



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON Matters

Volume XXXII

Number 5

May / June 2007

Witt's End

Expect the Unexpected – by Clyde Witt, editor

Late this spring Susan and I had an opportunity to stop at a birding spot we pass through often enough, yet always miss the exit for. It's one of those spots that never fails to draw the comment, "Some day we'll have to bird that area."

I'm talking about the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, west of Syracuse, New York. The area is bisected by Interstate 90 and millions of people zip through, probably wondering what all those ducks are doing out there, and why doesn't someone build a rest area on all this empty land. Birders know and think differently. We slow down (much to the chagrin of people racing to get to a crowded camp ground and hook up their televisions) watching for whatever we can see. Usually we don't know we're in the refuge until we're, well, in the refuge. We pass the exit before we see the signs. Our brains then default back to, "well, someday."

This time we planned ahead. We found the exit. There were still snow patches on the shade-side of trees. More ducks than could be accurately counted filled the air and the wetlands. The usual passerine suspects were in the trees, along with some early Tree Swallows seining the air. It was a sunny afternoon of birding in a great spot. An immature Bald Eagle provided excitement for us and the waterfowl.

Forced by time and grand-parental instinct, we pushed on. We had to return to the highway the way we came in. While doing so, we checked off the birds on the refuge list, noting which species were rarely seen there, like Sand Hill Cranes, etc. As we rejoined the parade of cars zooming through the refuge we glanced over the landscape, as we always do. There, standing on a hill, near where we had parked only minutes before, was at least one Sandhill Crane! I say at least one because at about the time we spotted the bird, a massive double tractor-trailer rig roared along side and blocked our view. Sort of like the curtain falling on a show you want to go on forever.

Last Meetings of the Season!

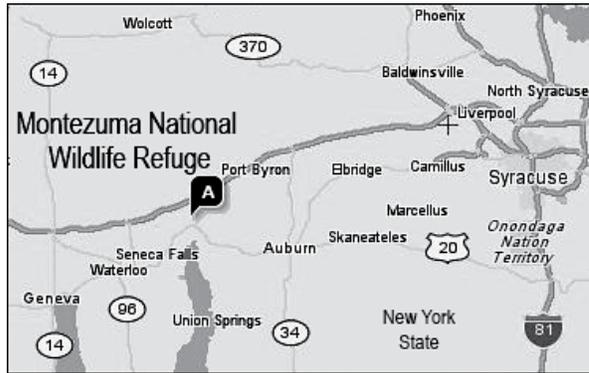
May 22, Dwight Chasar, chapter member, researcher, trip leader and one of the more knowledgeable birders on this part of the planet, will introduce us to Cleveland's wealth of ornithologists, "History of Northeast Ohio Ornithologists." These are fascinating people who have made a contribution to ornithology and

on whose experience we have all built. You'll recognize the names in buildings, clubs and streets. Now you'll learn why these folks are famous.

Our annual picnic will be held **June 26** at the Bath Nature Preserve. Bath Nature Preserve is located on Ira Road, west of Cleveland-Massillon Road. Last year's event was a great success, including the pre-picnic field hike that looked like a never-ending parade of birding fashions.

Our guest speaker this year is Greg Smith from the University of Akron who will talk with us about American Kestrels. We'll officially start at our regular time, 6:30 p.m. 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. You're responsible for your own picnic meal and maybe a bit extra to share. The chapter will provide soft drinks, tableware and hospitality.

The chapter holds its meetings the fourth Tuesday of the month, except for December when we do the Christmas Count. June is our annual picnic. Regular 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. Check MetroParks Maps at www.summit-metroparks.org for a map of Sand Run Park. Doors open at 6:30 and the meeting



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.

The Big 30 is here!

It was the year of the first test tube baby, the movie Grease and the Israel-Egypt Camp David Peace Treaty. And it was the year of the first Akron Audubon summer bird census—1978!

Some of us can remember that first year and others weren't even born then! But the older the census gets the better it gets! At least it does if we stand up and count.

This year the census dates are June 15th through June 24th. The 10-day period allows volunteers to fit the census into their schedule and work around bad weather. Summit County areas are divided among volunteers and every bird seen or heard is recorded for posterity. Recent past results are on our website at www.akronaudubon.org. This event is much like the Annual Christmas Count, minus the cold weather and snow. The real attraction is that you actually see some birds on the summer count.

