



GREATER AKRON

# AUDUBON *Matters*

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## **Witt's End**

### *Cracking the Code*

Early in July I was riding my bike through the CVNP. I was on Bath Road near Riverview, opposite the heron rookery. I glanced down at the stream and was stunned at the number of great blue herons standing on the shore and sandbars.

Fortunately, I had my J.J. Audubon signature model bird vocalization translator ring with me. A group of eight or nine juveniles had formed a semicircle around three adults. Obviously it was lesson time. I tweaked the tuner on my ring so I could listen to the conversations between adults and juveniles. Interestingly, reception came in on two frequencies and there seemed to be a failure to communicate between the two groups.

"Oh, gross!" said Gwrak to her cousin. "Did you see what he did?"

"Yuck," said Gweek. "He stuck his whole head in the water and ... Oh god! Like, that thing is still wriggling! And look how he's tossing it around!"

"Cool!" said Gwink, using his wing to poke his brother. "Man, he even gets to pound that thing on rock! Way cool!"

"Now children," said Gwrroonk, "this is where your food comes from."

"But ma," whined Gwrak, "why can't we get it where we always get it. You know, like when you or Gwruunk fly up to the nest and stick your beak down our throats and make that unk, unk, unk sound. And there it is!"

"Yeah. And why do we have to flap our wings all the way from the trees over there to come here for this," complained Gweek.

"Now children," explained Gwrroonk, "this is all part of being a great blue heron. And I emphasize the word great. You don't want to grow up all short and scrawny like that little green and brown fellow over there, do you? Just look at his yellow legs!"

About that time, Gwink and his brother Gwack started tossing sticks into the river, causing the adults to shriek and clatter their beaks.

I began receiving a transmission on some other frequency and tuned my ring as I scanned the branches above the river. Sure enough, two crows were sitting there watching the action.

"Man, don'tcha just love spring training," asked one.

"Caw, caw, caw," chuckled the other. "Let's go drop a few sticks in back of those old guys and watch them jump into the water!"

— By Clyde Witt, editor

## **Programs And Events**

We're back with a full lineup of great program for the coming Audubon year. We have the return of some of your favorite speakers with new topics. And some programs you've never dreamed of.

We'll start the season September 27 with Jim McCormac, president of the Ohio Ornithological Society, author and all round great guy. You'll remember Jim from last year when he spoke to us about birds in Ohio, based on his new field guide. This year Jim will talk about carnivorous plants - some of the more fascinating members of our vegetable life. Many people are surprised to learn we have a number of species right here in Ohio. Of course, most are familiar with the Venus-flytrap which is commonly sold in the nursery trade. While that species isn't native to Ohio, we have some plant carnivores that are equally interesting. Most of our species are rather rare, and this talk will focus on the odd habitats in which they occur, and on the plants themselves

Jim works for the Ohio Division of Wildlife, where he involved primarily with birds and ornithology. Prior to that post, he was botanist for the Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, and has scoured the state looking for rare plants, carnivorous or otherwise.

**October 25** our guest speaker will be from the plant world, however she'll be talking about insects - the praying mantis in particular. Cynthia Druckenbrod is the Glasshouse Manager, Cleveland Botanical Gardens. She is responsible for overseeing all of the plants and animals in the Eleanor Armstrong Smith Glasshouse.

She is an internationally recognized expert on the praying mantis.

**November 22** will be a night for raptors – peregrine falcons specifically. Come and meet Victory.

**December 18** will be the annual Christmas Bird Count and Hot Hot Hot Chili Dinner. More on these events in the next newsletter.

Our meetings are always the fourth Tuesday of the month from September through June, except in December when we substitute the annual Christmas count. The meetings are free and open to the public so be sure to bring a friend this month. We meet in the Mingo Shelter on Sand Run Parkway in Sand Run Metro Park. Mingo Shelter is about 1.3 miles west of Portage Path, or 1.75 miles east of Sand Run Road. Doors open at 6:30 PM and the program begins promptly at 7:00 PM.

### **Attention Educators, Naturalists**

The Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters (COAC), with Columbus and Western Cuyahoga Audubon Societies as partnering chapters, is offering a full ornithology scholarship to Audubon's Ornithology Camp at Hog Island, Maine. The purpose of the scholarship is to provide the recipient(s) an opportunity to gain field experiences which will add to the teacher's science-tools skill set.



