



GREATER AKRON

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Witt's End

Off the Beaten Path

In mid April, Susan and I took a hike into the Cuyahoga Valley National Park to check an area we'd never visited—which is easy enough to do in this huge gem we call our backyard. Our hike took us straight into the arms of the park. It was one of those areas we drive by all the time and always say, "Someday we're going to have to climb that hill and ..."

Someday finally arrived. This was not a trail you'll find on the map. We just followed the path of least resistance. Everywhere it was evident that winter had marched out with its heavy boots on. Left behind were wounds that Nurse Spring was doing her best to heal and hide. Spring beauties, cut-leaf toothwort and coltsfoot blanketed the hillside. May apples poked up through last year's long-dead grasses and weed stalks. And garlic mustard. Everywhere was invasive garlic mustard.

Another invasive species was the amount of trash. Several balloons from some gala had drifted in. We resolved to bring a trash bag with us next time to haul out the trash mindless people left behind. How can people leave their trash in a spot that is preserved for its beauty?

We followed a deer track to the top of a hill. Along the way ruby-crowned kinglets oblivious to us humans busied themselves. More than a half dozen noisy red-breasted nuthatches gleaned what they could from the bark of walnut and conifer trees. Flitting all around us was a large flock of brown creepers.

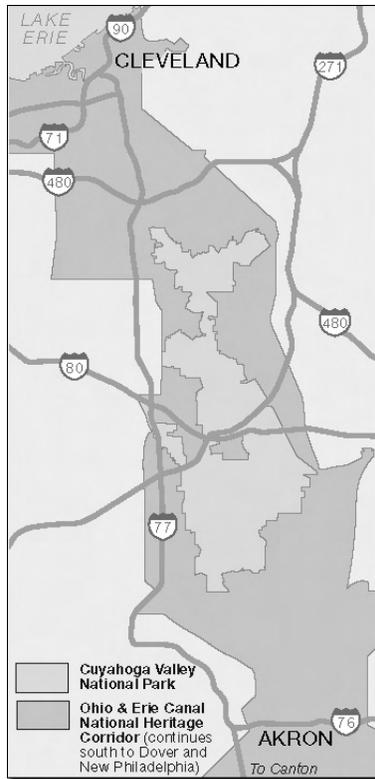
We paused for lunch on top of another hill that offered a commanding view of the Cuyahoga River. A cooperative yellow-bellied sapsucker provided us with an excellent study opportunity. We noted how his legs seem to be set wider on his body than most birds so that he "hugs" the tree as he climbs. To compare and contrast, we had a steady stream of red-bellied woodpeckers, northern flickers, a downy woodpecker and pileated woodpeckers to keep us entertained. We ended the day with 46 species and the warblers had yet to arrive. That's the way to spend a Sunday morning.

– Clyde Witt

Meetings

The chapter holds meetings 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. Check MetroParks Maps at 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 and you are welcome to bring a friend. Plan to stay after the meeting to enjoy refreshments served by our stellar hospitality committee.

Nothing like a couple of days of spring weather to make one haul out the field guides in another desperate attempt to learn those warblers and sparrows-again. It's never too late to get some identification tips from the experts. We're fortunate to have one of those experts right in our backyard and he'll be our guest speaker at the **May 23rd** meeting. Dr. Dan Petit, chief of natural resources, passerine expert and research leader for the Cleveland Metroparks—and all-round good guy—will discuss new research and findings on birds of this area. We'll also talk about this year's warbler migration. This is a great opportunity to talk with one of the nation's leading bird researchers who also happens to be a resident of Summit County.



June 27th we'll have our annual picnic/potluck. This year's event will again be held at Bath Nature Preserve. Last year the picnic was a great success—except for a bit of thunder and lightning—so we're planning a repeat performance. Okay, we'll leave out the severe thunder storms and try to have some ad hoc bird walks for early arrivers. Our guest speaker has not been identified at press time. We'll officially start at our regular time, 6:30 PM, however, you are encouraged to come early and enjoy the activities of bobolinks and eastern meadowlarks, along with many other birds nesting at the preserve. We've invited Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society, Canton Audubon Society and others to enjoy this outstanding place with us. Please bring a dish to share with 10-20 people. The chapter will provide soft drinks, tableware and hospitality.

Breeding Bird Census

Twenty-nine years old and going strong!

