



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON *Matters*

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April / May 1997

Chapter Meetings

The April 22nd meeting of the Greater Akron Audubon Society will feature David Emmit. He will present a slide program entitled "A Year of Wildflowers." As the spring flowers begin to bloom, you'll certainly won't want to miss this program.

On May 27th we'll be in for a real treat—Ruth and Bob English will be back with us. They'll be showing us a multimedia presentation: "New Zealand—Small Wonder Down Under." We'll see volcanoes, alpine peaks, wildflowers and birds. We'll also get a bird's eye view—taken from five flights on a Cessna. This fascinating program is too good to miss.

The last program of the GAAS season will be on June 24th, when Mark and Julie Shieldcastle will help us out with shorebird identification: "The Return of the Shorebirds." We'll begin the meeting at the Seiberling Naturealm at 7:30 PM.

Field Trips

We have some terrific field trips lined up for you—we hope to see you out in the woods soon!

April 24th: Towpath Trail of the CVNRA. Meet at 6:30 PM in the parking lot on Riverview Road, just north of Ira Rd.

April 26th: Mohican State Park, Ashland County. Met at the home of GAAS member Louise Fleming at 4 PM. The address is 1228 Twp. Rd. 653. Take I-71 South and get off at Rt. 250. At the exit, turn right (east) on 250. Go past Grandpa's Cheese Barn, Perkins, and a 76 station. The first road is Township Road 653. Turn left and go about 2 miles. There is one crossroad in the 2 miles, and from that point it is 3/4 mile. We are on the left. There's a pond, a barn, and the house is white with gray shutters. (Plan to bring any food or beverage that you would like for the evening.)

May 4: PPG Lime Lakes, Barberton. Meet at 8 AM in the parking lot on Van Buren Road, just north of Vanderhoof Road.

May 10: Ravenna Arsenal. This a rare invitation to bird this normally inaccessible spot, and hopefully see the nesting Henslow's Sparrows. The number of people is limited to 25, so you'll have to make a reservation in advance. Call or fax 644-0373 with the names of all

members of your party and your address or fax number. I'll send you instructions to find the proper entrance. **NO** walk-ins will be allowed, so reserve early.

May 11: Firestone Park. Meet at 8 AM in the parking lot on Harrington Road, just north of Warner Road (near the Firestone CC).

May 18: River Styxx Park, Medina. We'll have the opportunity to return to this park with Lisa Pettit, from the Smithsonian Institution. She's been conducting research in this area for some time, and we'll be benefiting from her observations. The park is on River Styxx Road, south of Medina. We'll meet at 8 AM.

Summer Bird Count

The Greater Akron Audubon Society's annual Summer Bird Count will be taken during the period from June 13th through June 22nd. We have extended the period so that all the territories can be covered more completely, no matter what the weather or how crowded your schedule is.

We need more birders! Please let your birding friends know about this, whether they are Audubon members or not. Brush on your bird songs, and call Carol Tveekrem at 644-5006 or email aa682@acorn.net if you would like to help.

—Carol Tveekrem

A Garden To Share

The Naturealm has the place, we have the people, now we need the plants! A beautiful, blooming garden is a celebration of life. Birds and butterflies contribute to its charm and vitality by adding color, movement and song. Our intentions are to plant native perennials in the beds at the Naturealm this spring to attract and benefit the birds and butterflies. The plant list has been carefully compiled by a friendly nursery (Paramount in Portage Lakes) and the Naturealm staff. (Please see the previous newsletter for a list, or call us and we'll send you one.)

No matter what your age, the sight of a butterfly can make you stop what you are doing and gaze upon the delicate movements of these dazzling insects. Watching them as they sip nectar from a flower, warm their wings in the sun or even lay eggs on leaves is a special moment in the study of nature. Butterflies are also beneficial to their hosts by serving as pollinators as they flutter from plant to

plant. They are attracted to flowers by color and scent. The bright red, orange and yellow flowers are their favorites, but they also visit purple, lavender and blue posies as well. Good nectar sources are simple flowers with tubular shapes or clusters of tubular florets, especially when they include a flat surface for perching. Wildflowers are also prime nectar sources. Our list includes some popular butterfly plants, Black-eyed Susan or coneflowers (*Rudebeckia*), the orange flowered butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), and purple coneflower (*Echinacea*) which provide nectar for both butterflies and hummingbirds.

