



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON

Matters

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Chapter Meetings

The speaker for the February 24th meeting of the Greater Akron Audubon Society will be Jenny Brumfield. Jenny is a member of our chapter, and she will share her experiences at a birding camp in Belize. So if you're like this editor—and wish you could go to Belize but probably won't—come and soak up a bit of what it's like to immerse yourself in birding in such an exciting place.

The speaker for the March 24th meeting is Trudy Beal, one of our members and a nature photographer extraordinaire. She'll make a presentation of pictures from the CVNRA and share nature photography secrets. All amateur photographers and nature lovers will find new perspectives on familiar places through Trudy's wonderful pictures.

The GAAS meets at the Seiberling Naturealm; the meeting begins at 7:30 PM.

Big Preservation Plans for Ohio's Darbys

On November 22, 1997, four conservation agencies, headed up by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), offered a proposal to protect Ohio's "Last Great Place in the Western Hemisphere," the Big and Little Darby watershed west of Columbus. The ecological significance of the Darbys is pointed out by the fact that they are State and National Scenic Rivers. TNC's long range plan calls for a community-based initiative that would result in protection of stream corridor, wetland and prairie habitat along both Creeks as well as the establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge in part of the Little Darby Creek watershed.

Land preservation of this magnitude is not an easy thing to accomplish. With Columbus' growth and development aimed towards this area, the pres-

sure to convert farmland to housing developments will be strong. Development delivers more stress to the rivers. Ohioans already witnessed this phenomenon in the near death of the Cuyahoga River. In order to avoid land-owner resistance to the plan, the

agencies are proposing the establishment of mutually supportive, voluntary land protection and management boundaries resulting in voluntary easements, private land acquisition work via TNC, expansion of MetroParks holdings and the Refuge. This offers farm

owners an alternative which can preserve their way of life and protect the area at the same time. Many conservation-minded families living in the watershed are excited with the idea.

There are many benefits to the natural world in preserving this important watershed: securing habitat for migratory birds, protecting threatened and endangered species, decreased

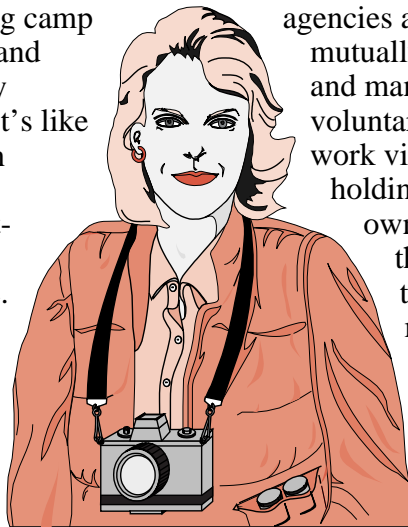
flooding, and water quality protection. Moreover, we must also consider how crucial this is to the quality of our lives. Just imagine urban sprawl similar to Montrose overtaking this treasure. We should support this plan and spread the good news. For more information, please contact Scott Davis or Teri Devlin of TNC's Ohio Chapter at (614) 717-2770.

— Joyce Pelz, Conservation Chair

Bring Back the Birds

At the recent Great Lakes Regional Conference, attendees learned why birds are not returning and what must be done to bring birds back. Held in Michigan City, Indiana, this regional conference focused on the diminishing number of song birds in our area. The emphasis was on what we, as members of the Audubon Society, can do to assist in protecting crucial habitat.

If you've never visited the Michigan City area I urge you to do so. The huge sand dunes in the Indi-



ana Dunes National Lakeshore are more reminiscent of a desert habitat than northwestern Indiana. The area has been designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) by National Audubon because of its importance to migrating bird species ranging from some of the smaller, warblers, to some of the larger, Sandhill Cranes.

We visited various habitats, including a thrilling evening at Jasper-Pulaski State Fish and Wildlife Area to see more than 15,000 Sandhill Cranes return to their resting area at sunset.

Amid the dreary messages of habitat loss and declining numbers of song birds, were messages of hope. With more than 65 million people declaring they are in some way birders, our collective knowledge and power is increasing. Our wildlife refuges are doing a good job of conservation. And they are getting better as more people understand the interaction of the pieces of the ecology puzzle. Citizen awareness and consciousness have reached new levels as the young people who received the environmental messages of the 60s are now becoming activists.

We left the conference realizing there is much to do. Feral and domestic cats kill millions of birds each year. Rampant development continues to eat critical habitat at record speed. Increasing human population continues to have a dramatic impact on wildlife in many third-world countries. It's not going to be easy, but it's a war we have to fight, one battle at a time.

