



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON Matters

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Witt's End

Pay Attention!

This year I was determined they would not get away without saying goodbye. Usually they're knocking on the door before I know they're in town. They make plenty of noise and certainly brighten a usually drab landscape. Then they're gone. Disappear without so much as a "see ya next year."

I'm talking about red-winged blackbirds, my harbinger of spring. Well, this year I paid strict attention as we waded through the closing days of July and slogged into the beginning of August. I admit, I was a bit distracted by the flooding and its aftermath. I watched, studiously on my twice-daily trips along Canal Road in the CVNP.

I'm pleased to report that as of this writing (the end of August) I've pinpointed, with laser accuracy, the departure of the last red-winged blackbird from this area. It was precisely between August 4 and August 13., I think. Rats! And I even kept notes this year. Just when I thought I had seen the last tail feather heading south, sure enough, I'd hear that telltale squawk and happily watch the brilliant red-orange epaulet flash before my eyes. Well, maybe next year.

Programs? You Betcha ...

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 executive committee has put together a dynamite lineup of programs for the coming year. Only one month, May 2004, remains unconfirmed and we'll have that program set by the time of the next newsletter. Here's a brief outline of the programs. You won't want to miss any. We'll give more details closer to presentation time.

September 23: Guess Hooo's coming to dinner? Right. Live and direct from the Ohio Bird Sanctuary in Mansfield, owls!

October 28: Dr. Lauchlan Fraser from the University of Akron Biology department with an update on UA research activity

at Bath Nature Preserve.

November 25: Our president, Mark Purdy will recount the turmoil and excitement he and Claire had on their recent Birding in Chile Adventure.

December: No program. The date of the Chili Dinner and Christmas Bird Count have been set for December 14. The chili dinner will bbe at Mingo Shelter in Sand Run Park, again. We'll have details on signing up for the count closer to the date.

January 27: Chapter member Shannon Ehlers, Un. of Akron biology grad student, will speak on her adventures in Ghana.

February 24: An extra special program, Coyotes in Ohiooooooooooooo.

March 23: Our friends from the Medina Raptor Center return with a cadre of critters.

April 27: Naturalist Stanley Stine tells us about a new park in northeast Summit county.

May 25: Stay tuned.

June 22: No program. We'll have information on the annual picnic.

Alaska Coalition Seeks Participants

If you believe in permanent protection of our pristine public lands in Alaska, you may want to attend the Alaska Wilderness Week conference being held in Washington DC September 20-24. This is a great opportunity for you to attend intensive issue briefings, participate in activist training sessions, meet in person with your elected officials and mingle with members of Congress. For more information, please go to www.alaskawild.org/wildernessweek, or contact Kristi Kashmer at <mailto:kristi@alaskacoalition.org>kristi@alaskacoalition.org.

Hawk Woods Saved

A \$450,000 grant from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund means that Hawk Woods, the 105-acre old-growth forest outside the city of Athens, will avoid the logger's saw. It will become a public owned nature preserve.

"They got Hawk Woods from a timber company, what a coup," said Logan Mayor Paula Tucker, who serves on the Natural Resources Assistance Council, the group that decided on June 24 to grant state Clean Ohio funds to

the project. "I think this is very important for Athens and south-east Ohio."

Bird Seed Sale Page 3!

Once the paperwork is complete, the city of Athens will purchase the property from Dale Riddle Forest Products, which bought the land in February with plans to log it. Approached by individuals and government officials who wanted to save the forest, Riddle agreed in April to sell the land to Athens for \$550,000. Then Hawk Woods supporters, led by the Athens Conservancy and the Athens Land Conservation Advisory Committee, and with support from Audubon Ohio, raised approximately \$100,000 toward the purchase of the woods. This money came from individual, foundation and government agency donations. The remainder of the

asking price came from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund, state money that provides up to 75 percent of total project costs. Phil Cantino, Chair of Ohio University's Environmental and Plant Biology Department, characterized Hawk Woods as a rare forest with statewide significance. "And as beautiful as Hawk Woods is now," says Cantino, "it will get even better with time. Preserving it for future generations has been a collaborative effort involving state and local government, the lumber company that owns it, several non-governmental organizations, and more than 100 individuals who donated time and money."

Summer Bird Count Results

Thanks to the continuing efforts of Ann Chaser, Doug Vogus and Dwight Chaser the Summit County Bird Census has tracked the comings and goings of bird species in this area for more a quarter century.

