



Cynthia Norris

Audubon *News and Views*

Canton Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society

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Mission:

The Canton Audubon Society mission is to promote the enjoyment, protection, and conservation of birds, wildlife, plants, and their habitat in order to maintain Earth's biodiversity.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

Canton Audubon Society is dedicated to welcoming everyone of all races, ethnicities, religions, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, ages, and abilities. To accomplish this, we will identify obstacles and improve opportunities for diverse audiences to pursue nature activities.

Membership:

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically a member of Canton Audubon Society.

Meetings & Contacts

Meetings are free and open to the public. They are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7pm from September thru May.

Location:

Stark Parks
Exploration Gateway, Sippo Lake
5712 12th St NW,
Canton, Ohio 44708.

Visit www.CantonAudubon.org
Or email:

CantonAudubonSociety@gmail.com

Like us on Facebook

Phone: 330-209-1261

CAS is a 501(c)3
nonprofit organization

*Denotes kid-friendly articles



WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

Zonotrichia albicollis

By Laura Dornan

One of the joys of backyard birding on a wintry day in Ohio is seeing white-throated sparrows at your ground feeders. This attractive and easy-to-identify sparrow breeds in the coniferous and mixed forests of Canada, New England, northern Great Lakes region and northern Pennsylvania, then heads to the southern states for the winter. Ohio is on the northern edge of their winter habitat and they can be found here from late fall to early spring. In winter the preferred habitat is thickets, overgrown fields, some wooded parks and suburbs, and backyard feeders that have some components of these habitats nearby.



Jon Cefus

Like most sparrows, they are primarily ground-feeders and forage for small seeds, fruit, buds and insects, using a two-footed kick on the ground to search under leaf-litter and also searching low-hanging trees and shrubs. At feeders, their favorite seed is millet; they also feed on sunflower.

The most distinguishing characteristic of the white-throated sparrow is, well--the white throat, which is out-lined in black. white-throated sparrows (WTSP) can be easily confused with white-crowned sparrows (WCSP). Both species sport crown stripes of either black and white (bright) or brown and tan (dull). WTSP also sports a yellow spot between the eye and bill (supraloral), not always very obvious. There is a bit of confusion about what the 2 color morphs mean so I hope to clear up the confusion. First of all, the 2 combinations DO NOT indicate the sex of the bird in either species. In white-crowned, all adults, male and female, have black and white crowns and immature birds have the duller tan crowns. In white-throated sp. the different color morphs do not depict age or sex. The color morphs appear equally in both sexes and while immature birds of both morphs are somewhat duller, there is still a distinct difference between bright and dull color morphs. These forms are maintained through a process called "negative assortative mating" or more simply put-- "Opposites Attract". A male of 1 color almost always mates with a female of the other color. Because bright birds are more aggressive and dull birds are more attentive to nestlings, this combination becomes a recipe for success.

Male birds of both bright and dull morphs sing and bright females sing. Dull females sing only very rarely. WTSP sing almost year-round but in fall and early winter, the



singing is occasional. Then on a sunny, warm day in mid to late February, I will begin to hear the beautiful, melodic, somewhat mournful *O Sam Peabody, peabody, peabody* on a regular basis. (When the birds arrive in Canada by late April and May the song is recognized as *O sweet Canada, Canada, Canada.*)

Female and 1st-year birds tend to move further south than adult males in winter. This enables the adult males to be the first to return to the breeding grounds to set up their territories. They usually arrive 1 to 2 weeks before the females. Pair bonds last throughout the season but not year to year. The female builds the cup-shaped nest

on the ground alone, using grasses, twigs, and pine needles and lining it with deer fur. The pale-blue or greenish-blue eggs with purple or chestnut speckles (usually 4) are incubated for 12 days and fledging takes place at 7 to 12 days. The young depend on both parents for about 2 more weeks.

White-throated Sparrows are relatively common but are in decline. They are one of the most frequent victims of window collisions. Photos by Jon Cefus.

