



The Passenger Pigeon

The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

September 2006 Vol 42 No. 6

September Meeting:

Thursday, September 21, 7:00 p.m.: Birding in Brazil

Upcoming Field Trips:

- Shawnee Lookout & The Oxbow, Sunday, September 10, 2006
- Brookville Reservoir, Sunday, September 24, 2006.
- Miami-Whitewater Wetlands, Sunday, October 8, 2006.

Are Your Dues Due?

If you haven't sent in your dues yet for the September 2006 - May 2007 birding year, please fill out the form on the newsletter cover and mail it in along with your membership fees.

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“Birding in Brazil” to Kick Off 2006-2007 CBC Schedule

The Cincinnati Bird Club's first meeting of 2006-2007 will take place at **7:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 21 at the Sharon Woods Visitor Center.**

Birders play a key role in the conservation of important bird habitat nationally, and particularly globally, by visiting and spending money when traveling to such sites in order to bird. These visits can have positive economic impacts.

Consequently, it is important to publicize our visits to areas that are important to birds, and to encourage others to visit and spend money in support of maintaining and protecting critical areas and habitats.

With this in mind, our first program for the 2006-2007 meeting schedule is about a

birding visit to three important areas in Brazil—the Amazon rainforest, seasonal wetlands, and dry savannah.

Steve Bobonick is the featured guest for September and will present a talk titled “Birding in Brazil.”

Steve has been a Cincinnati resident for 26-years and is a long time bird walk leader for the Cincinnati Nature Center. He was raised in Connecticut where he began birding when he was fourteen-years old.

Steve's business travels with GE Aircraft Engines have allowed him to bird on six continents. This program will focus on the habitats, logistics, accommodations and birds of three locations in Brazil: Cristalino Jungle Lodge (Amazon rainforest), the Pan-

tanal (seasonal wetlands) and Chapada dos Guimaraes (dry savannah).

As a reminder, when entering the visitor center, please note that the glass doors leading from the restroom/vending machine area into the first floor of the visitor center by the gift shop are locked during our meetings. Once you enter from the parking lot through the front doors into the restroom/vending machine area, please go through the wooden door on the right side of the room, near the park ranger office, and then make an immediate left turn through another wooden door to enter the facility.

—Jay Lehman
President

Upcoming Field Trips

Location: Shawnee Lookout & The Oxbow
Date: Sunday, September 10, 7:00 a.m.
Leader: Jay Stenger, 522-8147, jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

Next to May, an excellent argument could be made that September is the next best birding month in our region. Fall migration for warblers and other songbirds, shorebirds and a number of other species will be in full swing for our first field trip of the new CBC season. The combination of Shawnee Lookout and The Oxbow should stack up for a great day of birding a field. The combined habitats of these excellent birding sites at this time of the year should yield a great diversity of species.

We will begin the day by birding a few spots around Shawnee Lookout, focusing on migrant songbirds, especially warblers. We will eventually work our way over to the Oxbow where we should be able to find shorebirds, herons, water birds and even a few more war-

blers. Raptors will be seen throughout and Broad-winged Hawks, Osprey and the resident Peregrine Falcons are all possible.

We will meet at Shawnee Lookout at 7:00 a.m. in the lower boat ramp parking lot, which is located across from the main park entrance. A Hamilton County Park pass is required (\$2.00 daily, \$5.00 annual) for each vehicle. For directions and other park information check out the following website:

<http://www.hamiltoncountyparks.org/aboutus/directory.htm>

For information and maps of the Oxbow visit the Oxbow Inc. website at

<http://www.oxbowinc.org/>

This is not an all day trip, but if the birding and weather is good we will probably stay well past noon. Prepare for your trip accordingly. We will walk a bit in the morning, but at a slow and leisurely pace.

Restrooms are available but limited. If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

Location: Brookville Reservoir & environs
Date: Sunday, September 24, 7:00 a.m.
Leader: Joe Bens, 353-4229, jbens@cinci.rr.com

The CBC has been doing this trip during September for the past few years and has never been disappointed. While we rightfully associate the Brookville area with the waterfowl and winter seasons, it offers excellent birding throughout the year. The diverse habitats of this area may attract any species expected in our region, but on this trip we will focus primarily on the migration of three distinct families of birds; warblers, hawks and shorebirds. There are plenty of woodland habitats here, which offer excellent song birding. Brookville Reservoir may also be the best fall hawk-watching site in our immediate area. With both Bald Eagles and Ospreys nesting along with all the ex-

pected residents, the Whitewater River valley also works as a fantastic hawk migration "corridor". Each year large numbers of Broad-winged Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks and other raptors move through Ohio and Indiana during the second half of September. The ridges along Brookville Lake always seem to attract their fair share of these birds at this season. Predicting water levels at our local reservoirs is a bit tricky before the winters draw down in late October. Nonetheless, the extreme north end of Brookville Lake often has some exposed mudflats by the end of September, and when it does, shorebirds, terns and herons can be abundant. If time allows we will probably take a look at shorebird conditions at Hueston Woods on our way home. We expect to have a big day, so come and join us for some birding excitement.

