



GREATER AKRON

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Witt's End

So, What's New?

This past holiday season, Susan's mother gave me a delightful old birding book. It's a collection of best birding stories and pictures from *National Geographic*, published over a six-year period up to 1914! Among the grainy pictures of birders dressed more for a wedding than a field trip, are pictures of birds with familiar faces, but different names than we know today.

Among the articles, my favorite is one by Frederick H. Kennard, entitled, *Encouraging Birds Around The Home*. He talks about feeders and types of food, both of which are strangely similar to what we do now, nearly 90 years later. Some things don't change.

Speaking of enemies of birds he says, "Of bird enemies, cats are undoubtedly the worst, and maudlin sentiment should not be wasted upon them, for they are incorrigible. The plain, ordinary ally cat should be eliminated when possible and they make fine fertilizers when planted about the roots of one's favorite grape-vine."

Rather extreme! And he wastes little sentiment on red squirrels that "should be shot on sight." nor "cooper and sharp-shinned hawks [that] should both be shot at sight, while of the owls, the great horned is incapable of reform." Of the English sparrow Kennard says, "the pests should be shot and trapped relentlessly." What he has to say of the black snake, "the deadliest of enemies," should not be repeated in a family newsletter! Oh, my.

Well, 1914 was a different world than today. While the problems remain, hopefully our solutions are more enlightened. Keep your cats indoors, understand that hawks are an essential part of the ecosystem and marvel at the stealth of the black snake. But about those squirrels ...

— Clyde Witt

Meetings, We've Got Some Great Ones!

March Salamanders with Peter Niewiarowski, University of Akron. The program will focus on salamanders and his research at Bath Nature Preserve. We may have some show-n-tell salamanders. In April, as perennial as a crocus, Courtenay Willis will present another of her dynamic programs focused on avian research.

In May, we'll host Bill Rich of the University of Akron. Bill is a landscape and wildlife photographer. This program is not to be missed!

Our programs are held at the Seiberling Naturealm on Smith Road. Except for December, the meetings are 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 and ask that you bring your own cup.

Think Spring!

The Vernal Equinox is guaranteed to arrive this year on March 20. So, in case you're out camping, need to determine the temperature and have forgotten a thermometer, try this: Count the number of times a cricket chirps in 15 seconds and add 40. The result is the temperature in degrees Fahrenheit. If you want to covert that to Celsius, find a French-Canadian cricket and ... well, learn to live with Fahrenheit.

Example: If you count 15 chirps in 15 seconds, the temperature is 55 degrees. If you count only 1 chirp in a minute it's too cold for crickets and that was probably the sound of a twig snapping as a bear approaches your tent.

Road Show

The chapter will be operating information booths at several Spring festivals this season to help promote

membership in the organization. If you'd like to volunteer, see Mark at the meeting, or any member of the executive committee. The work is easy and the pay is great! You just have to pass out literature and talk about what Audubon does. And the pay? You'll have the heart-felt gratitude of all the committee members who've been doing this for many years now!

Here's the schedule: Donzell's Spring Festival: April 11-14. Medina County Earth Day Celebration: April 21, 1-4pm, Buckeye Woods County Park.

Earth Day Trivia

What was the original name for Earth Day? What year was the celebration first held, and where? Clyde knows the answer. Give him the correct answer at the March or April meeting and win a prize!

Field Trips

We're working on a schedule of Spring field trips. As of right now we have two for sure. On March 30 (Saturday), Clyde will lead a trip, starting at the Station Road Bridge parking lot in the CVNP. The parking lot is East off River Road, about one-quarter-mile south of Route 82, at the bottom of the hill. We'll get started at 9 a.m. sharp! This is a little-known spot to hunt for Spring warblers. It's also great for woodpecker species (six in one day is highly likely!) and maybe returning great blue herons. We'll walk the railroad tracks, so the going is flat but not necessarily easy. Dress appropriate for the weather and no whining!

Our second trip will be to Bath Nature Preserve May 5 (Sunday). This environmentally exciting spot will be playing a larger role in our chapter's future activities, so here's a great opportunity to be in at the beginning. Mark is heading up this event and will advise us of meeting location, time, etc. at the April meeting.

