



GREATER AKRON

# AUDUBON *Matters*

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## **Witt's End**

### *What's So Special?*

This summer a friend's daughter got married, an event guaranteed to bring a clan together. In this case, family members gathered from near and far for the ceremony in our beautiful CVNRA.

As I chatted with an aunt from New Zealand it did not take long before the conversation turned to birds. She told me she was not all the "keen" on birds since they always seem to be squabbling. Plus, "in New Zealand we don't have such exotic birds as you do here in America," she said, much to my amazement.

She went on to extol the beauties of an indigo bunting she had seen and a rose-breasted grosbeak that had come to the feeder at the home where she was staying.

While I struggled with the word "exotic" I asked about her birds in New Zealand. She told me about the "commons" you know, things like fantails.

Right. When was the last time we had a fantail in Summit County?

The point here is that what we might have in our own backyards can be exotic to someone else. All this dovetails with results of the membership surveys we conducted at the May and June meetings. Birding and bird programs ranked first on your list of program wants, closely followed by travel programs. You've also asked for more programs presented by members.

Toward that end the executive committee has put together a great lineup for this new Audubon year.

All of our programs are free and open to the public. We open the doors at the Naturealm on Smith Road in west Akron at 7:00 p.m. and begin the meeting promptly at 7:30 p.m.

— Clyde Witt

## **GAAS Programs**

### **Trends in Ohio's Birds**

We'll start things off September 28th with one of Ohio's leading birders, Vic Fazio III. Vic is a native of Australia and has lived in Ohio for 27 years. His Master's degree work involved the first population genetic study of an endangered songbird, the black-capped vireo of the

Southwest. He's spent 10 years of field study in such varied positions as bander-in-charge of Long Point Observatory, raptor biologist for Michigan Audubon and Hawk Watch International and has done extensive field studies locally at Killbuck and Big Island Wildlife areas. Vic has started a new publication entitled, Ohio Birds and Natural History, and runs one of the best birding Web pages on the Internet. If you're a birder you won't want to miss this program.

### **More Live Animals!**

Okay, on October 26th we'll have a room full of live critters when Leo's Ark docks at the Naturealm. Leo Boes, former naturalist in Fairlawn has a terrific program featuring some of the strangest creatures you've ever seen. His lively presentation debunks myths about many animals we'll never encounter in the local woods, and some that we might. This is a program sure to appeal to everyone.

### **The World of Bats**

November 23rd it will be bats and flying foxes when one of the premiere bat conservation organizations in the U.S. presents its lively program entitled the World of Bats! The November meeting will feature the diversity of bat species in the world. Our program will be presented by the nationally known folks from the Organization for Bat Conservation, Haslett, Michigan. This will be a special program featuring live flying foxes. Bring your kids and neighbors to this one!

That is just a small sampling of the programs we've arranged. Later in the year we'll take you birding in Morocco as well as our own backyards, with a visit to the rainforest like you've never seen it. And a few other places in between.

### **Six Billion and Counting!**

The world population is projected to exceed six billion people in October of this year. The speed at which this population level was achieved is incredible. The Earth had a population of only 1 billion in 1800. Two billion was reached in 1930, 3 billion in 1960, 4 billion in 1974, and 5 billion in 1987. National Audubon is commemorating

this dubious landmark by participating in a number of events at the national and international level to review and publicize population issues. Audubon will be closely associated with “Cairo”, an organized review of progress since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo. The Cairo meeting developed a 20-year plan on population and development, including an emphasis on women’s needs and rights.

Why Audubon is involved in population issues? The answer is population and habitat are inextricably linked. The consequence of increasing human population is increasing loss of habitat, the leading cause of declining animal and plant numbers. Thus, as Audubon members, it is our responsibility to support measures aimed at controlling the world’s population growth. Audubon’s Population & Habitat program was created for this purpose. This program focuses on restoration of international population funding and connecting population issues to state and local habitat issues. For more information, contact the Ohio state office of Audubon, Greater Akron Audubon, or check out National Audubon’s Web site, <www.audubon.org>.

