

The Chat

Vol. 121, No. 4 • November/December 2018



“Good news for birds”

Audubon President Responds to Tuesday’s Election Results

by National Audubon Society



Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) in West Chester Township. Photo by Megan Mahon.

(New York – November 7, 2018)

“The extraordinary turnout in this election shows how passionate voters are about the country’s direction and that’s good news for birds. We know an overwhelming majority of Americans want what birds need — clean water, resilient coastlines and action to deal with a warming climate. So we’ll work with Republicans or Democrats, anyone who is interested in taking bold steps to protect rivers, prairies and parks that birds need — all of

these are important to the quality of life for people across America,” said David Yarnold, President and CEO of National Audubon Society. “Whether birds and people win or lose after this election isn’t about which party is in power, it comes down to which policies are championed and how land and water are used. Audubon and its 1.4 million members will work with both political parties for the sake of birds, people and the environment.”

Audubon prioritizes common sense policy solutions that protect birds and the places they need. When the U.S. Congress returns for its lame duck session this month, Audubon will work to secure:

- Agricultural policy that supports local conservation efforts to improve the health of working landscapes and rivers to benefit birds and people, such as Audubon California’s Tricolored Blackbird partnership with dairy farmers and Audubon’s Conservation Ranching program which helps protect grassland birds like the Henslow’s Sparrow (Farm Bill 2018).
- Guaranteed funding for land conservation that has historically touched every county in every state and does not cost taxpayers a dime: the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which directs a portion of offshore oil and gas royalties to conserve land. The Fund has protected Golden-winged Warbler habitat in North Carolina, wintering areas for Bald Eagles in Washington and the ecologically diverse Big Thicket National Preserve in Texas with nearly 300 bird species.

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“Good news for birds” *continued*

- Protection for an additional 17,000 coastal acres in storm-prone states, including North and South Carolina, Delaware and Florida. The Coastal Barrier Resources Act does not prohibit development; it removes the American taxpayer from the job of paying for it, saving U.S. taxpayers taxpayer billions (Strengthening Coastal Communities Act of 2018).
- A spending bill that provides robust funding for federal conservation programs like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Everglades Restoration and Delaware River Basin Restoration Plan that restore habitat for countless wading birds and marsh birds. Specific funding should be allocated to the Department of Interior’s WaterSMART program, which protects Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo habitat across the Colorado River Basin; EPA’s National Estuary Program which restored habitat in

Louisiana critical to the Snowy Plover, Wilson’s Plover, American Oystercatcher and Least Tern; and Department of Energy renewables programs to help slow the impacts of climate change that is shrinking and shifting the range of more than 300 bird species.

The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. Audubon works throughout the Americas using, science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation. State programs, nature centers, chapters, and partners give Audubon an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire, and unite diverse communities in conservation action. A nonprofit conservation organization since 1905, Audubon believes in a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Learn more how to help at www.audubon.org.



Bufflehead (Bucephala albeola). Photo by John West (Audubon Photography Awards).

Monday, Nov. 19th: Birds in Decline – Bright Spots in the Gloom

We've all heard about the decline of many species of birds. But it's not all doom and gloom. There have been a number of success stories, such as the Peregrine Falcon and the Bald Eagle. Our November program, to be held on Monday, November 19, will highlight some of those successes.

Veteran birder Jay Stenger, known to many of you as the primary instructor in our bird class, compiler of the Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count, and a frequent field trip leader, will be our speaker that evening. Jay will highlight some of the birds which were difficult to find when he began birding, but which are increasingly common now. Some of those increases are due to rebounds in their continent-wide numbers, while others reflect range expansions into our area.



*Bald Eagles (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) in Campbell Lakes Preserve.
Photo by Bob Schlake.*

Audubon programs are held on the **third Monday** of the month (not including January, July, August or December). We meet at **7 p.m.** for light refreshments, with the program beginning at 7:30 p.m. We meet at the **Winton Woods Visitor Center**, located at 10245 Winton Road. To reach the visitor center from I-275, take the Winton Road exit, and go south. Just before the lake, turn right into the park. From the Ronald Reagan Highway, take the Winton Road North exit, and turn left into the park just after the lake.

Note that a Park District auto sticker is required – \$3 daily or \$10 annual for Hamilton County residents, or \$5 daily or \$14 annual for non-residents.

Saturday, Nov. 17th, 8 a.m.

Theme: Waterfowl & Late Fall Migrants

Location: Brookville Lake Area

Co-Leaders:

Jack Stenger, (513) 503-3389,

jackstenger@gmail.com

Jay Stenger, (513) 522-8147,

jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

Meet: in the Park & Ride Lot at I-275 Exit #7 (see directions below).

The focus of this trip will be the fall waterfowl migration, which should be near peak at this date. Our trip leaders plan to visit several spots around Brookville Lake and then make the short hop over to Hueston Woods before returning home. Both of these locations are hotspots and are excellent for attracting waterfowl and water birds at this season. The rural countryside surrounding these two large lakes has diverse habitats, so we expect to find a great variety and diversity of species throughout the day. In addition to many species of waterfowl we also expect to see loons, grebes, gulls, Sandhill Cranes, late shorebirds (such as Dunlin & Wilson's Snipe), Bald Eagles, many hawks, numbers of seasonal songbirds and much more. Rare species are always possible at this season. Prairie Falcon and Golden Eagle have been seen on this trip in recent years.

Our trip leaders, son and father team Jack & Jay Stenger, are expert



Sandhill Cranes (Antigone canadensis). Photo by Linda Koo (Audubon Photography Awards).

birders who don't miss much. They also know the Brookville region intimately, so we expect to find a great diversity of species. This will be an auto type tour and will consist of driving from spot to spot interspersed with a few short easy walks. While the trip duration is long and does entail a lot of driving, the rewards, in terms of what we see, always make it worth the effort.

