



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON *Matters*

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Witt's End

... **Getting' By With a Little Help** – by *Clyde Witt, editor*

At the most recent meeting of the chapter's executive committee, the first item on the agenda was chapter finances. Our biggest expense is in your hands—this newsletter.

The discussion (not a debate) was how to: Plan A – cut the cost (we spent about \$800 per issue, on five issues last year), or, Plan B – increase the revenue. Basic economics, really.

No one liked potential answers to Plan A. The newsletter is our link to the nearly 1,000 members we have in the Greater Akron area. It has to be the best that it can be. That leaves us with Plan B. Our only fund raiser is the annual seed sale. On that, our net profit barely covers the cost of a single issue. So, to save the newsletter, we've opted to raise money the old fashioned way—we're going to beg for it.

If each member contributes \$5 per year, our newsletter costs will be nearly covered.

We do receive some funds from National Audubon in the form of a dues split; about 12%, or \$2,450 out of the \$20,000 our members paid to National.

Occasionally, we receive a memorial gift. In fact, it was a major bequeath many years ago, then invested, that keeps us going. Paper costs and postal charges are rising, however.

Treasurer Dick Parker estimates, at our current rate of spending, not figuring rising costs, we'll go bust in about seven years.

Is the newsletter worth an extra \$5 per year?

Here's how you can save the newsletter. Mail a check for \$5, payable to Greater Akron Audubon Society (with Newsletter Fund in the memo section), P.O. Box 80056, Akron, OH 44308. Simpler for you, bring that check to any of our dynamic meetings this year, hand it to one of the officers and tell him or her what you think of the job we're doing. Thanks.

2007-2008 Program Line-Up

In an unceasing effort to bring its members the best programs in the region, the executive committee has put together yet another stellar program agenda. Not every month is filled and not all of the programs have titles. As of press time, here's some of the internationally known folks we've lined up.

September 25: Dead Birds Tell Many Tales. We're fortunate to have Dr. Andy Jones, curator of ornithology, Cleveland Museum of Natural History as our guest speaker. Andy presented this program to an international audience at the Museum and it is one not to be missed. He describes how today's methods in molecular biology are revolutionizing the way we study birds. With these new techniques, museum specimens can tell us a great deal about migratory pathways, genetic changes through time and surprising details about bird colors.

October 23: We have another internationally known birder -- Greg Miller. If his name sounds familiar it's because Greg was one of three birders profiled in the best selling book: *The Big Year: A tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession*, by Bob Obmascik. In one of the wackiest competitions around, every year hundreds of obsessed bird watchers participate in a contest known as the North American Big Year. In this entertaining book, Obmascik, a journalist with the Denver Post, tells the stories of the three top contenders in the 1998 American Big Year. The author follows each of the three birding fanatics as they travel thousands of miles in search of such hard-to-find species as the crested myna, the pink-footed goose and the fork-tailed flycatcher, spending thousands of dollars and braving rain, sleet, snowstorms, swamps, deserts, mosquitoes and garbage dumps in their attempts to outdo each other. Greg was one of those three and will give us the inside story about doing a big year. Fasten your seat belts and hang on to your wallet.

November 27: Watch this space.

December 16: is the Annual Christmas Count and Chili Dinner. More on those in the November Newsletter.

After the first of the year we'll have an update on Butterflies and Dragonflies with our own Larry Rosche who spoke with us a couple years ago when his book on the subject was published. In February it's a wild trip to Trinidad and Tobago with Clyde Witt and Susan Jones.

Chapter meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of the month, except for December when we do the Christmas Count. June is our annual picnic meeting, typically at Bath Nature Preserve. 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. 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.

Local Boy Makes Good

Marc Nolls, our field trip chairman and all-round-hard-working-guy, has been elected to serve on the board of the Ohio Ornithological Society.

He says he got interested in the activities of OOS about four years ago. "I realized how much I enjoyed birding, and decided to step-up and strive to become a serious birder."

He became more active in our chapter events as well as state-wide activities. "During that time, I became acquainted with the 'birding crowd' around the state; those who seemed to be most active and experienced. I am grateful for both the social and educational aspects of those new experiences."

In December 2006, Jim McCormac, president of the Ohio Ornithological Society (OOS), asked him to run for the board-of-director elections at the annual conference, held at Mohican State Park in May. He was elected to office and the rest is—or will be—history.

"My new responsibility is Northeast Regional Director, which includes a long list of official duties," says Marc. "Outside the business of the board meetings, my primary responsibility is raising awareness and membership of the society throughout the Northeast Region of Ohio.