– Mark Purdy

## **Wild Bird Seed Sale ‘99**

It’s never too early to think about feeding wild birds, so here’s a preview of our annual wild bird seed sale, slated for the end of October. Details will come in the October newsletter.

This is a bold, exciting new plan, the kind of thing required as we move into a new century. The format of the seed sale will be a bit different this year. Since this event is the chapter’s only fund raising event, the executive committee is striving to make it as profitable as possible. Our mission, to support educational efforts for saving and protecting habitat for birds and other animals, requires financial as well as physical and moral support.

Two words describe the new program: ease and quality. You will be able to pre-order your seed via telephone, fax, computer or in person! As for quality, we’re embarking on this program with Wild Bird Center in Fairlawn to offer the highest-quality seed available in the Akron area. If, in the past, you’ve been concerned about sticks and stems, possibly even corn, mixed in with your oiled sunflower, put those concerns to rest. As an example we’ll be offering oiled sunflower seed that has been triple-screened to assure its purity. You pay for seed — you get seed — not stems!

We will also be extending the pick-up time to three days in November to avoid any weather problems. And did I mention discounts? You bet! Wild Bird Center will be giving you 10 percent off the retail price of what you buy, and generously donating a percentage of the gross sales (from this fund raiser) to our chapter so that we can continue our educational efforts.

If you’ve not visited the Wild Bird Center in Fairlawn

you’re in for a real treat — as are your backyard birds! Summer Bird Count: News is Good and Bad

According to Carol Tveekrem, coordinator for our Summer Bird Count, there’s good news and bad news. There were fewer human participants this June, but we had some new avian participants.

Because we had fewer people beating the bushes the area coverage was spotty.

Total species seen was 124, with a total number of birds listed at 17,701. These were counted by 38 participants. The newcomers to the count were a pair of yellow-rumped warblers seen by Clyde on the edge of the special events area of the CVNRA, near Old Trail School.

The biggest and grandest newcomer was an American bald eagle that did a fly-over at Turkeyfoot Lake while the Dooley’s and Pelzes were checking out their new boat! Does this count as a pelagic trip bird?

Other single-showings included: dark-eyed junco, northern harrier, ring-necked pheasant, American woodcock, Eastern screech owl, great horned owl, whip-poor-will, winter wren, yellow-bellied sapsucker, hermit thrush and several warbler species.

Warblers, in general looked good: blue-winged warbler, 68; northern parula, 1; yellow warbler, 273; chestnut-sided warbler, 11; yellow-rumped warbler, 2; black-throated green warbler, 6; yellow-throated warbler, 1; cerulean warbler, 24; American redstart, 15; ovenbird, 18; Louisiana waterthrush, 4; mourning warbler, 2; common yellowthroat, 218; hooded warbler, 72; Canada warbler, 1.

Especially encouraging was the number of cuckoos: black-billed, 16 and yellow-billed cuckoo, 56. This species is known to eat gypsy moth larvae, which is probably why we saw an increase in their numbers this summer.

## **October Field Trip**

Interested in looking for some of those confusing fall warblers? We’re planning a field trip for Saturday, October 3rd at Allardale Park in Medina. This is the second year this park has opened to the public and offers some excellent birding habitat.

Clyde will lead the trip from the parking lot beginning at 8 a.m. You can reach the park, located on Remsen Road, by turning west from Medina Line Road, or by driving east on Remsen Road from Route 94, just south of its intersection with I-271. The park is located between Medina Line Road and State Road. The habitat is rolling hills and heavily wooded in many spots. It was formerly a tree farm. The Parks Department has set up identification stations near many of the trees to aid in their identification. Wear your sturdiest walking shoes for this one.

We already have a half dozen field trips on the calendar for next spring but if your interested in some winter trips bring your ideas to Clyde.

