



Audubon *News and Views*

Canton Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society

Established 1962

January/February 2024

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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

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Phone: 330-209-1261

CAS is a 501(c)3
nonprofit organization

*Denotes kid-friendly articles



Merlin Bird ID

From the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

A LOOK AT SONG ID BY MERLIN

By Chris Dyer

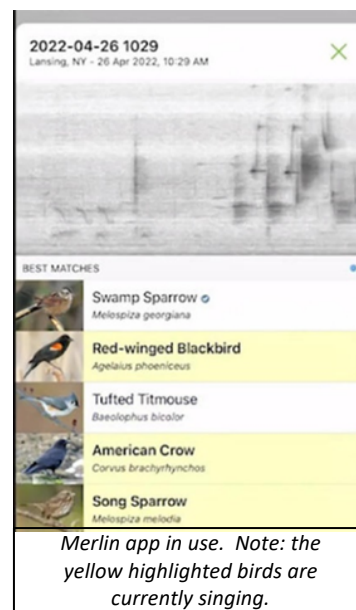
If you weren't already aware, The Merlin app for your smartphone has a song ID feature. Like everything that Cornell University has produced on the subject of birds, there has been much thought and work put into it.

By simply pushing the microphone button, and holding your phone out, the app will listen to birds singing, and pull up the name and a picture of the bird it hears. If you continue to let it go, it will continue to identify each new bird that starts vocalizing. The pictures and names of each bird it has recognized remain on the screen and lights up each time it vocalizes. If you are in a "birdy" spot, you could have a dozen or more birds show up on the app, remaining on the list until a new recording session is started. You can even play back the recording you made and watch as each bird highlights as his song plays; making it easier to learn the songs of each species. It also has pre-stored bird recordings for playback. All of this and the app is free! Another great feature: the app loads its info ahead so you don't need an internet connection for it to function.

Wow! Where was this technology when I started birding over 20 years ago!

Before we look at the positive uses this app has, I would suggest that we don't give our total trust to technology. In other words, just because the app says a bird is present, don't assume that it is and mark it down on your list. I have tested the app multiple times, as have people I have birded with, and there have been a few mistakes. These times are few and far between; but be aware of them. The app is not a replacement for your skills, it is an aide.

Now let me share the myriad of things that the app is good for. First, if you are hearing something you don't recognize, it can help refresh your memory. By showing a bird that you have heard before or attempted to learn, you can remember the song and you can claim the bird. Even if you hadn't heard the song before it gives you an idea of what to look for and where to look.



Are you hearing a Thrush? Look low for something brown and likely not moving much. Are you hearing a Cerulean Warbler? Look at the tree tops for something small and moving a lot. One of the best things about it is that it “hears” birds that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. Looking at a list of birds created by Merlin, I often notice the call of birds that I hadn’t even realized were present. They were there, but I was just not hearing them among the other birds.

I believe this app is a game changer for the average birder and will help beginners find joy in birding even at times when birds are hidden among the foliage. However, I also believe we should still work to learn our bird song even with Merlin available to us because:

A. It will help us discern an error on the rare occasion Merlin makes one

B. There will be times when the app may not be available, such as when your phone dies or isn’t with you.

C. It will make you a more knowledgeable birder and thus a better birder overall.

So, the next time you hear a bird singing try the sound identification feature. I think you will be impressed. You may even find out there are birds around you that you didn’t expect to find.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

► **Holiday Dinner/Silent Auction:** The CAS dinner was held at First Christian Church again this year. The food was great as was our very enjoyable speaker, Chuck Jacobchak. We raised \$390 in the silent auction. Thanks to FCC, Chuck, and CAS members & friends who helped make the night a success.

