



GREATER AKRON

# AUDUBON *Matters*

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## **Witt's End**

### *Why Legislation Fails*

There are a couple of environmental stories in this issue that brought to mind a story that Susan related to me a couple months back. She was speaking with a co-worker about the coming weekend and mentioned she was going birding. After explaining to the co-worker what "birding" is, the co-worker asked why she was going somewhere else – didn't she have birds in her own yard?

Environmentalists talk with each other so often we tend to forget we're still in the minority. So what can we do? Take a good look at the initiatives the chapter is making to establish direction and bring purpose to our organization. The historic evolution of our chapter, since its early days as the Cuyahoga Falls Bird Club, has been to grow and focus on issues other than birds.

We have become a vibrant environmental organization that has within its power the ability to preserve our little patch of the world for birds and other animals; and to make it a better place for our kids and grandchildren. It's easy. You commit to the cause of environmental progress and preservation; educate those around you; and let the politicians know you are one of 60 million birders in this country and that you vote. Simple enough.

— By Clyde Witt, editor

## **Meetings**

Faster than a speeding bullet? Well, you might think so if you're an overweight rock pigeon. Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound? Why jump when you can fly? How about, more powerful than a locomotive? When you have razor-sharp talons, who needs powerful? If you want to learn about peregrine falcons, possibly the fastest bird on two wings, come to the meeting November 22nd. Our speakers will be Chris and Chad Saladin, from the Medina Raptor Rehab Center. If their impressive multi-media show doesn't make an impression on you, they'll have a feathered

friend along with them who certainly will. Come and see a super show and meet a Super Bird.

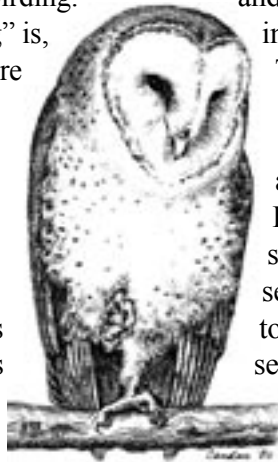
The chapter holds meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month, except for December when we do the Christmas Count. June is our annual picnic so the meeting place is not always the same. There are no meetings in July and August. Meetings are held at the Mingo Shelter in Sand Run MetroPark in the Merriman Valley. The entrance is off Sand Run Parkway, east of the ford and east of the Shady Hollow Pavilion (our previous meeting site.) Check MetroParks Maps at [www.summitmetroparks.org](http://www.summitmetroparks.org) for a map of Sand Run Park. The doors open at 6:30 and the meeting starts at 7:00. We usually start with a short business session before the main program. Meetings are open to the public so bring a friend. Refreshments are served by our stellar hospitality committee.

In lieu of the regular meeting in December, we'll again participate in the annual Audubon Christmas Count December 18. At the end of the day, our delicious chili dinner will be held at the Seiberling Naturealm on Smith Road this year, not Mingo Shelter. The chili, prepared by the executive committee, will be hot about 4:30 PM. The doors will remain open until 7:00 PM. The executive committee will provide everything you need except an appetite. Bring your count data and swap stories with fellow counters.

## **Forward Planning**

October 29th, nine members of the chapter's executive committee met with Christie Vargo, director of development for Audubon Ohio. The purpose of the gathering was to assess the chapter's strengths and set forth a plan of action. While our chapter is financially stable, it lacks a central focus. And in spite of having more than a thousand members, it suffers from low visibility in the Greater Akron community.

Christie, bringing with her a wealth of knowledge and experience in environmental causes, facilitated the five-hour meeting held at the Bath Nature Preserve. The



process on which the officers have embarked is not one they can successfully complete without input from the membership. Its goals will not be achieved in a matter of months.

The evolving plan is a long-range endeavor, based on the similar three-prong approach used by National Audubon; conservation, education and policy.

