

Audubon News and Views

Canton Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society

Established 1962

March / April 2023 Volume 68 / Issue 5

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



HARBINGERS OF SPRING

By Laura Dornan

A harbinger is defined as something that foreshadows a future event or something that gives an anticipatory sign of what is to come. As winter begins to lose its icy grip on us and we yearn for warmer days, we longingly search for any signs that spring is right around the corner. There are actually quite a few such signs, and we all seem to have our favorites. Here are a few; is your favorite listed here or can you think of others?



For some, the most obvious sign of spring is the actual vernal equinox or first day of spring, March 20 this year. But for anyone paying attention, spring has already arrived in many forms. Skunk cabbage, which has thermogenic properties that warm the ground around it, will first pop up out of the snow in February while snow is still on the ground. Snowdrops and crocus will soon follow. Shortly after the ice melts in wetlands & vernal pools, drive around with your windows down (at least a little bit). You will most likely soon be rewarded with the sound of spring peepers belting out their version of a love song. And it will be LOUD. When snowfall becomes a warm spring rain, usually in March, drive those roads very carefully, lest you come across a mass of salamanders crossing the road to get to their vernal pool to meet their destiny with love.

Of course, we all know groundhogs are beginning to come out of their burrows in early February but did you know skunks are also out and about? Robins are most commonly considered the harbinger of spring but in fact the first robin you see has actually been here all winter. It just moved from your yard, where the ground was too frozen to find food, to the woods where they can feast on berries of all types. Two birds that really do make an early appearance are woodcocks, which return in February and March and begin their courtship dances. But that is a sign of spring



that we usually have to go in search of. The bird that I have always considered my harbinger is the red- winged blackbird. While a few hardy birds may endure the cold, most head south. Also returning in February and March, they immediately begin to establish territories. As soon as I hear the first *conk-la-ree*, I know spring is here! Even if the thermometer does not agree.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ➤ Elections/board positions: It is election time again and CAS needs you. Requirements are a willingness to attend at least most of the meetings (held via Zoom) and to be a paying member of either the Canton or National Audubon Societies. Meetings last 2 hours, 5 times/year. Thank you to Ronnie Macko who will be completing her second term on the board. CAS By-laws state that Board Directors can serve two consecutive 2-year terms. Her seat and possibly another will need filled. If you or someone you know has an interest in preserving birds and our natural heritage, please contact Linda Chen, any current Board member or e-mail us at CantonAudubonSociety@gmail.com
- ➤ Fritz College Scholarship applications are due March 1, 2023. See cantonaudubon.org/about-2/scholarship
- ➤ Thank you to Diane Cotton and Diane Davis for their generous donations in memory of Wilma Mohr.
- ➤ Masthead photo: This month's photo is courtesy of Chris Dyer.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2022

The Canton CBC was held on Thursday, December 15. Weather was lousy with rain and drizzle all day plus temperatures ranged in the upper 30's and lower 40's. There were 26 participants and one home feeder with 73 species counted overall. Birds were not very active but four new species were seen for Canton CBC historical records. They were Short-eared Owls, Northern Shrike, Marsh Wren, and Orange-crowned Warbler yet very few blackbirds and ducks were spotted. However, this year, participants were finally able to meet up for a post-count gathering.

Next year's count date might change for several reasons. A later date can mean colder weather with possible snow cover and more bird species. The Wilderness Center and Quail Hollow bird counts are currently the following two days making it a grueling 3 days for participants of all three counts. There might be a few adjustments to the Canton CBC circle boundaries next year but all decisions are yet to be determined. A big THANK YOU to all 2022 participants!

OHIO SANDHILL CRANE SURVEY



In 2021, the Ohio Division of Wildlife (DOW) initiated what will be an annual event to count Sandhill Cranes (SACR) in Ohio, as part of the Midwest Crane Count. The survey is coordinated by DOW, International Crane Foundation and Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative and is conducted in 24 pre-selected counties, based on available wetland habitat used by SACR for nesting.

In 2021, 160 cranes were found in 5 counties; during the 1-day count, conducted in April this year, a total of 371 cranes were found in all 24 selected counties. High numbers of SACR were found in Trumbull (47), Geauga (56), Lucas (60), and Wayne (84). Five counties had 1; five had 2;

two counties had 3; three had 11 and 5 counties reported between 6 and 18 cranes. SACR, which were once extirpated in Ohio, returned to Wayne County in 1987 to breed and have continued to expand to other wetland habitats. They are listed as Threatened in Ohio.