► **Committee Retirement:** Laura Dornan has retired from all committees. They are Membership chair, Scholarship chair, Newsletter, and EDI. We will especially need help with the Membership Committee. If you are interested in any position, please email to CantonAudubonSociety@gmail.com

► **Newsletter Committee:** We are looking for members to join the Newsletter Committee or you can become a contributor, send us short or longer articles which can be about your travels, general nature-related interests, conservation issues, photos, and more. Email to CantonAudubonSociety@gmail.com

► **Masthead photo:** This month’s Cardinal photo was taken by Lee Dolan. It is a door hanger that she uses in both Ohio and Florida as a reminder of Alan ☹

CHAPTER CHATTER



Sometimes the editors of this newsletter are a little slow about learning of newsworthy information regarding our CAS members but we do like to think that we eventually get there. Such is the case of an award received by Kristen Beck during the Ohio State Fair in August 2023, when she received the Cardinal Award from Gov. Mike DeWine. This award, created in 1966, honors people who have made significant contributions to protecting Ohio's natural resources. Kristen, CAS member and past Board Director, has been rehabilitating native wildlife since the early 1900s and in 2011 established Clover Field Wildlife Center, is adjunct professor in Malone Univ.'s Dept. of Natural Sciences, and has served as board member and president of the Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitators Assoc. She has contributed to rehabilitation efforts around the state, working with bats and gray fox and in 1922 Clover Field cared for almost 900 injured, orphaned and ill animals. We may be slow in offering congratulations but they are nonetheless heartfelt. **Congratulations Kristen!**

► Congratulations to Lee Dolan on the write up she contributed to *The Stark Parks Official Magazine of Stark County Park District 2023-2024*. She wrote about her support and membership of Friends of Stark Parks for 16 years.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

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

January 17, 2024 at 7 pm

“Avian Survival Strategies” by Chris Dyer



Learn how birds deal with predators, inclement weather and other dangers they encounter on a daily basis. Chris earned a BS in Zoology and spent 11 years working at Sea World in the aviculture department caring for exotic birds as well as caring for wild birds in their avian rehab facility. He spent two years working as a part-time employee for the Wildlife Conservation Center at Sippo Lake and is a member of Canton Audubon Society.

Feb Member’s Night at 7pm

Members are encouraged to share nature-related photos, vacations, bird info, book reviews, songs, hobbies, trivia and more. There will be a sign-up prior to allow time for each participant. Please let us know if you would like to participate.

March 20, 2024 at 7 pm

“Birds of Cuba” by Byron Berger

Byron’s program will cover Cuba’s bird touring culture with an emphasis on its twenty-five plus endemic species and close to 300 migrant birds along with a bit of Cuban culture. Byron is a long-time member of Canton Audubon and travels extensively for the love of birds!

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



April 17th – Judy Semroc - “For the Love of “Blue” Birds: Blue Jays, Buntings, Grosbeaks & Bluebirds.

May 15th – Marlene Bolea - TBA

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 2024

February 16, 17, 18, & 19 are the dates for the 2024 GBBC, a perfect time for you to take the opportunity to introduce a friend, neighbor or family member to one of your favorite pastimes...birding! The National Audubon Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada invite birders to participate in this Citizen Science event by reporting bird observations, whether from your backyard, around your neighborhood or at your favorite park or nature center. Learn more on the GBBC website at www.birdcount.org. You can also submit pictures of the birds you see, you and other birders, and your favorite birding locations.



JOIN HUSTON-BRUMBAUGH NATURE CENTER FOR THE 2024 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Friday, Feb 16, 9-11:00 a.m.	Join the Nature Center staff in the Bird Observatory.
Saturday, Feb, 17	Closed
Sunday, Feb 18, 1-2:00 p.m.	Birding for Beginners: Dive into one of the world’s fastest growing hobbies – bird watching, aka birding. We’ll cover the basics such as bird identification, where to look for birds, and how to use binoculars. Appropriate for children and adults.
Sunday, Feb 18, 2-3:00 p.m.	Join the Nature Center staff in the Bird Observatory.
Monday, Feb 19, 9-11:00 a.m.	Join the Nature Center staff in the Bird Observatory.

CAS INSTALLS BLUEBIRD NEST BOXES AT TAM O'SHANTER PARK 🐦

by Connie Rubin



Barbra Lewis assembles a nest box onto a metal post at Tam O'Shanter Park.

A new housing development has just gone up in Tam O'Shanter Park. Across the street from one of Jackson Township's most exclusive housing areas, the new bird houses are state-of-the-art...for Eastern Bluebirds, that is.

Fifteen cedar, bluebird nest boxes have been installed along several of the new park's central trails, and their \$1,300-dollar cost was shared by the Canton Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society via an NAS Collaborative Grant. Seven new posts, baffles, and sparrow deterrents are also slated for installation this fall on bluebird nest boxes on the Conservation Trail at Sippo Lake Park.