Sources: American Bird Conservancy 'Bird of the Week', 3/25/2021, abcbirds.org; Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Donald & Lillian Stokes; Birds of Ohio, Jim McCormac; Cornell Laboratory Birds of the World, birdsoftheworld.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

► **Holiday Dinner:** There were 32 attendees at the CAS dinner Wednesday, December 7 which was held at First Christian Church (FCC) in North Canton. We earned \$313 from the silent auction thanks to those donating or purchasing items. Thank you to the wonderful staff at FCC, the guest speaker, Jim Tomko and CAS members and friends for making this event a success.

► **Hog Island Scholarship:** A new committee was recently formed in an effort to revive our former scholarship program while increasing the amount to \$500. The next scholarship will be offered for the 2024 Hog Island summer program sessions. We hope to award the scholarship to younger birders but everyone will be considered. Committee members are Dr. Robert Hamilton IV, Chuck McClaugherty and Meghan Schoenfelt.

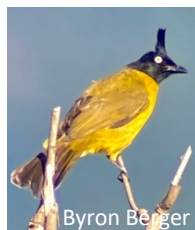
► **Masthead photo:** This month's photo is courtesy of Cynthia Norris.

► Contact CantonAudubonSociety@gmail.com with questions.

CHAPTER CHATTER

➤ A special thank you to Laura Dornan who contributed much of the content to this newsletter.

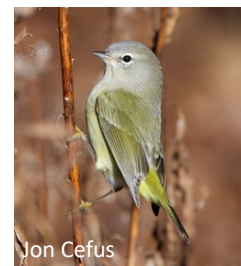
➤ Ronnie Macko and Shari Jackson recently returned from a 4-week vacation to Texas. Traveling from the Piney Woods area, down the coast, South Padre Island and 2 weeks in the Rio Grande Valley, they saw 224 different species of birds. Three species were life birds: Hook-billed Kite, Red-legged Honeycreeper and Social Flycatcher.



➤ Byron Berger recently returned from a 3-week trip to Asia. He spent 3 days birding in Singapore followed by a birding tour of Cambodia. He saw 205 bird species, 125 of them are lifers such as Black-crested Bulbul (pictured), Chinese Egret, White-faced Plover, and Malaysian Plover.

➤ While scouting for the Canton Christmas Bird Count at Tam O'Shanter Park December 4th, Jon Cefus located an Orange-crowned Warbler (pictured) that had previously been seen on November 12 by Nicky Rosner. This is not a common sighting even during migration; in December it is exceptional. He used an Eastern Screech-Owl recording to help in the survey, which attracted the warbler and several other birds. Used ethically and judiciously, these recordings can be a useful tool in conducting surveys.

Jon was also elected Vice-President of the Ohio Ornithological Society at the annual meeting on November 19, 2022. Congratulations Jon!



BIRDING TIPS FOR NEW (& NOT SO NEW) BIRDERS

IDENTIFYING BIRDS: PART 2

By Chris Dyer

This is the 2ND part of the ninth series. While the tips offered here may seem to be directed towards people new to birding, we are sure that even those who have been birding for decades will find some helpful information.

Last issue we looked at some of the best ways to narrow down a bird's identity by using its colors, shape, and markings. But the best birders use other factors than the bird's appearance to confirm their identification.

WHEN/WHERE - Knowing where and when birds should be in your area will greatly help you confirm or rethink your ID. For example, if it is a bird that should not be present in Ohio in winter and it's February, you may want to take another look at the bird. This includes confirming proper habitat as well. If in doubt, a brief review of your field guide, the area's checklists (which can be found on Ebird), will help you judge what birds should be around at a specific location and time.

