



GREATER AKRON

# AUDUBON *Matters*

Volume XXV

Number 6

June / July 2000

## **Witt's End**

### ***The Name Game***

What appeared to be a bright-orange spear aimed directly at my head brushed past so close that I'm sure I felt the wind of its wings. I dodged the critter and heard two different voices exclaim: Baltimore oriole! Northern oriole! Well, which was it?

Just another cool May morning on the bird trail at Magee Marsh. People with field guides listing three different names for the same bird, challenged each other. Meanwhile, as the debate raged over what to call that vireo over there, the bird paid no attention as it scrambled among the leaves (too many leaves this year) looking for its next meal.

This name-the-bird-game has been going on as

long as people have been trying to assign monikers to creatures. Don't get me wrong, names are important. They help to ease the confusion of birding. I forget the philosopher, Aldo Leopold, I think, who said something like, "The first step to understanding is to assign the proper name to a thing." And even when we know the proper name we have debates over pronunciation. For example is it *pie-le-ated* or *pill-e-ated* for that big woodpecker with the slick red top-knot?

Recently, at a gallery in Chicago, I had the great pleasure of viewing some of the 435 original prints of Audubon's Elephant portfolio. The vibrant colors of Audubon's work make birds more life-like than any field guide ever could. And I found myself as intrigued by the bird names as I did the fabulous paint-

ings. If our boy, J.J. Audubon, could join us on a field trip these days he might be as confused as some of the people on the Magee Marsh bird trail.

The conversation would go something like this:  
J.J.—Gimmie the gun! There's a Hooping Crane!  
Clyde—Cool it, J.J. That's a *sandhill* crane and it's endangered.

J.J.—Okay, but let's get a couple of those Dusky Ducks out there, or maybe one of those fat Summer ducks.

Clyde—Are you kidding J.J.? Those are *black* ducks and *wood* ducks and they're in trouble here in Ohio. J.J.—What's Ohio?

Well, you get the idea. But who really cares what the names are? Oh, I'm sure the

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people responsible for naming them (and the publishers of field guides) care. Me, I just like to get an occasional glimpse of the great cinnerous owl or velvet duck. Maybe I could get J.J. to help me find one of those Carolina parrots...

## **Invest in the Future**

Those who attended the April meeting enjoyed one of the more intriguing and educational programs we've had. Dr. Courtenay Willis presented her research on Acadian flycatchers, enhanced with slides and the use of special miniature video cameras. For the first time we had, literally, a bird's eye view of what happens in a nest when an adult returns to feed its young.

To show our support for Dr. Willis and her ongoing research of Acadian flycatchers and other species at Revenna Arsenal, the executive committee voted to immediately provide Dr. Willis with \$1000. In the future, this financial support will be called the Greater Akron Audubon Society Fellowship. The money will be given to support graduate students Dr. Willis requires for her research. This will be a renewable, annual gift. We have requested that Dr. Willis inform the chapter each fall about the nature of her pending research. In addition, it's possible that we will have a report, possibly in the format of a full program, each spring.

### **It's Election Time!**

Allan Dooley, chairman, nomination committee, has put together the following slate of candidates for the chapter elections to be held at the June 27 meeting:

President, Mark Purdy  
Vice President, Bill Tucker  
Treasurer, Susan Dooley  
Recording Secretary, Michele Tucker

In addition, in non-elected jobs, the following people have agreed to remain in current jobs or take on additional responsibilities:

Education Chair, Lloyd Bresley  
Newsletter Editor, Clyde Witt  
Conservation Chair, Michele Tucker  
Newsletter Mailing, Michele Tucker and  
Bill Tucker  
Assistant to President, Claire Purdy

We still have openings for a hospitality chair and a membership chair. As an organization that strongly believes in recycling, we seem to do more than our share of recycling the jobs of running this chapter. We would welcome the introduction of new ideas and people to keep the chapter vibrant. If you would like to help with any of the above jobs, or add to the committee with duties such as program chair or field trip chair, please see any member of the executive committee.

The major planning sessions for the next Audubon year, beginning in September, are held in July and August. Let us know what you thought of this year's programs and what you'd like more of.

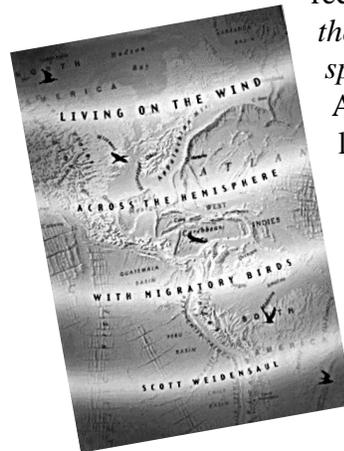
### **Field Guides in Libraries**

We have received approximately \$450 in memorial funds from friends of former chapter member Lee Warner. The executive committee has decided to provide a yet-to-be-determined number of field guides to school libraries. If we have enough field guides, we might also supply public libraries. The books will carry a special book plate indicating the book was donated by the Greater Akron Audubon Society in memory of Lee Warner. It's been suggested that the chapter might provide matching funds and increase the number of books we can provide.

