



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON *Matters*

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Witt's End

The Numbers Game

Some number things to consider as we plunge into 2002. Here's a little trivia. How many members are there in the Greater Akron Audubon Society chapter? Any guess around the number 1,000 gets you a prize. Actually, the number fluctuates so it's hard to say exactly. With the new dues-split program of National Audubon in effect, the money our chapter receives from people who join or renew through National is slowly decreasing. Two years ago the chapter received about \$6,500 a year. This year we'll receive a bit more than \$2,900.

This newsletter you're reading is our biggest expense. It's also our best way of educating and communicating. The cost of printing and mailing the newsletter is about \$4,000. And the fact that it's not more expensive is due in large part to the generosity of Rich Corbett at Consolidated Printing & Publishing who believes in our cause and does all he can to control fluctuating paper and printing costs for us.

Then we have the cost of renting the meeting space, supporting educational programs and other, minor expenses of running the chapter. What's this all adding up to? First, when you renew your dues, do so through the chapter newsletter. Use that form on the back because it entitles us to a greater share of the dues than if you renew through National. This might sound strange but it's true. The thrust of the new dues-split program is to make chapters take a more active role in fund raising on a local level and recruiting members on a local level.

The other thing to think about is stepping up to help. The chapter is in need of volunteers in a variety of skills. We need a Field Trip chairperson and a Hospitality chairperson, to name a couple jobs. Talk with Mark or any of the executive board members. So that there is no fighting, all jobs receive equal pay.

—Clyde Witt

102nd ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

National Audubon Society urges volunteers across the western hemisphere to participate in one of Audubon's great traditions, the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), being held from December 15, 2000 to January 6, 2001. This year marks the 102nd anniversary of the Christmas Bird Count since 27 conservationists in 25 localities, led by ornithologist Frank Chapman, changed the course of history. On Christmas Day 1900, the group initiated an alternative to the traditional holiday 'side hunt,' in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds. Instead of hunting, the group counted the birds they saw, thus founding one of the most significant citizen-based conservation efforts and a century-old institution.

Today, almost 55,000 volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific islands will count and record every individual bird and bird species seen during one 24-hour calendar day. About 1,800 individual counts will be held during a two-and-a-half week period. Each group has a designated circle 15 miles in diameter - about 177 square miles - where they try to cover as much ground as possible within a day.

Our chapter's circle is centered in Cuyahoga Falls, honoring the chapter's roots as the Cuyahoga Falls Bird Club.

The designated CBC compiler for each count will enter their data on-line via BirdSource <www.birdsource.org> or Bird Studies Canada's homepage <www.bsc-eoc.org>, where the 102nd Count results will be viewable in near real-time. Apart from its attraction as a social, sporting, and competitive event, CBC reveals scientific information on the winter distributions of various bird species as well as the over-all health of the environment. CBC is the longest running ornithological database and

continues to grow in importance as a monitor of the status of resident and migratory birds across the western hemisphere. The data, 100% volunteer generated, has become a crucial part of the U. S. Government's natural history monitoring database.

Count data from 1900 to the present is available at BirdSource <www.birdsource.org>, a collaborative Web site of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. All counts are open to birders of all skill levels.

In the 101st count, last season, more than 54 million individual birds were counted. A total of 2,485 species of birds was tallied, with a total of 689 in North America alone.

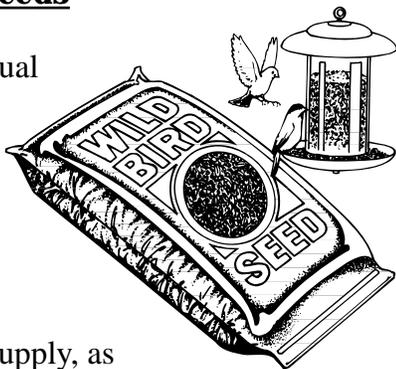
If you didn't make it to the November meeting to sign up with an area leader, give Marie Morgan a call at (330) 867-9850 and tell her you want to be part of this great event.

Again this year Marie, Bert Szabo and Bill Osborne will handle the monumental chore of gathering the data.

Following the count, beginning around 5:00 p.m. in the Mingo Shelter in Sand Run Park, we will have the annual chili supper. Volunteers from the chapter will supply the eats, all you have to do is show up!

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, well, *braved* might not be the right words this year. Temperatures during the pick-up were a balmy (by comparison to average) 50 degrees and sunny. Although not as large as some sales of the past, we still managed to sell (and load!) about 8,845 pounds of seed, down from about 12,000 pounds of seed last year. 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. And a special thanks to the workers: Wolfgang Pelz, Mark Purdy, Bill Tucker, Susan Dooley, Sarah Dooley, Susan Jones and Clyde Witt.