3	Common Loon	210*	Red-bellied Woodpecker	1833	European Starling
2	Pied-billed Grebe	210	Downy Woodpecker	530	Cedar Waxwing
32*	Double-cr Cormorant	44	Hairy Woodpecker	64	Blue-winged Warbler
1	Least Bittern	113	Northern Flicker	534*	Yellow Warbler
421	Great Blue Heron	30	Pileated Woodpecker	8	Chestnut-sided Warbler
1	Great Egret	149	Eastern Wood Pewee	13	Black-thr. Green Warbler
54	Green Heron	83	Acadian Flycatcher	3	Yellow-throated Warbler
181*	Turkey Vulture	4	Alder Flycatcher	3	Pine Warbler
1591	Canada Goose	87	Willow Flycatcher	2	Prairie Warbler
29*(14 yng)	MuteSwan	71	Eastern Phoebe	31	Cerulean Warbler
7(1 family)	Trumpeter Swan	92	Great Cr. Flycatcher	3	Black & White Warbler
141	Wood Duck	77	Eastern Kingbird	34	American Redstart
667	Mallard	6	White-eyed Vireo	3	Prothonotary Warbler
1	Hooded Merganser	20	Yellow-throated Vireo	33	Ovenbird
7*	Osprey	8	Blue-headed Vireo	1	Louisiana Waterthrush
3	Sharp-shinned Hawk	125*	Warbling Vireo	1	Kentucky Warbler
30	Cooper's Hawk	268	Red-eyed Vireo	1	Mourning Warbler
20	Red-shouldered Hawk	603	Blue Jay	286	Common Yellowthroat
7	Broad-winged Hawk	472	American Crow	102	Hooded Warbler
93*	Red-tailed Hawk	10	Horned Lark	7	Yellow-breasted Chat
7	American Kestrel	152	Purple Martin	108	Scarlet Tanager
3(family)	Peregrine Falcon	241	Tree Swallow	158	Eastern Towhee
1	Ring-necked Pheasant	138	N. Rough-winged Sw.	320	Chipping Sparrow
88*	Wild Turkey	161	Bank Swallow	152	Field Sparrow
2	N. Bobwhite	368	Barn Swallow	44	Savannah Sparrow
4	Virginia Rail	491	Black-capped Chickadee	12	Grasshopper Sparrow
1	Sora	284	Tufted Titmouse	922	Song Sparrow
149	Killdeer	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	59	Swamp Sparrow
20	Spotted Sandpiper	142	White-breasted Nuthatch	4	White-throated Sparrow
4	American Woodcock	8	Brown Creeper	995	Northern Cardinal
62	Ring-billed Gull	96	Carolina Wren	193*	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
9	Herring Gull	263	House Wren	288	Indigo Bunting
222	Rock Dove	4	Sedge Wren	139	Bobolink
795	Mourning Dove	2	Marsh Wren	1456	Red-winged Blackbird
8	Black-billed Cuckoo	63	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	60	Eastern Meadowlark
14	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	103	Eastern Bluebird	1192	Common Grackle
6(5=family)	Eastern Screech Owl	39	Veery	477	Brown-headed Cowbird
8	Great Horned Owl	2	Hermit Thrush	33*	Orchard Oriole
9	Barred Owl	141	Wood Thrush	319	Baltimore Oriole
11	Common Nighthawk	2082	American Robin	9	Purple Finch
515	Chimney Swift	704*	Gray Catbird	394	House Finch
60	Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	2	N. Mockingbird	1135*	American Goldfinch
53	Belted Kingfisher	20	Brown Thrasher	1277	House Sparrow
6	Red-headed Woodpecker				

"Total Birds=25,036"

Total Party Hours= 317

Total Species= 130 (A Record)

* = record high for that species

The June period was cooler than normal with little rain. Results were similar to those of recent years, with hawks (except red-taileds), owls, crows, blue jays and chickadees being found in average numbers. Red-tailed hawk numbers were the highest ever. The numbers of birds seen per party hour were also comparable to past years. Thus the effect of West Nile Virus on birds in Summit County was not evident. Bluebirds and Carolina wrens survived the past severe winter without issue. The county's various habitats are home to a nice variety of species. The southern lakes and reservoirs had cormorants, mute swans, pied-billed grebes, ospreys, a family of trumpeter

swans (Cottage Grove Lake) and a large purple martin colony (Portage Lakes). The peregrine falcons raised four young on the Landmark Building. The Springfield township/Lakemore area had grasshopper sparrows, horned larks and a least bittern. Sedge wrens were a rare find at the Bath Preserve and Coliseum grasslands. The Cuyahoga Valley National Park was home to the wild turkeys and most of the warbler species. No least flycatcher was found (missed previously only in 1987) and only one Louisiana waterthrush was counted!

