Planting to Attract Birds

by Chris Moran

If you have started thinking about next year’s growing season, think native!

Native plants have adapted to a particular environment and interact with other life in that environment. The plants and animals that have evolved together influence each other’s evolution.

Plants perform a primary role in the food chain. Most animals get food directly or indirectly from plants. Plants are the organisms that turn the sun’s energy into food. Those insects able to take that energy from plants and turn it into food, the insect herbivores, specialize in eating a certain group of plants because over 1000s of years they have developed the ability to digest the plants’ chemicals. Insects are an important food source for birds and other animals in the environment. In North America 96% of all terrestrial birds feed insects to their young. The specialized relationship of plants and insects is exemplified by the Monarch Butterfly. The Monarch can only eat the milkweed plant.

A non-native plant does not have the evolutionally relationships with insects in the new environment. Generally local insect herbivores do not recognize and cannot use the non-native plant as a food source. In addition, the non-native plant has been removed from the environment where it might have been kept in check. It can outcompete the native plants in the new environment.

A native plant has adapted to an area’s particular growing conditions such as the amount of sunlight or shade, the type of soil and the amount of precipitation the area receives. Native plants help restore habitat for birds and help them survive. Choose locally native plants that attract nutritious insects, and produce berries, nectar, and seeds to give the birds vital food and refuge.

Search the native plants database for listings of bird and wildlife friendly plants for the area and other resources.
Sept. 18th: **Behind-the-scenes at the Museum Center**

What is it like to be a museum curator? Join us for a behind-the-scenes tour of the Geier Collections and Research Center, home of Cincinnati Museum Center’s research collections and labs. **Dr. Heather Farrington**, the Zoology Curator at the Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC), will lead a tour of the Zoology collections, and provide some insights into life at the museum. She will talk about where the animals come from, how they are preserved and cared for, and the importance of maintaining collections like these. Come meet some of the most impressive specimens, like Gilbert the lion, Chief the elephant, and our Great Auk, and hear the stories of how they ended up at Cincinnati Museum Center. Want to see anything in particular? A condor? A penguin? A bird of paradise? Bring your wish list! After the tour, we can browse the collection and take a look at species specimens by request. You are welcome to take photos during the tour, and Gilbert is always available for selfies!

As Zoology Curator, Heather’s duties include managing the museum’s animal collections and DNA lab. The zoology collection contains birds, mammals, fish, insects, reptiles, amphibians, marine and freshwater shells, and marine invertebrates. She also supervises the live animal program, which includes animals on exhibit in the museum and animals used for educational programming. Heather is an Ohio native, earning a B.S. in Biology and Business Administration from the University of Mount Union, and a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Cincinnati (UC). Her thesis research focused on Darwin’s Finches in the Galapagos Islands. A geneticist by training, Dr. Farrington worked for the Army Corps of Engineers in Vicksburg, MS, on “environmental DNA” of invasive Asian carp in the Mississippi River watershed after leaving UC. Prior to her arrival at CMC in December 2015, she was the Research and Outreach Coordinator for the genetics lab at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh, NC. In her spare time, Heather is active with several Cincinnati naturalist groups, volunteers with local bird banding stations, and is an avid reader.

**PLEASE NOTE: This month’s meeting will be held at the Geier Collections and Research Center.**
The Geier collections building is located south of Union Terminal at 760 West 5th St., Cincinnati, OH, 45203 (Corner of Gest and 5th). The building has the bronze mammoth statues out front. There is a parking lot on the 5th St. side of the building. If the lot is full, you can park on the street. Enter through the iron gate next to the parking lot. Staff will be available to escort you into the building.

Oct. 16th: **Notes of a Young Birder**

Ethan Rising is a 15 year old birder born and raised in Cincinnati. Ethan’s fascination with birds began when a preschool teacher taught a unit on the Bald Eagle. Ethan learned everything he could about eagles the way some children do with dinosaurs. Ethan discovered the Ohio Young Birders Club when he was 7, then led by Kathy McDonald. His interest has now lasted over 11 years and has expanded from the Bald Eagle to raptors, then to songbirds, then to all things nature related.

He is a sophomore at the Seven Hills School. Ethan has gotten first and second place for bird photography in the American Birding Association’s Young Birder of the Year contest and has been a speaker at the Ohio Young Birders Club annual conference, The Biggest Week in American Birding and last year was invited to be the keynote speaker at the Indiana Young Birders Conference.
Field Trips (contributed by Jay Stenger)

Saturday, Sept. 16th, 8 a.m.

