



GREATER AKRON

AUDUBON *Matters*

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Chapter Meetings

The April 27th meeting of the Greater Akron Audubon Society will feature Pam Thomas of Pam's Perennials. Pam will present a program on landscaping with perennials. Her special area of interest is native species, ones which are especially hardy in this region as well as attractive to birds and butterflies. Many of the plants the GAAS planted in the perennial garden at the Naturealm were acquired through Pam's Perennials. As the weather begins to improve, gardening becomes less of a dream and more of a reality—so come to this program and get some new ideas for your own backyard.

The May 22nd meeting will be a total surprise for everyone—we don't know what it will be. We had a last minute cancellation of the speaker scheduled for this meeting, and the time was too short to come up with another speaker in time to meet the newsletter deadline. So come to this meeting with a spirit of adventure—we're looking for a "birdy" program, in keeping with the migratory season.

The June 22nd meeting will once again be a picnic. We'll be gathering at the Octagon Shelter of the CVNRA (directions in the next newsletter). A volunteer from the Akron Zoo will be visiting us with a ZooMobile program starting at 7:30 on Birds: Owls and Hawks. So mark your calendars for this pleasant evening.

Make a Difference

When Greater Akron Audubon Society began as the Cuyahoga Falls Bird Club, its focus was wild birds. In the 50-plus years since, we've grown to encompass the Audubon mission: Protection and preservation of habitat for birds and other animals. The current executive committee has worked to present a diverse series of programs to demonstrate that mission. But the fact is, except for when we've had a program focused on birds, chapter interest and attendance has diminished.

We're at a crossroads: Do we follow the path described by National Audubon, or do we re-set our course? You can make a difference. You have the opportunity to be an active voice in the direction of your chapter. If I knew who you were I'd personally ask you to seek one of the elective offices on the executive committee. I'd ask you to volunteer for one of the committee chairs now vacant. Show me who you are.

As the chair of the nominating committee I've chosen to contact you this way. Here's what your Audubon Chapter needs:

President: is responsible for the general direction of the chapter. Represents the Chapter at national and regional Audubon functions; is the person news media and civic leaders seek out for conservation and environmental information; believes in the Audubon mission and its cause.

Vice president: Supports the mission and is responsible for the duties of the president in the president's absence.

Treasurer: Supports the mission and is responsible for the financial well being of the chapter.

Secretary: Supports the mission and is responsible for meeting minutes and other correspondence of the chapter.

Those are the elective positions. Greater Akron Audubon also needs various committee chairs, including hospitality, programs, newsletter, membership, birdseed sale, field trips and others.

A member of the executive committee has many opportunities to offer his or her ideas. In lieu of a program chairperson, each committee member - this year - provided at least one program. You also participate as representative at occasional educational or informational events. The committee meets monthly to help plan Chapter meetings, events, field trips and to conduct the business of the organization. Committee members also have the opportunity to learn and grow in this organization by attending regional and national Audubon functions.

Being a member of the executive committee is a way in which your interest in conservation can become a part of your social life. You will not be alone. The strength of this chapter is the help and assistance each committee member provides the others. It's a good organization and it deserves your participation.

You have it within your power to direct the energy of this chapter. To help it become the premier environmental organization in our region. Call me at (216) 931-9434 days, or (330) 723-7527 evenings. If I'm not around, I'll get back to you. That's a promise.

—Clyde Witt

Chapter Needs

Clyde Witt has already written about the lofty, philosophical reasons why you should volunteer your time and energies to the Greater Akron Audubon Society. I'm here to describe some of the workings of the chapter, and some of our specific, and very pressing, needs.

The Executive committee is charged with the ongoing management of the club. This includes everything from making sure we don't spend too much more money than we take in, evaluating the many political and social issues which are brought to our attention, putting together programs for our chapter meetings—even the cookies and coffee we all inhale at every meeting. That sounds like a lot of work, doesn't it? Well, I won't lie to you—it can be! But I can also say, with complete honesty, some of the best times I've had over the last ten years have been in the company of the men and women who have been involved in the GAAS. We all joined because we love birding and valued the mission of the NAS—we still do—and we've stayed involved because of the camaraderie we found in the GAAS.

So here's your chance to make some new friends, do good things for the world at large **and** the place where you live as well. GAAS needs you! Presently we only have a dozen or so active members (out of 1100!) working on various projects. These good folks are stretched so far that the club can't take on any new projects, no matter how worthy. The chapter has a lot of strengths: a solid financial footing, community recognition, a large membership, and established traditions of service. But we need more involved members to pursue our shared goals.