We're looking for more people to lead some Spring-warbler trips. If you'd like to show off your leadership skills and host a group at a favorite spot, see Mark or any other member of the executive committee. It's fun and the pay is great! (See pay scale listed with Road Show story.) To be a leader all you have to do is show up, point the group in the right direction and make sure no one gets lost or arrested.

Ohio Audubon News

From the folks down in Columbus comes word that Joe Jennings is the Birding Trails & Festivals Project Coordinator. With a degree in Environmental Education from Slippery Rock University, Joe took over the

responsibilities for this program in December. Prior to his coming to Audubon, he was an Education Coordinator for the Environmental Learning Program for Rural Action in southeast Ohio. The goal of his program is to build public awareness of habitat conservation through the creation of five new birding trails or festivals in Ohio over the next three years.

Audubon Ohio says that six new sites have been designated as Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Ohio. The Important Bird Area program aims to identify and conserve areas of critical importance to bird populations that live in or migrate through Ohio. The new IBAs are Kelleys Island and Castalia Pond, Holden Arboretum, Spring Valley Wildlife, Port Clinton Beach, and Sandusky Bay.

A National Geographic moment?

Have you ever gathered your gear for a morning of birdwatching and later wish you would have stayed in bed? Well, I did last week. The Wakodahatchee wetlands west of Delray Beach Florida seemed like a perfect place to capture some wildlife on video tape? Wakodahatchee is a 50 acre man-made nature preserve with anhingas, green herons and my target this morning, a nesting blue heron.

I was grinning ear to ear and comfortable in the 65 degree morning mist. The nest sat an ideal distance away from where I set up the tripod and video camera on the boardwalk. I was thrilled to see the thriving habitat that was blossoming in this over developed strip of coastline between Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach. To my ears the sounds of nature were able to silence the nearby highways and ideal for the background sound in my video. The sun was burning off the last of the mist and I was now ready to turn on the camera when the human parade started. Oh boy, had I misjudged my quiet birding moment as the power walkers, strollers, joggers and retire folks streamed by my boardwalk hogging tripod. It is amazing how the muffled microphone picks up the clip-clop of heavy feet to the well meaning "Hello, are you taking pictures?" (not to mention the jiggle motion on the video that would have made an old salt seasick!) I received everything from a polite smile to a scowl that could only be interpreted as "get out of my way you nature freak!"

I suppose a more experienced birder would have known not to try to take video on a boardwalk ... but one has to learn sometime and Wakodahatchee was a nice place to start. If you are heading to south Florida you won't regret this walk; just leave the video camera at home.

— Rich Corbett

Christmas Count

The 2001 Christmas Bird Count, 63rd for our chapter, was made under dreary skies with occasional light rain in the afternoon. The day started with a temperature of 34 degrees. There was no snow on the ground. The total number of birds counted, 29,899, was higher than the last two years. Total species seen, 77, fell between 2000's 74, and 1999's 82. It's suspected that because of warmer weather on count day, we had more sightings of unusual birds such as house wren, gray catbird, and yellow warbler. These species have been listed in our totals but are subject to approval by the CBC director after review of unusual bird sighting reports.

The compilers of the 2001 count (Marie Morgan, Bill Osborne and Bert Szabo) wish to thank the 88 dedicated participants counting in the field and the 56 individuals counting at their feeders. It is because of their time, effort and dedication that this year's count was a continued success.

