

WINGTIPS



WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN, photo by Gina Swindell

MARCH 2023

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March 2023 Program
Tuesday, March 7th at 7 p.m.
Carlisle Reservation Visitor Center
“Cleveland Peregrines”
Chris and Chad Saladin



Chad and Chris Saladin are a husband and wife team with an obsessive passion for peregrine falcons. They were official peregrine falcon nest site monitors in the Cleveland area for the Ohio Division of Wildlife from the 1990s until the monitoring project ended in 2015 as peregrines recovered adequately enough to no longer be considered as "threatened" in Ohio. In the past, Chad and Chris participated in rehabilitation work with peregrines at the Medina Raptor Center, including rescuing injured raptors and assisting with rehabilitation efforts. Chad and Chris have been capturing images of peregrines at area nest sites through their monitoring experiences, and they have been fortunate to have had fantastic opportunities to see peregrines in the wild demonstrating their dynamic personality, speed, and agility. They have posted their photos and information about the area nest sites on the Cleveland Museum of Natural History falconcam forum in the past, and in 2012 they created a Facebook page called, "C&C's Ohio Peregrine Page" where they continue to summarize their experiences with local peregrines through words and photos.

Chad and Chris have had photographs on exhibit at the Midwest Peregrine Society's Bell Museum traveling exhibit that was initiated in Minnesota as well as having photos published in the former "Birder's World" magazine, The Cleveland Bird Calendar, several editions of the Hawk Migration of North America Journal, and in Audubon Magazine. In addition, they are honored to have donated peregrine photos that were used in a children's book called "Maggie the One-Eyed Peregrine" by Christie Gove Berg and they have also contributed photos in a book released in the spring of 2017 written by Pete Dunne called "Birds of Prey: Hawks, Eagles, Falcons, and Vultures of North America". Chad and Chris have conducted presentations about peregrines and their monitoring experiences and were co-speakers along with Laura Jordan of the Medina Raptor Center at the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association Conference in 2011 and the Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitation Association Conference in 2016. Now that the "official" monitoring of peregrine falcons has ceased, Chad and Chris continue to observe and study this dynamic bird of prey and hope to provide assistance to this specialized raptor as needed. As the population of peregrines grows it is believed that peregrines will manage their own numbers to a healthy balance due to their territorial nature. However, since being delisted from endangered and then threatened status in Ohio, there will be less protection and advocacy for the peregrine, so they hope to do what is possible on a local level to prevent peregrines from suffering the victimization at the hands of mankind that threatened their status initially. Continued information and education about this incredible species is key toward this effort, and Chad and Chris seek to utilize their ongoing passion for peregrines to emphasize the shared fascination and extensive value of this remarkable bird of prey.

March Field Trip
All trips are on Saturdays
Guests Are Always Welcome!

March 18th, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Caley Reservation
18207 West Rd, Wellington
Paul Sherwood to lead

Notes from the President
By Rob Swindell



Each year, Black River Audubon Society and other Audubon chapters are asked to submit an annual report to the National Audubon. We provide basic information about our chapter, such as educational and advocacy activities, financial data, accomplishments, and future goals. They also request information about our volunteers.

Black River Audubon is run entirely by volunteers and the numbers are inspiring. Our volunteers not only include board members, but also committee chairs, bluebird trail monitors and many others. In total, nearly 75 volunteers donate about 5,000 hours of their time per year.

In particular, I would note our bluebird program, which uses about 2,300 hours of volunteer time—from monitoring the trails to inputting the data. I would also like to praise this Wingtips newsletter. It is nearly unheard of for a volunteer organization to

continuously print a monthly newsletter (9x/year) for over 50 years. Most organizational newsletters start out strong, but quickly fade away as volunteers move on.

I have always felt that our volunteers are our most precious resource, and other chapters have shared that they are envious of the volunteers we have here at Black River Audubon. I wanted to take this opportunity to formally thank them for their time and commitment.

We always need and welcome new volunteers. As much as we do, there is always more we could do with more help. We still have a couple board positions open as well.

I am proud of the team we have here at Black River Audubon. We work really well together—and everyone’s heart is in the right place. Perhaps it is an extension of our founders, but I have not experienced egos or agendas with our volunteers, it is truly all about protecting birds and other wildlife.

Exploring Costa Rica!

By Gina Swindell



Arenal Volcano, photo by Gina Swindell

As a lover of birds, wildlife and all things nature you may imagine my excitement when I opened an email to find an invite to Costa Rica on a familiarization tour with Sabrewing Nature Tours. These tours are designed to allow organizational representatives to experience the areas, food and itinerary of the host with the hope that he or she will want to share this with others. I was both excited and afraid, as I don't love to fly. But, how could I turn down such a great opportunity? I couldn't.

