



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON *Matters*

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Chapter Meetings

The speaker for the April 28th meeting of the Greater Akron Audubon Society will be Jenny Brumfield. Jenny was supposed to speak in February, but illness forced us to reschedule. 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 May 26th meeting will be Barb Andreas, a Nature Conservancy board member. Barb will be telling us about TNC's plans for the Big Darby Watershed project. If you're not familiar with the Darby project, Conservation Chair Joyce Pelz wrote this about it for the last issue of the newsletter:

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. This is a tremendous project happening right here in Ohio, and you won't want to miss this program. The GAAS meets at the Seiberling Naturealm; the meeting begins at 7:30 PM.

Field Trips

We have a few trips scheduled for this spring. What we really need is a field trip coordinator, someone who would be willing to come up with a slate of field trips, and make sure there is a leader for every trip. If that sounds like a job you'd enjoy, contact Clyde at a chapter meeting, or call/fax GAAS Central at 644-6527. If you have a question about any of these field trips, please call GAAS Central.

April 26: PPG Lime Lake 4 in Barberton. Meet at 8:30 AM at the parking area for Lime Lake 4, which is on Van Buren Road, just north of Vanderhoof Rd.

May 9: Crane Creek State Park. Meet at 8 AM at the west end of the bird trail.

May 10: Firestone MetroPark. Meet at 8 AM in the parking lot on Harrington Road, just north of Warner Road (near the Firestone CC).

May 16: River Styxx Park, Medina. 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 conducted during the period from June 12th through June 21st. 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

Chapter Elections

The election committee (Mark Purdy, Joyce Pelz, and Allan Dooley) has come up with the following slate for the 1998-1999 term of office. Voting will be held at the June 23rd meeting. Nominations will be taken from the floor, but do be sure to have cleared it with the nominee first!

President: Clyde Witt
Vice-President: Wolfgang Pelz
Treasurer: Susan Dooley
Secretary: Pat Haddad

know about this, whether they are Audubon members or not. Brush up on your bird songs, and call Carol Tveekrem by JUNE 1st at 644-5006 if you would like to help.

—Carol Tveekrem

Short Subjects

Ravenna Arsenal Help Needed

The citizens' action committee formed to advise in the clean-up of the Ravenna Arsenal in Portage county needs volunteers. There are now two openings on the panel, which is helping to determine the clean-up efforts and the eventual use of this large property. Anyone interested in representing Audubon on this important committee should pick up a community interest survey form at the Reed Memorial Public Library in Ravenna or the Newton Falls Public Library in Newton Falls. Call Mark Patterson at 330/358-7311 for additional information. The surveys must be returned by April 30th—so act fast!

RiverDay '98

The Friends of the Crooked River is sponsoring the 8th annual RiverDay event on May 9th, 1998. There are a wide range of programs available that day. If you'd like to find out more about some of these events, please call 216/443-3730 or FAX 216/443-3737.

Summer Training Academy

The Center for Environmental Citizenship and the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund are co-sponsoring the Summer Training Academy. Open to people 17-28, the Academy is a crash course in in political environmental leadership. The purpose of the Academy is to teach young people how to impact critical environmental issues through electoral organizing. If this sounds interesting, please leave a message at GAAS Central (644-0373), and we'll provide the necessary contacts. But hurry—the deadline is May 1st!

New Land Conservancy in Area

The popularity of land conservancies continues to grow as a way to protect our natural resources. The Quail Hollow Land Conservancy in Hartville has received tax-exempt status and can now offer potential tax benefits to land owners through the use of conservation or scenic easements, gift lands and life estates. This conservancy has a variety of membership levels and activities available. If you are interested in more information, contact Judy Semroc at (330) 699-6213. Any contribution you make to these worthy causes is tax deductible.

Witt's End

Describe Normal Behavior



We birders are a strange lot. How else can you explain some of the things we do? I mean, behavior that non-birders might think of as strange, we consider normal.

For example: The day after returning to the office from the holidays, a co-worker who is a new-birder bounced into my office to display fancy new binoculars that Santa, in his infinite wisdom, had bestowed upon her. I must admit I was a bit envious. I had started this person down the birding path and now she was sporting binoculars that I could only dream about. Oh well, I reasoned, she's headed in the right direction — fast! I knew her behavior would soon boarder on bizarre and I would have to pay the karmic consequences. It became my fault and my responsibility.

Since she had been busy with family responsibilities during the holidays (a sure sign she was not yet a real birder) she had not used the binoculars to look at anything other than house sparrows and rock doves. The challenge she presented me was that she wanted to look at pretty birds. I keep a ragged (it wasn't ragged before my dog got to it) old National Geographic field guide in my office to handle emergencies and for occasional escape from job-related stress. I suggest you do the same. The book can serve as an arbiter when someone has the mordacity to challenge your ornithological skills in identifying some warbler that has committed ornicide (whacking itself into the side of a building is a good example of ornicide) during migration.

