collection of plants or creation of a habitat. Learn how you can add beauty and color to your landscape by incorporating birds, butterflies, dragonflies, and other jewels.

February 27 – Designing your Home Landscape

Bring a map or photo of your yard as we sit down and plan out your new habitat. Have some ideas in mind for the look and purpose you are hoping to achieve in your new yard.

Conservation Boot Camp

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center is more than a pretty place. A portion of

our mission is to return our site, as well as central Ohio, to the beauty it once was. In this series of classes we will walk you through the habitat conservation process. The time for each class is 2 – 4 p.m., and cost for each session is \$10 for GIAC members and \$15 for non-members.

January 23 – Recognizing the Invader

Many invasive, non-native, plant and animal species call central Ohio home. These invaders have flourished at the expense of our native plant and animals. This session will focus on recognizing these invasive species.

February 20 – Defeating the Invader

Now that we know who the invaders are and what they look like, how do we go about eliminating them? There is a strategy, and this session will teach you the strategy to deal with each of our primary invasive species.

March 20 – Deploying Allies

To successfully eliminate the invaders from our landscape we will need the help of our allies. Learn about the role native plants play in this battle for territory.

Columbus Audubon

Columbus Audubon January program: Nepal

Join us for our monthly public program and meeting at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center on Tuesday, January 26. Pre-meeting social time starts at 7 p.m. Come early to chat with your friends from Audubon and to enjoy a cup of coffee, tea, or juice.

Trekking in the Solukhumbu Region of Nepal

Please join Andi and Steve Wolfe as they recount their recent three week trek and photography workshop in the High Himalayas of Nepal.

Along with 10 other trekkers and a staff of 16 Sherpas, they walked 80 miles to experience the diverse flora and fauna, the beautiful landscape, and the friendly people of the Solukhumbu.

Their trek culminated with a climb to the top of 18,500 foot Kala Patthar, just across the Khumbu glacier from Mts. Everest, Nuptse, and Lhotse.

The trek was sponsored by two podcasts, The Rest of Everest (<http://therestofeverest.com>) and Tips From the Top Floor (<http://tftf.com>), both of which are now presenting episodes of the group's adventure. This trek is something you can do too, so come on out and hear all about it.

The Grange Insurance Audubon Center is located in the heart of down-



(Above) Andi and Steve Wolfe with some of the other 10 trekkers in the High Himalayas of Nepal.



(Right) A bird glides among the High Himalayas.

Columbus Audubon

Conservation mini-corner: What Is Calamus Swamp?

We sincerely hope that a steady stream of new members are joining GIAC or Columbus Audubon, and they, perhaps you, may not have heard of Calamus Swamp.

It is a 19-acre Columbus Audubon nature preserve consisting mainly of a glacial kettle hole, located 1/3 mile south of the intersection of state highway 104 and US 22 in Pickaway County.

Because of its poor drainage, Calamus Swamp was spared the fate of most of the surrounding region which was converted to intensive agriculture in the early 19th century.

Instead, Calamus became and remains a haven for many unusual wetland plants and animals, and is an important layover site for migrating birds.

The property was given to Columbus Audubon in 2000 by Mrs. Ada Burke,

whose family for years recognized the swamp as an unusual ecological treasure worthy of protection.

Columbus Audubon maintains the property in as nearly a natural state as possible, for the education and enjoyment of everyone. Calamus Swamp is open at all times to public access; simply park in the (unmarked) gravel lot on the east side of route 104 south of the intersection with US 22.

Although we have never encountered a problem, do not leave valuable items in your vehicle. I would be interested in hearing of any unusual observations, or if you notice something amiss. Send me an e-mail (horn.1@osu.edu) or call me at 614-262-0312. There will be more about Calamus Swamp in the next *Song Sparrow*.

-Dave Horn

Help Robins in Your Yard

If you have robins that decided not to migrate, you can help them by supplying ice-free water 10-15 feet from cover. In winter, I notice more robins in my heated bird bath than any other kind of birds.

I put out food for the robins by cutting up dried fruit, like raisins or currants, into small pieces. I keep the fruit fresh and dry so it's soft. Soaking the fruit makes it freeze and become too hard for the robins' soft beak to be able to eat.

Other lessons learned? If you're interested, email marc-a@columbus.rr.com to receive our monthly Ohio 'Nature Scoop' email or go to www.backyardhabitat.info to learn more. Let's work together to help birds, one yard at a time.

-Toni Stahl

ECO WEEKEND – Give it as a Gift!!

Get out your new 2010 calendars and save these Spring dates for **Eco Weekend: April 30 to May 2, 2010**. Eco Weekend will be held at Camp Oty'Okwa (near Conkles Hollow) in the Hocking Hills.

Eco Weekend is an opportunity to have an affordable and enjoyable weekend experiencing nature's beauty and learning about nature from experienced program leaders. There are nature-oriented programs for adults and families from Friday evening through noon on Sunday, and some special programs for youth from age 4 through eighth grade on Saturday. Come and learn from professionals who volunteer their time to share their knowledge with you about the natural world.

Are you aware that you can give the gift of Eco Weekend? It's very simple: you

provide the payment to cover the cost of registration, lodging and meals for someone you love. You may send in the payment at the time of their registration, or you may send in the payment ahead of time. The cost for an adult is \$105; the cost for a child (Pre-K through Grade 8) is \$60. Send payments to Maura Moran, 1292 Granfield Ct., Columbus, OH 43230, specifying the name of the recipient(s).

The 2010 Eco Weekend brochure and registration information will be included in the next issue of the Song Sparrow. Be sure to look for it! You may also download the brochure information from our website, www.ecoweekend.org.

If you have any questions, you can contact the Eco Weekend Committee at ecoweekend@columbusaudubon.org or

Ohio Natural History Conference

The Ohio Biological Survey will host the sixth annual Ohio Natural History Conference on Saturday, February 20, 2010 at Big Walnut High School, 555 South Old 3C Road, Sunbury. The conference includes short presentations on biodiversity, field biology and ecology of Ohio's plants and animals.

Our keynote speaker is Kenn Kaufman, presenting "Fresh Fields: the World View of a Perpetual Beginner". Kenn is well-known to many Audubon members for his North American Focus Guides series. Kenn regularly contributes to *Audubon*, *Bird Watcher's Digest* and *Birder's World*. Registration fees are \$20, or \$10 for students. For more information, contact the Ohio Biological Survey, ohiobiosurvey@rrohoio.com, phone 614-457-8787.