Lessons learned at the camp can enhance science instruction, and strengthen the link between teachers and the next generation of Ohio environmentalists.

The seven-day Audubon Field Ornithology Camp at Hog Island is held in June. The scholarship includes full tuition, \$985. To qualify, applicants must be an Ohio educator, either formal or non-formal. They must submit a letter of recommendation from an Ohio Audubon chapter or a partnering organization, and submit an essay describing your role as an educator. You should include your experience in conservation issues and environmental education, and note how you would incorporate the new knowledge into instruction. Write 250 to 500 words with your contact information on a cover page only. You must also commit to leading either a student program or an

educator workshop using the skills developed during the scholarship camp experience.

You must apply by October 15th, 2005:

(1) e-mail a WORD file of the essay and cover sheet to [dee96921@yahoo.com](mailto:dee96921@yahoo.com); (2) mail a hard copy with the letter of recommendation to Delle Nadler, P.O. Box 87, Bath, OH 44210-0087. The scholarship award will be announced February 1.

### **Good News About Kirtland's Warblers**

Michigan DNR officials on July 11 released its annual survey information indicating the state's population of the endangered Kirtland's Warbler is increasing.

Biologists, researchers and volunteers counted 1,415 singing males during the 2005 official census period. This count exceeds the 1,348 males observed in 2004, and represents the largest number recorded since monitoring began. The census was started in 1951, and has been conducted annually since 1971. The lowest numbers were recorded in 1974 and 1987, when only 167 singing males were found.

For more information on the Kirtland's Warbler, contact the MDNR, Wildlife Division, Natural Heritage Program at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr).

*(Special thanks to Jim McCormac for this report.)*

### **Your Help Needed to Save Arctic Refuge**

The fight over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is heating up -- Your Help Needed! Audubon is making a big push to save the pristine wilderness in Alaska from destructive oil drilling and you can help.

After 25 years of fighting, our last best chance to protect the refuge will be in the House of Representatives on a vote quickly approaching in September. All Audubon chapters and Audubon members around the country will be using this opportunity to weigh in with their members of Congress and fight at this critical time for one of the more pristine places left in America.

Every member of Congress will be voting on this measure and right now, it's too close to call. Log on to Audubon's special "Protect the Arctic" website - accessed via [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), or contact Desiree Groves in Audubon's public policy office in Washington, DC at 202-861-2242, x. 3038 ([dgroves@audubon.org](mailto:dgroves@audubon.org)) to find out more about how you can help.

### **Nesting Census Results**

*By Ann Chaser and Doug Vogus, coordinators*

Temperatures during the 10 day summer census period ranged from well above average to the lowest temperature of the month on June 18th. Most days were sunny with only one day with 0.32 inches of rain. A record number of observers found a record number of total birds!

Species abundance reflected recent GAAS trends. Of note were: a continued increase in mute swans; only one great horned owl and one screech owl during 10 hours of owling by Culls; good numbers of woodpeckers and hawks; a continued downtrend in bank swallows. Except for yellow warblers and common yellowthroats, warblers were found sporadically in select habitat. However, it is nice to harbor 19 species of warblers! Grassland species were found in fair numbers, reflecting both efforts to preserve grasslands and as yet undeveloped southern areas of the county. There were no detectable effects of the long, snowy winter. Four (!) species totally new to the GAAS census were exciting finds: a common tern over Nimisila Reservoir, a snipe from a small wetland in the NW corner of the county, dickcissels in two southern areas, a lark sparrow at the Akron sewage plant. These increased the cumulative total species over the 28 years of the GAAS June census to 172!

Many thanks to all who helped: Greg Bennett, Virginia Baumgardner, June Beyman, Peg Bobel, Dodie Boyd, Jackie Bradshaw, Jenny & Dave Brumfield, Virginia Buerki, Robert Capanna, Dwight & Ann Chasar, Sue Chester, Pat Coy, Wayne Crouse, George & Sandy Cull, Robert Curtis, Phyllis Devlin, Fred & Cheryl Dinkelbach, Lois Eckert, Paul Ellsworth, Mary Ann Faruque, Marty & Anne Gulbransen, Judy & Michele Hendrick, Larry Hunter, Mary Lou Hura, Jim & Linda Kennedy, Diane Johnson, Susan Jones, Steve & Marilyn Kaminsky, Laura & Paul Kammermeier, Winnie Kennedy, Jim Knisely, Steve Kolbe, George & Linda Kovach, Nancy Ibsen, Fred Losi, Brad Lyell, Wilbur McQueen, Marie Morgan, Hope Orr, Bill Osborne, Mike Pasek, Wolfgang & Joyce Pelz, Marlo Perdicas, Ed Pierce, Mary Reinthal, Jim Reyda, Sally & Norm Richenbacher, Pat Rydquist, Bert Szabo, Doug Vogus, Jim Vogus, Annette Webb, Ethyl Wheland, and Clyde Witt

