



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON Matters

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Witt's End

Seeing is Believing – by *Clyde Witt, editor*

We stood, gazing back in time at the stars all around us. We were on the edge of the universe. It was a place astronomers had gathered for a half century to peer into the past, hoping to predict the future. And while Kitt Peak, Arizona is hallowed ground for astronomers, it is also a marvelous spot for birders.

Susan and I were with a group of like-minded individuals from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. We were in Southeast Arizona to explore the heavens as well as the flora and fauna. Among our leaders were Andy Jones, curator of ornithology, Joe DeRocher, astronomer, and Naturalist Harvey Webster. Trust me, nothing got by us, from the rings of Saturn to the rings on the neck of the Elegant Trogon, to the rings on the tail of the Western Diamondback Rattlesnake.

What struck me as we looked out across the endless miles of space and land was how birding is connected to so many other aspects of natural history. Another thing that struck me was how people asked, “What do you expect to get from this trip?”

Expectations when you go birding (or fishing for that matter) can often lead to bitter disappointment. Better to set goals, like, don't get hurt, or find the Flame-colored Tanager. Don't expect not to get hurt. Don't expect to see the tanager. The expectation, if there has to be one, is to see what nature has to offer.

Program Schedule

Meetings

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 Merri-man Valley. The entrance is off Sand Run Parkway, east of the ford and east of the Shady Hollow Pavilion. Check

Month	Day	Event
September	1	
September	2	
September	3	
September	4	Meeting
September	5	
September	6	
September	7	
September	8	
September	9	
September	10	
September	11	
September	12	
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September	29	
September	30	
October	1	
October	2	
October	3	
October	4	Meeting
October	5	
October	6	
October	7	
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November	21	
November	22	
November	23	
November	24	
November	25	Meeting
November	26	
November	27	
November	28	
November	29	
November	30	

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 so bring a friend. Refreshments are served by our outstanding hospitality committee.

Once again, your executive committee has come up with a stellar lineup for the 2008-2009 season. We still have a few blanks in the schedule, so stay tuned and keep your eye on the Web site (www.akronaudubon.org) and the Newsletter.

September 23rd

Rich Ruggles of the Aurora Astronomical Society, Quail Hollow Astronomy Club, will talk with us about a challenge for astronomers as well as birders—or at least the birds. “Shedding Some Light On Light Pollution.” If you'd like to do some homework (sorry, no extra credit this early in the year) check out the Web site, www.astronomy101.com. Along with his active schedule in a couple of astronomy clubs, Rich does astronomy programs at Quail Hollow State Park. As with birding these days, astronomy is looking up.

October 28th

We're pleased to welcome back one of the premiere birders and great lecturers in this area, Dr. Andy Jones, curator of ornithology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Don't be turned off by the title of his presentation, “Splitting and Joining of Bird Species.” He's a PhD and has to talk that way. Andy promises no blood will be shed during this presentation. If you're a lister, you'll want to know what's happening with current morphology. Is your life list in danger of shrinking? Andy knows.

November 25

We'll continue our learning about the minutiae of birds with a great program from Professor Keith Tarvin, Department of Biology, Oberlin College. “Why Are Goldfinch Bills So Colorful?” Great question! Why Are Goldfinch bills So colorful? The bills of American Goldfinches are bright orange during the breeding season, and can change subtly over the course of a day or so. You don't want to miss the answer to this one. It will make for great conversation at all those holiday parties coming up.

December 21

Will be the annual National Audubon Christmas Bird Count. This will be in lieu of our regular meeting and include a free chili dinner. Come to the October and November meetings to learn how you can join in on this, the longest-running citizen science project on planet Earth.

Save the Date

We have some other important dates coming up, so mark your calendar. There's still time to sign up for the Ohio Ornithological Society's Lake Erie Raptor Seminar, September 27-28. This two-day event promises to be the biggest of its kind in this region this year. According to our own Marc Knolls who is on the OOS board, there will be presentations on Bald Eagles, raptor migration patterns and lots more, including internationally known speakers, field trips to hot spots such as Magee Marsh and the ever-popular Lake Erie Metropark, a premiere hawk viewing site in North America. The event will be at Maumee Bay Resort and Conference Center. See Marc for details, or log on to the OOS Web site, www.ohiobirds.org, or www.bsbobird.org.

Annual Wild Bird Seed Sale

Once again it's time to participate in the chapter's only fund-raising effort, the annual wild bird seed sale. No need to tell you that the cost of everything is going up, including the production of this newsletter. The profits from our seed sale typically pay for only one issue. This year, the sale will be held November 1 at Copley Feed and we are setting a goal of raising enough money to pay for two issues of the Newsletter. That means we have to profit more than \$1,400. You'll be getting more information on the sale, along with an order blank, in the next newsletter.