## **GAAS Christmas Count December 19th**

### **100th Anniversary of the Christmas Count**

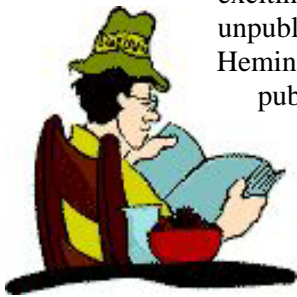
Every year since 1900, National Audubon Society has conducted the original citizen-science project, Christmas Bird Count, which has changed the way scientists monitor the environment and spawned dozens of imitators. This year, Christmas Count hits a significant milestone; it celebrates its 100th anniversary. What began as an effort to mobilize the early conservation movement now culminates in a vast on-line database that sheds light on how human activity has impacted the environment over the entire 20th Century.

Over 50,000 volunteers in all fifty states, every Canadian province, Central and South America, the Caribbean and several Pacific Islands (areas where North America's breeding birds winter) will count and record every bird species encountered over one calendar day during the count period. Compilers will enter their group's results at BirdSource, <<http://birdsource.org>>, the on-line source for bird information, run by Audubon and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Marie Morgan, Bill Osborne and Burt Szabo will again be our compilers. Marie says she's looking for more counters this year including some folks who can act as area coordinators.

### **Looking for a Vacation Spot?**

In its September/October issue, Audubon magazine <[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)> presents the second annual Audubon Travel Guide. The special issue also features three exciting exclusives: previously unpublished letters from Ernest Hemingway's last safari; the first published photograph of the



Jocotoa antpitta, a newly-discovered bird; and the first public look at a lost John James Audubon painting.

#### **The New Safari**

As the 35-mm camera replaces the .30-caliber rifle on safari, eco-tourism has become the fastest-growing type of travel. Audubon explores the ecological effects of hunting versus photography — the old versus new safari, and takes readers on the best new eco-trips.

#### **The Last Safari**

What really happened on Hemingway's last safari? Never-before-published letters and photos from the 1953 Kenya trip provide a glimpse of a bygone era. Renowned photographer Earl Theisen gives a real account of the adventure Hemingway described in his newly-published novel, *True at First Light*.

### **The Untouchable Wild**

The days of big game hunting may be over, but is the modern photo safari really any better for the land? By Ted Kerasote; photos by Michael Nichols

### **The Island at the End of the Earth**

Home to an amazing array of marine mammals and birds, South Georgia intrigued Captain Cook, delighted whalers and saved Ernest Shackleton. Peter Matthiessen, the Pulitzer-prize winning author of *The Snow Leopard*, describes walking among 50,000 king penguins, being chased by elephant seals and meeting the island's tiny population: one British couple.

### **A View With a Room**

Imagine awakening to the roar of a lion, watching scarlet macaws flit by your window or being able to watch rhinos from a treetop bungalow. The most beautiful and ecologically-sensitive lodges can be as inexpensive as \$30 a night. Alex Markels picks Audubon's 10 ultimate vacation outposts.

### **The Secrets of the Cloudforest**

Discovering a species is as rare as hen's teeth, and Audubon has the first photo of the *Jocotoa antpitta*, a new bird. As Robert McCracken Peck reports, Ecuador's cloudforest is a place where rare and undiscovered species still roam and people regularly live past 100. Photographs by Pablo Corral.

### **This Will Bug You**

Ever wonder why it is so hard to get rid of cockroaches? One reason may be that they can cover 59 inches a second, proportionately faster than a cheetah.

## **National News of Interest**

### **Audubon Ark to be Launched**

National Audubon Society announces the launch of the Audubon Ark. The boat will travel the length of the Upper Mississippi River to educate and celebrate the importance of the river for people and wildlife. The 48-foot river houseboat began its odyssey July 30th in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

"The Audubon Ark will help celebrate the wonders we still have in the Mighty Mississippi while reminding people of the incredible potential of a river restored to its original greatness," said Dan McGuinness, director of National Audubon's Upper Mississippi River Campaign. "We will show how the Mississippi of song and legend can be more productive commercially, a better home to our wildlife, and a safer river."

The Audubon Ark will take its message to river festivals and other events in four states. The boat will travel the upper Mississippi, ranging from St. Paul, Minnesota to Davenport, Iowa, making stops at 36 towns and cities in between.