This trip will probably run into mid afternoon so bring your lunch and drink. There will be

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some mostly level, dry and easy walking in the morning, followed by stop-to-stop driving around noon. Restrooms are available at most of our stops.

We will meet at 7:00 a.m. at the park & ride lot, located at the I-74/I-275 & Rt. 128 Miami town exit number 7. From here we will caravan to the Brookville area, about a 25-mile drive. Don't hesitate to contact Joe if you have any questions.

Location: Miami White-water Wetlands

Date: Sunday, October 8, 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Ned Keller, 941-6497, keller@one.net

Late migrant passerines, late shorebirds, early waterfowl, raptors and early winter visitors are all possible on this trip to one of our areas finest wetlands, the Shaker Trace at Miami Whitewater Forest. The focus of this trip however will be on sparrows. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, an otherwise extremely rare migrant through our

area, has become an annual and regular migrant at the wetlands, and is seen fairly often here during the first two weeks of October. We have a good chance of finding one. Lincoln's Sparrow is also expected at this time of the year and many of the winter sparrows should be in by then. A long shot, but the right habitat and the right time of the year, would be LeConte's Sparrow. We can expect some surprises and a mixed bag on this trip. The weather could prove to be the star of this trip as the first two weeks of October are typically cool, crisp autumn days. Fall colors will be abundant and make a picturesque backdrop to what should be a great trip. There may be a side trip to a nearby spot, but Ned is keeping his options open at this date.

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the wetlands parking area. From I-74, take the Dry Fork Road exit number 3, and turn right. Continue past the entrance to Miami Whitewater at

West Rd, and stay on Dry Fork until it ends. Turn right onto New Haven Road. At the first stop sign, turn left onto Oxford Road, and the immediately left again onto Baughman Road. The dirt parking area is on the right side of the road, just past the bike trail crossing. Directions to the park as well as other information can be found at the following website:

<http://www.hamiltoncountyparks.org/aboutus/directory.htm>

A Hamilton County Park pass is required (\$2.00 daily, \$5.00 annual) for each vehicle. The trip will consist of level, easy walking. The trails are not paved, so wear appropriate footwear. This trip should end around noon. There are no restroom facilities at the wetlands, but of course there are in the main park. Contact Ned to answer any of your questions.

—Jay Stenger
Field Trip Coordinator

Passenger Pigeon by eMail:

You can choose to receive your copy of the Passenger Pigeon by eMail instead of getting a paper copy through the regular mail. Getting the newsletter by eMail will save the Bird Club the expense of printing and mailing your copy, and you will receive it several days sooner than the paper copy would arrive. You will need to have the free Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. If you do not already have it, a free copy can be downloaded from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

To sign up for this service, send an eMail to the editor at mjb@schafter.cc. You can switch back to a paper copy at any time. Please consider giving it a try!

CBC Field Trip Notes: 2006-2007 Season

As you know the CBC season runs from September through May, with a three-month lay-off during the summer. With the exception of December, there will be at least one and as many as three field trips scheduled each month. That's approximately 16 field trips not counting the Christmas Bird Counts. During December the CBC sponsors several area Christmas Bird Counts (Cincinnati, Western Hamilton County, The Ohio River and East Fork) and encourages participation on other area Christmas and winter counts like the Hamilton-Fairfield CBC and the Hamilton County Parks winter count to name a few, so we don't schedule additional field trips during that month. In addition we occasionally plan overnight weekend trips and have a couple of surprises for this coming season.

Much thought is put into selecting the locations and timing of our trips. The CBC goal is to offer a diverse number of field trips that take advantage of the peak migration periods for

certain birds, which in turn gives us the best opportunity to find the maximum diversity of species over the course of the season. Other factors are also considered. We try to keep a balance between east side and west side locations and in-town (I-275 belt-way) trips versus longer, more distant trips. Consideration is also given to the aesthetic appeal of different sites and Saturdays versus Sundays. We try to keep a blend between new locations and the tried and true locations, and sometimes recycle old locations that haven't been visited in a while. Unfortunately we can't visit every spot. Take the month of May for example, when almost anywhere is great. There are over a hundred area spots to choose from that would be great during that month, but were limited to two, maybe three choices. It is also a consensus opinion that more scheduled field trips are better than less. It gives membership more options and flexibility in making plans. As long as the trip leader is will-

ing to go, there is no harm done if any particular trip is poorly attended. Some of the best birding I have had has been on small field trips.