We need someone to become the Secretary of the Executive Committee. We need a Hospitality chair—to be the nice person who brings the coffee and cookies to the chapter meetings. Are you more comfortable with a computer than a coffee pot? It's time for a new newsletter editor. Rather bird than write? We need a field trip coordinator. None of these positions takes a huge amount of time—a few hours a month generally. Watch one less sporting event on TV a month and you've got the time.

So contact us to lend your support of your chapter. GAAS needs your energy, your ideas, and your commitment. Phone Clyde—it'll be one of the best calls you'll ever make!

—Susan Dooley

Field Trips

Here's what we've got going this spring:

April 24th: CVNRA. This will be a walk on the tow-path trail of the CVNRA with members of the Ashland Audubon Society. Meet at 8 AM in the parking lot on Riverview Road, just north of Ira Rd.

May 2nd: Bath Preserve. Meet at 8 AM in the parking area just off of Ira Road in Bath Township. The turnoff ("Hickory Farm Lane") is 1.0 mile west of Cleveland-Massillon Road and 0.5 mile east of Hametown Road. (Weather permitting, as there is no paved parking area. Boots recommended, due to

possible muddy trails.)

May 8th: River Day. GAAS will be participating in the River Day festivities by leading a nature walk in O'Neill Woods. Details aren't ironed yet, so watch the Akron Beacon Journal for details.

May 15th: 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 Styx Park. Meet at 8 AM. River Styx Road is 1/2 mile west of the intersection of Rte. 18 and I-71. Turn left at the stoplight onto River Styx Road and follow it south for 4 miles. The park is on the right side of the road; if you get to Blake Road you've gone too far. Questions? Call Clyde at (330) 723-7527.

Witt's End

Some Thoughts on Field Trips

In March I was able to escape the dreary confines of northeast Ohio for a couple of days of sunshine in Corpus Christi. Although chasing down a buff-bellied hummingbird was my goal for the trip, Susan and I joined a boating excursion into the backwaters of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to see the whooping cranes. The variety of birdlife never ceases to amaze me. Chasing after creatures four-inches-long or six-feet-tall — it's all exciting.

Our field trip into Aransas had a knowledgeable guide who felt responsible for filling in any quiet moment with some rather mundane patter. But his bird knowledge was unquestionable. There were many neophyte birders on board and the proliferation of birds prompted many questions. Too many questions for our guide. Since I was sporting my Audubon cap I naturally became an instant expert on birds. Toward the end of the day, as our guide was looking off one side of boat, I spotted a large bird, soaring just above waterline. I could see lots of black and white in its curved wings. It had to be the one bird missing from our list that many people wanted to see — an osprey. To prove my expertise, I blurted out, "Osprey at three o'clock!" As everyone on board turned to look in that direction, the guide quickly corrected my error: "Crested Caracara!" Oops. A much better bird. In my defense I noted that I'd never seen the bird flying and did not expect to see it over water since it's favorite meal is snake.

The point of all this is, as I was told by a guide on a pelagic trip several years ago: If you see a bird, call out something. It's better to see the wrong thing twice than not see the right thing at all.

Join in the fun of our field trips this spring. I guarantee no Crested Caracaras in Akron, but maybe some ospreys.

—Clyde Witt

Nest Box Network

Join the ranks of scientists across North America and contribute valuable information to the study of cavity nesting birds. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology invites you to take part in the Cornell Nest Box Network (CNBN), a citizen-scientist research project. Participants investigate the breed-

ing biology of cavity-nesting birds by monitoring nest boxes. Prior experience is not necessary. CNBN is well suited for backyard bird watchers and nest-box enthusiasts. Only one nest-box is necessary to participate in researching questions about clutch sizes, feathers in tree swallow nests, and removing old nests from nest-boxes.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology provides a 160-page research kit with complete instructions for monitoring nests and collecting data, access to an e-mail discussion group, and a subscription to *Birdscope*, a quarterly newsletter, for the initial participation fee of \$20.00. Hope Orr, a local Audubon member, is a CNBN ambassador, and has brochures further explaining the nest-box program. If you want more information about this program, call her at 330-666-9619. You can also get information by visiting the Cornell Lab website at <http://birdsource.cornell.edu/cnbn>. Sign up now, and become a citizen-scientist for Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Fighting for Alaska's Wilderness

An illustrious member of our chapter, former congressman John Seiberling, has been named as the honorary chairman of the Alaska Coalition of Ohio. This is a statewide lobbying body dedicated to saving the Arctic National Wildlife refuge from oil drilling. Mr. Seiberling has been a friend of the refuge since the 1970s, when he worked in Congress to preserve ANWR in its pristine state.

