



GREATER AKRON AUDUBON *Matters*

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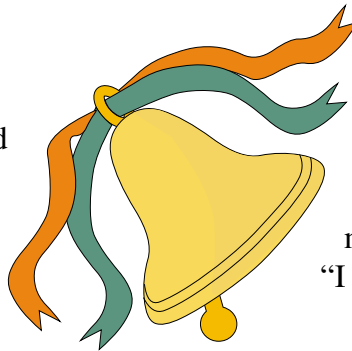
Witt's End

On Seeing the Wrong Thing Twice

Two recent birding experiences reinforced the value of speaking up when you're on a field trip. The adage of seeing the wrong thing twice being better than missing the right thing once, came home to roost — again. In September, Susan and I were birding the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge near Newburyport, Massachusetts. Before we arrived at the refuge itself, we stopped at the side of the road to join a group of birders, scopes up, searching a newly mowed field. You couldn't see it driving past, but the field was loaded with shorebirds.

One old timer, whom I suspect knew every migrating bird on a first-name basis kept worrying over a couple birds that just about everyone else ticked off as black-bellied plovers. His local birding buddies had had this discussion before — that was obvious. But this guy insisted and started talking about aspects of the American golden plover that could not be ignored. We all took longer, harder looks. To close the deal, a black-bellied plover ambled in next to the goldens! I noticed the guy in the crowd who earlier said, "If those are goldens I'll give ya \$50," had silently slipped away.

Our second reward for paying attention was in October at Hawk Mountain, Kempton, Pennsylvania. When migrating raptors are coming straight at you, or in some cases below you, you get a different perspective for identification. Here, too, were the old timers who get blasé about hawks and other raptors. While the spotting of a golden eagle (we saw four that weekend) gets everyone's attention, the call of "another buteo species" sometimes is lost in discussions of weather and thermals. Those of us who persisted in studying



wing and tail patterns of one particular bird were rewarded with a northern goshawk. Those who didn't were left to mumble and come up with excuses like, "I was pouring coffee and missed it."

— Clyde Witt

Think Summer

In the rush to get the last Newsletter out, I neglected to thank all the folks who participated in the Summer Bird Count last June. If I've missed someone please accept my apologies.

Garnet Byrne, Robert Capanna, George Cull, Lois Eckart, Paul Ellsworth, Mary Ann Faruque, Judy Hendrick, Nancy Ibsen, Susan Jones, Gene Kovach, Karl Liske, Hope Orr, Erica Stux, Woody Stover, Sandy Wagner, Clyde Witt, Marian/Howard Zehnder, William Zelesnik, Judy Tisdale

Seed Sale Succeeds

This year's annual wild bird seed sale was a success due in large part to the cooperation of our friends, Mark and Nancy Roesner at Copley Feed and Supply, as well as chapter members who braved below-freezing temperatures for five hours during the pick-up. Although not as large as some sales of the past, we still managed to sell (and load!) about 12,000 pounds of seed. I'm sure the birds will appreciate our efforts. Of course the biggest thank you goes to all our chapter members who purchased seed, all the profits of which go to support our educational programs throughout the year.

January and February Meetings

The next two chapter meetings will take us from steaming jungles of Panama to steaming volcanoes of Iceland. Fortunately, we will do all this travel from the comfort of the Seiberling Naturealm on Smith Road. Our meetings, except for December, are held the fourth Tuesday of the month. 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.

We start the year heading Southwest with Wendy Weirich. Wendy is a naturalist with Cleveland Metroparks at Look About Lodge, located in the beautiful South Chagrin Reservation. She has been with the Cleveland Metroparks for eight years. Wendy has worked as a naturalist in Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and New Mexico. Her interests include gardening in harmony with nature, birding, and just about any natural phenomenon.

Her program is called “Panama, the Land Between the Seas” and will focus on birds and other wildlife. We’ll take a look at the abundant and outrageous wildlife of Panama. An important element of this program is how the people of Panama interpret and relate to their natural surroundings.

In February we go the opposite direction, Northeast to Iceland. Our own Mark and Claire Purdy visited the land “built by fire” and will share their experiences with the birdlife and culture in this exotic land. The focus of the program will be on the seabirds (puffins, murres, etc) that are extremely abundant (and easily photographed), as well as other species common to Iceland. In addition, Mark will include some general info on Iceland — glaciers, volcanoes, geysers, other geothermal activity, plate tectonics, etc.

Audubon Joins BirdLife International

The National Audubon Society was named a partner designate of BirdLife International, according to Frank Gill, Audubon’s senior vice president for Science. Under the agreement, which was made earlier this fall, Audubon will cooperate with BirdLife International on a variety of bird conservation projects, serving as that organization’s provisional partner for the United States.