One must be willing to sacrifice leaves for caterpillar food in a butterfly garden. The hollyhocks (*Alcea rosea*) offer an excellent food source for painted ladies and common checkered skippers. If you decide to plant a wildlife garden in your yard, remember the number one rule: Use No Pesticides! Caterpillars and many beneficial insects will suffer. Patrol your garden in the early mornings while enjoying a cup of coffee. You may see some bad guys lurking about, and while it is still cool they are easier to catch. Try shooting a strong spray of water on those aphids and send your pesticides to the hazardous waste center, it will benefit the planet. Attracting birds to your garden is a benefit because they eat many insects.

Help us fill the beds at the Naturealm by donating divisions or seedlings from your perennial garden. The collection dates are Saturday, May 31 and Sunday, June 1 from 11am to 4pm at the Seiberling Naturealm on Smith Road, or you may bring your plants to the May 27 meeting. If, however, you don't have the right plants, we will be accepting cash donations to finance the purchase of extra perennials. Call and let us at 644-0373 and let us know if you plan to help. We can send you a list of plants right away. Think Spring!

—Joyce Pelz

A Limited View From Mt. Graham

Several years ago, the University of Arizona (U of A) made plans to build telescopes atop Mt. Graham in Arizona. This mountain is a unique ecosystem which possesses more life zones and vegetative communities than any other solitary mountain in North America. It is a tribal burial ground as well as sacred ground for the Apache Indians who still hold ceremonies on Dzil Nchaa Si An (Mt. Graham).

The peak consists of nearly 500 acres of virgin spruce-fir forest which is considered federal "critical habitat" for plants and animals (including the Mt. Graham red squirrel) found nowhere else in the world. The telescope site construction will destroy or fragment 27% of this habitat and the mountain isn't even considered a quality site for astronomy. Over 24 universities have rejected or aban-

doned the project because they found scientifically superior locations or they did not want to participate in a project in violation of all U.S. environmental and Native American cultural and religious protection laws. In 1988, U of A lobbyists convinced Congress that they did not have time to complete the environmental and cultural studies for fear their foreign partners would go elsewhere. This resulted in a rider inserted without public hearing during the final hours of Congress attempting to exempt the project from all applicable U.S. cultural and environmental laws.

Now The Ohio State University has decided to be the first U.S. university to join this controversial project. One wonders if OSU took the time to read reports of the discoveries made four years after U of A's rush for congressional exemptions. U of A discovered that they had lobbied for the site with the poorest visibility of any site on Mt. Graham. This required further exemptions. Had U of A taken the time to follow the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act as well as Native American cultural and religious protection laws, they would have avoided the public humiliation of their scientific miscalculations and possibly noticed that an existing observatory near Tuscon was far superior.

Public records document the fact that OSU has passed up world-class telescope projects which were unencumbered with endless delays, miscalculations and human rights and environmental destruction. Maybe they will use the Firestone Farm money to pay the \$27,000 per night cost to use the telescope instead of Ohio taxpayer's dollars.

—Joyce Pelz

It's Time To Do Your Part

Earth Day is upon us. So, in the spirit of recycling I was going to suggest we take the easy route and recycle some of the information from previous newsletters. But as with other aspects of recycling, nothing is as easy as it first appears. Foremost is the fact that recycled news, unlike recycled packaging material, has little value. I started on a quest to find out if recycling really is working. The conclusion I've reached is a definite maybe.

Civilians seem to be doing their part. Last year the U.S. reached the 25 percent level of recycling its trash. That was the lofty goal established by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1988. Now experts are questioning whether we can ever achieve a level higher than 25 percent.

The problem seems to be that at least half of what we throw into the trash is not recyclable to begin with. So is it cost-effective to go after the valuables in that last 25 percent of the trash?

Aluminum cans are a good example. Aluminum cans are about the most valuable item in the waste stream, yet

Welcome!

Many of you are newcomers to our newsletter with this as your first of three free issues. It was great to meet and talk with you at the Donzell's Spring Open House. We hope you enjoy our newsletter and if you want to continue your subscription, please fill out the membership application on the back. You will receive a free bird guide or backpack with your paid membership and a year's subscription to AUDUBON magazine. Your membership fees help us in our endeavors to protect nature. See back page for details.

we're recycling only 65 percent of them. Other items in the stream, in significantly lower numbers than aluminum cans, will cost huge amounts of money and time to extract, yet produce small yields. That will be bad business.

The generic term packaging often gets a bad rap for polluting the solid waste stream. Here's a list of what packaging material is still going into the municipal solid waste stream. Virtually all of these packaging materials are recyclable or reusable: corrugated boxes 37 percent, beverage containers 17 percent, food and other containers (includes bottles, jars and cans made from glass, steel, aluminum and plastic) 13 percent, wood packaging 12 percent, folding cartons 7 percent, bags and sacks 5 percent, other 9 percent.