Theme: General Nature Walk, Focus on Fall Migration
Location: East Fork State Park
Leader: Joe Bens, (513) 353-4229, joebens@live.com
Meet: in the South Beach Parking Lot at East Fork SP.
(see directions below)

Come out and join our trip leader Joe Bens for what should be an exciting, early autumn (close enough) day afield. Joe is an expert birder and fall song bird migration (especially warblers) will be in full swing by this date. Joe will most likely focus on that seasonal spectacle and rightfully so. But Joe is also a skilled and well rounded naturalist who is also heavily interested in botany and butterflies. So in Joe’s own words “we will walk around and look at everything.” With Joe as our trip leader, we can be assured we will find and identify many species of birds, lots of butterflies and observe a great diversity of plants on this outing.

With its varied habitats, this 4,870 acre Ohio State Park is an excellent location to find all of this natural diversity. Neo-tropic migration will be at peak on this date, as is shorebird migration. The park’s woodlands should abound with warblers and other songbirds and some shorebirds, gulls and terns can usually be found on the park’s beaches. Osprey and Bald Eagles and other raptors are expected as well. Many species of water related birds are attracted to 2,160 acre Harsha Lake. There is always a chance for a rarity, as East Fork has an excellent reputation in that regard, particularly in the fall.

Joe knows East Fork SP very well (Joe has been the compiler of the East Fork Christmas Bird Count for over 30 years) and plans to visit several different locations and habitats within the park. This will entail driving to a few different spots interspersed with a bit of walking in between. While we will walk a bit during the morning, it will be moderate and at a leisurely pace over mostly level trails and roadsides. Joe will probably stay at it until birding begins to tail off in the afternoon. So come out and see a diversity of birds, butterflies and plants on what should be a pleasant autumnal morning in a beautiful setting. Restrooms are available in the park. There are no Park fees. If you expect to see birds, you will need binoculars. Other items that may make your walk more enjoyable include a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, water and waterproof walking shoes. If you have any questions feel free to contact Joe.

Directions:
We will meet at 8 a.m. in the Parking Lot of the south shore Swimming Beach. To get there, enter East Fork SP from the south entrance and follow the Park signs to the beach. We will meet at the west end (left hand side facing the lake) of the parking lot.

To get to the south side entrance to East Fork SP from I-275 take exit #65, SR 125 (Beechmont Ave./Ohio Pike) and go east about 9 miles to the junction of Rt. 222. Turn left onto Bantam Rd. (opposite Rt. 222) and follow the signs to the park entrance.

Visit the East Fork State Park website for a Park map and other info at:
http://parks.ohiodnr.gov/eastfork

Army Core of Engineers Harsha Lake website:

Saturday, Sept. 23rd, 7:30 a.m.

Theme: Fall Migration, Focus on Warblers & Shorebirds
Location: Shawnee Lookout Park & the Oxbow Area
Leader: Jack Stenger, (513) 513-503-3389, jackstenger@gmail.com
Meet: in the Upper Oxbow Parking Lot at the Main Entrance.
(see directions below)

*Note: This trip will be jointly conducted with Oxbow Inc.

An excellent argument can be made that September, after May, is the second best birding month in our region. Fall songbird (especially warblers) and shorebird migration should be in full swing on this date and finding these species will be the primary objective of this field trip. Our trip leader, Jack Stenger
is an expert birder and naturalist. Jack’s exceptional field skills will certainly aid us in finding and identifying many species and you can expect a long list by days end.

We will meet at the usual spot in the Oxbow (Upper Parking Lot at the main entrance), but before long Jack will probably move us over to Shawnee Lookout where we will focus on migrant songbirds, especially warblers. A stop at Lost Bridge to see what shorebirds are around is also highly likely. By late morning we will head back over to the Oxbow, stopping for another look around Lost Bridge on the way. If water levels are favorable (low) we should find shorebirds, both here and in the Oxbow. Herons, egrets, terns, other water birds and raptors should also be expected on this trip. The combination of Shawnee Lookout and The Oxbow should stack up for a great day of birding. The combined and varied habitats of these two excellent and adjacent birding sites at this time of the year should yield a great diversity of species.

Jack plans to bird until around noon, maybe a little longer if things are still hopping. While we will drive to a number of different locations in the Oxbow/Shawnee area, we will also walk a bit in between stops. For the most part walking will be generally easy and at a comfortable birding pace. Restrooms are available. If you expect to see birds you will need binoculars. A Hamilton County Park Motor Vehicle Permit is required ($3.00 daily, $10.00 annual) for each vehicle. Note that this trip will be jointly conducted with Oxbow Inc. Please feel free to call or email Jack if you have any questions.