New birder and I set the field guide in the corner of my office. On a diagonal, set to minimum focus, she was able to view pretty birds to her heart's content. Of course, I had to turn the "branch" and all the birds offered static views, but it worked. It dawned on me that this might be a good way to practice birding skills during the doldrums of winter. The image is about equal to what you see in the field. I found the National Geographic guide more interesting than Peterson's since it shows more habitat and birds in views other than profile. You can move the book farther away to make images smaller and add to the challenge.

Hey, it works. And I never promised my Mom that I would always act normal and refrain from doing anything that might embarrass the family name.

—Clye Witt

Warblers

by Jon Dunn/Kimball Garrett

The new Peterson field guide to Warblers is the book we've all been waiting for. It is a joy. It will bring spring into your house. It is comprehensive. It does everything you've wanted a field guide to do — and more. It goes beyond your current definition of "field guide." The book is also massive. So, if I have to say something less-positive about it; it might be a challenge to handle in the field. Six hundred sixty pages is a sizable book to carry in the field, but surely it should have a place in your home and the trunk of your car during the month of May.

The authors (with maps by Akron's own Larry Rosche) have blended the Peterson-style illustrations with photographs and line drawings to illustrate specific features. There are 115 species of New World warblers, of which slightly more than half occur in North America north of Mexico. The authors thoroughly cover 18 genera of warblers occurring in this area. They also cover the numerous hybrids which often defy identification, except for the true experts. The book goes beyond typical descriptions and locations. It discusses behavior, habitat, voice, distribution, subspecies, plumage and more for each bird.

Of the many features of the book, perhaps my favorite is the series of 52 undertail patterns, side by side. How many times have you looked up into the branches and seen only the underside of the bird and ground your teeth because you could not identify the critter? Well, now you have a field guide that will help you out.

—Clyde Witt

Audubon's Population and Habitat Campaign

One person every four-tenths of a second — 9,000 people an hour — over 200,000 people a day — this is the world's current growth rate! There are now over 260 million Americans and over 5.8 billion people in the world! These are staggering numbers, difficult to adequately comprehend. But, what does it mean? As most anybody interested in nature knows, countless species of plants and animals around the world are gravely threatened. It is estimated that 50,000 species a year, most of them undescribed, are becoming extinct every year. The most common cause is loss of habitat, which brings us back to the world's mounting population. As more and more people populate the Earth, more and more land is utilized for human needs. Land for housing, raising of crops and farm animals, and exploitation for raw materials and energy. These demands are made even worse by the growing per-capita consumption rate of the world. Invariably, wildlife is the loser

when humans demand more from the Earth.

While unchecked population growth may at times seem unstoppable, it is a problem that can be solved. Experience has shown that successes can be achieved with a relatively small investment. For example, the Dominican Republic has cut its fertility rate in half in the last 20 years, and Mexico has reduced its fertility rate by 60% in the past 25 years. However, this sort of progress can only occur with continued assistance from the U.S. and other developed countries. The benefits are numerous: the countries being assisted are better able to solve their own social and environmental problems, wildlife gains greatly, and the prospects for a more stable and peaceful world are enhanced.

Since its inception, National Audubon Society has been concerned with the protection of wildlife and its habitat, with an historical emphasis on birds. Today, it is impossible to consider the protection of wildlife and habitats without an awareness of what is arguably the greatest driving force behind habitat loss: the alarming growth of the human population. Audubon believes that slowing the human population growth rate must become a fundamental concern of all who care about wildlife. Thus, the creation of the Population and Habitat Campaign.

The overall goal of the campaign is to insure that sound population policies are implemented in the U.S. and overseas that contribute to the well-being of people, and that protect non-human species and their habitats. A major element of this goal is to influence Congress to continue financial assistance for family planning, both domestically and abroad. For poor Americans, and many developing countries (where population growth is the greatest), Congressional assistance is often the only hope for family planning. This does not mean support for abortion. In fact, appropriate family planning can reduce abortion by reducing unplanned pregnancies.

While this campaign may seem somewhat controversial to some, it is critical to protecting the world's habitat and wildlife and cannot be ignored. Without population stability, all natural habitats will ultimately come under human attack. However, by taking action now, we can take an extremely important step toward guaranteeing the long-term survival of natural habitats, including the birds that inspired creation of the National Audubon Society.

For more information, contact the local chapter, or the National Audubon Society's Population and Habitat Campaign at: National Audubon Society, Population and Habitat Campaign, 4150 Darley, Suite 5, Boulder, Colorado, 80303 (website: <http://www.earthnet.net/~popnet>).

—Mark Purdy