The SACR is a tall wading bird with a long neck and bill and a large bustle-shaped tail. It is a gray bird with a red crown but also often sports a lot of rust coloring on the feathers, a result of iron in the water where it forages. It is a secretive bird during the breeding season. Its rolling bugle call is a sound that once learned, is never forgotten, aiding in its

identification.

The Midwest Crane Count is April 15, 2023 from 6:30-8:30 am. Volunteers are asked to scout and survey cranes in a designated block in Columbiana County during the 2-hour period. Submit results as eBird lists. Chuck McClaugherty is coordinating the Columbiana County count which has had a few cranes for a number of years. If you are interested or have questions, contact Chuck, to participate. If you want to help in a different county, he can refer you to that coordinator. Let him know of others who might be interested and share their email address. Contact him at: mcclauca@gmail.com Read more about SACR at Ohio DOW, wwww.wildohio.gov Source: The Louisville (OH) Herald, May 19, 2022.



UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

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



March 15, 2023 at 7pm "Birds of Southwest USA" by Byron Berger

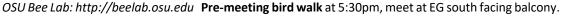
Byron will discuss the regional birds and their habitats such as deserts, grasslands, various types of forests and intermittent water areas. He will also talk about sky islands which are isolated mountain ranges that rise up in the desert "sea". They provide unique habitat allowing for a greater diversity of all wildlife species. Byron is a long-time member of Canton Audubon Society.

Pre-meeting bird walk at 5:30pm, meet at EG south facing balcony.

April 19, 2023 at 7pm

"Phenology: The age-old science to predict bloom time and insect activity", Denise Ellsworth

Phenology is the study of recurring biological phenomena and their relationship to weather, climate, bird migration, hunting and gathering seasons, blooming of wildflowers and trees. Learn how phenology tells us what's blooming and what insect activity is to come. With an easy-to-use web-based biological calendar, learn how to customize this calendar for garden plants and insects of interest. Denise is the Program Director for Pollinator Education at The Ohio State University.







May 17, 2023 at 7pm

"Raptor Hallow Sanctuary" by Josh Kuszmaul

Learn about different birds of prey, their life histories and why they came to live at Raptor Hallow Sanctuary. Josh is the Executive Director which started with 4 birds in his backyard. They now care for over 40 non-releasable native animals. He became a bird enthusiast while growing up on his family's farm monitoring bird nests to see how many eggs hatched and chicks survived. **Pre-meeting bird walk** at 5:30pm, meet at EG south facing balcony.

CAS BIRD/NATURE WALKS

March 4	Nature Walk, Hoover Park Connector Trail, North Canton at 9:00am.
April 1	April Fool's Day Nature Walk, Tam O' Shanter Park, Canton at 9:00am.
April 22	Alan Dolan Memorial Earth Day Nature Walk, Jackson Bog State Nature Preserve, Massillon at 9:00am.
May 6	Nature Walk, Metzger Park, Louisville at 9:00am.
May 13	World Bird Migration/Global Big Day Nature Walk, Cottonwoods Wetlands, Sippo Lake at 9:00am.
May 28	Black Birders Week Nature Walk, Stadium/Monument Park, Canton at 1:00pm.
June	Field trip to Bobolinks and Butterflies Festival at Byers Woods, Ashland. (Date is TBD)
June 21	Pre-picnic nature walk at 4:00pm. Meet at the Boathouse, Tyner Rd east entrance, Sippo Lake.
July 8	Nature walk at Norma Johnson Center in Dover at 9:00 am, coinciding with the butterfly exhibit July 6-16.

- Shreve Migration Sensation Saturday, March 11, 2023, Shreve, Ohio. www.shreveohio.com/migration-sensation
- Jen Brumfield at Massillon Museum for Brown Bag Lunch on Tuesday, March 28, 12:10 12:50pm.

