



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON Matters

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Witt's End

Expect the Unexpected – by *Clyde Witt, editor*

"I'm not real sure what all we've got down here," said the professor of physics and collector of just about everything. "We have this ancient bird collection that's been gathering dust and ..."

Susan and I had tuned out about the time Jamie Day was turning key in the lock of the display case. We were staring at a Carolina Parakeet, Passenger Pigeon and, ohmygod, an Ivory-Billed Woodpecker!

"I think we have three of those Passenger Pigeons," Day said.

We also counted two Carolina Parakeets and scads of other species. The story of how we got involved with the collection is too long for this space. Birds species from all over the world, collected and prepared by professors and students from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, had been bouncing around the school for years. Now they were in the charge of Professor Day, the curator of the Moosnick Science Museum. While Day is a great physics prof, he admits to being short on birding skills. He showed us cartons of birds in various stages of repair--all dust covered.

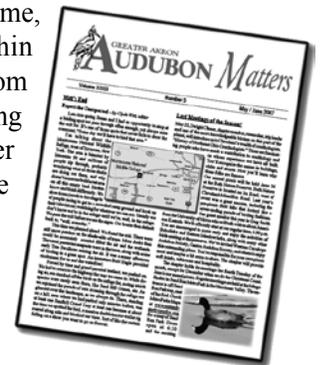
Some of the birds are tagged with dates, species and collector, others are not. Part of the collection came from a defunct natural history museum in Cincinnati that was collecting birds at the time of J.J. Audubon. He asked us to take a quick look to see what he might want to keep and what birds he might want to toss. When he said that, I recalled Aldo Leopold's admonition that the first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces. We told him not to toss anything! Help is on the way, we promised. And it is. We'll keep you posted on this marvelous collection of birds, many of which were gathered as long as 200 years ago.

Plan Ahead

One reason our chapter has been in a stable financial condition for many years is through the generosity of members who have died. They had the foresight to include our chapter in their wills or instructed family members to direct donations to us. It's an easy thing for all of us to do and will assure the good work of the Audubon mission, protecting birds and other wildlife, will continue in the future.

Friends of the Newsletter

Our plea in September for funds to help the Newsletter has generated \$243 from 27 donors--and plenty of advice. All suggestions are welcome and some, from professional printers within our organizations as well as from other Audubon Chapters, are being considered. Treasurer Dick Parker provided this list of names; people who have donated from \$5 to \$50. We know this list is incomplete and not in any order, however, we want to recognize and thank these individuals:



*Dwight and Ann Chasar, Edith C. Chase, Anna Lee Cleary, Phyllis and Edward Devlin, Frederick and Barbara Dillick, Carol DiMauro, Robert and Ann Duff, Robert and Mari-
anne Gooding, Susan Jones and Clyde Witt, Robert and Ellen Kannen, Karl R. Liske, David A. McKinley, Stephen and Deborah Mergenov, Richard and Cathy Parker, Wolfgang and Joyce Pelz, Robert E. Pickup, Karl E. Stutz, Dennis and Margaret Taddeo, Timothy J. Taylor, John and Marylou Turk, Gerald and Elizabeth Wensel*

If you'd like to help, here's all you have to do: Mail a check for \$5, payable to Greater Akron Audubon Society (with Newsletter Fund in the memo section) to GAAS, 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.

Programs

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 typically Bath Nature Preserve. 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. Check MetroParks Maps at www.summitme

troparks.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.

October 23 -- Greg Miller, The Big Year

In one of the wackiest competitions around, every year hundreds of obsessed birders participate in a contest known as the North American Big Year. Hoping to be the one to spot the most species during the course of the year, each birder spends 365 days racing around the continental U.S. and Canada compiling lists of birds, all for the glory of being recognized by the American Birding Association as the Big Year birding champion of North America. Even if you have yet to read the book of the three crazy guys featured in *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsessions*, you'll enjoy meeting one of those guys as he gives us the inside scoop of what it takes to do a big year.

November 27 -- At press time this one was still a mystery. Our speaker had not confirmed so come join in the mystery ...