So before you throw anything into the trash, stop and think if there is a way to reuse it. If not, put it into the recycling bin.

— Clyde Witt

Zap the Zappers

The research is in and as many people have suspected, bug zappers aren't worth the money to zap a mosquito. In fact, they probably do more harm than good. Reporting in "Entomological News", Dr. Douglas W. Tallamy, an entomologist at the University of Delaware in Newark, says the zappers kill billions of insects each year — but hardly any are mosquitoes or other biting pests. He studied six different devices.

Tallamy recruited a high school student, Tim Frick, to collect all of the insect killed over the course of one summer in six yards. They counted 13,789 dead bugs, but only 31 were biting flies. The haul included about 2,000 potentially beneficial insects that prey on other bugs. In addition, thousands of harmless species, including aesthetically pleasing creatures like fireflies and scarab beetles, were killed.

The comfort people derive from zappers is almost totally psychological, heightened with every sizzle as another insect bites the dust. Tallamy suggests that the carbon dioxide humans exhale is so attractive to mosquitoes that the only way to avoid the insects entirely might be to stop breathing. Spoken like a true academic.

—Clyde Witt

Eco-Friendly Java

In response to a question of which coffee companies are ecologically friendly, I decided to post this to all on BirdChat. This has been a hot topic recently with an Eco-OK program that endorses coffee from certain farms, several coffee companies (including the ABA) already marketing shade-grown coffee, and our research fund-raising program of selling "bird-friendly" labels to coffee roasters for organic coffee grown in Mexico. Unfortunately, there has been very little cooperation between various players despite an attempt at our First Sustainable Coffee Congress last September. Each program has its flaws and in the name of fairness I will briefly point these out for all of these programs.

Trivial Observations

- February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon.
- It takes a lobster approximately seven years to grow to be one pound.
- Montpelier, Vermont is the only U.S. state capital without a McDonalds.
- Giraffes have no vocal cords.
- The cruise liner, Queen Elizabeth II, moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel that it burns.
- Cat's urine glows under a blacklight.
- An iguana can stay under water for 28 minutes.
- It takes about a half a gallon of water to cook macaroni, and about a gallon to clean the pot.
- In the last 4000 years, no new animals have been domesticated.
- The highest point in Pennsylvania is lower than the lowest point in Colorado.
- Nutmeg is extremely poisonous if injected intravenously.

Eco-OK criteria is not based on any scientific data and the criteria are somewhat arbitrary which can lead to a farm that fits the strict criteria yet is a relative wasteland for birds. The coffee companies that are going out on their own generally lack the knowledge to base their decisions on which farms are good for birds and the environment in general. Some companies MAY view the topic as simply a marketing strategy. But most coffee companies that are interested in the topic are ethically sound and should eventually be able to, with enough guidance, market a truly "bird-friendly" coffee.

Our program at the

Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center is limited in scope and, as in the others, does not guarantee that the coffee is from a truly ecologically sound coffee plantation. We chose organic Mexican coffee because the vast majority of this coffee is grown in "bird-friendly" conditions with a large multi-species tree canopy, epiphytes etc...that host an incredibly diverse community of birds and other creatures. Mexican organic farms are certified as organic by another unrelated program. We cannot, however, guarantee that one particular cup of coffee is from beans grown on one of these farms, but the odds are great that it is. We do not have the resources to certify plantations, nor can we without established guidelines that are based on sound scientific research. At this point, we have a long way to go with researching the various gradations of shaded plantations from other coffee-growing regions. These gradations range from shade plantations with just a few scattered pruned and short trees of a single species to nearly pristine forest with a coffee shrub layer and high biodiversity.

In short, there are and will be several shade-coffee programs in the coffee world competing for the consumer's dollars. It is buyer beware. Check the facts, check the sources and ask questions of your coffee supplier. At some point we may have a list on our Website of coffee companies that will use the "bird-friendly" sticker on their packaging for some of their coffee (depending on their sources).

<http://www.si.edu/smbc/smbchome.htm>

John Sterling
Wildlife Biologist
Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center





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As a member of the National Audubon Society, you are also a member of the Akron area chapter. There are no local dues, and you receive our newsletter automatically. GAAS meets at 7:30 PM on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Seiberling Naturealm, on Smith Road between Sand Run Road and Riverview Road in northwest Akron.

If you have a question about our organization and its activities, call GAAS Central at 644-0373. Upcoming events are announced at this number. You can also write to: Susan Dooley, 768 Portage Lakes Drive, Akron, 44319.