A big thanks to all the participants: Greg Bennett, Dave & Jenny Brumfield, Don Burlett, Bob Capanna, Dwight & Ann Chasar, Sue Chester, George & Sandy Cull, Pam Daum, Phyllis Devlin, Fred & Cheryl Dinkelbach, Diane Dulzer, Lois Eckert, Elinor Elder, Paul Ellsworth, Mary Ann Faruque, Denis Feld, Marty & Ann Gulbransen, Judy & Michele Hendrick, Larry Hunter, Judy Hurley, Nancy Ibsen, Diane Johnson, Susan Jones, Winnie Kennedy, Jim Knisely, George & Linda Kovach, Brad Lyell, Wilbur McQueen, Marie Morgan, Hope Orr, Bill Osborne, Ed Pierce, Mary Reinthal, Jim Reyda, Bob Roach, Tom & Mary Anne Romito, Larry Rosche, Marlo Rossetti, George & Linda Sangrik, Pat Stafford, Bert Szabo, Doug & Jim Vogus, Janet Wertz, Clyde Witt.

Governor Signs Bill To Govern Water Sampling

Governor Bob Taft has signed H.B. 43, a bill supported by Audubon Ohio that will provide new guidance to environmental educators in the use of volunteers to monitor surface water quality.

H.B. 43 requires the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency establish regulations under which water samples collected by volunteers can be used in its water quality regulatory programs. Audubon Ohio became interested in the bill because it intends to include hands-on activities like water quality testing in the educa-

tional programs at the nature education centers it is working to develop in Ohio.

Audubon Ohio Executive Director Jerry Tinianow testified on May 14 in favor of the legislation before the Ohio Senate Energy, Natural Resources and Environment Committee. Tinianow described the importance of giving meaning to the work done by conservation volunteers. "Under proper guidance," said Tinianow, "both adult and children volunteers have proven capable of generating useful data on water quality." Tinianow added that when we give volunteers work meaning in this fashion, we encourage responsibility and care.

Now that Taft has signed the legislation, Audubon Ohio will work with the Ohio EPA to develop regulations that will provide clear guidance to environmental educators on how water sampling should be handled in order to render the results useable in state programs. Audubon Ohio will strive to insure that the regulations set standards that are sufficient to assure reliability of the data generated by volunteers, while still permitting sampling techniques that are affordable, and that can be learned and performed by volunteers, including children.

Dig This

Audubon magazine is looking for chapter members who compost! Please outline in a brief e-mail where you live and the name of your chapter, what kind of compost pile or bin you maintain, where it's placed, what you feed it, what you use the finished compost for, and, if you like, a humorous experience or lesson learned in the process. This information will not be printed verbatim, but will be used to research a future Backyard column. Responses should be sent to Jennifer Bogo, senior editor, jbogo@audubon.org with the subject heading: Audubon Composts. Though we are hoping to hear from as many people as possible, not everyone who responds will be mentioned in the story.

Annual Wild Bird Seed Sale

We're going out on a limb this year to get you the earliest possible information on the chapter's annual wild bird seed sale. Weather and market conditions control the actual prices, however, our friends at Copley Feed and Supply have given us some tentative prices. Please use the attached order blank And order early. Pick up day will be November 8.

Again, we are limiting the offerings to the most popular sellers from the past: Niger seed (thistle) will be sold for \$9 for 10 pounds; black oil sunflower will be \$14.50 for 50 pounds; The popular Oliger mix will be \$6.50 for the 20-pound bag and \$13.50 for the 50-pound size; Bird Banquet (looks good enough to eat!) will cost \$14.50 for the 35-pound bag.

This is the chapter's only fund raiser and the money goes to support educational programs throughout the community.

Here are the offerings:

Niger (thistle)	10 pounds	\$9.00	x =	_____
Oil sunflower	50 pounds	\$15.50	x =	_____
Oliger wild bird mix	50 pounds	\$13.50	x =	_____
	20 pounds	\$6.50	x =	_____
Bird banquet	35 pounds	\$14.50	x =	_____

Total: _____

Multiply the number of bags by the price for each to get your total.

***Mail your order form and check, payable to

Greater Akron Audubon Society, to: JoyWolf Enterprises, P.O. Box 26278, Akron, Ohio 44319

(By cutting up this newsletter form, and using your own stamp and envelope you'll save the chapter nearly \$400)