## **28th GREATER AKRON AUDUBON SOCIETY SUMMIT COUNTY BIRD COUNT, JUNE 10-19th, 2005**

1312 Canada Goose	69 Hairy Woodpecker	1 Northern Parula	48 Mute Swan*
128 Northern Flicker	631 Yellow Warbler*	118 Wood Duck	43 Pileated Woodpecker*
8 Chestnut-sided Warbler	1046 Mallard*	154 Eastern Wood-Pewee	13 Black-throated Green Warbler
1 Hooded Merganser	122 Acadian Flycatcher	13 Yellow-throated Warbler*	31 Wild Turkey
5 Alder Flycatcher	7 Pine Warbler*	3 Pied-billed Grebe	115 Willow Flycatcher
2 Prairie Warbler	21 Double-crested Cormorant	3 Least Flycatcher	23 Cerulean Warbler
560 Great Blue Heron	121 Eastern Phoebe	3 Black & White Warbler	44 Green Heron
128 Great Crested Flycatcher*	39 American Redstart	124 Turkey Vulture	85 Eastern Kingbird
4 Prothonotary Warbler	6 Osprey	20 White-eyed Vireo	37 Ovenbird
3 Sharp-shinned Hawk	29 Yellow-throated Vireo	7 Louisiana Waterthrush	26 Cooper's Hawk
9 Blue-headed Vireo	3 Kentucky Warbler	30 Red-shouldered Hawk	167 Warbling Vireo*
1 Mourning Warbler	6 Broad-winged Hawk	363 Red-eyed Vireo	298 Common Yellowthroat
71 Red-tailed Hawk	621 Blue Jay	126 Hooded Warbler	7 American Kestrel
421 American Crow	12 Yellow-breasted Chat	8 Virginia Rail	7 Horned Lark
133 Scarlet Tanager	3 Sora	129 Purple Martin	193 Eastern Towhee
2 Common Moorhen	378 Tree Swallow*	420 Chipping Sparrow	1 American Coot
141 N.Rough-winged Swallow	128 Field Sparrow	191 Killdeer	114 Bank Swallow
1 Lark Sparrow	10 Spotted Sandpiper	384 Barn Swallow	78 Savannah Sparrow
1 Wilson's Snipe	636 Black-capped Chickadee	18 Grasshopper Sparrow	6 American Woodcock
294 Tufted Titmouse	1089 Song Sparrow*	166 Ring-billed Gull	4 Red-breasted Nuthatch
73 Swamp Sparrow	4 Herring Gull	169 White-breasted Nuthatch	1210 Northern Cardinal
1 Common Tern	5 Brown Creeper	198 Rose-breasted Grosbeak	264 Rock Pigeon
100 Carolina Wren	302 Indigo Bunting	831 Mourning Dove	357 House Wren
3 Dickcissel	4 Black-billed Cuckoo	5 Marsh Wren	125 Bobolink
46 Yellow-billed Cuckoo	59 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1661 Red-winged Blackbird	7 Eastern Screech-Owl
124 Eastern Bluebird	45 Eastern Meadowlark	3 Great Horned Owl	44 Veery
1207 Common Grackle	5 Barred Owl	1 Hermit Thrush	406 Brown-headed Cowbird
6 Common Nighthawk	140 Wood Thrush	21 Orchard Oriole	642 Chimney Swift
2674 American Robin	298 Baltimore Oriole	60 Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	807 Gray Catbird
6 Purple Finch	35 Belted Kingfisher	18 Brown Thrasher	320 House Finch
5 Red-headed Woodpecker	2272 European Starling	1116 American Goldfinch	242 Red-bellied Woodpecker
633 Cedar Waxwing*	1545 House Sparrow	249 Downy Woodpecker	71 Blue-winged Warbler

\*record high for that species

Total Species: 128 Total Birds: 30299 Party Hours: 350 + 11 owling