



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON

Matters

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Chapter Meetings

The October 27th meeting will feature Dr. Randall Mitchell. Dr. Mitchell is an Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of Akron. He is in charge of the project to convert a portion of the former Firestone property in Bath Township into a science and nature center for educational use by the University and for recreational use by the citizens of Bath. Dr. Mitchell will share with us the University's plans for the property and explain why this is land worth preserving.

At the November 24th meeting GAAS will host Annette Souder of the National Audubon Population

and Habitat Campaign. The impact of human population growth takes on different forms in different parts of the country, but the problems of mega-farms (such as those cropping up here in Ohio) are global issues. We are fortunate to have this nationally known speaker to discuss with us the latest information on mega-farms and other critical issues relating to population growth and habitat reduction. Her message is not all doom and gloom. It's a message of concern and advocacy, economics and challenges.

As we have in the past, the GAAS meets at the Seiberling Naturealm in Akron; the meeting begins at 7:30 PM.

Get Your Bird Seed!

Almost since its founding, your Audubon Society has conducted an annual bird seed sale, an event made possible over the years by many loyal customers and hard-working volunteers. But this year brings some changes—changes that we think will benefit everyone. Working again with Mark Roesner of Copley Feed and Supply and our stalwart organizers Marie Morgan and Tina Osborne, GAAS President Clyde Witt has come up with a new way for you to get your birdseed and continue supporting Audubon. Instead of having to send in your orders (and checks) ahead of time, all you have to do this year is go to Copley Feed on Saturday, November 7th from 8 AM to 5 PM. Bring in this issue of the newsletter as proof of membership, buy all the seed you need for the winter, and tell the clerk you want your purchase applied to the Greater Akron Audubon Fund-raiser. Copley Feed and Supply will make a donation of \$2 for each bag of seed sold to GAAS members that day. Nothing could be easier, both for you and for the backs of the GAAS seed-haulers of yore! The following seed purchases (of the same fine products we have offered in the past) will qualify:

Oliger Wild Bird Seed—50 lb.

Copley Wild Bird Seed—50 lb.

Oliger Wild Bird Banquet—35 lb.

Deluxe Finch Mix—50 lb.

Copley Finch Mix—50 lb.

Oil Sunflower—50 lb.

Sunflower Blend—50 lb.

Sunflower Chips—50 lb.

Thistle Seed—10 lb. or 50 lb.

Safflower Seed—50 lb.

Peanut Pieces—50 lb.

Cardinal Chickadee Mix—50 lb.

Squirrel Nut & Crunch—50 lb.

Mark Roesner doesn't have the prices available yet (this year's fresh crop isn't in yet), but they will be competitive as always. And for the first time, home delivery is available (at an extra charge). If you'd like to arrange delivery, call Copley Feed (666-4741). Copley Feed is located at 1468 S. Cleveland-Massillon Road in Copley (just south of the Copley circle). With their help and your purchases, the GAAS can continue its commitments to good programs, Audubon Adventures in area elementary schools, conservation efforts and birdwatching opportunities. So come on out to Copley Feed and Supply on Saturday, November 7th (with this newsletter in hand) and get ready to feed our wintering birds!

Saving the ANWR—Again

Since it was established in the 1960, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has been threatened with oil drilling and mineral exploitation so often that we have come to expect an annual announcement: “They’re after ANWR again!” It seems that no matter how often the citizenry makes it plain that Americans want this refuge left alone forever, some corporation or politician decides to give it another try. Last month, a full house at the Naturealm saw a stellar display of the beauties and wonders of the ANWR and heard a powerful presentation by Lenny Kohm, a tireless, dedicated defender of this important environment. And although part of the ANWR is still at risk, there is some really good news about recent political efforts.

The first happy surprise at the meeting was the arrival of former Rep. John Seiberling and his wife Mary, both of whom worked as hard for ANWR as they did for our own CVNRA. Rep. Seiberling feels a special commitment to environmental causes, and he shared with us some of the stories about how the good fight was won in the 1970s. But no victory is permanent, it seems, and more legislation is needed to keep the Arctic Refuge safe.

And that leads to the second piece of promising news: a simple bill to secure the future of all of the Refuge has been introduced in the 105th Congress. It is H. R. 900, the Morris K. Udall Wilderness Act of 1997. At the September meeting, Lenny Kohm asked us to contact Rep. Tom Sawyer, who had not signed on as a co-sponsor of this bill, which would protect an important piece of coastline by designating it a wilderness. Apparently, our members went to work and got results: Rep. Sawyer has now become a co-sponsor of H. R. 900. The work is far from over, since things are moving very slowly in Congress. If you are in another congressional district than the 14th, please write your representative and urge support for this bill. We will keep you posted. And if you can help further efforts like this, please speak with Joyce Pelz, our Conservation Chair, at the next chapter meeting.

Witt’s End

The Connectedness of Birders

In early September I sat in the backyard of Sally Spoffard, alternately enjoying the sun’s warmth filtering through sparse vegetation, and a cool breeze moving down from Cave Creek Canyon. Sally is 84-years-young and has been welcoming birders to her Arizona backyard for nearly three decades. She and her late husband Walter, settled in this breathtaking

place that, if not at the end of the world, is close enough to see the end by standing on a chair. She has to travel 60 miles (each way) to buy groceries. This is beyond remote.