 Program: "Birding on Boats: Secrets of Lake Erie Birds", free and open to the public, no registration. Bring a lunch or order from the Greatness Café. Complimentary cookies & coffee. www.massillonmuseum.org
- Earth Day Celebration at KSU/Stark Branch Sunday, April 23, 2023 1 4 pm. Enjoy a free, family friendly afternoon filled with environmental activities, nature walks, scavenger hunt, games, and more. Volunteers are needed to help at the Canton Audubon Society table. www.kent.edu/stark/earth-day-celebration
- Huston Brumbaugh Nature Center: www.mountunion.edu/nature-center | See the 2023 spring newsletter.
 - Earth Day Celebration Saturday, April 22. Celebrate Earth Day at the Nature Center. Events throughout the day.
 - Bioblitz: City Nature Challenge Saturday, April 29, 1-4 pm.

BIRDING TIPS FOR NEW (& NOT SO NEW) BIRDERS



By Chris Dyer

This is the 3rd 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 tidbits of helpful information.

IDENTIFYING BIRDS PART 3: VARIATIONS

When identifying birds, it is important to remember there is a great deal of variety in colors, shape, and size, even among the same species. These varieties can occur for a multitude of reasons.

First there are the "normal" differences among a species that are expected and are shown in most field guides. These include:

1. **Sexual Dimorphism -** Simply put, this means males and females look differently than each other. In most cases this is a different color scheme between males and females. However, it also includes size difference in the case of many raptors. Size difference generally won't affect your ability to identify species except in the case of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawk since the size of Cooper's males and Sharp-shinned females overlap. Color differences between sexes can be minor and cause little trouble in identification, such as the red spot on the head of the Downy Woodpecker male. They can also be extreme making the male and female unrecognizable as the same species. Red-winged Blackbirds are prime examples of this.



Male & Female Red-winged Blackbird

2. Color Morphs - There are some species that can show color variation that are not indicative of sex. Birds such as Snow Geese, Eastern Screech Owls, and others may have two or more colors "choices" within the same species. This is similar to the way that humans have a variety of hair colors. In some cases, the bird's color morphs are separated by regions, such as the Northern Flicker. In other species they mix freely within the same region.



2 color morphs of Eastern Screech Owl

3. Seasonal changes - During fall and/or spring molt, some birds change color. In most of these cases the male will become brighter and more colorful in spring and look more like the female in fall and winter. However, there are some species where the male changes from his spring plumage to his own unique winter coloration, looking different enough from the female to cause confusion. For example, the fall male blackpoll warbler looks different from both the female and his breeding plumage.



Winter Male Blackpoll Warbler

In all the above cases the alternate color patterns can be learned easily by studying the field guides or at least, by checking the guide in the field. However, there are birds with unusual colors or physical traits which are not shown in the guides. They can be caused by a number of factors including hybridization, faulty genetics, or even poor diets. Although such occurrences can be rare, they do exist and the more you bird, the chances will increase that you may find one of these unusual birds. This is why it is important to include other identifying factors such as shape, posture, behavior, and habitat to identify birds rather than by using color alone. Continued on page 5

EXAMPLES OF OTHER VARIATIONS



Leucistic Northern Cardinal

1. **Albinism & Leucism** - Albinos have no pigmentation and appear as totally white members of their species with pink eyes, exposed skin, have some colored feathers mixed with white ones. Eyes and beaks are usually of normal color.



Albino Vulture

2. **Juvenile coloration** - Most young birds don't have full adult coloration. Having different coloration can make them more camouflaged for safety and can also separate them from adults, so they are not seen as competition by adult males and are left unharmed. Many juveniles appear much like females of their species with only slight differences, such as the dark colored beak of the juvenile Northern Cardinal. Others like the black spotting of a juvenile Robin can make them look very different than the adults and can confuse novice birders.



Juvenile American Robin

3. **Hybridization** - On rare occasions two different species will cross breed with each other. The offspring might appear as either parent, or as a combination of the two. This is most common in ducks but can occur with other groups as well. These hybrid children can be a challenge to identify as they can appear as a unique species and will rarely appear in a field guide.



Northern Pintail x Mallard Hybrid

4. **Artificial coloration** - There are occasions when a bird's natural coloration can be affected by outside factors. The most commonly seen is a reddish stain on feathers from iron in the waters they frequent. This is common among cranes, and some waterfowl. Rarely, other colors can stain a bird. I once found a female house sparrow stained a bright Cyan from head to belly from some substance or dye she had gotten into. Tar and mud are other examples of substance that can stain and change a bird's color patterns.