Species:							
pied-billed grebe	16	Cooper's hawk	16	hairy woodpecker	82	eastern towhee	2
great blue heron	37	red-shouldered hawk	4	northern flicker	33	American tree sparrow	391
Canada goose	2563	red-tailed hawk	85	pileated woodpecker	11	field sparrow	2
mute swan	11	American kestrel	11	blue jay	1007	fox sparrow	1
tundra swan	5	merlin	2	American crow	1010	song sparrow	146
wood duck	6	wild turkey	16	black-capped chickadee	1029	swamp sparrow	35
gadwall	22	American coot	138	tufted titmouse	493	white-throated sparrow	124
American widgeon	6	Bonaparte's gull	11	red-breasted nuthatch	64	white-crowned sparrow	43
American black duck	34	ring-billed gull	1124	white-breasted nuthatch	277	dark-eyed junco	625
mallard	1464	herring gull	26	brown creeper	21	northern cardinal	851
green-winged teal	1	rock dove	1723	Carolina wren	82	red-winged blackbird	174
canvasback	1	mourning dove	957	house wren	1	rusty blackbird	15
redhead	6	eastern screech-owl	12	golden-crowned kinglet	13	common grackle	62
ring-necked duck	154	great horned owl	9	eastern bluebird	111	purple finch	4
lesser scaup	15	barred owl	4	American robin	187	house finch	929
bufflehead	27	northern saw-whet owl	1	gray catbird	1	white-winged crossbill	1
hooded merganser	22	belted kingfisher	23	European starling	8561	American goldfinch	1038
red-breasted merganser	1	red-bellied woodpecker	192	cedar waxwing	340	evening grosbeak	1
ruddy duck	323	yellow-bellied sapsucker	1	yellow warbler	1	house sparrow	2714
sharp-shinned hawk	10	downy woodpecker	338	yellow-rumped warbler	1		

Field counters: Ian Adams, Deedra Allen, John Bowler, Michael Bowler, Peter Bowler, Dave Brumfield, Jenny Brumfield, Garnet Bryne, Don Burlett, Doug Caesar, Nick Calabro, John Cameron, Bob Capanna, Ann Chasar, Dwight Chasar, Pat Coy, Emily Cubera, Mike Cubera, Pam Daum, Jonathan Dean, Phyllis Devlin, Cheryl Dinkelbach, Fred Dinkelbach, Mike Edgington, Mary Ann Faraque, Fred Fricker, Bob Furst, Christa Glatter, Darrel Goodson, Ann Gulbransen, Martin Gulbransen, Mary Lou Hura, Diane Johnson, Tracey Johnson, Susan Jones, Barbara Kaplan, Winnetta Kennedy, Isaac Kerns, Sheila Kerns, Dave Kersten, Gene Kovach, Linda Kovach, Duane Kurapka, Karl Liske, Tom Liston, Fred Losi, Alice Luddington, Christine McCorkle, Beth McGuire, Wilbur McQueen, Kathy Mock, Fred Montague, Marie Morgan, Paul Motts, Rich Nicholls, Bill Osborne, Joyce Pelz, Wolfgang Pelz, Alice Phillips, Rebecca Porath, Jim Reyda, David Richards, Tasi Riley, Tim Riley, Maryanne Romito, Tom Romito, Larry Rosche, Cynthia Rudick, James Rudick, George Sangrik, Linda Sangrik, Sterling Saxe, Steven Sheppard, Walter Starcher, Woody Stover, Bert Szabo, Karin Tanquist, Jim Tomko, Dan Van Auken, Doug Van Auken, Steven Van Auken, Doug Vogus, James W. Vogus, Jeff Wert, Clyde Witt, Howard Zehnder, Marian Zehnder, Bill Zelesnik.

Feeder counters: Joan Albright, Bill Barnes, Jo Anne Barnes, Irene Barrington, Helen Dessent, Marion Dibbert, Joanne Dobbins, Ann Falor, Pat Fricker, Lois Frisbee, James Frost, Mrs. Frost, Benita Gadsden, Carole Gatian, Jamie Gerard, Pauline Green, Annemarie Hansen, Sue Henniger, Beth Hoffman, Donald Hogle, Betty Hudkins, George Jones, Hedy Jones, Lucille Kiehl, Barbara Klewe, Janet Kucko, Carolyn Liebmann, Elaine Martin, Ruth May, James McIntyre, Karl Meisner, Bill Meyers, Bill Miloscia, Amy Mitch, Gary Moats, Lewis Monegan, Betty Peabody, Nancy Post, Norm Richenbacher, Sally Richenbacher, Peg Robinson, Doris Rooney, Grace Rymer, Cheryl Schnuth, Elaine Sommers, Joyce Strasser, Steve Strasser, John Strickland, Karl Stutz, Arthur Sutton, Evelyn Sutton, Margaret Thorp, Sue Tolley, Charlotte Walker, Patricia Webb, Patricia Zeigler,