BEHAVIOR - Knowing a bird species' typical behaviors can help confirm its identity as well. This doesn't mean you have to study a bird intensely for years to know every in and out of its daily routine. But learning behaviors, such as what height of a tree a bird hangs out, or if he's secretive or brash, goes a long way to helping you finalize your ID. Is the bird you see in constant motion and hanging out with several others that look similar? If so, it could be a Kinglet. Behavior won't give you a distinct ID but will likely help you narrow your options and confirm your suspicions. Below are some common behaviors that can help distinguish a bird's identity:

- i. **Movement** - The way a bird moves can be distinct. Woodpeckers climb the sides of trees as do Black and White warblers, Nuthatches and Brown Creepers. But Nuthatches often go headfirst in a downward direction. This distinct action makes them immediately recognizable. Another example would be birds that run across the ground like thrushes, as opposed to most birds that take flight when spotted. In addition, many birds have a distinct way of flying. This can be speed, amount of time between flaps, or it can be flight style, like the undulation (up and down) flight of the American Goldfinch. Vultures hold their wings more angled, soar more than they flap, and tend to teeter like a man on a tightrope, which gives them away. These are just a few examples of distinct flight patterns that can help with an ID.
- ii. **Location Height** - Where they spend their times in the tree or shrubs goes a long way towards shedding light on a bird's identity. Cerulean Warblers are birds of the highest treetops. American Redstarts spend their time at a tree's mid-range, while Common Yellowthroats tend to be birds of low shrubs & stay close to the ground. The family of thrushes are often on the ground or at least close to it. These are all good examples of how knowing the bird's preferred height can help narrow the species down.
- iii. **Diet** - Is the bird at a feeder eating seeds? At a bush eating berries? Hunting for insects or even larger prey? What a bird eats and how he catches it can tell you a lot about who he is. Seeing what appears to be a gull flying over the water's surface and having him suddenly pluck a fish as he does, means you are likely looking at a tern and not a gull at all. Seeing a bird sitting still and then suddenly take a quick, short flight to grab a bug from the air only to return to the same exact perching spot, can clue you in to the bird's identity as a flycatcher.
- iv. **Nesting** - If you happen to discover the bird's nest, you have found another clue as to its identity. Is it a cavity nester? If so that limits your options greatly. Is the nest low in the reeds or high in a tree? Some birds, like Orioles, have distinct enough nests that you can identify its builder without even seeing the bird itself.

SONG - Songs are a great tool for identifying birds and in some cases are even better than using sight. Learning bird songs will be covered more deeply in an upcoming installment.

One last note on identifying birds. Don't be upset if you can't figure out which bird you are looking at. Even experienced birders have got to "let go" of some and just move on. In the same vein, you may make mistakes and identify a bird incorrectly. It happens to everyone. In fact, mistakes are a great way to learn when it comes to birding, so figure out where you went wrong and build from it.

Chris Dyer is a long-time member of Canton Audubon.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

**All upcoming programs will be both in-person and via Zoom*

January 18, 2023 at 7 pm

Member's Night

Members are encouraged to share nature-related photos, vacations, book reviews, songs, hobbies, trivia and more. There will be a sign-up prior to the meeting to allow time for each participant. Please email CAS if you plan to participate!

February 15, 2023 at 7pm

"Ohio Bats" by The Wilderness Center

Ohio's bats have been through a lot in the last decade. This program will look at the life histories of common Ohio bats, discuss the impacts of White Nose Syndrome, and explore ways that you can help.

Pre-meeting: Meet & greet the bats at the Wildlife Conservation Center at 6:00pm.

Photo: Little brown bat, Ann Froschauer/USFWS



March 15, 2023 at 7pm

"Birds of Southwest USA" by Byron Berger

Byron will discuss the regional birds and their habitats such as deserts, grasslands, various types of forests and intermittent water areas. He will also talk about sky islands which are isolated mountain ranges that rise up in the desert "sea". They provide unique habitat allowing for a greater diversity of all wildlife species. Byron is a long-time member of Canton Audubon. **Pre-meeting bird walk** at 5:30pm, meet at EG south facing balcony.