Gull with orange dye

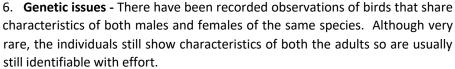


Sandhill Cranes stained by "rusty" water



"Yellow" cardinal affected by diet

5. **Dietary issues** - A poor diet or malnutrition can cause poor feather growth but can also cause the fading or failure of reds, oranges, and yellows in the feather pigments of some birds. In a similar fashion poor health can cause the pigmentation to fail, even when the diet is normal.





Cardinal with both male and female characteristics

While birding, most birds you see will be identifiable by standard field guides and practice, but it is important to know that in addition to the rare birds that have shown up in your area, there are also many cases of common local birds that may be unrecognizable at first glance due to one of these unusual situations.

^{*}All pictures taken from the internet.

CELEBRATING EARTH DAY



By Laura Dornan



Earth Day will be celebrated on April 22, 2023 this year and the theme is "Invest in Our Planet". Listed here are a few suggestions for ways to make your celebration both meaningful and productive.

Write, call or email your representatives to encourage them to support conservation efforts in Congress and the Senate. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act was not passed before the end of the last Senate so more action is needed. Other conservation measures that also need congressional support include "Break Free from Plastics Pollution Act"; "Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Enhancements Act"; North American Grasslands Conservation Act". With the start of a new congressional session, all of these Acts will need new introductions and votes of support.

Plant native plants in your garden for the benefit of wildlife. Introduce a child, neighbor, relative, or community leader to the joy of nature by taking them on a bird or wildflower walk. Visit www.earthday.org Go Plirding! (see article below).

PLIRDING FOR EARTH DAY



By Laura Dornan

Definition—Picking up trash while birding.

Word origin—Derived from the word plogging. Itself a word coined from the Swedish phrase plocka upp, meaning "pick up" and the word jogging.

History—Several years ago plogging became popular among concerned joggers in Sweden and soon became a world-wide movement as joggers turned running for fitness and fun into a treasure hunt for trash. Before long birders wanted to join the cause and turned plogging into plirding.

How to do it—Simple, keep a jacket pocket or backpack pocket empty or take along a small (or large) trash bag to deposit trash you find along the trail.

Why—If birders don't show concern for the environment, why should we expect anyone else to? Maybe we will inspire others to pick up trash also or at least to not deposit it!

Hints—To make it fun, turn it into a contest to see who can collect the most or see if you can up your own record. (Kids especially will enjoy this). If the trail is an out-andback, take note of what trash is where and collect it on the way back. Be safe, don't pick up dangerous objects and wear gloves. Some people take along "grabbers" for safety and to make picking up easier on the back.

So now you know...Let's Go Plirding!

DID YOU KNOW 👫



A vaccine has been approved by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to protect honeybees against American foulbrood disease, an aggressive bacterium that has been decimating honeybee hives. The vaccine is incorporated into royal jelly, a sugar feed given to queen bees, which then produce worker bees with inherited immunity. The vaccine could be available next year and will be distributed on a limited basis to commercial beekeepers. Source—Camille Fine, USA Today & Canton Repository, 1/12/2023

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 Matako Landscape Services 8361 Portage St NW, Massillon, OH 44646 330-832-7080 Birding supplies Landscapes, Garden, Spring/Fall Clean-up M-F:9a-6p, Sat: 9a-5p, Sun: 10a-3p

The Towne Printer

2403 Cleveland Ave NW Canton, OH 44709 330-455-4550 M-F: 10am-4:30pm, Closed S/S Printing services

The Terra Depot

Megan Shoenfelt 7404 Shepler Church Ave SW Navarre, OH 44662 330-471-6257 Bird Seed, Feeders, Houses, Statuary www.theTERRAdepot.com Fri & Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 12pm-4pm

BIRD CONSERVATION NEWS IN 2022



- ➤ Lesser Prairie Chickens (LPCH) southern subpopulation (western TX and eastern NM) were declared Endangered by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in November 2022. The northern subpopulation is listed as Threatened. LPCH, pictured left, have suffered from a significant loss of grassland habitat across their historic range.
- ▶ Piping Plovers (PIPL) had a record breaking 2022 breeding season on the coastlines of all five Great Lakes with 150 chicks fledging in the wild from 72 unique breeding pairs. This is the greatest number of chicks to have fledged since the population was listed as federally endangered in 1986. A memorial video for Monty and Rose, the Chicago PIPLs,

can be watched at: www.pbs.org/video/monty-and-rose-memorial-carved-lakefront-rock-4sf7v8