Even though implementation of the plan will take some time, changes have already begun. At the chapter meetings, for example, you'll find cards on which to make suggestions. We're looking for ways to make Greater Akron Audubon more responsive to environmental issues in our community. We also need suggestions for programs and projects you would like to see and participate in. We need to know if the time and place for our monthly meetings most suitable, for example.

"Opportunities for our chapter are numerous," says Mark Purdy, president. "We have immediate access to a national park. And the Bath Nature Preserve, where we've been instrumental from the beginning, is like a clean sheet of paper on which we can help draw the future."

The mission of National Audubon has always been to connect people with nature; to bring people to the nature experience. Our chapter is launching a similar mission that can only be successful with volunteer help and input from all its members. One of the first things we need is to add a volunteer coordinator to our executive committee. This person will work with members, helping to identify the most satisfying, useful and rewarding activities within the organization. If you'd like to fill this critical role, contact Mark or any member of the executive committee.

### **Turning Back the Clock.**

Most people turn back the clock one hour at the end of October. It seems that our elected officials in Washington turned back the clock 30 years at the end of September. U.S. House of Representatives demonstrated its determination to roll back 30 years of conservation success when it voted to pass HR 3824. The legislation, more aptly called the "Extinction Bill," undermines the protection of habitat critical to endangered and threatened wildlife, while delivering a windfall in benefits for wealthy landowners and developers, at taxpayer expense. Since its passage in 1973, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has successfully protected many endangered species, including the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Whooping Crane. Only 9 out of the 1,800 species listed as threatened or endangered have gone extinct. The "Extinction Bill" puts many more species at risk of being lost forever, abandoned to commercial development and special interests. For 30 years the federal government successfully provided a safety net for them; this legislation tears that up.

"Endangered species are America's weakest and most vulnerable wildlife," said John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society. "When government fails to honor its responsibility to protect the weak and the vulnerable, in favor of the rich and powerful, the weak and the vulnerable eventually die."

This wrong-headed bill, introduced by Congressman Richard Pombo (CA), will simply put all of America's endangered species in harm's way. For more information and to learn how you can help, visit National Audubon's Web Site, [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).

### **Bird Listers Needed**

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon announced the release of eBird 2.0 at [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org). It's an updated version of the powerful Internet-based program currently used by thousands of birders. eBird is a free, user-friendly way for birders across North America to record, archive and share their observations at any hour of the day. It is also an important tool for conservation, providing researchers with a comprehensive picture of the abundance and distribution of birds. The data come to life via eBird's colorful new interactive maps.

In addition to a completely new look and feel, eBird 2.0 has a streamlined data entry process and a suite of new output tools geared toward the interests of today's birders. On customized "My eBird" pages users can now view their life, state and county lists—all generated automatically as individual reports are entered. There are two primary ways to search the data: by location and by species. For example, trip-planners can view a list of all the species recorded near their destination. Those interested in learning more about a particular species can view maps and charts showing seasonal distribution and frequency of reports. Check it out.

### **GAAS Launches New Web Site**

For several years now, executive committee member and all-around hard worker Wolfgang Pelz has maintained our Web site. Some recent changes have made us easier than ever to find us in cyberspace. Just tap in [www.akronaudubon.org](http://www.akronaudubon.org) and there we are! Wolfgang is still doing all the behind the scenes magic that goes into Web maintenance. Check for places to bird, other organizations in the area, information on meetings, joining the chapter and lots of other things.

### **Audubon Ohio Objects to Ohio EPA**

During testimony at a public hearing on October 11 on Middle Bass Island in Lake Erie, Audubon Ohio advised the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) that it opposes granting a permit to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) for a proposed project on

the island. The ODNR project, which would expand an existing state-owned marina and construct campground facilities on Middle Bass Island, would destroy critical wetlands - the most threatened ecosystem in Ohio - in a rare Lake Erie island habitat.

"We are disappointed that a state agency normally charged with protecting natural resources is actively seeking to destroy them," said Audubon Ohio Executive director Jerry Tinianow. "We hope the ODNR will reconsider this ill-advised project."