—Clyde Witt

Ohio Audubon Council Report

The winter meeting of the Ohio Audubon Council (OAC) discussed a number of issues that will have long-range impact. OAC President Joyce Pelz brought the 20-member council up-to-date on the Akron water diversion controversy. In this area we are at the precedent-setting edge of a critical environmental issue. Certainly the question of whether water should be diverted from one local watershed to another is important. The greater issue is that if the project, moving water between the Lake Erie and Ohio River watersheds, goes forward, it sets the precedent to move water in larger quantities over greater distances. Western states have envied the huge supply of fresh water in the Great Lakes, and you can be sure developers and others have been working on ways to turn profits by selling another natural resource. OAC and other environmental organizations have been fighting the diversion project. It urges residents of the area to voice opposition to the plan by writing the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and political representatives.

The day's humor was provided by a news release from the Central Ohio Coal Company. It is proposing to establish a 200-acre "testimony to man's historic efforts to master the earth and claim its resources." The proposal includes an outdoor museum featuring a stripmine pit 3,000 feet long with a 100-foot-high wall, along with the world's largest dragline machine known as Big Muskie as the centerpiece. So the question is: Are people willing to pay to see a landscape torn and ravaged by stripmining? What a concept! A theme park to glorify what the coal industry has done to our hills and waterways! It should be noted that some of the entrance fees will be used to pay for herbicides the company intends to use on the unreclaimed spoil pile to "maintain its true state." Do you get the feeling that the coal company is somehow trying to dodge its responsibilities here and walk away from the \$3 million cleanup it is required to do on this land?

—Clyde Witt

WETLANDS: Destructive Permit Replaced by Worse?

From the February 6th National Audubon Advisory:

As fallout from a suit the National Association of Home Builders brought against the US Army Corps of Engineers, the comment period for the proposed phase-out of Nationwide Permit 26 remains open until February 24th. Conservationists unanimously agree that NWP 26 remains the single most destructive general permit sanctioned by the Clean Water Act. If repealed, NWP 26 will be replaced by "activity specific" permits. The Corps preliminary draft of these replacement permits favor development. The draft permits contain no restrictions on three acre development lots. They would also allow permit applicants to destroy up to ten acres of wetlands if the project is part of a larger "master planned development."

Saving wetlands is one of National Audubon's top goals for '98, and the defeat of NWP 26 is key in closing a gaping loophole in federal wetlands policy. NWP 26 has accounted for the destruction of tens of thousands of acres of wetlands, and we support the Corps' proposal to phase out NWP 26 by December 13, 1998. Comments are especially important from Ohioans. Our state has destroyed 90% of its original wetlands and stands to lose many more acres if this permit is replaced. Small isolated pools and headwaters important to amphibian life, waterfowl, streams, and quality waterways could be destroyed without review. For more information on how to direct your comments to the Corps, please contact us at (330) 644-0373 or joyce.pelz@lmco.com.

—Joyce Pelz

Fifty-Ninth Christmas Bird Count

The 1997 Christmas Bird Count, December 21st, 1997, was made under cloudy skies and snowless ground. The temperature hovered around 32 degrees. It was a pleasant day for the pursuit of birds.

The compilers of the 1997 count wish to thank all those who took the time and effort to make this year's count a huge success.

53 parties spent 218 hours counting birds in the field and travelled a total of 959.5 miles by foot and car. The 53 parties spent 132.5 hours on foot and walked 148 miles. The time spent observing from cars was 85.5 hours and the miles by car were 811.5. Owlers spent 11.5 hours and covered 32 miles. 32 feeder-watchers participated in the count, as well as the 104 counters in the field.

