



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON *Matters*

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Witt's End

Does Counting Count?

While doing the Summer Count this past June I was alternately struck by how few birds there were of some species and how many of others. It's a perfect example of yangst—getting yanked around by anxiety.

Counting birds is a great way to get yourself into a deep pit of pessimism. It's also a great way to see how birds persevere in spite of we humans.

It might make for an interesting philosophical discussion, but there's no real future in pessimism. I think down deep in every birder there is, or has to be, a tiny core of optimism. Why else would we do this?

Why else indeed. To answer that question, resident birder Dwight Chasar has offered to give us his take on population trends over nearly a quarter of a century. One evening this summer, he and his wife Ann, chatted with Susan and I along the Towpath Trail. My conclusion was that it's hard to make sense of numbers of birds when the numbers of bird counters is so volatile. It's hard to make sense of numbers when areas covered ebb and flow like the tides. It's hard to make sense of numbers when the quality of the counters improves with each passing day in the field.

Some times it doesn't make sense at all, and that's okay. It's just fun! I urge you to come visit with Dwight at the November meeting. Be prepared to be recruited for the Christmas Count—an event that will have you questioning your good sense.

— Clyde Witt

Program lineup

The lineup of programs for the coming year is almost finished. We should have them all locked in by the time you get the newsletter next month. Here's what

we have so far. And so far, so really good! Our meetings, except for December and June, are held the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Seiberling Naturealm. Doors open at 7 PM and the meeting starts promptly at 7:30 PM. Meetings are free. We serve light refreshments but ask that you bring your own cup.

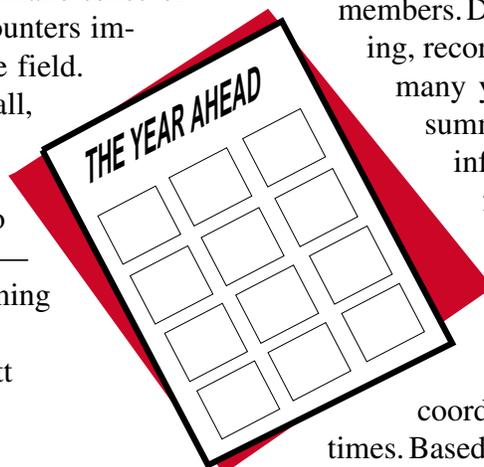
This month we kick off the new Audubon year with a repeat from a couple years ago. The great folks from the Medina Raptor Rehab center will be here, along with some feathery friends, to talk about the important job of getting injured birds back into the wild. Here's your chance to get an up-close and personal look at some birds you only see at a distance. This is a great family program and packed the house the last time we had them.

October is still being negotiated. Watch this space!

November will be another in our response to the requests we've had for more programs by chapter members. Dwight and Ann Chasar have been counting, recording and tracking birds in this area for many years. This season they took over the summer bird count. Dwight will give us an informative program, detailing the results from area counts, where we fit into the national picture and what it all means.

December is the annual Audubon Christmas Count. The date is tentatively set for December 17. Our count coordinators will give us exact dates and times. Based on the success of last year's chili supper on count day, we'll probably do a repeat. We'll let you know the exact date and times, and how you can participate in this worthwhile endeavor.

January will be another special program. Joining us



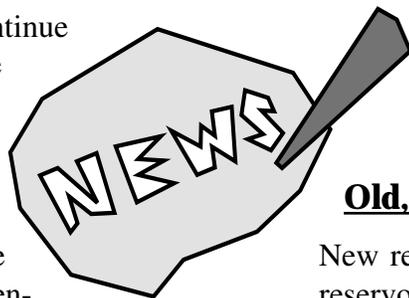
from the Cleveland Metro Parks will be naturalist Wendy Weirich. She is also manager of Look About Lodge in South Chagrin Reservation. Wendy was one of a chosen group of naturalists sent to Panama with the mission of teaching environmentalism in the elementary schools. What she found when she got there was a land where people would rather eat the birds than look at them - and plenty of other surprises. This light-hearted look at a serious problem will keep you on the edge of your seat!

February will take us to a place even colder than Akron in, well, in February. Our own Mark and Claire Purdy went to Iceland this past spring and they're willing to tell all. If you saw the great presentation on Morocco last year, you know you're in store for a real cool treat. No funny hats this year.

March will again bring a familiar face to the front of the room. Dr. Courtenay Willis, recipient of the Akron Audubon fellowship, will discuss on-going avian research. If you saw her program last year - how 'bout that video right in the Acadian flycatcher's nest! - you know you're in for a treat.

New chapter officers

At the June meeting, new officers for the coming Audubon year were elected. This year Mark Purdy will serve as president and Bill Tucker will back him up as vice president. Retaining her job as treasurer will be Susan Dooley. Michele Tucker adds to her duties and moves into the secretary job. Michele is also our conservation chair as well as current hospitality chair. Clyde Witt will continue to edit the newsletter. We'd like to add a special thanks to Helen and Lloyd Bresley who have served in a variety of jobs over the years. As with many volunteers, they find themselves torn between Audubon and the Metro Parks Serving Summit County. You'll now find them at the Naturealm and other parks. Say hello! They'll continue to be caretakers of our garden at the Naturealm. Also, names not appearing on the leader board for the first time in many years, Joyce and Wolfgang Pelz. They're still around and will be active in the chapter. Joyce's new business adventure is, fortunately, keeping them rather busy. I'm sure they'll still share a few lawn care tips with you, just ask.



