



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON *Matters*

Volume XXVIII

Number 1

Sep / Oct 2002

Witt's End

Fish Gotta Fly, Birds gotta Swim

I think of the end of the summer as the nadir of the birding year. Unless you live in an area with easy access to shorebirding, you're kind of at a loss for bird-watching activity.

Birds sense this too, I believe, so to keep our interest in the woods and on them, birds (maybe all of nature) devise ways to attract our attention. For example, I was listening to a report on NPR about a penguin that has turned up in Alaska! It has the experts in a tizzy deciding: A — How did it get there? And B — what to do about it. Forces were lining up on both sides of this little creature dressed in a black-tie dinner outfit. Should they capture it and take it back to Chile or let Nature take its course?

Further south, just when the folks in Missouri had about settled down from the visit of the smew 18 months ago, mid-August brought them a ruff in alternate plumage.

Back up north, a green violet-ear hummingbird had birders flocking to the UP of Michigan. And how about those crazy snake fish on the East Coast? It's said they can walk hundreds of yards on land. Can't you just see them, hoping along on their tails saying, "Look at me! Look at me?"

Closer to home, driving down River View Road in

the CVNP one morning, Susan and I spotted a paper wasp's nest entwined in a telephone wire suspended over the road. Plenty of natural branches for those insects to work with, so what's with the wire?

Have you noticed how red-winged blackbirds steal away as strangely quiet as they were raucous in the spring? Suddenly they are little more than swirling black clouds in our memories. How do they manage to sneak away every season?

Here's some strange behavior. Well, strange from the human perspective. Maybe for the bird it was perfectly natural. I was riding my bicycle down Akron-Peninsula Road in the CVNP. On one stretch, where the river winds near the roadway, a huge snag is revealed by the water's low level. I had passed the spot numerous times and noted great blue herons, green herons, countless swallows and other creatures resting on the log in the middle of the river.

One particular morning I glanced over and noticed a red-tailed hawk perched on the snag. What? I went back for a second look. Sure enough. He was sitting there, looking into the water with the intensity of a belted kingfisher. I waited about as long as I could in hopes he would make a dive for a fish. But then, maybe he was just admiring his handsome profile.

I'm really glad fall is here so we can get back to what passes for normal.

New Meeting Location • New Meeting Location • New Meeting Location

It's a long, somewhat sad tale, but the end of the story is that GAAS is forced to move its meeting location. We've enjoyed the Naturealm for many years. Now we're moving to an even more bucolic location on Sand Run Road in Sand Run Park — Shady Hollow.

The chapter holds meetings once a month on the 4th Tuesday, except for December (Christmas Bird Count Chili Dinner), June (annual picnic), July and August when there are no meetings. The GAAS monthly meetings will be held at the Shady Hollow Pavilion in the Sand Run MetroPark in the Merriman Valley, beginning September 24, 2002. The entrance is off Sand Run Parkway, just east of the ford. Check www.neo.lrun.com/MetroParks/mapguide-menu.html for a map of Sand Run Park. The pavilion is 1.3 miles west of N. Portage Path Drive and .9 mile east of Sand Run Road (or N41° 08.029' W81° 33.586' if you need the precise location).

The doors open at 7:00 and the meeting starts at 7:30. Meetings are free and open to the public. The new meeting place comes with the same guarantee as the old place: If you don't like our free programs we'll double your entrance fee back!

Dynamic Programs This Year

At press time, the full program line-up was not complete. We can give you some information as to the outstanding speakers we will have this year.

September 24 we start the year with something close to all of us - the Cuyahoga River. We have a national park named after it, we enjoy its beauty, yet we know very little about this great crooked stream. Our guest speaker will be Jim White, executive director, Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan. His program will cover the river, its current condition and efforts to clean it up.

In addition, we'll have a speaker from the Alaska Coalition to update us on the Alaska preservation efforts. Don't miss the great double header.

October 22 we'll continue our tradition of bringing you the true story of bats in an attempt to demystify the Halloween stories. Michael Johnson, wildlife biologist with Davey Resource Group, will talk about bats' natural history and habitats here in Ohio. We'll learn about bat species, with an emphasis on rare and endangered species, regulatory procedures, survey techniques to determine potential impacts associated with land development practices, field mist-netting and the developing technology of advanced echolocation detectors.

November 26 we'll host a speaker from the Northern Ohio Association of Herpetologists who will speak about snakes of Ohio. Presentation will include live snakes!

December 15 is the probable date of the Annual Christmas Count and Chili Dinner. We'll have more information in future Newsletters.

After the first of the year we'll have international wildlife artist and writer Julie Zickefoose! As you can imagine, she is in great demand and although we have a commitment from her to speak to our chapter, we have yet to nail down the date. If you read *Bird Watchers Digest* and many other birding publications, you're familiar with her work. This has been a great catch for us (BIG thanks to Mark Purdy on this one) and we anticipate a huge crowd from the Akron community as she will be signing books and her prints. Stay tuned.