Eastern Bluebirds are found in open farmlands, orchards, and open woodlands. The small, blue and white birds with a bright orange breast during spring breeding, weigh up to 1.2 ounces and have a wing-span of 9 to 12.6 inches. The return of male bluebirds in February in Ohio is a harbinger of spring and a symbol of happiness and peace.

But Eastern Bluebirds have been heavily threatened by House Sparrows, first brought to the US from England. This aggressive, non-native sparrow has exploded in population invading bluebird nest boxes to destroy eggs, kill nestlings and bluebird adults in an attempt to take over their nest boxes. Bluebird enthusiasts and scientists alike have been trying a variety of deterrents, and those at Tam O'Shanter Park feature predator guards to protect the Eastern Bluebirds from House Sparrows, snakes, raccoons, cats, and other predator birds. They feature metal conduit posts each with a stovepipe metal baffle, a durable cedar box that is insect and rot-resistant with a 1.5-inch circular opening, boxes set 5 feet above the ground, and fishing line that crisscrosses the top of the boxes to discourage predator birds from perching. Fishing line is also strung along the sides of the entrance hole to deter House Sparrows. Both of these birds enter the opening differently while in-flight. Bluebirds pull in their wings before landing while sparrows do not. Thus, the string interferes with sparrows' flight pattern.

Habitat destruction is the #1 threat to Eastern Bluebirds, whose first choice of a home is a natural cavity in a tree. House Sparrows are their #2 threat. Stark Park's preservation of the Tam O'Shanter property for public use addresses the first threat, and the new nest boxes equipped with predator guards address the second.

Installing the boxes is only the first step to assuring Eastern Bluebirds thrive; the second step is weekly afternoon monitoring of the boxes during nesting season from March to August. Monitoring assures House Sparrow nests and/or their eggs can be removed. After each Bluebird brood has left the nest, and at the end of the nesting season, monitors will remove old nests to prevent parasites and bacteria. Doing so greatly increases the chance of Eastern Bluebirds nesting in the boxes. Audubon members and park volunteers will serve as monitors, and Stark Parks will replace the boxes if they suffer damage from storms or other factors.

Special thanks to Audubon member Barbra Lewis for writing the grant, gathering materials, assembling all predator guards, and installing 15 boxes with assistance from Stark Parks at Tam O'Shanter Park, as well as 7 new boxes at Sippo Lake Park. Thanks to Terra Depot (Megan Shoenfelt) in Navarre for donation of the bluebird boxes at cost. Hopefully these "state of the art" bluebird boxes will be duplicated by the public for other locations. Tam O'Shanter Park is located at 5055 Hills & Dales Rd., Canton, OH 44708. For more information: OhioBluebirdSociety.org / Sialis.org / nabluebirdsociety.org



Nest Box with predator guards.

FALL BIRDING FROM PINEY WOODS TO RIO GRANDE VALLEY 🌿

by Ronnie Macko

(With apologies from ANV editors. Ronnie's article as originally written was more interesting and detailed but unfortunately available space in this newsletter prohibited printing in its entirety.)



Green Jays by Shari Jackson

Shari Jackson and I took a 4-week birding/butterflying trip to Texas in fall of 2022, camping in a small TAB trailer. In addition to the many species we would find in Ohio, we found 43 species of specialty birds. Starting in the Piney Woods north of Houston with Brown-headed Nuthatch, Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Then we headed to Sabine Woods where we had read Red-legged Honeycreeper had been seen. The bird was still there and we joined a group of birders watching it flit around high in an oak tree.

We visited Sea Rim State Park, Anahuac NWR, High Island, Bolivar Flats, Jamaica Beach, and a favorite stop, Lighthouse Beach in Port Lavaca. We saw many shorebirds, ducks, herons, ibis, gulls, and water birds, along with migrating warblers. Marsh Wrens and Clapper Rails were feeding in the open at Lighthouse Beach.

The Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center brought us American and Least Bitterns, White Pelicans, Roseate Spoonbills, Gallinule, Least Grebe and Neotropic Cormorant. The boardwalk was damaged by Hurricane Harvey, but most of it has been rebuilt, bigger and better than before. At South Padre Island, vireos, warblers, buntings, grosbeaks and flycatchers and a Groove-billed Ani, along with more shorebirds and waterbirds, including Marbled Godwits and American Oystercatchers were found.