Our conversation was frequently interrupted by a male Blue-throated Hummingbird that persisted in using a feeder located 18 inches from my left ear. I assume he viewed me as a rival for the nectar, so rare in this southwest desert region. I was fortunate to meet this birding legend via those serendipitous connections that happen in birding. A number of years ago my friend, Susan, shared a too-brief friendship with naturalist-writer Jonnie Fisk. Susan and Jonnie exchanged house visits and numerous birding experiences. Even into her eighties Jonnie continued to work and live in Arizona where she befriended the Spoffards. Susan wanted to meet Sally whom Jonnie had talked and written about. She wrote to Sally to be sure she’d be home when we arrived. (Sally’s gate is open for birders, even if she’s not there.)

By walking on this web of birding friendships I was able to chat (albeit vicariously) with thousands of other birders, many who’ve written the books we use, others we’ve never heard of. The string running through it, binding us all, was to watch just one more little feathered creature scratch in the Arizona dust, or hover at a plastic dish for sustenance before its rigorous migration to who-knows-where. Go birding. You never know who you might meet.

—Clyde Witt, President

Endangered Species Act Bill Revived

On September 15th, Senator Kempthorne (R-ID) tried to get the entire text of his Endangered Species Act (ESA) reauthorization bill, S. 1180, attached as yet another anti-environmental rider on the Senate Interior Appropriations bill. Audubon opposes S. 1180. This controversial bill was to be tacked on to a spending bill with no opportunity for full debate or public input. Currently the bill remains on hold. Although it could also be attached to the omnibus bill, the Administration has stated its opposition to having this bill attached as a rider.

With only days until the end of the legislative session, Congress passed a “continuing resolution” on September 17th, which ensures government funding of the ESA from the end of the fiscal year, September 31st, through October 9th, when Congress plans to adjourn. During this period, Congress will attempt to resolve spending disputes for the next fiscal year. Audubon and other conservation organizations are working to support pro-environment amendments and oppose anti-environmental riders to the appropriations bill.

Corps to Revise Wetland Permit Proposal

In response to over 10,000 comments to the July 1 release of "nationwide" wetland general permits, the US Army Corps of Engineers will once again revise this controversial proposal. The proposal was designed to replace Nationwide Permit 26, which currently allows up to three acres of "isolated or headwater" wetlands and streams to be destroyed under a nearly automatic approval process. Instead of revising NWP 26 to be more protective of wetlands, however, the July 1st proposal would have opened up all non-tidal wetlands – millions of new acres — to expedited permitting.

The Corps may issue its revised proposal soon. Its revisions are expected to improve over the July proposal. However, we do not yet know whether the revisions will address the most serious concerns about the potential environmental impacts allowed under expedited permitting. With Audubon's Julie Sibbing now in the Washington, D.C. offices, we expect to be well informed as to the Corps activity on this issue. You can contact her at jsibbing@audubon.org or call (202) 861-2242.

—Joyce Pelz,
Conservation Chair

The Endangered Species Act turns 25 on December 28, 1998

Twenty-five years ago, on December 28, 1973, President Nixon signed a landmark piece of legislation into law -- the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA immediately formed a focal point for the environmental movement, as it reflected both the need for and the desirability of protecting species and their habitats. The ESA represents a revolutionary approach to preserving and restoring biodiversity. Since its inception the ESA has been a symbol of hope for declining species.

Some species have recovered enough so that they no longer require protection, and many species have been rescued from apparently certain doom.

In sum, the Act has been and will continue to be the most effective legal tool Americans currently possess in the fight for biodiversity. But the ESA is not the only instrument at our disposal. By working locally to protect species and their habitats, we can

achieve positive results that bolster and facilitate the efforts of the ESA.

Audubon's Fall FlyAway

Audubon's Fall FlyAway celebration is the ideal opportunity to highlight the 25th anniversary of the ESA. The fall events -- National Wildlife Refuge Week, wetland tours, and World Population Awareness Week -- provide myriad occasions to act on behalf of endangered species.

The major threat to species and the primary cause of their decline is habitat loss. There is no better way, then, to help species than by focusing on the protection of their habitats.

From October 10th through 18th, during National Wildlife Refuge Week, America's refuges, significant providers of habitat for endangered birds and other species, will take part in a nationwide "open house." Audubon invites everyone to visit their nearest National Wildlife Refuge and learn about what they do while appreciating the spectacle of fall bird migration. Audubon chapters will participate in a range of exciting activities on National Wildlife Refuges throughout the country.

Electronic Mailing Lists

The National Audubon Society hosts over 20 E*Mail lists, some for members of the Society, some for members of specific regions, and some for anyone with an interest in environmental issues.

Websurfers point your browser to:
<http://www.audubon.org/net/list/index.html>

Audubon Requests

Throughout the fall, Audubon is calling on conservationists and birdwatchers to nominate their favorite birding spots for recognition as Important Bird Areas (IBA). The Audubon IBA program is a comprehensive effort to identify and protect habitats critical to birds' survival. Audubon urges that participants identify IBA site candidates and submit an IBA discovery form, available on the Audubon Website.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DINNER

A quick note here, so you can mark your calendars. The dinner will once again be held at Papa Joe's Restaurant in Cuyahoga Falls. The date has been set for Sunday, December 20th. More details in the next issue.