



GREATER AKRON

# AUDUBON Matters

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## Witt's End

### *Birding as an Olympic Sport?*

Maybe it's because the Olympic Games are going on as I write this, or maybe it's because my copy of the American Birding Association's 1999 *Big Day Report* finally caught up with me. Whatever the reason, birding as sport seems to grow with every migration.

The Big Day report makes for interesting reading – if you want to read about the fringe-area of our hobby. A Big Day usually consists of spending as much time in the field as humanly possible in 24 hours and totaling the most species you can.

Hundreds, maybe thousands of people undertake this challenge. Since there's no money involved, the reports are probably all honest and truthful.

The way you play the game is to just select the day you think birding will be best, find a friend crazy enough to participate, load your car with gas and your backpack with food and water, and head out for 24 hours (or any fraction there of) of fun. Last year the big winner, in species seen, was a team from Texas with 222 species. They did it on April 24.

But before you think you have to head for Texas or some other hot spot, consider what a team from Ohio did. In May of 1997, Bernie Master and Mark Dawson totaled 173 species in 21 hours. They drove 475 miles and walked three miles. Last year the only team reporting a Big Day to the ABA spotted 114 species in 11.5 hours, October 3. Something to think about as you head out for your fall birding this year.

— Clyde Witt

### Fall Migration Field Trips

Although the chapter has not scheduled any field trips this fall, there are still some great birding opportunities available. Wetland ducks repre-

sent nature's timeless equation as they fly thousands of miles from Canada to southern portions of North America and back again.

The sight of geese flying overhead always makes us look up. Ducks exploding from a wetland's pond are a thrill you'll long remember. Join National Parks Ranger Tom Nash for the first of a three-part series called *Wildness on the Wing*. The focus of this inaugural part is wood ducks. Meet at the Ira Trailhead at 8 a.m. Each program will last about 90 minutes.

The second part of the series will be November 4 with a search for mergansers and shovelers. The final part will be November 18, focusing on buffleheads and goldeneyes. This will be a great series of birding trips that will be educational as well as challenging.

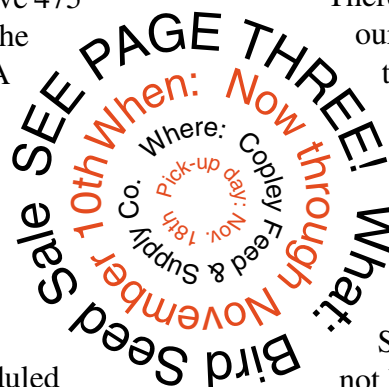
The Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area offers a lot of birding trips on weekends. These trips are led by folks familiar to us all whether it's rangers like Paul Motts or volunteers like Dwight Chaser. The trips start at various times and in different spots throughout the park. To find out what's happening when, call the park at 330-650-4636. You can also visit the park on-line at [www.nps.gov/cuva](http://www.nps.gov/cuva) or at [www.dayinthevalley.com](http://www.dayinthevalley.com).

### Count on Surprises When Counting

There are lots of reasons to join a count such as our annual summer nesting survey in June or the Christmas Count in December. Aside from meeting some great people with comparable interests, probably the best thing about going on a count is finding what you might not expect to find.

Recently, a group of 21 biologists made a sweeping survey in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. They were not looking for birds. Their target was butterflies and moths. They counted 706 species!

And the most exciting part is this group of distin-



guished scientists estimate there could be hundreds more still uncounted.

This count was part of the Taxa-Biodiversity Inventory in the Smokies, started in 1998. It's a scientific endeavor never completed anywhere else. The goal is to catalog every plant and animal species in the half-million-acre park. So far scientists have discovered new salamanders and earthworms measuring 18 inches in length.

This study could take up to 15 years to complete. The lepidopterists who participated in this one day bioblast estimate that there could be as many as 3,000 species of moths and butterflies in the park. Many species were collected for study later back in the lab. Some of the moths collected had wingspans of more than five inches in length while others were only a few millimeters. Scientists found 11 families of moths. Fifty species were identified that had never been seen in the park. Of these, one was a European native and 25 had never been formally named anywhere! One moth, called the ghost moth, had only been seen in two other places, the mountains of West Virginia and on Mt. Mitchell in North Carolina.