Celebrate Nature in the City

Nature has the power to soothe and enthuse. More people are finding that out as they join the free, year-round "Celebrate Urban Birds!" citizen-science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. From schools, hospitals, and senior centers, to wellness programs, scout packs, and military bases, participants are reaping the benefits of a closer connection to the natural world and a new appreciation for city birds.

People of all ages and backgrounds participate in Celebrate Urban Birds through gardening, cultural activities and citizen-science. For the citizen-science part of the project, participants watch city birds for 10 minutes, check off 15 target species of birds, and send the information through the mail or the Internet to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Once enough data are gathered, scientists hope to learn more about how birds survive in cities and how they use urban green spaces such as parks, rooftop gardens, and even potted plants on balconies for food, resting sites, and shelter.

While supplies last, everyone who signs up will receive a

Celebrate Urban Birds kit in English and Spanish with two colorful urban birds posters, educational materials about birds and urban greening, a data form, and a packet of sunflower seeds to plant in pots and gardens. More than 60,000 free kits have been distributed.

Learn more about Celebrate Urban Birds and sign up at www.CelebrateUrbanBirds.org!

Important Bird Areas of Ohio Book

Keep your eye on the Audubon Ohio Web site, www.audubonohio.org. It contains information about Audubon Ohio's next State Assembly, to be held the weekend of October 18 and 19 in Bellville, Ohio. The Web site also contains information about its upcoming publication of Important Bird Areas of Ohio, a new book that will provide detailed information on Ohio's 66 Important Bird Areas. The book is due out momentarily, and Audubon Ohio is already maintaining a list of people who want to receive notice as soon as it is available for sale.

If you are interested in being added to the mailing list for the Assembly and the IBA book, please send a message to ohio@audubon.org or call Ellen Armstrong at 614-224-3303. Be sure to provide your mailing and e-mail addresses and phone number, and indicate whether you are interested in the Assembly, the book or both.

Summer Bird Census Results

by Ann Chasar and Doug Vogus

You all spent a lot of hours in the field—a record as a matter of fact. And you counted a record number of birds. Thanks for your commitment, all your efforts, your organization and your reports. The money you spent on fuel to survey your areas is also very much appreciated.

Many of you commented that you had fun. It is a different way to look at birds, enjoy the outdoors and appreciate what we have.

The results will be posted on the Greater Akron Audubon Society Web site (www.akronaudubon.org) as are those of recent years. We hope to get the 31-year summary on the site by the end of the year. The Cleveland Bird Calendar, which reports data for seven counties, and The Ohio Cardinal, Ohio's ornithological publication, will both receive this data. They pick and choose what they want to mention in their publications, but the data are retained in their archives.

A record number of participants spent a record number of hours in the field. They counted the highest number of birds in the thirty-one years of this census. Actual birds per party hour were down, possibly due to the weather.

While census days had little rain, many were overcast and five days had below average temperatures. The results mirror those of recent years. Our treasured parks and preserved areas have specialized habitat for species difficult to find elsewhere in the county. But volunteers also scoured industrial areas, bike paths and RR tracks to find high numbers of Yellow

Warblers, House Wrens, Gray Catbirds, Willow Flycatchers, Eastern Towhees and a few Northern Mockingbirds. Church lots, cemeteries and small woods throughout the county revealed Eastern Wood-pewees, Great-crested Flycatchers, Red-eyed Vireos, Wood Thrushes and Scarlet Tanagers.

Airports and a few grasslands had high numbers of Eastern Meadowlarks and Savannah Sparrows. The lakes in the southern part of the county yielded Ruddy Ducks (Springfield Lake), Common Moorhen and Pied-billed Grebe (Summit Lake), an American Coot, Double-crested Cormorants, nesting Osprey. Surprises were small heron colonies and nesting gulls. A few of the wintering Red-breasted Nuthatches and Dark-eyed Juncos stayed put. A lone Great-horned owl was found.