December 16 -- In lieu of the regular meeting in December, we'll again participate in the annual Audubon Christmas Count. At the end of the day, our delicious chili dinner will be held at the Mingo Shelter. The chili, prepared by the executive committee, will be hot about 4:30 PM. The doors will remain open until 6:30 PM. The executive committee will provide everything you need except an appetite. Bring your count data and swap stories with fellow counters.

January 22 -- Akron's own, Larry Rosche, will get us up to speed on "Butterflies & Dragonflies." Great way to warm up in January.

February 26 -- Susan Jones and Clyde Witt will really turn up the heat with a report on their recent adventures in Trinidad & Tobago.

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 – well, balmy temperatures, anyway.

This year marks the 107th 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, 14 Purple Finches and only one Northern Cardinal.

Today there are more than 60 Audubon Christmas Bird Counts throughout Ohio that attract close to 1,500 volunteer 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 16, followed by a chili dinner held at Mingo Shelter. 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 October or November meetings, call Marie Morgan at (330) 867-9850.

Common Birds in Trouble

[This article was submitted by Audubon Ohio's Education Specialist, Casey Tucker]

It's sometimes easy to take birds that are abundant and widespread for granted because, well, they're common. Because they are common we may assume that they're not at any risk of disappearing anytime soon. A new report by National Audubon and Audubon Ohio requires a second look at some of these common birds.

The report, called "Common Birds in Decline," is a State of the Birds report for 2007. It highlights some of the more abundant and widespread species that have experienced population declines greater than fifty percent over the last forty years.

For the first time ever the report draws upon data from both the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and the U.S. Geological Survey's Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). Both surveys rely heavily upon volunteer Citizen Scientists to gather the data needed to understand how bird populations are doing. The use of both data sets allows us to gain a better picture of how birds are doing throughout the year.

Some representative species for Ohio that we should pay attention to (including their percentage declines over 40 years) include:

Northern Bobwhite	-99%
Grasshopper Sparrow	-97%
Green Heron	-82%
Cerulean Warbler	-80%
Red-headed Woodpecker	-78%
Eastern Meadowlark	-75%
Northern Flicker	-67%
Red-winged Blackbird	-64%
Yellow-breasted Chat	-63%
Field Sparrow	-59%

Free Music

What better way to start the day, or end the night, than with great bird songs. Sometimes it's tough to get up early or stay out late, so the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, through its Division of Wildlife, along with funds from the sale of cardinal license plates has made things a bit easier. It is producing a series of birds calls and songs on CD. These are great for learning those elusive sparrow calls and other secretive birds, along with ducks, owls shorebirds and soon, warblers.

Technically these CD are excellent and produced here in Ohio by the Borrer Laboratory of Bioacoustics at The Ohio State University. Marc Nolls has been providing these CDs at the meetings as he gets them from the state. They are free, but limited in quantity so it's a first-come first-served deal. We'll have more if you miss out this month.

FEED THE BIRDS

As has been our tradition, this year's (our 27th) wild bird seed sale is possible through the generous cooperation of Copley Feed & Supply store on Copley Circle, 1468 S. Cleveland-Massillon Road.

Our seed is fresh and prices are competitive with retail offerings in the area. This is the chapter's only fund raising effort; profits support our programs and newsletters.

Deadline is November 2nd. Pick up is November 10th at Copley Feed.

Please mail your check, payable to Greater Akron Audubon Society, and completed order form ASAP

Joyce Pelz
PO Box 26278
Akron, OH 44319-6278

All order forms must be in by November 2 to accurately place the order with Copley Feed.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Bag Size</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Bags</u>	<u>No. of Subtotal</u>
Oil Sunflower	50 pounds	\$20.00	x	=
Niger seed	10 pounds	\$13.00	x	=
Wild bird mix	20 pounds	\$8.50	x	=
	50 pounds	\$18.50	x	=
Bird Banquet	35 pounds	\$18.50	x	=
Songbird Choice	40 pounds	\$23.00	x	=
		TOTAL	\$

Name _____ Phone (In case we must call): _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (optional if you want to be added for special notices) _____

Pick-up will be Saturday, November 10th, from 9 AM to 1 PM, at Copley Feed & Supply Company
1468 S. Cleveland-Massillon Road. (just south of Copley circle)

All seed not picked up by IPM will be donated to the Seiberling Naturealm.