I prepared by looking at the birds of Costa Rica and WOWZA- after that, the flight was an afterthought! I arrived in San Jose having had a great flight into Atlanta (under 2 hours) and then to San Jose (4 hours.) The customs process was easier than expected and I walked out to find a man holding a card with my name- like in the movies. After a short ride to the Hotel Bougainvillea, I viewed my first bit of paradise. This place is located in the central valley and, though an urban area, an oasis appears when you walk out the back door. They have 10 acres of gardens, rocks/minerals, a tennis court and pool. Of course, all that I made time for was to bird. My first bird, and a lifer, was the White-winged Dove. My second, and I think my favorite, was the Blue-gray Tanager. We took an afternoon trip to a local coffee field where we enjoyed a Costa Rica endemic, the Cabanis's Ground-sparrow.

Our first full day took us to the highlands where we saw more birds than I could take in. It was so intense. We enjoyed the Irazu volcano and two sought after birds, Volcano Junco & Timberline Wren, among many others. A treat to the locals was an atypical Baird's Sandpiper. Next, we had lunch at Nocha Buena, where we saw a Basilisk (Jesus Lizard) eating dropped seeds under a feeder along with several more life birds for me including the flashy Red-legged Honeycreeper. We ended the day at our first lodge, where we would stay for two nights.

Rancho Naturalista felt like heaven on earth. The grounds were amazing and though there were, again, many lifers for me here, the hummingbirds were sensational. They fly up to you and buzz around your face. There were at least 10 species for us to sit and

enjoy at very close range. The accommodations and food were also top notch. The bird that our guides seemed the most excited about was the Lovely Cotinga- it was stunning for sure. I was also enamored with several parrot species we found. The Snowcap and both the Black and White crested Coquettes (hummingbirds) were special too. During our stay here we visited Finca Christina, an organic coffee plantation and its workings. Though I don't enjoy coffee, seeing the care and effort that the owners provide to make this special coffee was priceless.

Our next stop was the Arenal Lodge. On our way there, we were treated to our first Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth. She was climbing a roadside tree as her baby clung to her front. What an amazing thing to see. Between lodges, we stopped at Manu Centro where we hiked deep into the rainforest to find a Bare-necked Umbrellabird. What a treat!!! We were also graced with great views of the Red-capped Manakin as it practiced its mating dance. Bird behavior is so interesting and special to observer in-person.

We spent the next three nights at the Arenal Observatory Lodge, which sits at the bottom of the Arenal volcano. This place was just magical. My room faced the trees where Mantled Howler Monkeys and Geoffrey's Spider Monkeys roosted overnight. From my room I enjoyed them swinging through the trees morning and night as they came and went each day. While I ticked off many more lifers, I also enjoyed the Poison Dart Frog, Red-eyed Tree Frog, Eyelash Pit Viper, Capuchin Monkeys and other wildlife. The rooms and food here were also stellar! What a special place for relaxing, hiking, eating and everything nature.



Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth and baby, photo by Gina Swindell

Winter: The Best Time to Start Native Plant Seeds

By Danielle Squire



Tickseed with Syrphid Fly, photo by Danielle Squire

Starting plants from seed is a marvelous pursuit for all levels of experience- from beginner to professional. Among the many rewards, starting plants from seed can have a big impact on your local ecosystem. These impacts are my favorite topic to discuss and one I will elaborate upon in a future article. As we are now in February, we must make haste in planning our seed starting process. I know what you're thinking- "*isn't it a little too soon?*". The answer is: it depends on what you are planning to grow. This is where journaling comes in handy! Keeping records of your plant choices and their specific needs helps to keep you on track. Annuals and vegetables are generally started 4-6 weeks before the last frost date. Native perennials, however, are a bit more complex and need more time, as there is much to consider.

Native plants have a long and fascinating genetic history here in Ohio. As such, they are encoded with special coping mechanisms in relation to our seasons which help them grow when they have the best chance of survival. Have you ever wondered why plants don't start popping up when we have a few warm winter days? How do the plants know it's not Spring yet? It has a lot to do with

the brilliant design of their seed coats. This is where “pre-treatment” comes in, and why we want to start planning our native perennial choices over winter. For example, some seeds are very tough or contain chemical inhibitors and need long periods of freeze/thaw or moisture before their coat breaks down (called stratification), which can range from 10 days to 2 years! This can be done by placing the seed and a moist sterile material like coffee filters in a sandwich bag and then placing it in your refrigerator. Others reach their highest chance of germination when nicked or rubbed against a rock or sandpaper (called scarification) and others when they pass through the digestive system of wildlife (acid treatment) which can be simulated with hydrogen peroxide! We can even create little greenhouses using recycled plastic with air/drain holes and simply leave them outside over winter (referred to as winter sowing). Many of our native plant seeds only need 10 days of warm soil to wake up. Our goal as seed starters is to give the seeds their ideal environment to “crack the code” of their seed coat barrier.