We always need volunteers. This is a great way to sharpen your birding skills and see new areas of the county. We would especially like to know of any woodcock or nighthawk locations. And if you have an active hawk nest or resident owl calling in your neighborhood during the June 15-24th dates, let us know.

Contact Doug Vogus at 330-865-0776 (e-mail vogeyeye@yahoo.com) or Ann Chasar at 330-467-3664 (e-mail ascdwc43@yahoo.com) if you would like more information. Those who helped out last year will be contacted to help out again.

Show Time!

Akron's own, Larry Hunter has made it to the big time. Well, Hollywood is not calling exactly, however, Larry and the Portage Lakes Purple Martin Association (PLPMA) are featured in Wild Ohio, Ohio Division of Wildlife's free publication (www.wildohio.com).

The story details the success of the PLPMA along with how to care for Purple Martin houses. Larry says, like any real estate deal, successful martin attraction is all about location. If you're interested in more information about these fascinating birds, contact the Purple Martin Conservation Association at www.purplemartin.org. To learn about the PLPMA, and discover how you can volunteer for this important project in our backyard, contact Larry at (330) 644-1540.

Look But Don't Touch

This important message from the Ohio Division of Wildlife. Is it really an orphan? In the spring and early summer, you may have the good fortune to observe a nest of birds or a young mammal with no adult in sight. Enjoy the scene, but unless there appears to be something amiss; a nest out of the tree, broken legs or wings, or wounds and bleeding—leave it alone. Many species of animals are raised by one adult that may temporarily

leave its offspring in search of the next meal. Wildlife parents are devoted to the care of their young and rarely abandon them (abandonment is usually a result of injury or death). Since they cannot be in two places at once, the young may be left alone several times a day. When in doubt, contact your county wildlife officer who can get you in contact with licensed wildlife rehabilitators, trained to handle cases of orphaned animals.

Audubon Ohio Photo Contest

The Audubon Ohio photo contest is open to amateur (Defined as anyone who earns less than 10% of their income from photography.) nature and wildlife photographers. The event will run through August 31st.

The submission categories highlight two of Audubon Ohio's conservation initiatives: Audubon At Home and Important Bird Areas. The Audubon At Home category will accept photos of birds photographed in backyards, community parks, neighborhoods, and cities. The Important Bird Areas category will accept photos of birds photographed in Ohio's Important Bird Areas, which are listed at (<http://www.audubonohio.org/bsc/sites.html>).

You can submit digital photos by sending them as an attachment to ohio@audubon.org with "Audubon Photo Contest" in the subject line of the message. Digital photo attachments should be no larger than 2MB in size, and should be in a .jpg format.

Print photos can be mailed to: Audubon Ohio, 692 N. High St., Suite 303, Columbus, OH 43215. These will be scanned and added to the Web site along with the digital photos. Prints should be no smaller than 4 x 6 inches and no larger than 8 x 10 inches. If you would like your photo returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope large enough to accommodate the photo along with your submission.

Accompanying each photo you must identify 1) which category you are entering, 2) where the photo was taken, 3) when the photo was taken, 4) the kind of equipment used [e.g. Nikon camera and spotting scope digiscope set-up] and 5) contact information [mailing address, daytime phone number, and e-mail address]. Additional information, like the story behind the photo, would be helpful. You can enter as many times as you like. Photo submissions will be up-loaded to the Audubon Ohio Web site once every two weeks for everyone to view. Photographers will retain the copyright to their photos, but submission to the contest implies permission for Audubon Ohio to use the photos in other media during the duration of the contest.

House Approves Great Lakes Restoration Bill

Decades of dumping raw sewage into the Great Lakes have put them at great risk. National Audubon has issued a statement applauding the House of Representatives for approving HR 720, which will fund the most critical part of the effort to clean up the Great Lakes. Clean water is essential to public health and the environment. This House action puts us one step closer to cleaning up the mess.

HR 720, the Water Quality Financing Act of 2007, autho-

\$14 billion over four years for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). The CWSRF provides low-interest loans to construct wastewater treatment facilities and other pollution-abatement projects. The vote count was 303 to 108.

Fully funding the CSWRF is considered a critical part of the 2005 Great Lakes Regional Collaboration agreement designed to end the flow of wastewater from flowing into the lakes by 2020.

Another water-sources bill (HR 700), which passed, 368-59, authorizes \$125 million for local governments, water agencies and non-governmental organizations.