"I am very excited to be involved with such a group of experienced birders with a common passion and vision to organize and serve the Ohio birding community. I anticipate another exciting learning curve as I contribute to, and receive back from, the Ohio Ornithological Society."

The OOS conferences, workshops, and field trips are an enjoyable way to strengthen your birding skills and meet fellow birders from around the state. For more information on the OOS, its activities, and its resource tools, ask Marc, or, visit its Web site at www.OhioBirds.org.

Audubon Chapters Build Ties with Congress

Chapter leaders have been working with Audubon Ohio to build relationships with key members of Congress. One such member is Representative Betty Sutton, elected to the district formerly held by now-Senator Sherrod Brown. Audubon has two active chapters in her district, ours and Black River Audubon. Lucky for us, her staff is willing to listen to our concerns.

This report is from Marnie Urso, grassroots coordinator, Audubon Ohio: In July, Greater Akron Audubon Society member Joyce Pelz joined me in Rep. Sutton's Akron office and has this to say: "Visiting with Rep. Betty Sutton's staffers, impressed me," says Joyce. "Why? I have visited with several staff people in Washington over time and they are interested, but not as enthusiastic. Jerel was very familiar with global warming/renewable energy issues and eager to hear what we had to say. His questions were thought provoking. He conveyed

the impression that his boss wanted him to learn as much as he could. Therefore, our personal visit was important to open his mind to our recommendations. Now we need more people to contact the office by phone, e-mail, fax or more personal appointments to shore up the forces!"

Top item in the July discussion was current legislation on global warming, with a request from the Audubon members that Congresswoman Sutton become a co-sponsor. This included statements of the urgent need to proceed with experimentation and research into alternate energy sources to reduce our dependency on oil and to minimize environmental damage caused by our present industrial and consumer practices.

Strickland to Lakefront Owners: The Beach is Yours -- Maybe



In an effort to keep an ill-advised promise to owners of properties on the shore of Lake Erie, Governor Ted Strickland issued a mushy policy statement on July 13th. In the statement, the Governor announced, "apparently valid real property deeds must be honored unless a court of law determines that the deeds are limited by or subject to the public's interest in those lands or are otherwise defective and/or unenforceable."

Audubon Ohio has struggled ever since to understand what the Governor means by his statement. What does it mean to "honor" a deed? What makes a deed "apparently valid?"

The Governor's statement stems from an ongoing controversy over the extent of the state's public trust over the waters of Lake Erie and the lands that lie under those waters. Audubon Ohio and many of its sister organizations believe that the state holds the land up to the "ordinary high water mark" in trust for the use of its people, and that the people have the right to walk along any portion of the beach below that line when it is exposed due to lower lake water levels. Owners, however, believe that the public may only walk in the water and that the State has no public trust above the line where the water meets the land, regardless of how high or low lake water levels are.

On August 10, 2006, then-candidate Strickland met with Audubon Ohio and other conservation groups and announced that he was still studying the issue. The very next day, however, he sent a letter to the Ohio Lakefront Group, which represents lakefront owners, stating that he agreed with their position.

Fortunately, we still have a key friend in state government who is willing to stand up for Audubon Ohio's interpretation of the law. In a lawsuit filed against the state by lakefront owners, Attorney General Marc Dann recently filed a brief that agrees completely with Audubon Ohio's position. Curiously, in his July 13th statement, Governor Strickland announced that the attorney general would continue to argue this position in the lawsuit, even though it is contrary to the governor's own position. In a meeting with Audubon Ohio's executive director on July 25, the attorney general insisted that he will continue to defend the historic right of the public to access the entire shore of Lake Erie up to the ordinary high-water mark.

[This article was submitted by Audubon Ohio Executive Director Jerry Timianow]

Summer Bird Census

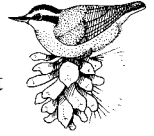
— by Ann Chasar and Doug Vogus

In June we completed another Summit County nesting bird survey, thanks to many volunteers. Here, Ann and Doug provide a word picture of what all those numbers mean.