So the next time you have an opportunity to join in a bird or butterfly count, sign up. Your next best opportunity is only about two months away when the chapter participates in the annual National Audubon Christmas count. We are targeting December 17 as the day for our count. We also plan to have a chili dinner afterward as we did last year.

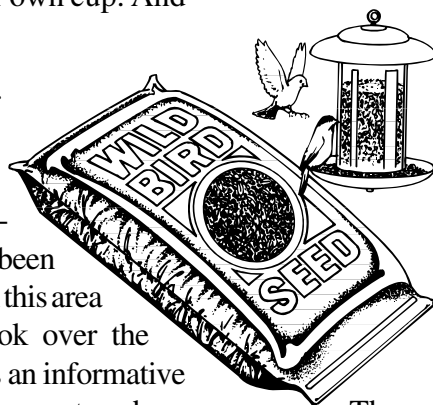
We'll have more information for you at the meeting in November.

### **Program lineup**

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. And bring a friend!

**October 24th** is still being negotiated.

**November 28th** will be another in our response to the requests we've had for more programs by chapter members. Dwight and Ann Chaser 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 tentatively set for the 17th.

**January 23rd** will be 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 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 27** will take us to a place even colder than Akron in, well, in February. Our own Mark and Claire Purdy went to Iceland, the country formed by fire, this past spring and they're willing to tell all. If you saw their great presentation on Morocco last year, you know you're in store for a real cool treat. No funny hats this year.

**March 27th** will again bring a familiar face to the front of the room. Dr. Courtenay Willis, recipient of the Akron Audubon grant, 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.

### **Speak Your Mind, Please**

Michele Tucker is creating a list of chapter members willing to write an occasional letter to U.S. representatives and senators when she notifies 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](mailto:mitucker@aol.com). — Michele Tucker

### **Wild Bird Seed Sale**

It's time for our annual wild bird seed sale. You can start ordering right now. Based on your comments, we're returning to the seed-sale format of the past. This is your chance to make life a bit easier for the birds, add some color to our drab northeast Ohio winter landscape and support a critical Audubon education program.

There are **no** costs of administration for the seed sale and all proceeds of this sale will benefit the

GAAS. The seed sale is the chapter's only fund raiser. Money generated from this effort goes directly to our support of the Audubon Adventures program.

The sale will be held in the familiar confines of Copley Feed & Supply Company, 1468 S. Cleveland-Massillon Road. It's located at the southwest side of Copley circle. You will be able to pick up your seed between 9 AM and 2 PM on the 18th. If you don't pick up your seed we donate it to the Seiberling Naturealm. And if you'd like to help with the distribution of the seed on pick-up day, see any of the chapter officers. They'll be glad to sign you up.

Since this event is the chapter's only fund raising event, the executive committee is striving to make it as profitable as possible. You'll be able to pre-order your seed (and pre-pay, please!) no later than November 10th. On this page you'll find a list of products available as well as prices. There is also an address label you can cut and use to send in your order. By cutting up this newsletter form and using your own stamp and envelope you'll save the chapter nearly \$400.

We've limited the choices to the most popular items. A recent study showed that about 65 million people, or 43 percent of the U.S. households, provide food for wild birds. As a nation we spend at least \$2.5 billion on bird-related products. Do your part and help Akron Audubon! **Pre-orders must reach us by November 10th.**



### Greater Akron Audubon Society Bird Seed Order Form

Mail your order form and check, payable to Greater Akron Audubon Society, to: JoyWolf Enterprises, P.O. Box 26278, Akron, Ohio 44319

Customer: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

	<u>Price</u>		<u>Quantity</u>		<u>Total</u>
<u>Niger (thistle)</u>					
10 pounds .....	\$ 9.50	x		=	
<u>Oil Sunflower</u>					
50 pounds .....	\$ 10.00	x		=	
<u>Oliger Wild Bird Mix</u>					
20 pounds .....	\$ 5.50	x		=	
50 pounds .....	\$ 11.00	x		=	
<u>Bird Banquet</u>					
35 pounds .....	\$ 11.50	x		=	

**Total**

*Use this mailing label*

JoyWolf Enterprises  
P.O. Box 26278  
Akron OH 44319

*Multiply the number of bags by the price for each to get your total. We've included the tax in the prices. Mail your order form and check, payable to Greater Akron Audubon Society, to: JoyWolf Enterprises, P.O. Box 26278, Akron, Ohio 44319.*