Great Lakes Region Board Member

Part of the structure of the National Audubon Society mandates that each region (in our case, the Great Lakes Region) elect a person to represent the interests of the region to the NAS board of directors. Liz Woedl, of the Oxford (OH) Audubon Society has been nominated for this position. She has been active in the NAS for many years; she has also been active on the Ohio Audubon Council. If you would like to comment on this nomination or read Ms. Woedl's biography, please contact one of the officers. The Executive Committee will cast the chapter's votes on June 30th.

ESA Needs More Funding—Again!

Each year Congress decides to split the trillion dollar budget pie into many small pieces. And endangered species get the tiniest piece of all. On average, less than 32 cents of what you pay to the IRS goes to endangered species conservation in the U.S. In fact, Congress spends around \$200 million on endangered species programs for over 1100 listed species. Sounds like a lot, but let's put it into perspective: \$4 billion is spent for Department Of Transportation requests for highway demonstration projects over the next 5 years! According to *U.S. News and World Report*, nature provides humanity with \$33 trillion in services each year, including: Crop pollination from insects, bats and birds, recreational fishing, wildlife and (one of our favorites) bird watching, commercial uses of wild fish and plants, and more.

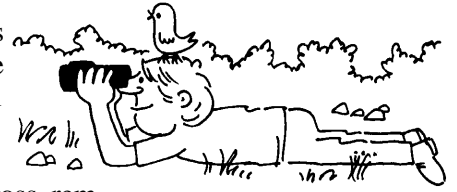
Of the more than 1000 species of listed as threatened or endangered in the U.S., less than 10 have been recovered.

The Endangered Species Act is grossly underfunded. We need our Congress to back the current Endangered Species Recovery Act (HR 960). Rep. Sherrod Brown is a co-sponsor, please call Rep. Sawyer and encourage him to support this bill.

—Joyce Pelz

Adams County, Ohio

How does this sound? — Spend the day hiking beautiful trails through the rugged foothills of a great mountain range, across rem-



nant prairies, and along pristine waterways. Hike the trails and see large numbers of birds, many of which are never seen in Northeast Ohio. Between birds, enjoy a variety of wildflowers, some of them quite rare. Then conclude the day with a delicious dinner in a charming inn. This may sound like some distant exotic location, but it's actually quite near, as all of the above can be experienced in Adams County, Ohio, only 4 hours by car from Akron!

My wife and I enjoyed an excursion to Adams County over the 4th of July weekend in 1998. Adams County is on the Ohio River, about 40 miles east of Cincinnati and 20 miles west of Portsmouth. Inspiration for the trip idea came from the May 1998 Akron Audubon program by Barb Andreas of the Ohio Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC, with the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, manages the Edge of Appalachia Nature Preserve in Adams County. The preserve includes two major areas open to the public: (1) Buzzard roost Rock, a rocky promontory reached via a woodland trail, (2) Lynx Prairie, a cedar barrens remnant prairie, which is home to a number of rare plant species. Both areas are home to a number of bird species rarely or never seen in Northeast Ohio: Blue Grosbeak, Kentucky Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Chuck-Will's-Widow, Summer Tanager, Black Vulture, Mockingbird, Pine Warbler, Red Headed Woodpecker, and Carolina Chickadee. We were fortunate enough to see or hear all but the Summer Tanager. In addition, we saw our first Grasshopper Sparrow, amazing numbers of Ovenbirds, and a nesting colony of Cliff Swallows.

We stayed at the Murphin Ridge Inn, a delightful 1810 farmstead set in the midst of lovely Amish farm country (937-544-2263). For a break from birding, we visited the interesting Mound City National Historic Site, which offers a glimpse into the pre-Columbian cultures of Ohio. Serpent Mound is also nearby. (Further information on lodging choices and area attractions is available through the Adams County Chamber of Commerce, 937-544-5454). With its combination of beautiful landscapes, good birding, and history, a visit to Adams County can be very rewarding. As for timing, it is probably good all year. However, we found it particularly nice as a mid-summer getaway trip — a time when Northeast Ohio birding is sometimes hit by the summer doldrums. So, for a fun and easy trip of your own, consider Adams County!

—Mark Purdy