This year the GAAS Summit County Breeding bird census will start on Friday, June 16th and end on Sunday, June 25th. An added attraction this year is the start of a new state-wide breeding bird census called *Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II: 2006-2010*. Some of the information from the GAAS survey will provide additional data for this atlas. Anyone who wants more information about the nesting survey and how to participate, please contact Doug Vogus at (330) 865-0776 (e-mail vogeye@yahoo.com), or, Ann Chasar at (330) 467-3664 (e-mail ak450@acorn.net).

Those who helped out last year will automatically be contacted to help again. This is a great project. Our county-wide survey is thought to be the longest running such survey in the state. Data from the survey has been used by researchers for articles in important birding publications.

This project is a bit different from the annual Christmas Count. For one thing, you won't freeze! And because the areas to be surveyed can be done over a two week period, you can pick your time according to the weather. The total area is much greater than the Christmas count; it covers all of Summit County, so we need all the help we can get. Come to the meeting and get your name on the list or talk with one of the chapter officers.

Spring Bird Walks

Once again, the chapter is cooperating with the MetroParks, Serving Summit County, to offer some challenging bird walks. Field Trip Coordinator Marc Nolls has put together a great lineup. Here's the agenda:

- May 6, 8 a.m. Deep Lock Quarry, the Towpath Trail in the CVNP. This is a great spot to hear and see the hooded warbler.
- May 7, 8 a.m. Bath Nature Preserve. Need bobolink for your list? This is one of the top spots in the area to find

this endangered bird.

- May 13, 8 a.m. Liberty Park's Buttonbush Trail. This is a first for us so we're bound to have a great adventure.
- May 14, 8 a.m. Bath Nature Preserve. Eastern meadowlarks should be filling the air with song on this early Sunday morning walk.

Some of these areas are new for many folks so check MetroPark's Web site, www.summitmetroparks.org, or come to the meeting and we'll tell you where to go.

Go Online for GAAS News

Thanks to Web guru Wolfgang Pelz and printing/communications wizard Rich Corbett, our Web site, <http://www.akronaudubon.org>, is up and running and looking better than ever. Wolfgang has reworked the pages making them easier to navigate. You can find the current and archived copies of all of your favorite issues of *Audubon Matters*, along with links to other area conservation organizations, field trip locations and events.

<p>GAAS Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home • Monthly Meetings • Bimonthly Newsletter • Christmas Bird Count • Summer Bird Count • Armchair Activist • Spring Bird Walks • Autumn/Winter Bird Seed Sale • Traveling Display • Audubon Adventures • Wildlife Rehabilitation • Books in Schools Program • Electronic Links, Web pages 	 <p>Greater Akron Audubon Society</p> <p>Welcome</p> <p>Thank you for visiting the home page of the Greater Akron Audubon Society. We hope you enjoy the visit and decide to join in some of our activities. As is common on the Web, these pages are continually changing. Each page should indicate the date of the last change; in addition, this home page will have dates for each of the subsequent pages. If you notice any errors or have any comments on these pages, please direct your messages to info@akronaudubon.org</p>	<p>News for April 2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apr. 25, 2006 Damon Greer, Division of Wildlife - "Black Bears in Ohio, Something's a Bruin" - see Monthly Meetings for details. • Apr. 29, 2006 Garlic Mustard Pull at Bath Nature Preserve - see Bath Nature Preserve for details. • Apr. 7-9, 2006 - Lake Erie Wing Watch Weekend - see Wing Watch for details.
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Chapter Receives Garden Grant

Congratulations! Audubon Ohio and the Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters has awarded our chapter \$841.39 as a Collaborative Funding grant in response to our recent application. We join five other chapters awarded grants in this initial round of funding.

The project, spearheaded by Joyce Pelz, will create a native plant species garden in a prominent space at the Nature Realm, provided by MetroParks, Serving Summit County. Take a walk at the Nature Realm and visit the garden project. It will be clearly identified with signs.

Be Careful Out There

The subject of rabies is not a pleasant one, however, the disease is becoming prevalent in Ohio. This information is provided by Kevin Metcalf, naturalist, North Chagrin Nature Center, Cleveland Metroparks:

I thought I would offer a slightly different perspective on the rabies issue, as someone who works in the field of Outdoor

Education, answers a lot of questions about bats and rabies from the public, and who works at a park where we have had the only Ohio (North American?) case of a rabid coyote with raccoon-strain rabies.