January and February Meetings

The next two chapter meetings will take us to the center of the Earth and beyond. 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.

January 22, we start the year heading Southwest, really southwest. Clyde Witt and Susan Jones had the chance of a lifetime to visit Kapiti Island Nature Preserve in New Zealand this Summer. They



Susan and Clyde



will share with us a place where only 50 people per week are allowed to

visit. The island is a showcase of how the New Zealand government is saving birds and other animals from extinction. Come and enjoy a place with animals fly, birds walk and rocks float!

On **February 26** we go to precisely the middle of the planet. Our own Mark and Claire Purdy traveled to Ecuador this Fall and will share their experiences with the bird life and culture in this exotic land.

Speaking of Dinner ...

During routine maintenance of the Columbus peregrine falcon nest box, Donna Daniel, ODNR, Division of Wildlife District One, Columbus, naturalist, is always on the lookout for remains of what the central-Ohio peregrines have been eating. She collects various prey pieces and parts from the nest site and favored perches. If all that remains is a single feather, bill, feet, etc., identification is aided by comparison to specimens held in The Ohio State University Museum of Biological Diversity.

The lists below are by no means the only species the Columbus peregrine falcons are eating, but rather an interesting sample. At any rate it disproves the myth that urban peregrines only eat pigeons.



Remains of the following species were found this season: red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, house finch, yellow-breasted chat, black-billed cuckoo, mourning dove, Eastern bluebird, various robin-sized passerines feet only, unidentified shorebird — possibly solitary sandpiper, racing pigeon (leg band remained) and rock dove.

Remains of the following species have been found in previous years: common moorhen, yellow-billed cuckoo, northern flicker, downy woodpecker, northern cardinal, chimney swift, cedar waxwing, European starling, house sparrow, red-winged blackbird, rose-breasted grosbeak, American goldfinch, and a parakeet (common pet store variety)

Birders Bring Big Bucks

Costa Rica, once dependent on banana agriculture and small-scale farming, has built a stronger economy, conserved land, and supported scientific research on rainforests through ecotourism. Now these efforts are in jeopardy.



In a survey of its membership, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) found that Costa Rica, like many ecotourism and nature destinations, is feeling the ripple effects of the travel industry slowdown caused by the September 11 attacks in the United States and the military action in the Middle East. The unwillingness of many Americans to travel is sidetracking the goals of ecotourism to provide benefits to local people and to aid in conservation efforts.

Even with the current turmoil, TIES' survey indicates that booking rates for North American itineraries remain positive and stable, and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) still predicts positive growth for tourism worldwide. During the first eight months of 2001 tourism was on track for a 3% increase, following a record 7.4% growth rate in 2000. The WTO predicts that 2001 should still see growth, although at a slightly lower rate of 2%.

In the past decade, key nature destinations have posted rates of growth well above average, indicating ecotourism's strength as both an industry and a travel preference. Costa Rica, for example, posted a 9% average annual growth rate from 1990-99, according to the WTO. In the same time frame

South Africa saw a phenomenal average annual increase of 19.3%, Indonesia 8%, and Belize 6%.

After such exceptional growth over the past decade, the sudden slowdown in the travel industry has deeply affected ecotourism providers. According to TIES' membership survey, destinations and their citizens employed in the ecotourism sector are feeling the threat and the pains of an international travel industry damaged by terrorism and world conflict. Across the globe cancellations are high and bookings are low. Ecotourism is being hit at its roots-local providers are firing staff, reducing departures, and preparing for the worst.

Ecotourism is especially important in developing nations by providing additional funds and jobs at the local level, where they are needed most. A 1999 study by the United Kingdom Department for International Development found that tourism is growing in all but one of the 12 countries that are home to 80 percent of the world's poor-including Brazil, Indonesia, Nepal and Peru.

UN Report Links Population Growth With Environmental Decline

Audubon President John Flicker today hailed the release of the 2001 UN Population Fund report and praised its focus on the link between population growth and environmental degradation. "No environmental victory is permanent as long as population growth remains unchecked," Flicker said. "So much of the environmental destruction we see across the globe today is fallout from the population explosion that has occurred over the last 50 years." *The State of World Population 2001 - Footprints and Milestones: Population and Environmental Change*, shows how poverty, hunger and environmental degradation are worsening worldwide. The report demonstrates that an important solution to these problems is slowing global population growth.

The worldwide decline in migrant bird species is just one sober indication of how human population growth has affected the natural world. More than 50 percent of neotropical migrant bird species that are monitored in the eastern United States and prairie states have been in decline for the last three decades. This alarming drop is largely due to habitat destruction, caused by rapid rates of population growth both overseas and in the United States. For more information about the environment-population connection, check Audubon's Web site www.audubonpopulation.org.