- ➤ Cerulean Warblers and Wood Thrush have shown declines of about 60% over the last 50 years but within the last decade, both birds are showing signs of stabilization. www.stateofthebirds.org/2022/eastern-forest-birds
- ▶ Birds of Hawai'i: Known as the "bird extinction capital of the world", nearly half of the 73 endemic Hawaiian bird species and subspecies have gone extinct or are presumed extinct. One-third are federally protected under the Endangered Species Act. The Dept of Interior announced in Dec. 2022, their strategy to prevent the "immanent extinction of Hawaiian forest birds" with funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, 2022-2026 fiscal years. 17 of the 41 endemic honeycreepers have gone extinct and 14 are listed as endangered. Kiwikiu (a honeycreeper species) are the rarest forest bird on Maui with a population fewer than 150. The spread of non-native mosquitoes, vectors for avian



malaria, have devastated many populations of Hawaiian forest birds. Non-native predators including the Indian mongoose, snakes, rats, and cats have also taken their toll on Hawai'i's endemic birds. USFWS/abc.org/Audubon.org

► Horseshoe crab eggs fuel globally significant stopover habitats for migratory shorebirds, some are federally threatened. In July 2022, horseshoe crabs have officially found a sanctuary at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, some of South Carolina's last intact coastline. In Delaware Bay November 2022, bait harvest of female horseshoe crabs is on hold, at least for now.

ARMCHAIR ACTIVISM

Grasslands and grassland birds have been declining by more than 50% since 1970. Grazing land makes up a large portion of the total acres of grassland available. The U.S. Farm Bill is ongoing legislation that funds and guides programs related to how grazing lands are used. On January 24, the American Bird Conservancy (ABC), working to make the 2023 Farm Bill stronger for bird conservation, submitted a letter to the Senate and House Agriculture Committees outlining recommendations for grazing land conservation that would benefit birds and ranchers.

While the need for this conservation advocacy seems to pertain only to the western states, grassland conservation does matter to everyone. Via email, ask legislators to support the recommendations offered by the ABC in their Jan. 2023 letter. www.contactsenators.com Or sign the "Take Action" letter at abcbirds.org to voice your concern.

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry (ANF)

Senator Debbie Stabenow, (D-MI), Chairwoman: www.stabenow.senate.gov/contact Senator John Boozman, (R-AR), Ranking Member: www.boozman.senate.gov/public

Contact Ohio's U.S. Senators to voice your support:

Sherrod Brown (also an ANF committee member): Phone: 1-(888)-896-6446 or www.brown.senate.gov

J.D. Vance: Phone: 1-(202)224-3353 or www.vance.senate.gov

To read the letter from the ABC in its entirety see the link at cantonaudubon.org

BIRD-SAFE BUILDINGS ACT: Congressional leaders will soon reintroduce this bill which would help protect birds from glass collisions — one of the greatest human-caused threats to birds. Please ask your U.S. Representative and Senators to co-sponsor the Bird-Safe Buildings Act now! Or sign the "Act Now" letter at *abcbirds.org*

Canton Audubon Society P.O. Box 9586

Canton, Ohio 44711



The Newsletter of Canton Audubon Society

Mailing label

Officers:

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

Directors:

Marlene Bolea - 2021-2023, 1st term
Dr. Robert Hamilton IV – 2022-2024, 1st term
Barbra Lewis – 2022-2024, 1st term
Ronnie Macko - 2021-2023, 2nd term
Chuck McClaugherty - 2022-2024, 2nd term
Myra McCoy – 2021-2023, 1st term
Megan Shoenfelt – 2022-2024, 1st term

Conservation: Linda Chen

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

Education: Lee Dolan Membership: Laura Dornan Newsletter: Laura Dornan, Linda Chen Programs/Field Trips: Scott Watkins

Publicity: Connie Rubin

Scholarship, Fritz (college): Laura Dornan (chair), Lee Dolan, Joyce Stevens, Bob Rohrbaugh, Rose Ann Carper

Scholarship, Hog Island: Dr. Robert Hamilton IV,

Megan Shoenfelt, Chuck McClaugherty, Social Media: Linda Chen, Chris Lamb Website: Scott Watkins

The Wilderness Center Trustees (1 seat available):

George Goldsworthy Chuck McClaugherty

We serve Stark, Tuscarawas, Carroll and parts of Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Mahoning, Summit & Wayne Counties.

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