



GREATER AKRON

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Witt's End

Try Looking Behind You

I set off on one of my regular hiking routes in the CVNP the other day, fully aware of what I was going to see. I have walked the route enough times that I am on a first-name basis with most of the trees and stream crossings.

I decided to be brave and do something different. Rather than walk in the usual, clockwise route, I'd go *counterclockwise* and see what I had been missing. (For you digital types, clockwise is a term from the last century that refers to the direction in which the hands on a clock move.)

My first encounter was also a first-bird for me in the CVNP. At a spot along the river where Susan and I had seen spotted sandpipers the day before, I spooked an osprey who was just finishing its lunch!

On down the trail I found myself caught in the crossfire of a pair of dueling barred owls. Susan tells me, from the fact that one owl's vocalization was pitched high and the other's low, it was probably a mated pair — talking over whose turn it was to watch the kids, no doubt.

At a point along the trail where the day before we had heard, but could not identify, a calling bird, I encountered the creature again. This time, with a major pishing effort, I found myself eye-to-eye with a Louisiana waterthrush. Another first for the CVNP and me.

The fourth encounter along the trail was yet another first. I heard scratching in the leaves and looked down to see a six-inch-diameter gopher tortoise a few feet off the trail! At the time I did not know it was a gopher tortoise and assumed it was a woodland tortoise. (Truth be told, I did not even know if there was a species called woodland tortoise.) A later check of my field guides indicated that the species is more common in the Southeast.

So, the first lesson I learned was to always carry a camera because you never know when you might have

to document what you've seen. The second lesson was, when you walk even a familiar path in an unfamiliar direction, be prepared for a new perspective on what you thought you knew.

Meetings — We Got 'Em!

The chapter holds meetings once a month on the 4th Tuesday, except for July, August and December. The GAAS monthly meetings are held at the Shady Hollow Pavilion in the Sand Run MetroPark in the Merriman Valley. The entrance is off Sand Run Parkway, just east of the ford. Check the MetroParks Web site 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 return your entrance fee, twofold!

May 27 — We're doing something a bit different this month. We will be **starting at 6:30 PM** and we're going to put together many of the skills we've learned this past year and do a little bird watching, plant identification and general appreciation of the beauty surrounding us in Sand Run Park. If you were at the February meeting featuring Julie Zickefoose, you learned a lot about bird behavior and saw the birding world through the eyes of an artist. At the April meeting we learned about the fascinating world of dragon and damselflies from Larry Rosche. Now we'll put all that knowledge to work on some short bird walks as part of the meeting. Depending on how many people we have, we'll divide into workable-size groups and walk the trails close to Shady Hollow pavilion. After the walks we'll gather at the pavilion for a short meeting, have some coffee and cookies, and compare notes.

June 24, Annual picnic — Based on last year's rousing success, the Executive Committee has opted to hold the annual Picnic at Wolf Creek Winery again this year. The meeting will be held June 24 at Wolf Creek Winery on Cleveland-Massillon Road, about two miles north of Wadsworth Road (state route 261), starting at 6:30 PM. Since the object of the exercise is for you to try (and buy!) the various wines of Wolf Creek, no beverages are permitted. You should bring your own picnic meal to enjoy, although Wolf Creek does offer a limited carry-out menu. It's called carry-out, but actually it's carry-in. You telephone a selected list of restaurants and they'll deliver to the winery. We'll not have a formal program, just the sharing of bird stories — real and imagined.

If you have any program suggestions for next year, please pass the ideas on to any member of the executive committee. As of now we have a clean slate and we're open to all suggestions.

The Dues Blues

Since National Audubon changed its dues structure and the dues split with the local chapters, there has been a lot of confusion as to who pays what and who gets what. We promised to give you the best available information and here's what we know. First, you can renew through the chapter, using the coupon on the back of this newsletter. However, there's no real advantage to doing that. In fact, it makes more work for the membership chairman, also disguised as our chapter president since no one has stepped forward to do the job. The key to how the chapter can receive a bigger cut of the dues, is for you, or anyone you know, to initially join through our chapter newsletter. If you join through National headquarters, National gets all the dues money for the first two years. We do not get any of the dues split until your third year. Meanwhile, for those first two years, the chapter has all the expense of the member (such as this newsletter). If you don't think it's a fair deal, write to John Flicker, National Audubon Society, 700 Broadway, New York, New York 10211.

Elections in June

June is election time for chapter offices. The election will be held at the June meeting, June 24 at Wolf Creek Winery. If you would like to run for one of the four elective offices, please see Clyde Witt, nomination committee chairman, at any chapter meeting. If you would like to put the name of someone into nomination, please make sure they agree to running for the office, then contact the nomination committee. Currently, we have candidates for president, Mark Purdy; vice president, Bill Tucker; and treasurer, Susan Dooley. We are still looking for a candidate for recording secretary.

Thank you!

An extra big thanks goes to out-going recording secretary Michele Tucker. She's served as hospitality chair and recording secretary for a number of years now. Also, we'd like to express our thanks to Carol Struthers who has stepped in as hospitality chair this year. Great cookies and dedication to a job that gets a minimal amount of recognition — unless the coffee water is cold.

Thanks to you both!

Summer Bird Count

Time is running out to sign up for the annual Summer Bird Count of Summit County. This is the event where you don't freeze your tail feathers or beak. You also have the luxury of going back tomorrow if the weather is not to your liking today. Here are the details:

The count begins June 13 and runs (or walks, if you prefer) through June 22, covering two weekends. The object of the exercise is to get a count of breeding birds in our area. We count every bird of every species. The procedure is similar to the Christmas Count except that you don't wear gloves. You're assigned a territory (we cover the entire Summit County domain) and search out the birds. It's a great way to spend a cool morning or warm summer evening.