Regarding bats and rabies: It seems that bats are always getting the bum wrap. The general public has a pre-conceived association between bats and rabies, so if a “sick” or downed bat is found, those animals are often assumed rabid and are more likely to get sent in for testing than say, a deer. The heightened fear of bats has led to many bats being killed and widespread public panic in situations where a bat—probably perfectly healthy—is found roosting on a wall in the daytime in plain view.

Regarding raccoons and rabies, I know that many folks are working hard at preventing the spread of rabies further in Ohio and it is a daunting task. Ohio has certainly done an outstanding job relative to some other states, and no doubt the efforts have slowed down or halted the spread in some cases. In 2005 we found that raccoon-strain rabies had jumped the Ohio-Pennsylvania line. Now the line is seemingly through eastern Cuyahoga Co., with our only positive raccoon in the far NE portion of the county.

Feeding wildlife brings animals like raccoons, skunks, coyotes, even black bears (an increasing issue in NE Ohio) into our backyards. Feeding wildlife creates an association between people and an easy meal.

What to do? Make sure compost piles, garbage, pet foods, etc., are inaccessible to those night-time foragers. In regard to bird-feeders, they should be made as mammal-proof as possible. Try to avoid lots of seed on the ground if possible.

By the way, the rabies shots today are nothing like they used to be. You get five injections in a series, with the location of the shots depending on the site of the bite. If your finger gets nipped, you will get them in the shoulder as any other vaccine. You should get your first shot ideally within 24 hours of a bite. They can be effective up to five days after the bite, but don't push it. If you are ever bitten by a wild mammal, by all means get the shots. Your life is worth the very slight discomfort of a rabies injection.

When is a Lake Not a lake?

According to a report from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio has at least 50,000 lakes and ponds, with more than 2,000 covering five acres or more. Not all are true lakes, however, or at least not true “natural” lakes that were in Ohio before early settlers began building farm ponds, reservoirs and canals.

In fact, aside from Lake Erie, most of the well-known recreational lakes in Ohio—the water we enjoy the most—are

definitely human-made. Virtually all are reservoirs, held back by dams and built for water supply or flood control where no lake existed before. Some popular reservoirs fall into a separate category of human-made lakes, tracing their origins to small, natural bodies of water that were greatly enlarged in the 1800s to become feeder-lake reservoirs for Ohio's canals. You would be hard pressed to find any trace of their natural shorelines today. These include Indian Lake, Buckeye Lake and the Portage Lakes chain—now among the most-visited Ohio State Parks. And don't forget western Ohio's Grand Lake St. Marys (13,500 acres), a canal feeder that was once the largest reservoir in the world.

Just where are the true, natural lakes in Ohio? Lake Erie is of course Ohio's grand-champion glacial remnant, followed in size by 385-acre Chippewa Lake in Medina County. Perhaps Ohio's best known and best preserved inland glacial lake is the 100-acre beauty at Punderson State Park in Geauga County. Other glacial lakes have been lost over time to natural processes that transformed them into something quite different: glacial bog meadows. One fascinating example, still in transition, is Triangle Lake Bog State Nature Preserve, just off Interstate 76 in Portage County.

The second type of natural lake in Ohio is more likely to be found in southern counties. These are oxbow lakes, formed when a bend in a winding river became separated from the main flow—either by floods or erosion—then was left on its own as a free-standing body of water. These lakes are not very large and are not very long lasting, therefore most of them tend not to be named.

What's interesting is that only three dozen or so of Ohio's 50,000 lakes and ponds make the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's list of “natural” lakes. Jim Bissell, the museum's curator of botany, places the count at 33. He's been helping compile a list since 1988, and he includes one special qualifier that goes beyond the lake's geological history.

Bodies of water making Bissell's list must not only have natural origins, but also be home to certain floating and deep-water vegetation—often these plants are rare and even endangered. In some cases, these plants may be found exclusively in just one specific lake. He says there are other naturally occurring lakes in Ohio beyond his list of 33, but they no longer support the types of vegetation he looks for as hallmarks of these unique ecosystems.

So, when is a lake not a lake? For those of us without science degrees or clever as second-graders, the answer to that riddle is whatever you want it to be. For me, if it's wet, if you can fish or swim in it, watch ducks swim on it, boat on it or just sit back and enjoy the sun setting across its waters—then it's a lake.