Migratory birds protected

In an important victory for birds, President Clinton signed into law the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the only bill in this congress that directly helps songbirds. Signed on July 20, the new law establishes a fund to support partnership programs that will conserve and enhance habitat of neotropical migratory birds such as the Kirtland's Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Black-capped Vireo and Kentucky Warbler. At least 75 percent of the money will go to projects in the Caribbean and Latin America, where the birds spend their winters. It authorizes \$5 million per year for five years and funds a maximum of 25 percent of the money for each project. The remainder will be raised or contributed by partners such as businesses, non-governmental organizations and foreign nations. - Michele Tucker

Heritage Forests Campaign

On July 17th, Audubon's Heritage Forests Campaign delivered 700,000 letters and postcards from individuals calling on the U.S. Forest Service to protect all 60 million acres of our pristine, wild national forests from logging and road building. This brings the number of public comments the Forest Service has received in support of this initiative to more than 1 million - nearly four times the previous record for public comments to a federal agency on a policy initiative. The sheer quantity of comments sends a strong message that Americans support an effective roadless policy for our national forests. The Forest Service will now review these comments, along with those from congress and the Clinton administration, and then release its final policy this fall.

I'm creating a list of chapter members willing to write a letter to their U.S. Representatives and Senators when I notify them of important Audubon Action Bulletins requiring member support. If you're interested in protecting the environment for birds, other wildlife and future generations, please forward your e-mail address to mitucker@aol.com. - Michele Tucker

Old, really old, news

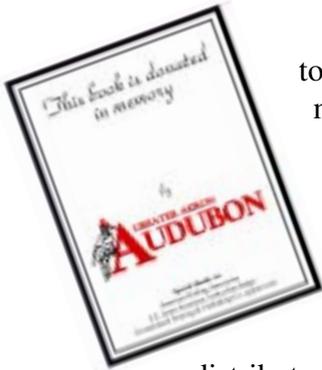
New research reveals that the rapid escape of "huge reservoirs of methane trapped beneath the ocean floor" was responsible for a mass extinction event 183 million years ago. The so-called big burp occurred during prehistoric global warming and scientists now wonder about the stability of methane hydrate reservoirs on the

sea floor and whether current global warming could trigger another big burp extinction event.

Young birders meet

Thanks to the efforts of Akron's own Jenny Brumfield and two other young birders, Jessie Barry and Alex Merritt, 37 young birders from across the nation met this summer in Fort Collins for the inaugural Young Birders' Conference. Participants ranged in age from 12 to 20. This conference was held just prior to the American Birding Association conference, also in Fort Collins. Jenny's dad, Dave Brumfield, was recruited as a van driver during the field trips.

Books program update



Last winter and spring, thanks to the generosity of many chapter members and others, money donated in memory of chapter member Lee Warner, we launched another books-to-schools program. The executive committee resolved to purchase field guides and

distribute them to area school libraries. Here's where we stand on the project: Working with the fine folks at the American Birding Association, we will be able to purchase a yet-to-be-determined number of National Geographic Field Guides at a very reasonable price. That part of the project is still in the works. A special bookplate has been designed and approved. Through the generosity of S.E. Jones Associates, and our newsletter printer, Rich Corbett at CPP, the cost of these facets of the project to the chapter will be minimal. We are still having difficulty finding the right people in the school systems to work with on distribution. If you have any contacts with anyone in any school system within our chapter area, please see Bill Tucker or Clyde Witt.

Summer bird count

For the full impact of this summer's bird count, done during two pleasant, but damp, weeks in June, you'll have to attend the November meeting. Dwight Chasar will tell you how we did this year compared with the past. Here are a few highlights from the data gathered and collated by Ann Chasar and Doug Vogus.

A total of 18,165 birds were counted, compared with our all-time high of 32,036 in 1995. We also had

fewer species, 121 versus 128 seen in 1996 and 1997. Forty people participated this year. Seven species recorded all-time high numbers, while purple martins were lowest since the count started in 1978.

Raptor update

Here's some new you'll only read here. J.P., the female peregrine falcon nesting on the FirstMerit Corp. Tower in downtown Akron, laid four eggs this year. Meanwhile, in Cleveland, a female peregrine was found dead on a Cleveland street, leaving four unhatched eggs in a nest on the LTV Steel building. Cleveland Metro Parks Zoo officials retrieved the eggs from the nest and incubated them.

The eggs hatched but then zoo officials were faced with finding homes for the hatchlings. Turns out that J.P.'s eggs failed, so the four frail, featherless hatchlings migrated, with the help of humans, to Akron and were put into J.P.'s nest. Although probably confused by the sudden population boom in her nest, J.P. took over and raised the young ones. Damon Greer of the Ohio Department of Wildlife says all four youngsters fledged. J.P.'s was one of 13 known peregrine nests in the state this year.

Also, close to home, a pair of ospreys previously hacked in Ohio, built a nest for the first time on Long Lake. It appears the nest was not successful. The osprey reintroduction program administered by the state's division of Wildlife continues. Officials say nine birds obtained from Maine are being hacked in the towers on Meyers Island in North Reservoir. The last known osprey nesting in Ohio was in 1913. We're over due!

FOR COMPUTER LITERATE BIRDERS



We are beginning a loosely monitored email 'news list' that will share updates and information pertaining to the Greater Akron Audubon Society. Members are welcome to subscribe by sending an email to: gaas_news-feed@maclaunch.com.

For additional information and computer versions of current and archived newsletters browse to: <http://www.cppnet.com/gaas>