On day 10 we arrived at Mission, TX for birding at the Birding Center and Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park. Highlights here were Inca and White-winged doves, Buff-bellied Hummingbirds, Clay-colored Thrush and Black-crested Titmouse, along with multiple flower gardens and many butterflies. There is a Hawk Watch tower at Bentsen and we were excited to be there at the right time to see our lifer Hook-billed Kite, a nemesis bird for us for a long time. You can't drive in the park but you can bike, walk or take the tram that drives through the park every hour. We spent 2 weeks in this area, finding more great birds such as Altamira Oriole, Golden-fronted and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, White-tipped Dove, Plain Chachalaca and Common Pauraque.



Oystercatcher by Shari Jackson



Band-celled Sister butterfly
by Shari Jackson

Other areas visited are the National Butterfly Center (Olive Sparrow), Anzalduas Park (Black-throated Gray Warbler and Gray Hawk), Estero Lano Grande State Park (Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Mottled Duck, Black Phoebe, Anhinga), Salineno (Bewick's Wren), Falcon Dam State Park (Greater Roadrunner, Verdin, Townsend's Solitaire).

There were more areas visited and even more we didn't have time to visit. It's always hard to leave but it's also wonderful to get back home and reflect on all the great places we visited, beautiful birds and butterflies we saw and the nice people we met.

PLASTICOSIS IN SEABIRDS 🐦

It seems that plastic pollution at sea is becoming so prevalent that the scarring of digestive tracts in seabirds is being found across different ages of the birds, according to a new study, published in the Journal of Hazardous Materials.

When seabirds ingest small pieces of plastic, it can inflame the digestive tract. Over time, this can cause tissues to become scarred and disfigured, and eventually affecting digestion, growth, and survival. Researchers have called the fibrotic condition “plasticosis” to make it clear that it was caused by plastic in the environment.

Study co-author, Alex Bond, who is the senior curator in charge of birds at the U.K.'s Natural History Museum in London, said "This study is the first time that stomach tissue has been investigated in this way and shows that plastic consumption can cause serious damage to these birds' digestive system."

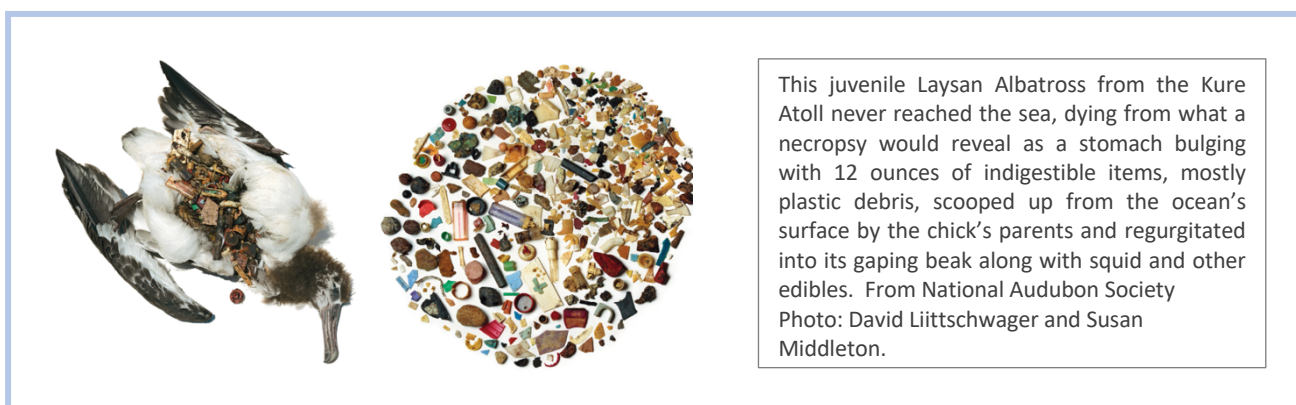
Other studies have found that around 90% of all seabirds have ingested plastics. Bird and marine conservationists argue that reduced plastics consumption and targeted efforts to keep plastics out of our oceans are the best ways to curb the situation. *Source: Birding Community E-Bulletin April 2023 Paul J. Baicich & Wayne R. Petersen*

You can find more details here:

www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/mar/03/plasticosis-new-disease-caused-by-plastics-discovered-in-seabirds

And you can see the original article here:

www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304389423003722



SEABIRDS TO BENEFIT FROM U.N. HIGH SEAS TREATY

The United Nations High Seas Treaty, also known as the as the agreement on “Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction” or 'BBNJ', was signed by nearly 70 countries in New York on September 20, 2023. The treaty needs to be ratified on a national level before it goes into effect.