EVENTS

HUSTON BRUMBAUGH NATURE CENTER Phone: (330) 823-7487 email: naturecenter@mountunion.edu

- **Great Backyard Bird Count** February 17-20, 2023. Join Nature Center staff as participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count in the comfort of the Bird Observatory. Save the dates!

- **Photo Contest and Exhibit Open House at the Nature Center** Sunday, February 26 from 1-5 p.m. If you'd like to enter photos, contact the center or visit their website for contest rules. www.mountunion.edu/nature-center

UPCOMING BIRD FESTIVALS for 2023

www.allaboutbirds.org/news/birding-festivals



Laura Dornan

FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL BIRD FEEDING MONTH



Laura Dornan



Linda Chen



Linda Chen



Linda Chen

CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT



By Laura Dornan



If you are like me, you are always interested in ways you can make your birding and other outdoor activities more meaningful. I love birding just for the sake of watching birds do their thing but if I can also contribute to science while out and about, that's a double win! Here are 2 Citizen Science projects in which you can participate in February that may interest you.

BALD EAGLE: Winter is a great time to look for bald eagles; immature eagles often congregate at large reservoirs, lakes, rivers and wetlands AND adult eagles begin to establish nests in February and March. Although eagles have been removed

from the state and federal endangered species list, the Ohio Division of Wildlife continues to keep track of eagle populations and nest sites. If you spot an active eagle nest, the ODOW would like you to report the sighting at www.wildohio.gov Photo by Laura Dornan.

Report Wildlife Sightings. **Remember to respect the bird's space and stay at least 100 yards away.**

The last bald eagle nest census, completed in 2020, confirmed 707 nests in Ohio.

Source: *Wild Ohio Magazine*, 2022, Vol 33, Is 1



GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT was first launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. It was the 1st on-line Citizen Science (sometimes called Community Science) project. It always occurs over 4 days in February; this year it is from Friday, Feb 17 thru Monday, Feb 20. The data that is obtained from this worldwide bird count helps scientists understand global bird populations before they begin an annual migration; helps with understanding of how birds are affected by environmental changes; how ranges are expanding or shrinking; what birds inhabit different areas, i.e., urban and rural.

Entering data is easy to do and instructions are clear, easy to understand. Photos of birds and participants are welcomed and also easy to download. The count can be conducted at one or several locations, for as few as 15 minutes on one day to as much as several hours on all 4 days. At home, at a park or nature center, while on a hike. By yourself or with a group. To learn more about the count and how to participate, go to www.birdcount.org

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK UPDATE

Peggy Lewis kept pretty good tabs on the ducks and says the last time the 8 young ones were seen was November 19. The adult was still present as of December 10, 2022 at the Miller Farm.

Some thoughts:

Why did the young ducks leave without the parent? Migration is not instinctive to whistling-ducks so how did they know to leave? Or did they really leave or just move somewhere else? Can they find their way to warmer climes?

Why didn't the parent go also? Might it be injured or ill in some way that is not apparent? Can it make it through the winter? Doubtful.

SO many questions to which we will likely never have the answers. Now that the young ducks have gone, people will probably not be checking the site out so we may not learn any more about the adult.

Marcescence – Ghost Tree

By Laura Dornan



American Beech

One of my favorite activities is walking through a woodland on a winter day, hearing only the crunch of leaves underfoot, enjoying the smell of a woods rich in organic matter, and observing the bare branches that show the true shape of the variety of trees present. And I enjoy trying to identify the trees without the aid of leaf shape. But wait, not all of the trees are bare. Some of them still have their leaves clinging on, stubborn reminders of the glory the tree once flaunted. I call these ghost trees, slightly spooky denizens of the forest that cause me to ponder their existence.

Now I know what this phenomenon is. But still perplexed about why it happens. Scientists call it “marcescence” (mar-ces-cence), derived from the Latin *marcesco* meaning “to fade or wither”. In Ohio, young American beech trees and all species and ages of oak trees are most likely to exhibit marcescence. But WHY?