1933	Canada Goose	153	Acadian Flycatcher	64	Blue-winged Warbler
39	Mute Swan	8	Alder Flycatcher	1	Northern Parula
79	Wood Duck	132	Willow Flycatcher	651	Yellow Warbler
660	Mallard	3	Least Flycatcher	5	Chestnut-sided Warbler
1	Bufflehead (injured)	1	Olive-sided Flycatcher	16	Black-throated Green Warbler
5	Ruddy Duck	89	Eastern Phoebe	4	Yellow-throated Warbler
22	Wild Turkey	180	Great Crested Flycatcher *	5	Pine Warbler
1	Pied-billed Grebe	112	Eastern Kingbird	27	Cerulean Warbler
38	Double-crested Cormorant	24	White-eyed Vireo	1	Black-and-White Warbler
565	Great Blue Heron	33	Yellow-throated Vireo	57	American Redstart
73	Green Heron	9	Blue-headed Vireo	6	Prothonotary Warbler
144	Turkey Vulture	157	Warbling Vireo	1	Worm-eating Warbler
18	Osprey (4 were juveniles)	432	Red-eyed Vireo	32	Ovenbird
2	Sharp-shinned Hawk	750	Blue Jay	4	Louisiana Waterthrush
32	Cooper's Hawk	565	American Crow	2	Kentucky Warbler
32	Red-shouldered Hawk	3	Horned Lark	363	Common Yellowthroat
7	Broad-winged Hawk	248	Purple Martin	153	Hooded Warbler
96	Red-tailed Hawk	397	Tree Swallow	7	Yellow-breasted Chat
9	American Kestrel (5 were juveniles)	296	N. Rough-winged Swallow	137	Scarlet Tanager
1	Common Moorhen	210	Bank Swallow	241	Eastern Towhee
1	American Coot	464	Barn Swallow	592	Chipping Sparrow
231	Killdeer	743	Black-capped Chickadee	138	Field Sparrow
24	Spotted Sandpiper	389	Tufted Titmouse	78	Savannah Sparrow
5	American Woodcock	9	Red-breasted Nuthatch	9	Grasshopper Sparrow
74	Ring-billed Gull	219	White-breasted Nuthatch	2	Henslow's Sparrow
21	Herring Gull	6	Brown Creeper	1117	Song Sparrow
308	Rock Pigeon	137	Carolina Wren	75	Swamp Sparrow
790	Mourning Dove	552	House Wren *	4	Dark-eyed Junco
7	Black-billed Cuckoo	2	Winter Wren	1320	Northern Cardinal
11	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	3	Sedge Wren	178	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
3	Eastern Screech-Owl	7	Marsh Wren	401	Indigo Bunting
1	Great Horned Owl	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	110	Bobolink
11	Barred Owl	89	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1830	Red-winged Blackbird
6	Common Nighthawk	124	Eastern Bluebird	111	Eastern Meadowlark *
509	Chimney Swift	63	Veery	1291	Common Grackle
57	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2	Hermit Thrush	539	Brown-headed Cowbird
46	Belted Kingfisher	223	Wood Thrush	21	Orchard Oriole
3	Red-headed Woodpecker	2721	American Robin	299	Baltimore Oriole
279	Red-bellied Woodpecker	1055	Gray Catbird *	7	Purple Finch
327	Downy Woodpecker	7	Northern Mockingbird	325	House Finch
54	Hairy Woodpecker	16	Brown Thrasher	1121	American Goldfinch
128	Northern Flicker	2266	European Starling	1375	House Sparrow
48	Pileated Woodpecker	637	Cedar Waxwing		
231	Eastern Wood-Pewee				

Note: Peregrine falcons fledged 3 young before the count

* =record # per party hour

Total Species: 129

Party Hours: 428

Total Birds: 33190

Volunteers: 69

Many thanks to the record number of volunteers! Jan Auburn, Trudy Beal, Gregory Bennett, Peg Bobel, Steve Borgis, Sandy Brown, Virginia Buerki, Garnet Byrne, John Cameron, Robert Capanna, Dwight & Ann Chasar, Sue Chester, Charlie Christie, Pat Coy, Wayne Crouse, George & Sandy Cull, Phyllis Devlin, Fred & Cheryl Dinkelbach, Diane Dulzer, Susan Duppstadt, Paul Ellsworth, Henry Fortlage, Chriss Fulton, Bob Furst, Craig Griffin, Marty & Ann Gulbransen, Larry Hunter, Mary Lou Hura, Andrea Ireland, Diane Johnson, Susan Jones, Hedy Jones, Marilyn Kaminsky, Barb Kaplan, Jim Knisely, Gene & Linda Kovach, Karl Liske, Fred Losi, Wilbur McQueen, Marie Morgan, Marianne Nolan, Marc Nolls, Hope Orr, Bill Osborne, Jane Oswald, Michael Pasek, Wolfgang & Joyce Pelz, Mark & Claire Purdy, Mary Reinthal, Jim Reyda, Mary Anne & Tom Romito, George & Linda Sangrik, Bert Szabo, Karin Tanquist, Doug Vogus, Jim Vogus, Janet Wertz, Bradley Wilkinson, Clyde Witt, Marian Zehnder.