



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON *Matters*

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Witt's End

Coming Attractions: Spring

As a wordsmith, I enjoy learning the derivation of words or expressions we use in daily conversation. Recently a colleague was telling me the origin of the phrase, beating around the bush. It seems this expression comes from the time of the Middle Ages. In Europe people were birders, not in the sense we are today, since the object of the exercise was to eat the birds. Apparently groups of people went out at night while the birds roosted and, using pans and sticks, beat around the bushes and trees to flush the birds into nets.

I've been on a few field trips that took that same sort of turn. I recall a trip to Mentor Headlands when our group teamed with a group from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. We formed a huge circle of about 20 people and slowly moved toward each other in attempt to flush what was then called a short-billed marsh wren, now more aptly called the sedge wren. It is not a proud moment.

The four-inch-long critter was terrorized by the clomping humans and managed to elude most of them. Those of us who saw him — saw him. Those that didn't still claim it was a mouse, not a bird at all. So let's not beat around the bush. Spring, that wonderful season of change and renewal will soon be upon us. As we enter what we think of as the beginning of the birding year, I hope you will be thinking about the direction you want Greater Akron Audubon Society to take. Change is in the wind. As the poet Robert Burns said, "Nature's mighty law is change."

Into the Near Future

This month we have a special program, designed to chase some of the winter chills and blahs away. The speaker at our February 22 meeting will be Randy Mitchell, assistant professor of Biology at University of Akron. Those of you who attended Randy's last presentation know what a great speaker he is. This time his program will focus on research he

has done on the important role hummingbirds play in pollination.

We've had to make a change in the March program. On March 28 we will have a one of our own chapter members, Dr. Warren Stoutamire, professor emeritus of biology, University of Akron. Dr. Stoutamire recently completed a journey down the Ornicco River system in Venezuela, tracing the explorations of Baron Fredrich von Humbolt who spent five years exploring South America in the 1800s.

Christmas Count '99

December 19, 1999 proved to be a rather pleasant weather day for the 131 participants (86 in the field and 45 feeder counters) of our chapter's 61st annual Christmas count. This was the 100th count for what has evolved into the National Audubon Society. Here are the numbers: 58 parties spent 222 hours in the field. They traveled more than 141 miles by foot and 717 by car. The more intrepid counters that when looking for owls spent more than nine hours doing so, covering 32 miles in the 15-mile-diameter count area.

One bird not tallied in the data below is the black swan reported by Steven Van Auken's group, birding in the Magadore Reservoir area. The ruling from Geoff LeBaron, CBC director is that as more black swans are reported, attempts will be made to determine if the species has established itself and can be consider wild, not an escaped bird. Also, a house wren seen during count week does not show on the tally.

Two all-time high numbers were achieved this year. Ruddy ducks were out in force with 1,215 individuals counted, and eastern bluebirds, always a welcome sight, showed an overwhelming 114 birds on count day.

Without the diligent efforts of Marie Morgan, Bert Szabo and Bill Osborne, this important winter project would not have been possible.

Christmas Count '99

Here's what we saw:

pied-bill grebe	8	rough-legged hawk	1	golden-crowned kinglet	16
horned grebe	2	American kestrel	12	eastern bluebird	114
great blue heron	31	merlin	3	American robin	224
tundra swan	8	wild turkey	8	cedar waxwing	501
mute swan	11	American coot	479	northern shrike	3
Canada goose	1962	killdeer	1	European starling	4409
wood duck	2	ring-billed gull	1267	yellow-rumped warbler	10
green-winged teal	2	herring gull	50	northern cardinal	802
American black duck	21	rock dove	1377	eastern towhee	5
mallard	1964	mourning dove	816	American tree sparrow	713
northern pintail	7	eastern screech-owl	7	field sparrow	14
northern shoveler	4	great horned owl	11	fox sparrow	1
gadwall	11	barred owl	8	song sparrow	229
canvasback	3	belted kingfisher	26	swamp sparrow	21
redhead	1	red-bellied woodpecker	167	white-throated sparrow	99
ring-necked duck	6	downy woodpecker	301	white-crowned sparrow	14
lesser scaup	3	hairy woodpecker	77	dark-eyed junco	608
oldsquaw	1	northern flicker	46	red-winged blackbird	7
bufflehead	79	pileated woodpecker	14	rusty blackbird	1
hooded merganser	29	blue jay	683	common grackle	57
red-breasted merganser	4	American crow	1166	brown-headed blackbird	2
ruddy duck	1215	black-capped chickadee	947	purple finch	11
turkey vulture	1	tufted titmouse	417	house finch	910
bald eagle	1	red-breasted nuthatch	14	common redpoll	11
sharp-shinned hawk	8	white-breasted nuthatch	267	pine siskin	2
Cooper's hawk	21	brown creeper	14	American goldfinch	1043
red-shouldered hawk	9	Carolina wren	52	house sparrow	1982
red-tailed hawk	87				

The following people participated in the count:

Deedra Allen, Joanne Barnes, Irene Barrington, Helen Becker, June Beyman, John Bowler, Peter Bowler, Dave Brumfield, Jenny Brumfield, Don Burlett, Roberta Bush, Doug Caesar, Nick Calabro, Rober Capanna Sr., Ann Chaser, Swight Chaser, David Costello, Stephanie Costello, John Daily, Jonathon Dean, Helen Dessent, Cecilia Devlin, Phylis Devlin, Marion Dibbert, Fred Dinkelbach, Robert Dispenza, Mike Edgington, David Erickson, Sue Evanoff, Mary Ann Faruque, Louise Fleming, Alan Frank, Fred Fricker, Pat Fricker, Lois Frisbee, Robert Furst, Ryan Furst, Beth Garner, Carole Gatian, Jamie Gerard, Carlin Gibbs, Marcella Glassner, Darrell Goodson, Pauline Green, Ann Gulbransen, Martin Gulbransen, William Hampshire, Rick Hanger, Rob Harlan, Suzanne Henniger, Donald Hogle, Betty Hudkins, Aaron Hulstine, Mary Lou Hura, Diane Johnson, Tracey Johnson, George Jones, Hedy Jones, Jeffrey Kannen, Barbara Kaplan, Winetta Kennedy, Isaac Kerns, Sheila Kerns, Dave Kersten, Lucille Kiehl, Paul Kiplinger, Barbara Klewe, Gene Kovach, Linda Kovach, Jeffrey Kraus, Marian Kraus, Janet Kucko, Diane Kurapka, Carolyn Liebmann, Lin Lung Ho, Fred Losi, Alice Luddington, Penny Main, Elaine Martin, Harold May, Ruth May, Christine McCorkle, Beth McGuire, Wilbur McQueen, Bill Miloscia, Amy Mitch, Gary Moats, Kath Mock, Fred Montague, Marie Morgan, Paul Motts, George Nahmi, Beth Nichols, Rich Nichols, Bill Osborne, Joyce Pelz, Wolfgang Pelz, Jim Reyda, Dave Richards, Norman Richenbacher, Sally Richenbacher, Maryanne Romito, Rom Romito, Larry Rosche, Grace Rymer, George Sangrik, Linda Sangrik, Sterling Saxe, Steven Sheppard, Dick Stoffer, Dave Stover, Joyce Strasser, Bert Szabo, Margaret Thorp, Sue Tolley, Dan Van Auken, Douglas Van Auken, Steven Van Auken, Doug Vogus, James Vogus, Sandy Wagner, Charlotte Walker, Hal Webb, Beverly Weigl, Jeffrey Weigl, Howard Zehnder, Marian Zehnder, Pat Zeigler, William Zelesnik.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

The next Great Backyard Bird count will be held February 18-21. There's no official sing-up for this, nor is there any fee. It's just birding and fun for the computerheads among us.

To participate, tally the highest number of each bird species seen at one time at your backyard feeder on during your daily walk in the park. When you get home, log onto <<http://birdsource.org>> and click on the Great Backyard Bird Count button to report your findings. You'll quickly see how this information fits into the continent-wide picture by selecting animated maps (updated throughout the count), showing the species being reported across North America.

Last year about 42,000 reports tallied more than three million birds of 350 species.

1999's Top 10

What were the top 10 feeder birds in North America last year? According to project Feeder Watch, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, the dark-eyed junco was number one. In descending order, the next nine were mourning dove, house finch, downy woodpecker, American goldfinch, blue jay, northern cardinal, black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch and European Starling.

Regional lists are available at <http://birdsource.cornell.edu/pfw/pfwnews/pfwnews.htm>.

Gypsy Moth Information

The National Park Service, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, has monitored the gypsy moth population in Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA) since 1987. The gypsy moth infestation has produced noticeable defoliation since 1996. Within the boundaries of the park, aerial surveys detected 39 acres of defoliation in 1996, 54 acres in 1997, 175 acres in 1998 and 4,351 acres in 1999. Since officials have determined there are more than

12,000 acres of forest susceptible to defoliation, management options are being explored. greatest line-up of science-based environmental programs available in the Akron area. All programs are free and open to the public. We meet at the Naturealm the fourth Tuesday each month except December, July and August, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Just for Fun

Name These Birds!

Okay, birders, here is a list of clues that lead to the names of common and not-so-common birds. If you want to know the answers you'll have to come to the next chapter meeting!

1. Foolish person
2. Informal talk
3. Grumble, complain
4. A game for one
5. Burn fitfully
6. Accept without question
7. Virginia vine
8. Big or Little constellation
9. A fun time
10. Superficial reader
11. Crackbrained
12. Woolen flag material
13. Fast
14. Scold
15. Persecutor, harasser
16. Of basic importance, main, chief
17. Fabric similar to canvas
18. Increase check amount before cashing it
19. Flogger, beater
20. Coal mover or ditch digger
21. Tie up, entangle
22. Stretch your neck for a better look
23. Dupe, trick, delude
24. Vend, peddle
25. Spur on
26. Cower, shrink

Tribute to Lee Warner

It's with sadness we report the death of long-time chapter member Lee Warner in early January. Those of us who birded with her will long remember her cheerfulness and enthusiasm for birding. Lee was mother of former chapter president Mauri Peterson. During the past couple of years, Lee had been migrating with the other snowbirds between our area Mauri's home in Florida. The chapter has received substantial donations in Lee's name and it's the decision of the executive committee to channel all of the money into nature-oriented books for children. Based on our successful books-in-schools program of a couple years ago, we know the need is great. The books will all carry a specially designed book plate noting the book has been donated in Lee's memory. That many children will benefit from this largesse to our chapter is a fitting tribute to this fine woman who enjoyed few things more than birding.