### **Reminder: Great Backyard Bird Count**

Put a note in your calendar for the following dates next year: February 17-20. That's a weekend not just for watching birds, but for teaching new people about watching birds as part of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). Take a look at past year's results at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc), and get your digital camera ready to share your birds through the online gallery. Participants submit their observations online and can see where their results fit in immediately through maps, charts and tables. There's no fee to take part, and no registration, just the joy of birds and the buzz of seeing your results on the computer. Your challenge is working out what you can do with the GBBC to help you be more successful! For more details, contact Paul Green at [pgreen@audubon.org](mailto:pgreen@audubon.org).

### **Sleigh bells Ring ...**

If you're thinking that winter is rapidly closing in on us, you're right. And that annual rite of winter, the Christmas Bird Count, is looking for volunteers. You'll probably recall the balmy temperatures last year and the hundreds of species counted - in Santa Barbara, not Akron.

This year marks the 106th year of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). It is unquestionably one of the most successful, and longest-running citizen science monitoring programs ever. Ohio has been involved with the CBC since its inception in 1900.

The first Christmas Bird Count had 27 volunteer participants who counted birds in 25 distinct count circles across 13 different states and two Canadian provinces. They collectively counted 18,500 individual birds and 90 total species. Today there are nearly 50,000 volunteer CBC observers throughout the world.

Professor Lynds Jones of Oberlin was one of the original 27 counters of 1900, thereby securing Ohio's place in history as one of the first states to conduct a Christmas Bird Count. During that first Ohio count, Jones counted 14 species which included a red-shouldered hawk, 40 American tree sparrows, and 14 purple finches and only one northern cardinal.

Today there are more than 60 Audubon Christmas Bird Counts throughout Ohio that attract close to 1500 volun-

teer counters who count nearly 20,000 northern cardinals annually, and the number of both volunteers and cardinals goes up each year. It's estimated that nearly three million people in Ohio participate in some form of wildlife-watching activity. Those activities include bird-watching, bird-feeding, landscaping for birds, nature photography, or some other activity like participating in a local Christmas Bird Count.

Our Chapter's count day is December 18, followed by a chili dinner held at Seiberling Naturealm. If you can't get into the field on count day, feeder counters are welcome if you live within the 15-mile diameter of our count circle. The circle is centered in downtown Cuyahoga Falls. It's easy to get in on the fun and camaraderie. Come to the November 22nd chapter meeting to sign up. If you can't make it to the meeting, call Marie Morgan at (330) 867-9850.

### **Something Old For Something New**

The Kirtland Bird Club is looking for past issues of The Cleveland Bird Calendar. The project is to make the calendar available on-line in PDF format at [www.ClevelandBirdCalendar.com](http://www.ClevelandBirdCalendar.com). This is a major project the KBC has undertaken and will be of enormous benefit and interest to all birders when completed. The Cleveland Bird Calendar records all the birding activity in the nine-county region. It's record go back more than 100 years. If you think things are not what they used to be in the good-old-days, this is where you go to check it out.

The calendar is sponsored by the KBC and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. It is the repository for all birding records sent to the calendar editor, currently Kevin Metcalf. Kevin recently took over the job from Larry Rosche who held the post for 16 years. Chapter member Susan Jones is the new design director for the calendar and Clyde Witt is the copy editor.

KBC is especially interested in the issues listed below. If you have or know of anyone who may have these or any past issues please call Delores Cole at (440) 461-1084. You can also talk with Susan and Clyde about this project. KBC would like to have originals if you're willing to donate them. In any case it would appreciate just being able to make copies, which will be returned to you in perfect order.

Here are the issues that are missing from the museum's archives:

Anything before 1931	1945 Vol41 No1, No3
1931 Vol27 No3, No4	1947 Vol43 No1
1933 Vol31 No1, No3, No4	1948 Vol44 No1, No4
1937 Vol33 No1	1960 Vol56 No2 No4
1938 Vol34 No1 & Vol2	1961 Vol57 No1 No2, No3
1944 Vol40 No1, No3, No4	