If you missed the sign-up sheet at the last chapter meeting, we'll have another at the May meeting. Or, you can participate by contacting Doug Vogus at 330-922-5613 (e-mail vogey@cs.com) or Ann Chaser, 330-467-3664 (e-mail ak450@acorn.net). Those who participated last year should have already been contacted. If not, contact either Doug or Ann. If you attended last November's chapter meeting and heard the great presentation by Dwight Chaser, you know the value of gathering this data.

Ann currently has 24 years of bird census information and has offered to provide a summary of this data to anyone who asks. Maintaining and collating this data is a monumental job. Doug, Ann and Dwight are to be commended for their efforts. Without volunteer activists like this, a great deal of scientific work would be greatly diminished. The Summer and Christmas Bird Counts are your chance to participate in citizen science at its best.

Is It Warm Out Here?

Disregarding the winter we just survived, all over the place plants are blooming earlier and birds are on the nest sooner. Recent studies in the *Journal of Nature* indicate the natural world is already responding in a major way to a warming climate change. A United Nations panel has predicted that in the next century, a temperature rise of 10.5 degrees Fahrenheit could be a reality.

So what can we do about it? There's a great new book available, just in time for some hot summer reading. *You*

Can Prevent Global Warming (and Save Money!): 51

Easy Ways. The book spells out simple steps citizens can take to realize net savings of \$2,022 per year, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25,000 pounds, and lower our dependence on Middle East oil.

National Geographic magazine featured the book on its website on Earth Day (see link below). Also, the *New York Times* will be highlighting the book as part of an upcoming "Science Times" issue focusing on global climate change.

You can buy a copy at your local bookstore or order it from any of the online sources.

If you'd like to read what National Geographic thinks of this book, visit http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/04/0422_030422_conservationtips

The book's author, Jeffrey A. Langholz, Ph.D., assistant professor, International Environmental Policy, Monterey Institute of International Studies, has a Web site, www.preventglobalwarming.net.

Ohio's Eagles Lookin' Good

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) reported bald eagles on the nests in four counties as early as February this year. Typically the birds are on the nests by mid-April. Twenty-five years ago Ohio had only four nesting pairs of bald eagles. In 2002 we had 79 pairs in 28 counties. A record 107 young were produced. Summit county is not on that list so if you observe bald eagles nesting, and there has been increased activity particularly in the CVNP, report the activity to the local ODNR office or any ranger in the CVNP. Trained volunteers will monitor the nest.



Bald eagles build huge nests, usually near water. Nest can reach 10 feet in diameter and weigh as much as 2,000 pounds. Eggs hatch in 35 days and young birds are flying in three months.

Other endangered species are doing well, too. Nineteen pairs of osprey fledged 27 young last year, 33 new peregrine falcons took to the sky and 21 pairs of trumpeter swans produced 46 cygnets.

Support birders in Venezuela

By Beth and Steve Cagan

In June of 2002, we had the wonderful opportunity to be part of a group led by Stan Searles and Vicki Davison, both of the Cleveland Zoo, to the Andean Venezuelan state of Mérida. Our group had several missions, not the least of which was to attend Stan and Vicki's wedding. For us, getting in some birding and meeting the only Venezuelan ornithologist in the area, Carlos Rengifo, were high on the list.

Carlos introduced us to a number of habitats that were entirely new to us, as well as helping us see some wonderful birds. We also were privileged to talk with him about the scientific research and environmental education projects that he, his students, and his associates are engaged in.

The scientific work includes collection of some very basic data on neotropical migrants, surveys of torrent duck population, and data collection on the threatened red-faced parrot. Education work includes creating birding and nature groups in the high schools and the university, which are developing and spreading a consciousness of the importance of conserving the valuable and threatened habitats in that area of Venezuela.

Part of his work has included education and training of the rangers in the two national parks that occupy most of the land area of the state of Mérida. These people are underpaid and somewhat isolated. They have had very little possibility to increase their knowledge of the flora and fauna of the parks they care for. But Carlos and his associates have trained them in bird identification, so they can in turn educate park visitors. Carlos reports that they are committed to their work and enthusiastic about learning and sharing.

One of the key obstacles to their effectiveness is that in the twenty or so ranger stations, there is not even one pair of binoculars (not to mention spotting scopes) or one field guide.

So even while we are looking for ways to find money for the larger scientific research work, we have undertaken to collect some resources for these park workers. We know that there are many opportunities for birders to donate used binoculars and books. Now we are adding one more. We have spoken about this project to the Kirtland Bird Club in Cleveland and the Akron Audubon group. We would like to ask you to do a couple of things:

Donate binoculars and field guides. They can be used, as long as they are decent and in alignment. The guide we're looking for is de Schauensee and Phelps, *A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela* (or even better the Spanish version, Phelps and de Schauensee, *Una Guia de Las Aves de Venezuela*). Or of course, the new guide book that has replaced this one. If you have other good guide books to Venezuelan or northern South American birds, they would also help. It's good if they're in Spanish, but English versions will also be helpful.

Stan has offered the Zoo as a fiscal umbrella, so that donations can be tax deductible. To get in touch with us about responses to any of these requests, you can send a note to stevecagan@igc.org, or call us at home: 216-932-2753