Our enthusiastic participants saw 27,075 individuals of 81 species

<u>Totals</u>	<u>Species</u>						
6	Pied-billed Grebe	53	Ruddy Duck	75	Hairy Woodpecker	706	Northern Cardinal
1	Horned Grebe	6	Sharp-shinned Hawk	53	Northern Flicker	4	Eastern Towhee
11	Double-Cr. Cormorant	15	Cooper's Hawk	11	Pileated Woodpecker	725	Amer. Tree Sparrow
32	Great Blue Heron	4	Red-shouldered Hawk	773	Blue Jay	10	Field Sparrow
7	Mute Swan	87	Red-tailed Hawk	1029	American Crow	2	Fox Sparrow
3078	Canada Goose	16	American Kestrel	1398	Blk.-capped Chickadee	202	Song Sparrow
2	Snow Goose	1	Merlin	454	Tufted Titmouse	39	Swamp Sparrow
11	Wood Duck	336	American Coot	13	Red-br. Nuthatch	180	White-throated Sparrow
22	American Black Duck	7	Killdeer	305	White-br. Nuthatch	18	White-crowned Sparrow
1366	Mallard Duck	2968	Ring-billed Gull	19	Brown Creeper	1264	Dark-eyed Junco
3	Northern Shoveler	42	Herring Gull	36	Carolina Wren	4	Red-Winged Blackbird
2	Gadwall	698	Rock Dove	3	Winter Wren	3	Common Grackle
6	Am. Widgeon	793	Mourning Dove	23	Golden-cr. Kinglet	12	Brown-headed Cowbird
3	Canvasback Duck	8	Eastern Screech Owl	21	Eastern Bluebird	3	Purple Finch
1	Redhead Duck	8	Great Horned Owl	3	Hermit Thrush	648	House Finch
14	Ring-necked Duck	2	Barred Owl	428	American Robin	2	Pine Siskin
2	Lesser Scaup	1	Saw-whet Owl	1	Grey Catbird	1002	American Goldfinch
5	Common Goldeneye	14	Belted Kingfisher	1	Northern Mockingbird	1874	House Sparrow
17	Bufflehead	126	Red-bellied Woodpecker	232	Cedar Waxwing		
28	Hooded Merganser	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4997	European Starling		
7	Red-br. Merganser	379	Downy Woodpecker	42	Yellow-Rumped Warbler		

Members who have read the National Audubon strategic plan know how important this work is to Audubon's conservation efforts, and NAS is working to give even greater prominence to citizen-scientists like our Christmas counters. So thanks to all of you, old hands and newcomers, for your essential contribution to GAAS and the Audubon cause. This year's field and feeder observers were:

Deedra Allen	Cecilia Devlin	Ann Gulbransen	Alice Luddington	James Rawdon	Judy Tisdale
Cathleen Barrett	Phyllis Devlin	Martin Gulbransen	David Luddington	Esther Rehms	Sue Tolley
Irene Barrington	Fred Dinklebach	Maggie Hachmiester	Elaine Martin	Jim Rehms	Jim Tomko
Helen Becker	Robert Dispenza	William Hampshire	Richard Martin	Mary Reinthal	Carol Tveekrem (28)
Nancy Blair	Joanne Dobbins	Judy Hendrick	Harold May	Jim Reyda (44)	Jim Tveekrem
Michael Bowler (23)	Rose Donatell	Sue Henninger	Ruth May	David Richards (38)	June Tveekrem
Peter Bowler	Lonnie Drouhard	Elaine Holland	Christine McCorkle	Norm Richenbacher	Daniel Van Auken
William Bowler	David Erickson	Betty Hudkins	James McIntyre	Sally Richenbacher	Douglas Van Auken
David Brumfield (30)	Ann Falor	Aaron Hulstine	Wilbur McQueen	Mary Anne Romito	Steven Van Auken
Jenny Brumfield	Mary Ann Faruque	Mary Lou Hura	Amy Mitch	Tom Romito	Douglas Vogus (32)
Don Burlett	Louise Fleming	Nancy Ibsen (30)	Gary Moats	Larry Rosche	James Vogus
Roberta Bush	Fred Fricker (33)	Diane Ingersoll	Kathy Mock	Ronda Russell	Jeff Wert
Garnet Byrne (39)	Bob Fritz	Claire Johnson	Fred Montague	Pat Rydquist	Robert Wheat
Doug Caesar	Robert Furst (29)	Diane Johnson	Marie Morgan (45)	Grace Rymer	David Whited
Nick Calabro	Ryan Furst	Hedy Jones	Mike Moutoux	Sterling Saxe	Clyde Witt (26)
Bev Calvert	Wakaba Futamura	Barbara Kaplan	George Nahmi	Steven Sheppard	Howard Zehnder
John Cameron	Beth Garner	Winetta Kennedy	Debbie Nauer	Cynthia Smith	Marian Zehnder
Robert Capanna (39)	Carole Gatian	Isaac Kerns	Rich Nichols	Sue Sprengnether	Patricia Ziegler
Ann Chasar	Marcella Glassner	Sheila Kerns	Bill Osborne (44)	Stanley Stine	Bill Zelesnik
Dwight Chasar (43)	Jill Golgosky	Paul Kiplinger	Joyce Pelz	Dave Stover	
Chris Craycroft (44)	Joe Golgosky	Barbara Klewe	Wolfgang Pelz	Bert Szabo (31)	
Jonathan Dean	Darrell Goodson	Jamie Koch	Larry Pinkus	Mark Telzroll	
Helen Dessent	Craig Griffin	Karl Liske	Mark Purdy	Margaret Thorp	