Nature does it best. A perfectly viable way to start your seeds is to simply lay them upon the ground in late Fall, embed them firmly into the soil, and then hope to see them again as little green darlings come Spring. This may be the best method for a mass planting requiring many seeds but can be tricky when exposed to wildlife or elemental patterns, and be difficult to identify as sprouts. Many growers will experiment with replicating the natural environment of their plant seeds in order to maximize the chances of germination and to organize their production. Digging into a bit of research will reveal where your chosen plants typically grow, giving you an idea of what they experience in nature. Seed packets usually contain helpful information, and there is more and more literature on native plants becoming available in both printed and online formats. We want to be a part of your seed-starting journey! If you are interested in learning more, need help acquiring seeds, or have questions along the way, don't hesitate to reach out to the Black River Audubon Society for more information.

Know Your Local Government

By Cheryl Wolfe-Cragin

Black River Audubon Advocacy Chair

At our last BRAS meeting there were several questions regarding how we can help preserve natural habitats for the birds and other fauna and flora that are crucial for ecosystem (and our) health. One of the best ways you can have a direct impact is to participate in our local government. Don't assume they are aware of all the information needed to make the best decisions.

How can this be done? First, make sure you know your elected officials at every level. Do you live in a city or village that has a city council with committees or are you in a township? Find out who is serving in the various roles and when and where their meetings take place. The best way is to attend a few meetings to find out what issues are being discussed and which ones are on the horizon.

Most officials welcome visitors and get excited to see new people. Introduce yourself. Be aware, there may be a part of the meeting that is not open to the public if they go into an executive session for some reason. Don't be afraid to politely ask questions and give information that you feel is lacking. How do land use issues get decided? You may be able to find some of this information online at the jurisdiction's website. Minutes of past meeting may also be available to read.

Discover how to contact these folks in between meetings. Find out how they interact with the county commissioners and the state government. If there are funds available for use at the local level for habitat restoration, wastewater and stormwater issues, and agricultural runoff prevention, ask if they are taking advantage of grants, etc. And, most importantly, remember: these people work for you, the citizen.

Black River Audubon Membership Only
(but including Wingtips) is \$15/Year

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Email address _____

Send with \$15 check to Black River Audubon
P.O. Box 33, Elyria, OH 44036

“The mission of the Black River Audubon Society is to promote conservation and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife through advocacy, education, stewardship, field trips, and programs for the benefit of all people of today and tomorrow.”

National Audubon Membership Application Only
(Includes membership in Black River Audubon and subscriptions to WINGTIPS and AUDUBON magazine: \$25/year)

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Chapter Code S52, 7XCH8
Send your check to: National Audubon Society,
225 Varick Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10014
Attention: Chance Mueleck

To pay online, go to blackriveraudubon.org/membership and select the type of membership you prefer.

Jack Smith Outstanding Speaker Series

Saturday, March 25th at 3 p.m.

Carlisle Reservation Visitor Center

"A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds"

Scott Weidensaul



Scott Weidensaul is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist "Living on the Wind" and his latest, the New York Times bestseller "A World on the Wing." Weidensaul is a contributing editor for Audubon and writes for a variety of other publications, including Living Bird. He is a Fellow of the American Ornithological Society and an active field researcher, studying saw-whet owl migration for more than two decades, as well as winter hummingbirds, bird migration in Alaska, and the winter movements of snowy owls through Project SNOWstorm, which he co-founded. He lives in New Hampshire.

Even as scientists make astounding discoveries about the navigational and physiological feats that enable migratory birds to cross immense oceans or fly above the highest mountains, go weeks without sleep or remain in unbroken flight for months at a stretch, humans have brought many migrants to the brink. Based on his bestselling new book "A World on the Wing," author and researcher Scott Weidensaul takes you around the globe -- with researchers in the lab probing the limits of what migrating birds can do, to the shores of the Yellow Sea in China, the remote mountains of northeastern India where tribal villages saved the greatest gathering of falcons on the planet, and the Mediterranean, where activists and police are battling bird poachers -- to learn how people are fighting to understand and save the world's great bird migrations.



LESSON'S MOTMOT, photo by Gina Swindell



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