**Directions:**
To reach the upper Oxbow parking area, go south on US Hwy 50 from the I-275 #16 exit. In about 200 yards, turn left (east) at the edge of the Shell/Subway and go over the levee to where the road T’s with a fence directly in front of you. Turn right and go to the Oxbow entrance sign. Turn left into the Oxbow. The upper parking area is immediately on the right.

For directions, maps and other park information check out the following website:
http://www.greatparks.org/parks/shawnee-lookout

For information and maps of the Oxbow visit the Oxbow Inc. website at:
http://www.oxbowinc.org/

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**Sunday, October 1st, 9 a.m.**

**Theme:** Fall Migration, Focus on Sparrows

**Location:** Miami Whitewater Wetlands (Shaker Trace)

**Leader:** Ned Keller, (513) 349-3369, nedkeller49@gmail.com

**Meet:** at the Baughman Rd. parking lot.

(see directions below)
interesting flora and fauna we see along the way. The weather might prove to be the star of this trip as early October usually produces mild temperatures and pleasant weather. Fall color will also be underway and will make a picturesque backdrop to what should be a pleasant morning walk.

The trip will consist almost entirely of walking. The walking will be fairly moderate (slow) over level terrain. But the trails through the wetlands are not paved and can be damp and muddy at any season, so wear appropriate footwear. This trip should end around noon. If time permits, Ned may make a quick visit to nearby Fernald Preserve. If you expect to see birds binoculars are necessary. There are no restroom facilities at the Miami Whitewater wetlands, but they are available nearby in the main park. A Hamilton County Park pass is required ($3.00 daily, $10.00 annual) at Miami Whitewater for each vehicle.

**Directions:**
We will meet at 9 a.m. at the wetlands parking area on Baughman Road. From I-74, take the Dry Fork Road exit # 3, and turn right (north). Continue past the intersection of West Rd., and stay on Dry Fork until it ends. Turn right onto New Haven Road. At the first stop sign, turn left onto Oxford Road, and then immediately left again onto Baughman Road. Go about 0.7 mile to the dirt parking area on the right side of the road, just past the bike trail crossing. Contact Ned to answer any of your questions.

**Directions to Miami Whitewater as well as maps and other information can be found at the following website:**
http://www.greatparks.org/parks/miami-whitewater-forest

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**Sunday, October 15th, 10 a.m.**

**Theme:** Fall Color & Botanical Walk  
**Location:** Spring Grove Cemetery  
**Leader:** Denis Conover, (513) 641-3651, conovedg@hotmail.com  
**Meet:** at Spring Grove Cemetery, along the road just beyond the tunnel from the main entrance on Spring Grove Avenue (see directions below)

The focus of this field trip will be the diverse botanical community found at Spring Grove Cemetery. Come out and join UC professor, and skilled botanist and naturalist Denis Conover as he leads us on a mid-morning autumnal walk through the beautiful grounds of Spring Grove Cemetery. This is a beautiful time of the year and fall color should be near peak on this date. Denis will identify the tremendous diversity of trees, shrubs and other plants that can be found here and expound on their ecology. Denis will point out our native flora, invasive species, ornamental plantings and fall color as well as show us some of the many national and state champion trees found here. One white oak that he will show us is thought to be nearly 400 years old. So why not come along and join Denis on what could be a glorious fall morning and gain some tips and insight on plant identification and their natural history.

Denis has been involved in various types of botanical research since 1981 and is a professor in the department of Biological Sciences at the University of Cincinnati. Denis has interests in other aspects of natural history as well and he will be sure to point out any birds and other fauna we might run across.

Participants should be prepared for a few hours of walking, most of which will be relatively flat and on pavement, but there will also be some walking off pavement on trails or in damp or wet grass. We suggest wearing good waterproof footwear. Binoculars are not necessary to see plants but are recommended if you have them. Restrooms are available at the cemetery office.

**Directions:**
The Spring Grove Cemetery main entrance is located on Spring Grove Avenue just west of the Winton Road intersection. To find our meeting spot, drive in through the main entrance gates and go straight. You will go through a short tunnel. Just beyond the tunnel, pull over and park alongside the right side of the road. If you have any questions feel free to contact Denis.
Audubon Ambassador Training
Lunch & Learn

by Tami Lunan

You are invited to a lunch and learn event Sept. 23rd to talk about how our community can be a stronger voice for birds. We are actively recruiting bird-lovers in your area to become Audubon Ambassadors – volunteers who advocate for birds as they face a new set of threats and challenges, including our changing climate. Will you join us?