BirdLife International is a global partnership of more than 100 conservation organizations with a

focus on birds, working together on shared priorities, polices and programs of conservation action, exchanging skills, achievements and information.

Audubon already devotes significant resources to BirdLife International’s Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program first started in Europe in the 1980s. A priority of Audubon’s bird conservation efforts, the IBA program aims to identify and protect a network of sites critical for the long-term viability of naturally occurring bird populations. Having helped identify and create hundreds of IBAs, Audubon is the organization most closely identified with the program in the United States.

Ottawa Upgrades Website

Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge recently upgraded its Website (www.fws.gov/r3pao/ottawa/ottawa) to include a wide variety of information on refuge activities. This includes pages on refuge history, objectives, wildlife programs, habitat



management, work activities, volunteer activities, directions to the refuge, visitor programs and activities, and more. In a “Recent Bird Sightings” area of the Website, refuge visitors can log on and enter any unusual wildlife or bird sightings.

A Quiz section allows users to test their knowledge of the refuge and its wildlife with a quiz that provides user with a score and another that tests one’s knowledge of bird identification using various photos and bird calls. In a “Habitat Management Exercise”, the Website user can play the role of the refuge manager and design various units into the habitat that will provide wildlife benefits the user would most enjoy.

Roadless Area Policy

The U.S. Forest Service issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed roadless policy. The “preferred alternative” contained in the FEIS represents a tremendous victory for the protection of birds and other wildlife.

The protection of roadless areas is one of the largest and most important land conservation decisions made in the last 100 years. The issuance of this document puts us one step closer to finally protect-

ing virtually all remaining roadless areas in our national forests. We urge President Clinton to take the final step to protect these wild lands as soon as possible.

The preferred alternative recommends providing wilderness level protection for more than 55 million acres of roadless areas with the National Forest System. Specifically, the alternative would prohibit road construction and reconstruction on 49.2 million acres of inventoried roadless areas, increasing that number to 58.5 million acres in April 2004 when the Tongass National Forest is included. It would also prohibit timber harvesting except for clearly defined stewardship purposes in roadless areas, and allow road construction only when necessary for public safety and resource protection.

Grassroots support was a major factor in the Forest Service decision making process. In its press release announcing the preferred alternative, the Forest Service cited the importance of receiving more than 1.5 million letters, faxes and e-mails during the course of the 9-week public comment period this past summer. We want to thank all Audubon members who voiced their opinions on this important subject.

We congratulate the Clinton Administration for listening to the American people and making substantial improvements in their proposal. By proposing a prohibition on commercial logging in roadless areas, and providing a framework for inclusion of the Tongass Rainforest in Alaska, the Administration has made important improvements for protecting these important roadless areas.

We are hopeful that President Clinton will further strengthen the final proposal by placing severe restrictions on "stewardship" logging, and by according immediate protection from logging and road building to the Tongass National Forest.

Hawaiian Coral Reefs In Need Of Protection

As you know, the National Audubon Society actively works to restore abundant wildlife to our oceans and along our coasts through our Living Oceans program. Just as birds and their habitat are in need of protection, so are marine fish, seabirds

and ocean ecosystems. And right now, your help is needed to protect the fragile coral reefs of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands!

These coral reefs are some of the most fragile habitat in the world. They are home to more than 7,000 species of plants and animals - half of which are found nowhere else in the world.

This area also serves as the primary nesting ground for 99% of the world's remaining Laysan albatross population, and 98% of the world's remaining black footed albatross population. It is also home to threatened and near-endangered species, such as sea turtles, monk seals, and hundreds of fish species.

The coral reefs are in trouble. Damage wrought by overfishing, commercial fishing, oil spills and vessel grounds have ruined a good part of the reef. If allowed to continue this could destroy it completely.

In an effort to save the coral reefs of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, the Clinton Administration is deciding whether to designate the area as a National Marine Sanctuary managed by the Department of Commerce, or a National Monument managed by the Department of the Interior. Audubon and our partners in ocean conservation look to maximize protection of coral reef and its resources - and the only way to ensure that is by establishing a National Monument under the supervision of the Department of the Interior. Establishing a National Marine Sanctuary, rather than the Audubon-supported National Monument, would give jurisdiction to an agency whose stewardship of marine resources has resulted in the overfishing of nearly half (42%) of this nation's marine fish populations. As an Audubon supporter, we're counting on you to call fax or e-mail White House chief of staff John Podesta. Urge him to save the coral reefs of the northwestern Hawaiian islands by establishing it as a national monument managed by the department of the interior, not a national marine sanctuary handled by the department of commerce! This short message could spell the difference for this one-of-a-kind treasure. You can reach Mr. Podesta by calling (202) 456-6789, fax at (202) 456-1121, or send an e-mail to the White House Web page, www.whitehouse.gov/WH/Mail/html/Mail_President.