Once ratified, the historic High Seas Treaty will allow the establishment of marine protected areas on the high seas, a critical step to conserving ocean biodiversity and reaching the global community's “30×30” target to conserve or protect at least 30 percent of the ocean by 2030. The agreement provides for the common governance of about half of the Earth's surface and 95% of the ocean's volume, the largest habitat on our planet. Currently, only about 1% of high seas are protected. www.state.gov/signing-of-the-high-seas-treaty

ABC Webinar via YouTube | Let's Talk Trash: Plastic Pollution, Birds, and Our Oceans (7/2021)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsBXQGOsLPk

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK

Buteo lagopus

by Laura Dornan

"The rough-leg has no opinion why grass grows, but he is well-aware that snow melts in order that hawks may again catch mice. He comes down out of the Arctic in hope of thaws, for to him a thaw means freedom from want and fear" --Aldo Leopold, January Thaw—A Sand County Almanac, 1949



An apt description for why this Arctic breeder comes down to the large grasslands, hay-fields, and reclaimed strip mines of eastern Ohio every winter. They begin to arrive in Ohio the third week of October through the first week of November. According to the 2022 Edition of the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Ohio*, they are considered **uncommon** winter residents, meaning they are likely to be present in appropriate habitat but less likely to be seen, smaller numbers found and extra effort may be needed. This extra effort may mean a trip to The Wilds, Killdeer Plains WA, or Funk Bottoms WA, to name a few.

A trip to any of these areas in January or February is almost certain to result in the sight of a Rough-leg sitting at the very tip-top of a tree in an erect posture (make sure it is not a crow!). Hopefully you will also see one hunting—a pure delight to watch. His flight is slow and graceful, as he quarters the ground like a Northern Harrier. He may hover in the air, turning his head from side to side, then suddenly partially close his wings and drop down to capture his prey. In Ohio, this is likely to be a mouse or vole. In the Arctic, it will be mice, lemmings, pocket gophers and large insects.

When first learning the plumage of this hawk, one may be overwhelmed. There are several variations, including 3 different color morphs: very light, buffy or intermediate, & black or melanistic. Adults and juvenile plumages differ and a slight difference occurs in males and females. But all these variations will be less confusing if you concentrate on the basic field marks: a white rump when viewed from above, a large black band across the belly, black patches near the wrist, black wing tips. In Ohio, the light color morphs outnumber the black by about 10 to 1. Legs and feet are feathered to maintain warmth in the frigid Arctic temperatures.



Tom Koerner, USFWS

When these hawks return to their breeding grounds on the open tundra, they will build nests on cliffs and rock outcrops. They are large and bulky, 24-36 inches across, and 20-24 inches deep, made from small sticks and twigs. Average clutch sizes are 3-5 young; when prey is scarce, 2 or 3 young.



Jon Nelson, USFWS

Resources: Natural Areas and Preserves Association, newsletter Autumn 2021; Birds of Ohio, by James S. McCormac

Photos: USFWS

CAS Business Supporters

Dumont's Seed Company

619 30th St NW, Canton, OH 44709
Ph: 330-492-0204
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Hartville Elevator

11 Prospect Ave N, Hartville, OH
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Huston-Brumbaugh Nature Center

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

Little Sparrow Bookshop

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Ph: 330-967-2142
New & used books, Audiobooks, gifts, Local authors & artists
T, W, F: 11a-6p, Th: 11a-7p, Sat: 10a-5p, Sun: 12-4p, Closed Mon

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
Ph: 330-409-8096 www.StarkParks.com

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Sat: 9am-4pm, Sun: 12pm-4pm

Canton Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9586
Canton, Ohio 44711



The Newsletter of Canton Audubon Society

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Connie Rubin, Secretary – 2022-2024

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Barbra Lewis – 2022-2024, 1st term
Chuck McClaugherty - 2022-2024, 2nd term
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Education: Lee Dolan

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*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

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Name: _____

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Canton, Ohio 44711-9586

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