Join the Audubon Ambassadors by signing up for a fun day of learning and discussion:

• Hear stories of local birds affected by changing weather and seasons
• Learn how to engage others about birds and climate change
• Find out how to plant native plants for birds–and why it matters so much
• Learn how to advocate effectively
• Make new friends who are eager to help our birds and our communities thrive now and tomorrow
• Take Action to save our environment

This event is free and last from 10 a.m.–12 noon. Lunch will be provided. Registration is required. Register by emailing your full name, e-mail, address & phone number to tlunan@audubon.org or via eventbrite

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/audubon-ambassador-training-lunch-learn-tickets-36722663475

Want to know more about what is happening with energy issues in Ohio?

Need some tips on talking with your lawmaker or a reporter?

Still trying to figure out how to Tweet?

The Ohio Energy Table cordially invites you to join us in Columbus for a one-day training event designed to provide leadership development and skills-based experiences necessary to effectively advocate for clean energy policies in Ohio.

When: Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017
9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Lunch will be provided
Where:
The Grange Insurance Audubon Center
505 West Whittier Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Register by emailing your full name, e-mail, address & phone number to tlunan@audubon.org

around the valley . . .

Oxbow, Inc.
6th Annual Oxbow Butterfly Count
Sat., September 9th, 10:45 a.m.
Leader: Bob Nuhn, Kathy McDonald (513) 748-0281, mkmcdonald@me.com
Meet: In the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow

Field trip
Saturday, October 14th, 8 a.m.
Trip Leaders: Joe Bens, (513) 353-4229, joebens@live.com
Meet: In the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow

Cincinnati Nature Center Bird Walk
Saturday, Sept 9th & 23rd, Oct. 14th & 28th
Meet in the Rowe Woods parking lot at 8 a.m.
Hone your birding and identification skills by registering for the 31st annual Audubon Birding Course. Our local Cincinnati Audubon Society Chapter (ASO) has been sponsoring this class since 1987. The three-week course will be held on three consecutive Sunday mornings. This year’s dates are: October 8th, October 15th and October 22nd. Father-son team Jay Stenger and Jack Stenger will again be this year’s instructors. Both Jay and Jack are well known and exceptionally knowledgeable birders. Jay has been an instructor for this course since its inception in 1987. The course is held at the Audubon House which is located in Groesbeck at 3398 W. Galbraith Road, just a couple of minutes from the Cross County Highway.

Each class will begin at 8 a.m. with a casual classroom session that includes a continental breakfast. The classroom sessions will be followed by a field trip to a local hot spot, usually wrapping up about 1 p.m. The field trip locations will be determined by current birding conditions and the interests of the participants.

Through discussions, visual and audio presentations and field observations, the course will particularly focus on sharpening identification skills. But the course will offer much more than that. When, where and how to find birds in our area is also prioritized. Other course topics will include migration, bird abundance and distribution, habitat, conservation, local hotspots, and birding equipment and resources. The setting is informal and questions are encouraged. Jay and Jack also infuse a lot of fun, levity and enthusiasm throughout.

This course is geared towards all birding levels. While mid-level birders will likely gain the most from this course, most birders, beginners and experienced alike, will find that this course will help hone their ID skills and add to their knowledge of local birds. Over 450 area birders have taken this course over the years and have found it entertaining and informative. The course is open to everyone, including older kids if accompanied by an adult. Binoculars are required and a field guide will be useful to refer to in class and in the field. If you do not have a pair of binoculars the ASO can lend you a pair during the course.

Advance registration is required. Course fees are $15 for ASO members and $30 for non-members which include a year’s membership in ASO. The course will be limited to a maximum of 25 participants. To register, please make your check payable to ASO and mail to:

ASO Bird Course
3398 W. Galbraith Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45239

If you have any questions call the Audubon House at 741-SWAN or email Jay Stenger at jaystenger@cinci.rr.com.
Audubon Society of Ohio
3398 W. Galbraith Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45239
513-741-7926 (SWAN)
mail@cincinnatiaudubon.org

Our mission is to promote the conservation and appreciation of nature for environmental sustainability with a focus on birds, through habitat protection and education

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Membership form for the Cincinnati Chapter of the National Audubon Society.
Enclose a check or money order payable to “ASO.”

Membership: ___ 1 Year ($15) ___ Family ($25) _________ Additional Contribution

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E-mail: ________________________________________________________________

Mail to:
ASO
3398 W. Galbraith Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45239

Your information will not be shared with any other group