No one really knows. But scientists do have a few possible explanations. It may help protect young, low-growing branches & buds from being grazed by forcing large herbivores to get a mouthful of dried-out leaves that are neither tasty nor nutritious. It is also possible that the dried leaves create noise that hinders the browser's ability to hear the approach of predators.

Another hypothesis concerns the tree itself. Oak and beech trees often occur on nutrient-poor soils. Leaves on the ground decompose faster than those on the tree. By remaining on the tree until early spring, the marcescence leaves provide a nutritious mulch when and where it is most needed. The leaves also may trap more snow and rain during the winter to provide more moisture around the base of the tree, assisting in spring growth.

It seems quite clear that there is probably more than one explanation for marcescence and likely that several hypotheses hold true and work together for the benefit of the tree. Now, as you wander in woods, you have another adaptation for strategy for life to ponder and provide more joy in your explorations. Photos by Linda Chen.

Source: *Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves Association newsletter, Winter 2021-2022, Guy Denny*



Pin Oak



FISHERS (*Pekania pennanti*)

Fishers, a mammal that was extirpated from Ohio by the 1830's, have begun to repopulate the state. In the past 10 years they have been confirmed in 6 counties in Northeast Ohio. This is a result of natural recolonization from populations in Pennsylvania. Fishers can be easily misidentified as a river otter or mink, other members of the same family of carnivores. They are about the size of a housecat, with lean, long, dark brown bodies and long, full, black tails. They inhabit forests, eating small and medium sized animals. The Ohio Division of Wildlife would like your help in tracking fishers by reporting sightings at wildohio.gov

Photo by Holly Kuchera.

Source: *Wild Ohio Magazine, 2022, Vol 33, Issue 1*



2022 STATE of the BIRDS REPORT

In mid-October, the 2022 State of the Birds Report (www.stateofthebirds.org/2022) was released, giving us a new look at bird population health since the 2019 report that showed a loss of 3 billion birds in the last 50 years. This new report has equally dire news but not without hope. While data shows trends of declining birds in most habitats, wetland conservation measures have resulted in waterfowl increases.

Some findings in the report show over 50% of U.S. Bird species are declining; Grassland birds have the fastest decline—34% loss since 1970; Shorebirds are down by 33%;

Seventy new Tipping Point species were identified, species which will lose half their already dwindling population in 50 years. These birds are not currently on the Federal Endangered Species List. Some of these birds are Bobolink, Golden-winged warbler, Prairie warbler, Rufous hummingbird, Ruddy Turnstone, and Least tern.

Waterbirds and ducks have increased by 18% and 34%, respectively. According to Ducks Unlimited, decades of collaboration between hunters, landowners, state and federal agencies, and corporations have provided a network to restore and protect wetland-dependent species. The Fish and Wildlife Service wants to use that precedent to build a foundation for responding with other bird groups in habitats such as grasslands, forests, deserts, mountains, and oceans.

It will take a combination partnership, incentives, science-based solutions and the will to dramatically scale up conservation efforts but the American Bird Conservancy says “Everyone can make a difference to help turn declines around. Everyone with a window can use simple solutions to prevent collisions. Everyone can help green their neighborhoods and avoid using pesticides that harm birds. Everyone who lives in a neighborhood can bring the issues and solutions to their community and use their voice to take action.” **Now** is when we have the best chance to reverse directions, before more birds plummet to Endangered. *Source: American Bird Conservancy News October 12, 2022*

ANNOTATED CHECKLIST of the BIRDS OF OHIO 2022

The Ohio Bird Records Committee and Ohio Ornithological Society have joined in publishing the 2022 edition of *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Ohio*, edited by Robert Harlan. This valuable resource was last published in 2008 and much has changed since then. The booklet contains current and historical information on the 443 species countable species in Ohio, up through March 2022. (In 2008, it was 420 species). It is currently available at Time & Optics, 6954 Co. Rd. 77, Millersburg, OH, 44654. Phone 330-674-0210 or can be ordered by mail or phone or picked up at the store if you are in the area. The cost is \$5.00 per copy with postage & handling \$2.00 per copy. For 5 or more copies sent to one address, postage & handling is \$10.00. This booklet is an especially valuable resource when you have seen a rare bird and you want to know just how rare it is. And it is a good way to keep track of your Ohio bird list.