In addition, Clyde is checking to see if a special purchase of field guides can be made through the publisher, American Birding Association or some other entity. If so, the participating association's name will be included on the book plate. A professional graphics design firm, S.E. Jones Associates, Inc., has offered to design the book plate for us at no charge. The committee plans to have this program in place by September.

### **Living on the Wind**

If you like to believe in dreams and lost causes, I recommend you read *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*. Author Scott Weidensaul follows (and in some cases waits for the arrival of) birds from the Arctic to the Antarctic, and back, with stops, including our neighborhood, along the way. Bird migration is one of the more fascinating, unsolved mysteries we citizen scientists can



participate in, enjoy, discuss and do something about.

Weidensaul explains the various theories of migration, the obvious and the not so obvious. He helps researchers in their sometimes lonely pursuit of scraps of data that ultimately fill in the puzzle. He does it in a manner that mysteriously pulls you along, just as the birds are pulled along. You'll shiver with him in Churchill, Manitoba, and sweat in the heat of Argentina. You'll stand in familiar places, like Pt. Pelee, Hawk Mountain and Cape May. And you'll

wonder, as does the author, at how the first bristle-thighed curlew ever found tiny Ranigora Atoll in the vastness of the Pacific.

Weidensaul writes about it all with clarity and understanding. Although based on countless hours and miles of research, this book is not objective. The author's pessimism seeps through many times. And there is much to be discouraged about when we talk of the future of birds. Discussions such as the use of pesticides in Argentina or what the protection of a single species such as the snow goose have done, are not pleasant reading.

*Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, North Point Press, 420 pp., is an amazing, enthralling book. It's a book as important as any field guide because it teaches us about animal behavior. And through that teaching, helps us to understand why birds (and other migrating animals) do what they do. Possibly, through the teaching and understanding, we can find a way to guarantee future migrations.

### **Conservation and Reinvestment**

With 315 House cosponsors, Conservation and Reinvestment (CARA) enjoys a particularly impressive level of support given that it poses a mation ar advance in land protection in the U.S. CARA provides \$2.85 billion in funding for land acquisition, open-space protection, and local parks and recreation facilities. This money will come from the approximately \$4 billion in revenue that the federal government earns each year from oil-drilling leases.

Some members of the House and Senate Budget and Appropriations committees, however, do not want to set aside this money. Many representatives believe that, with such overwhelming congressional and popular support, opponents can stall but cannot

ultimately derail CARA. Its best chance for passage remains as part of a fiscal year 2001 appropriations bill that Congress must pass before adjourning for the fall elections.

**TAKE ACTION:** Help bring H.R. 701 to a vote by calling House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) and Majority Whip Tom Daley (R-TX) and ask them to schedule a vote for H.R. 701. The number for the Capitol Switchboard is 202-224-3121.

***To send them an e-mail visit  
Audubon's Action Center at  
<http://congress.nw.dc.us/audubon/>***

### **Have you considered an Audubon Camp?**

At Audubon Camps there is something for everyone. Adults, families, kids, teens, teachers. Spend your summer vacation exploring the natural world in extraordinary locations.

Audubon Camp participants are guided by expert Audubon program leaders. The adventure will inspire you to investigate more closely the natural beauty of North America's diverse natural ecosystems. Discover Connecticut's eastern woodlands and coastal habitats ... hike the northern forest of Vermont ... kayak the island ecosystems of Maine ... adventure through the vast and untouched north woods of Minnesota and Wisconsin ... camp out under the stars beneath the breathtaking Rocky Mountains in Wyoming.

The National Audubon Society Camps and Workshops have for over 67 years provided young people and adults with experiential hands-on learning and outdoor adventures. The Audubon Camps' warm and expert counselors and guides will introduce you to new experiences that will enrich your life for years to come. Check it out!



### **Summer Bird Count**

The annual Summer Bird Count will be held June 9-19. If you participated in this count in the past, I suggest you immediately call your territory leader if you have not been contacted. Because of such short notice, and if you can't get hold of your leader, go out to the same spot you worked in last summer, count every species and every bird, then call your territory leader and tell'em what a great job you did! This year's count is being coordinated by Doug Vogus, 330-922-5613.