New Phone Number

The chapter has installed a new phone answering system that will carry important meeting and field trip information. The new number is **330-315-5213**. It is being graciously hosted by volunteer Joyce Pelz. A big thanks to her for offering one of her company's phone lines for this service.

New Ohio Birds Checklist

A new *Birds of Ohio Checklist*, produced by select members of the Ohio Bird Records Committee, is available. The checklist's main innovation is bar graphs indicating each species' abundance over the course of a year. This updates the 1987 *Distribution and Abundance of Ohio Birds*. Additionally, each species has brief comments regarding its status, whether it nests, if

it's rare and on the review list, native or not. All 410 species currently accepted on the Ohio list are included, right up to the Brown-headed Nuthatch.

The committee was allowed to use original cover art (two night herons) by the late Charles Gambill. Thanks to a generous grant from the Master Family Fund, it is able to provide these checklists at no cost to the birding community. If you would like one, e-mail Jim McCormac and provide your name and address.

Jim McCormac- Jim.McCormac@dnr.state.oh.us
Secretary, Ohio Bird Records Committee

Nature Preserve Needs Help

Bath Township is looking for volunteers from GAAS to patrol the Bath Nature Preserve. According to Mark Purdy, president and one of the volunteers, response from Bath Township residents has thus far has been poor.

"If things don't get better," says Purdy, "the township will be forced to pay somebody to patrol the preserve, which would put a real crimp in the park department budget."

The Bath Trail Corps is a volunteer organization sponsored by the Bath Township Trustees. Its primary goal is to assist the Township safety forces. Volunteers are needed to patrol the nature preserve, provide emergency first aid if required and report suspicious activity to local police. It also provides general assistance and information to visitors concerning the preserve, its history and habitats, preserve rules, etc. A volunteer must receive basic first aid training and CPR training, both of which can be arranged by the township at no cost to the volunteer. Volunteers are expected to patrol at least twice a month (roughly 4 hours per month). If you're interested, contact the Bath Parks Administrator at 330-666-4007.

Songbird Education Guides Available

If you're a teacher of grades K-8, Audubon Ohio has a deal for you. The folks in Columbus recently announced the availability, free of charge, of the Ohio Songbirds Teachers Kits. These kits include the new *Ohio Songbirds: A Teachers' Guide to Activities in the Classroom*, bird identification guides and other bird-related items. Each chapter can have up to eight teacher kits to distribute.

Audubon Ohio also has additional copies of just the book, *Ohio Songbirds: A Teachers' Guide to Activities in the Classroom*, to distribute. If you're a teacher and interested in this worthwhile program, talk with Mark or other chapter officers about obtaining the books for you.

Whose Running The Asylum?

Here's one I got from the *Washington Times* in June. The Army Corps of Engineers dumps about 200,000 tons of toxic sludge into the Potomac River every year. An internal document from the Environmental Protection Agency says it is "not a ridiculous possibility that these discharges actually protect the fish in that they are not inclined to bite [presumably fishers' baits] and get eaten by humans, but instead go ahead with their upstream movement and egg laying."

The Corps began these discharges in 1989 under a permit issued by the EPA. One sane person in the Congress, George P. Radanovich, (R-CA), chairman of the subcommittee on national parks, recreation and

public lands, said, "This is one of the most frightening examples of bureaucratic ineptitude and backward logic I have ever seen."

He's got that right! Good fishing, friends.

June 14 through 23, 2002 GAAS Summit County Breeding Bird Census Summary

Daily maximum temperatures varied from 66° to 87° F with little precipitation during the count period. The results of the 25th GAAS census fall in line with those of recent past years. Coots, Double-crested Cormorants and Mute Swans from the southern part of the county are notable. While raptors in general were present in good numbers, a record number of Cooper's Hawk were seen, with a good distribution throughout the county. High numbers of Blue Jays and American Crows (nest predators) and Brown-headed Cowbirds (nest parasite) were found. Recent increases in Cedar Waxwings, Northern Cardinals, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Eastern Towhees, Gray Catbirds, Eastern Bluebirds, Carolina Wrens, Baltimore Orioles and American Goldfinches are evident. Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats are abundant and Blue-winged Warblers are present in small numbers throughout the county. Most other warblers found are present in appropriate habitat almost exclusively within the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the northern tier of Metro Parks, Serving Summit County. The Grasshopper Sparrows so abundant at the coliseum grasslands last year shunned the area this year as the grasses grew thick and tall. However, those same grasslands and a few other grassland areas led to a record high number of Bobolinks.