The Senate is expected to take up HR 720 later this year. The Great Lakes watershed is one of the world's most significant ecological systems, on which the region's fisheries, birds, other wildlife, and people depend. Close to 95% of America's fresh surface water is contained in the Great Lakes, providing drinking water for 40 million people. Additionally, the Great Lakes provide habitat and migration routes for 400 bird species, including the Great Blue Heron. Audubon is focusing on bird and wildlife habitat restoration and protection of open spaces adjacent to Great Lakes wetlands, particularly in Important Bird Area watersheds.

Keep Your Eyes Wide Open

Here is some interesting information from the Ohio Division of Wildlife. When you're out there birding, you might not be as alone as you think. There is increased evidence of bobcats living in Ohio's eastern and southeastern counties. There were 37 confirmed sightings by state wildlife officials during 2006, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. This represents a marked increase from the 20 verified sightings in 2005.

The bobcat was found throughout Ohio during early settlement, but as land was converted for crops and communities the bobcat's population declined. By 1850, the animal could no longer be found living in the state. A handful of unverified sightings in the 1960s marked the bobcat's unofficial return. Since 1970, state wildlife biologists have verified 122 bobcat sightings in 33 counties.

Verification of the elusive bobcat includes photographs of the animal and its tracks; encounters through incidental trapping, from which animals are later released; recovery of road kill and sightings by Division of Wildlife personnel. The Division of Wildlife also received 134 unverified bobcat reports last year.

In 1997, the Division of Wildlife began monitoring bobcats in Ohio using a combination of field surveys and follow-up investigations of sightings. These efforts have been supported by the Wildlife Diversity and Endangered Species fund, which receives donations from Ohioans through the state income tax check-off program and by the purchase of cardinal license plates.

And if bobcats seem too small to worry about, approximately 22 different black bears were confirmed in the Buckeye State. While the number of bears in Ohio may not exactly increase, sightings of the burly creatures certainly will.

"During the months of May, June, and July, young male black bears disperse on a quest to find their own territory. This is called "yearling dispersal," explained Dan Kramer, wildlife management supervisor for northeast Ohio. Yearling dispersal occurs when an adult female bear (referred to as a sow) boots her year-old cub out of the family unit so she can breed and raise a new litter of cubs. Young females have smaller ranges and seldom venture as far as males to establish territories.

The Division of Wildlife estimates the Buckeye bear population at somewhere around 50 to 60 black bears living in Ohio year round. During 2006, a total of 113 reported sightings of black bears occurred in 20 Ohio counties. Most sightings occurred in northeast and southeast Ohio. "In northeast Ohio, a total of 76 sightings were reported in 12 counties," Kramer said. "Ashtabula led the state with 44 sightings followed by Geauga (19 sightings) and Trumbull (13 sightings) counties," noted Kramer.

Every year, many bear reports in Ohio are associated with nuisance situations. Once people become "beareducated" problem bears often disappear. Moving bird feeders higher, keeping trash inside until pick up day, and cleaning up after grilling out all help to deter bears from becoming nuisances.

Efforts to monitor the Ohio black bear have been supported by the Wildlife Diversity and Endangered Species fund, which receives donations from Ohioans through the state income tax check-off program and by the purchase of cardinal license plates.

The black bear is protected by state law. For more about Ohio's wildlife diversity, visit the Division's Web page, www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife.

Global Warming Solvable

In response to the recently released United Nation's report on global warming, Audubon President John Flicker, said, "This latest report from the world's scientists makes it clear that people and governments have it within their power to curb global warming, but that time is running short. Humans caused the problem, and it's up to humans to fix it.

"There is much good news here and even reason for optimism if we listen and heed the call to action. The report confirms that many of the technologies we need to address the problem already exist and simply need to be deployed in a serious way. The U.S. can start filling the scientists' prescription by rapidly adopting emissions caps, renewable electricity standards, energy conservation measures, and improving fuel efficiency.

"The report makes it clear that voluntary measures have had no effect—these cannot be take 'em or leave 'em approaches. The world's best scientists are telling us that it will take serious changes backed by the force of law if we want to minimize the risk to people and wildlife.

"Every poll confirms that the American public is clamoring for solutions to this grave threat. The clock is ticking and the White House has failed to lead the way. Now it's up to Congress to set the course that science prescribes to lead us away from the threats of global warming and toward a brighter energy future."