1978... fast forward to 2007. Most species recorded in the first GAAS Breeding Bird Survey are still present and more are found as volunteers provide better coverage. From 30 years of data we can say a bit about bird populations in Summit County: Whip-poor-wills and Northern Bobwhites are ghosts of the past. Common Moorhens and Common Nighthawks aren't common anymore. Cooper's, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks all seem to be increasing. While Ring-necked Pheasants decreased through the 1980-90s, the spread of Canada Goose, Mute Swan and House Finch became evident. Double-crested Cormorant, Wild Turkey, Yellow-throated and Pine Warblers have all been regularly reported only since

the early 1990s. Strong increases in Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird and Yellow Warbler have made these species wonderfully common. Grassland birds can still be found in appropriate habitat in small numbers matching the early years. Song and Chipping Sparrows are abundant, while Field Sparrows seem to be declining. Veery, Wood Thrush and Hooded Warbler, neotropical migrants, seem to be holding their own. Other species continue to surprise us. The King Rail found at Turkeyfoot Lake brought the total number of species recorded during the thirty years to 183!

Summit County's varied habitats have hosted a good number of species. But the comments on data sheets turned in by volunteers stress one theme: Habitat is disappearing fast! What will the next 30 years show?



24 Mute Swan	189 Eastern Wood-Pewee	608 Cedar Waxwing
191 Wood Duck	96 Acadian Flycatcher	54 Blue-winged Warbler
951 Mallard	3 Alder Flycatcher	524 Yellow Warbler
44 Wild Turkey	90 Willow Flycatcher	2 Chestnut-sided Warbler
24 Double-crested Cormorant	4 Least Flycatcher	11 Black-throated Green Warbler
464 Great Blue Heron	86 Eastern Phoebe	10 Yellow-throated Warbler
56 Green Heron	103 Great Crested Flycatcher	6 Pine Warbler
117 Turkey Vulture	116 Eastern Kingbird	14 Cerulean Warbler
10 Osprey (3 were juveniles)	14 White-eyed Vireo	28 American Redstart
2 Bald Eagle	26 Yellow-throated Vireo	2 Prothonotary Warbler
6 Sharp-shinned Hawk	6 Blue-headed Vireo	1 Worm-eating Warbler
22 Cooper's Hawk(2 were juveniles)	136 Warbling Vireo	26 Ovenbird
21 Red-shouldered Hawk	349 Red-eyed Vireo	6 Louisiana Waterthrush
4 Broad-winged Hawk	710 Blue Jay	2 Kentucky Warbler
102 Red-tailed Hawk	420 American Crow	305 Common Yellowthroat
8 American Kestrel (2 juveniles)	13 Horned Lark	98 Hooded Warbler
5 Peregrine Falcon(family unit)	215 Purple Martin	112 Scarlet Tanager
1 King Rail	383 Tree Swallow	170 Eastern Towhee
1 Virginia Rail	250 N.Rough-winged Swallow	515 Chipping Sparrow
1 Common Moorhen	170 Bank Swallow	107 Field Sparrow
2 American Coot	4 Cliff Swallow	56 Savannah Sparrow
269 Killdeer	470 Barn Swallow	14 Grasshopper Sparrow
17 Spotted Sandpiper	691 Black-capped Chickadee	4 Henslow's Sparrow
62 Ring-billed Gull	298 Tufted Titmouse	952 Song Sparrow
15 Herring Gull	5 Red-breasted Nuthatch	66 Swamp Sparrow
188 Rock Pigeon	267 White-breasted Nuthatch	3 Dark-eyed Junco
760 Mourning Dove	12 Brown Creeper	1139 Northern Cardinal
8 Black-billed Cuckoo	81 Carolina Wren	163 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
61 Yellow-billed Cuckoo	455 House Wren	293 Indigo Bunting
7 Eastern Screech-Owl	1 Winter Wren	4 Dickcissel
2 Great Horned Owl	7 Marsh Wren	123 Bobolink
7 Barred Owl	3 Golden-crowned Kinglet	1977 Red-winged Blackbird
10 Common Nighthawk	43 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	66 Eastern Meadowlark
409 Chimney Swift	117 Eastern Bluebird	1305 Common Grackle
61 Ruby-throated Hummingbird	47 Veery	381 Brown-headed Cowbird
41 Belted Kingfisher	6 Hermit Thrush	35 Orchard Oriole
3 Red-headed Woodpecker	166 Wood Thrush	229 Baltimore Oriole
247 Red-bellied Woodpecker	2396 American Robin	3 Purple Finch
271 Downy Woodpecker	906 Gray Catbird	391 House Finch
70 Hairy Woodpecker	2 Northern Mockingbird	1320 American Goldfinch
112 Northern Flicker	11 Brown Thrasher	1375 House Sparrow

1978: Total Species: 99 Total Birds: 4700

1978: Party Hours: 85 # Volunteers: 17

2007: Total Species: 126 Total Birds: 30355

2007: Party Hours: 368 # Volunteers: 61

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