2 Pied-billed Grebe	45 Hairy Woodpecker	88 Blue-winged Warbler
9 Double-crested Cormorant	123 Northern Flicker	1 Parula Warbler
399 Great Blue Heron	25 Pileated Woodpecker	422 Yellow Warbler
44 Green Heron	109 Eastern Wood Pewee	12 Chestnut-sided Warbler
1 Black-crowned Night Heron	72 Acadian Flycatcher	17 Black-throated Green Warbler
10 Mute Swan	9 Alder Flycatcher	2 Yellow-throated Warbler
1612 Canada Goose	99 Willow Flycatcher	2 Pine Warbler
126 Wood Duck	4 Least Flycatcher	1 Prothonotary Warbler
1 American Black Duck	83 Eastern Phoebe	21 Cerulean Warbler
712 Mallard	57 Great Crested Flycatcher	2 Black & White Warbler
98 Turkey Vulture	62 Eastern Kingbird	14 American Redstart
8 Osprey	5 Horned Lark	33 Ovenbird
1 Sharp-shinned Hawk	19 Purple Martin	5 Louisiana Waterthrush
41 Cooper's Hawk (4 yng*)	172 Tree Swallow	1 Kentucky Warbler
21 Red-shouldered Hawk	161 N. Rough-winged Swallow	231 Common Yellowthroat
10 Broad-winged Hawk	229 Bank Swallow	97 Hooded Warbler
73 Red-tailed Hawk	4 Cliff Swallow	4 Yellow-breasted Chat
7 American Kestrel	282 Barn Swallow	93 Scarlet Tanager
6 Peregrine Falcon (4 yng*)	713 Blue Jay	1017 Northern Cardinal
2 Ring-necked Pheasant	688 American Crow	150 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
39 Wild Turkey	449 Black-capped Chickadee	212 Indigo Bunting
1 Northern Bobwhite	449 Tufted Titmouse	164 Eastern Towhee
3 Virginia Rail	134 White-breasted Nuthatch	383 Chipping Sparrow
2 Sora	3 Red-breasted Nuthatch	155 Field Sparrow
14 American Coot	7 Brown Creeper	44 Savannah Sparrow
160 Killdeer	253 House Wren	9 Grasshopper Sparrow
7 Spotted Sandpiper	2 Winter Wren	855 Song Sparrow
2 American Woodcock	4 Marsh Wren	57 Swamp Sparrow
107 Ring-billed Gull	113 Carolina Wren	6 White-throated Sparrow
6 Herring Gull	53 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	126 Bobolink
338 Rock Dove	130 Eastern Bluebird	1566 Red-winged Blackbird
789 Mourning Dove	47 Veery	48 Eastern Meadowlark
2 Black-billed Cuckoo	2 Hermit Thrush	1141 Common Grackle
12 Yellow-billed Cuckoo	135 Wood Thrush	484 Brown-headed Cowbird
15 Eastern Screech Owl (9 yng*)	2166 American Robin	18 Orchard Oriole
6 Great-horned Owl	658 Gray Catbird	300 Baltimore Oriole
9 Barred Owl	18 Brown Thrasher	13 Purple Finch
9 Common Nighthawk	579 Cedar Waxwing	428 House Finch
502 Chimney Swift	1934 European Starling	1074 American Goldfinch
56 Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	6 White-eyed Vireo	1502 House Sparrow
51 Belted Kingfisher	12 Blue-headed Vireo	note: (1 Least Bittern week of July 1st))
6 Red-headed Woodpecker	17 Yellow-throated Vireo	
190 Red-bellied Woodpecker	92 Warbling Vireo	Total Species 128
189 Downy Woodpecker	226 Red-eyed Vireo	Total Birds "26,942"
		Party Hours 303 (51 participants)

MANY THANKS to the following dedicated participants:

Virginia Baumgardner, Dave Brumfield, Garnet Byrne, Robert Capanna, Dwight & Ann Chasar, Ernie & Chris Cornelius, Wayne Crouse, Geoge & Sandy Cull, Phyllis Devlin, Marilyn Diefendorff, Fred & Cheryl Dinkelbach, Paul Ellsworth, Mary Ann Faruque, Denis Feld, Christa Glatter, Anne & Marty Gulbransen, Mary Lou Hura, Judy Hendrick, Michele Hendrick, Nancy Ibsen, Hedy Jones, Susan Jones, Winnie Kennedy, James Knisely, Gene & Linda Kovach, Brad Lyell, Wilbur McQueen, Marie Morgan, Hope Orr, Bill Osborne, Joyce & Wolfgang Pelz, Ed Pierce, Mary Reinthal, Jim Reyda, George & Linda Sangrik, Patricia Stafford, Carol Struthers, Bert Szabo, Doug Vogus, Jim Vogus, Jan Wertz, Clyde Witt, William Zelesnik

Sincerely, Doug Vogus and Ann Chasar, Count Organizers