RECOVERING AMERICA’S WILDLIFE ACT LEGISLATION (S. 2372)

PLEASE contact U.S. Senators Brown 1-(888)-896-6446 and Vance (# unknown) to voice your support for Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA). The U.S. House of Representatives passed RAWA June 2022. It provides funding for conservation or restoration of wildlife and plants of greatest concern; implements strategies for wildlife conservation of states, territories, District of Columbia and tribal lands; and wildlife conservation education and recreation projects.

Ohio has more than 400 species of concern and would receive \$20 million annually from RAWA. It has broad support from hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2372

CAS Business Supporters

Dumont Seed

619 30th St NW, Canton, OH 44706
330-492-0204
Bird Seed, Feeders, Supplies, Lawn, Garden

Hartville Elevator

11 Prospect Ave N, Hartville, OH
330-872-9320
Birds seed, Feeders and supplies
M-F 8am-5pm, Sat: 8am-noon Sun: closed

Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center

University of Mount Union
1972 Clark Ave. Alliance, OH 44601
330-823-7487
T-F: 9am-4pm, Sat 1pm-5pm,
Sun 1pm-5pm, Mon: Closed

Stark County Park District

Administration: 330-477-3552
5300 Tyner St NW, Canton, OH 44708
Exploration Gateway (EG)
5712 12th St NW, Canton, OH 44708
330-409-8096 www.StarkParks.com

The Ladybug Garden Center & Gift Shop

Donna Mataka Landscape Services
8361 Portage St NW, Massillon, OH 44646
330-832-7080
Birding supplies Landscapes,
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M-F: 9a-6p, Sat: 9a-5p, Sun: 10a-3p

The Terra Depot

7404 Shepler Church Ave SW
Navarre, OH 44662
330-417-6257
Bird Seed, Feeders, Houses, Statuary
www.theTERRAdepot.com
Hours: Fri & Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 12pm-4pm

Canton Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9586

Canton, Ohio 44711



The Newsletter of Canton Audubon Society

Mailing label

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Scott Watkins, VP - 2021-2023... ph 330-209-1261
Laura Brown, Treasurer - 2021-2023
Connie Rubin, Secretary – 2022-2024

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Barbra Lewis – 2022-2024, 1st term
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Chuck McClaugherty - 2022-2024, 2nd term
Myra McCoy – 2021-2023, 1st term
Megan Shoenfelt – 2022-2024, 1st term

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EDI: Chuck McClaugherty, Laura Dornan,
Connie Rubin, Barbra Lewis, Lee Dolan

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Newsletter: Laura Dornan, Linda Chen

Programs/Field Trips: Scott Watkins

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*We serve Stark, Tuscarawas, Carroll and parts
of Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison,
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Canton Audubon Society (Chapter code: S69)

* Chapter Supporter Membership Application

Does not include National Audubon Society Membership

____ Song sparrow (Student).....\$10
____ Cardinal (Basic Individual/Family).....\$20
____ Bluebird (Business Supporter, 2 years)..... \$50
____ Screech Owl (Sustaining)..... \$75
____ Bald Eagle (Life)..... \$300
____ Other (name your amount)..... \$ ____
____ *Introductory National Audubon Society/...\$20

Canton Audubon Society Joint Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO AND MAIL TO:

Canton Audubon Society

P.O. Box 9586

Canton, Ohio 44711-9586

* OR, PAY ONLINE at www.CantonAudubon.org