The trip will run into mid afternoon but of course you can leave at any time you like. Bring your lunch and drinks. It always seems colder around large lakes so dress accordingly. If you have a scope it will prove useful. Restrooms will be available. One important note, Indiana State Parks charges a daily per car entrance fee (\$7 resident, \$9 non-resident). At this time of year there are usually no attendants on duty, but we cannot be sure of that.

***NOTE:** This field trip will be conducted jointly with the Audubon Society and the Cincinnati Bird Club.

Directions:

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Park & Ride lot, which is located directly off the I-275 Exit # 7 at State Route 128 marked Cleves-Hamilton. This is the first exit just west of the Great Miami River at Miamitown. We will caravan from there to the Brookville area, about a 30-minute drive. Contact Jack or Jay if you have any questions.

Brookville Lake Website: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2961.htm>

Whitewater Memorial State Park (at Brookville Lake) Website: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2962.htm>

Hueston Woods State Park Website: <http://parks.ohiodnr.gov/huestonwoods>

The 119th National Audubon Society

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society with over 100 years of citizen science involvement. It is an early-winter bird census where thousands of volunteers across the US, Canada, and 19 countries in the Western Hemisphere go out over a 24-hour period to count birds. Over 2,600 individual counts were conducted and over 73,000 people participated last year.

Count volunteers search for birds within a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle while counting every bird they see or hear throughout the day. It's not just a species tally; all individual birds are counted, giving an indication of the total number of birds within the circle that day. If observers live within a CBC circle, they may arrange in advance to count the birds at their feeders and submit those data to the count compiler. All individual CBCs are conducted December 14th through January 5th each season, and each count is conducted during one calendar day.

CBC participants are organized into groups or field parties by the compiler of the count. Each field party covers a prearranged and specific area within the 15-mile diameter count circle. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate regardless of one's birding skills. Compilers arrange field parties so that inexperienced observers are always out with seasoned CBC veterans. You don't have to commit to the whole day either. You are welcome to participate for as long as you like; a half-day or even just a few hours would be great. If you live within a count circle you can choose to stay home and count the birds at your feeders.

The data collected by observers over the past

century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, CBCs provide a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years. The long-term perspective made possible by the Christmas Bird Count is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitats and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.

The first CBC was done on Christmas Day of 1900 as an alternative activity to an event called the "side hunt" where people chose sides, then went out and shot as many birds as they could. The group that came in with the largest number of dead birds won the event. Frank Chapman, a famed ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History and the editor of *Bird-Lore* (which became the publication of the National Association of Audubon Societies when the organization formed in 1905), recognized that declining bird populations could not withstand wanton over-hunting and proposed to count birds on Christmas Day rather than shoot them.

There are many Christmas Bird Counts to choose from and we encourage you to take part in as many as possible, but we also hope you can find the time to participate in at least one of our local Christmas Bird Counts listed below (on page 6). If you have any questions concerning a particular count, feel free to contact that count's compiler.

**NOTE: All National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts remain FREE.*



Local National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts

(Endorsed by the Audubon Society, Cincinnati Chapter)

Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count (71st Annual)

Sunday, December 30, 2018

*Compilers: Jay Stenger, (513) 522-8147, jaystenger@cinci.rr.com;
Jack Stenger, (513) 503-3389, jackstenger@gmail.com*

Western Hamilton County Christmas Bird Count (52nd Annual)

Sunday, December 23, 2018

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

East Fork Christmas Bird Count (35th Annual)

Saturday, December 22, 2018

Compiler: Joe Bens, (513) 353-4229, joebens@live.com

Ohio River "Oxbow" Christmas Bird Count (31st Annual)

Saturday, December 15, 2018

Compiler: Jack Stenger, (513) 503-3389, jackstenger@gmail.com

Hamilton-Fairfield Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 15, 2018

Compiler: Mike Busam, (513) 259-3262, mbusam@gmail.com

For more information on Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts,
visit the following website:

<http://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

What conservationists have learned through Christmas Bird Count Data:

- Audubon's 2014 Climate Change Report is a comprehensive, first-of-its kind study that predicts how climate change could affect the ranges of 588 North American birds. Of the 588 North American bird species Audubon studied, more than half are likely to be in trouble. Our models indicate that 314 species will lose more than 50 percent of their current climatic range by 2080.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has included Audubon's climate change work from CBC data as one of 26 indicators of climate change in their 2012 report.
- In 2009 CBC data were instrumental in the collaborative report by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - State of the Birds 2009.
- In 2007, CBC data were instrumental in the development of Audubon's Common Birds in Decline Report, which revealed that some of America's most beloved and familiar birds have taken a nosedive over the past forty years.



Christmas Bird Count 2015, Central Park, NYC. Photo by Camilla Cerea.



Audubon Society of Ohio

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

Join or Renew Your Audubon Society of Ohio Membership

Please consider joining your local Audubon chapter or renewing if you are already a member. Although our events are free and open to the public, we would certainly appreciate your support for our activities.

If you are already a member of National Audubon Society, they give us a small portion of your national dues, but it doesn't amount to that much. You can use the form printed below, or just send us a check and enclose the requested information. All our memberships are for a calendar year, but if you join or renew now, your membership will be good through 2019.

Become a Friend of the Audubon Society of Ohio

Membership form for the Cincinnati Chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Enclose a check or money order payable to "ASO."

Annual Membership: _____ Individual (\$15)
_____ Family (\$25)
_____ Additional Contribution

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (home) _____ (cell): _____

E-mail: _____

Mail to:

ASO
3398 W. Galbraith Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45239

Your information will not be shared with any other group.