While all of these things are considered, the bottom line is we try to choose a location that is going to produce birds. I haven't ever done it, but I have often considered keeping an annual list of birds seen on CBC field trips. Maybe we can try to do it this year. I imagine the list would be pretty impressive. My guess is at least 220 species annually, maybe even more. What's your guess?

If you haven't ever been on a field trip, you should give it a try. I highly recommend them. I have been on hundreds of field trips and I can't remember a really bad time, yet I have many great memories. You meet some really good people too. Below are some bits of advice and protocol to make your field trip experience enjoyable, fun and trouble free in no particular order of im-

portance. Old hands already know all of this but it might be of interest to some.

- 1) Feel free to contact the field trip leader prior to the trip if you have any questions or would like additional information.
- 2) Inclement weather usually will not cancel field trips. Hazardous weather and driving conditions probably will cancel a field trip. As a general guideline an uncomfortable day in the field will not cancel a trip but an unsafe day most likely will. Use common sense and if you're in doubt call the trip leader. Remember, there is no pre-registration for the majority of trips, so the leaders do not know who to expect to show up; that is one reason we cancel very few trips.
- 3) Birders of all experience levels are encouraged to participate on field trips. Don't be intimidated if you're a beginner. We all started there. Birding in a group is an excellent way to enhance your skills. There are usually sev-

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eral experienced birders on these trips who are more than willing to answer your questions (some even correctly) and argue with each other.

4) Non-CBC members are encouraged to participate on our field trips. Bring a friend or family member.

5) Always arrive at the meeting location on time and with a reasonably full tank of gas.

6) If you have a scope, bring it. You never know when it will come in handy. If you don't have a scope, don't let it stop you from coming. Birders are usually happy to share their scopes with others. Do bring binoculars.

7) Always bring food and plenty to drink regardless of the duration of the trip. Don't expect to have a picnic; birders almost never want to waste time at a picnic table when they can eat in between birding stops.

8) Dress appropriately. No matter how nice a day you think it's going to be, it doesn't hurt to have something extra to wear when your proved wrong. Dressing in lay-

ers is probably best.

You can add or remove layers to suit your own comfort. If they say it will be 70 degrees and sunny, prepare for 45 degrees and rain. Forecast says 28 degrees and sleet, prepare for minus 10 and a foot of snow. If you don't need the extra clothing, great. Take it off. Don't wear it. But trust me, there will be a day when you will be glad you brought that extra stuff.

9) Comfortable, waterproof shoes are the difference between happiness and insanity.

10) A field guide is always useful.

11) Special gear can save a day out birding. Some useful items to consider having on a field trip are; rain gear, water, sunscreen, insect repellent, first aid kit, Triple A membership, cell phone (see below) and fix-a-flat tire inflators.

12) Cell phones can be very handy in case of an emergency and a convenient way to stay in touch in a caravan. Exchange your numbers with the leader at the beginning of the trip.

13) Caravanning is different from car-pooling. Caravanning just means that we will travel to and from our destinations as a group in separate cars similar to a procession. If you are a driver, familiarize yourself with the general area beforehand by looking at a map. Field trip leaders will drive at the speed limit. They will not go under the speed limit just because they are caravanning. As a driver, you owe it to the others behind you to keep up with the flow of traffic.

14) Car-pooling is encouraged but not mandatory. Car-pooling saves gas and makes sense in many cases. But how long one can stay, and which routes the driver will go home by, are only a couple of limiting factors to car-pooling.

15) Leaders are aware of the needs for restroom breaks and do their best to plan stops along the way. Many places we visit however have limited facilities and some have none. If nature calls it is perfectly acceptable to find a private spot

and take care of business.

16) Feel free to leave a field trip at any point. Don't stay home because you can't stay for the duration of a trip. Two or three hours of birding is better than not birding at all. 17) Field trips are fun and social affairs. Talking is expected. On the other hand excessive talking and noise when you're on birds or listening to their songs can be a distraction. Use common sense and courtesy when in doubt.

18) Your suggestions, opinions and ideas concerning field trips are welcome. Please feel free to contact me, Jay Stenger, on these issues at any time.

—Jay Stenger
Field Trip Coordinator
522-8147,
jaystenger@cinci.rr.
com



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Cincinnati Bird Club
Newsletter Editor
7577 Whitehall Circle West
West Chester, Ohio 45069
Email: mjb@schafter.cc

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VISIT US ON THE WEB:

www.cincinnatibirds.com/birdclub/index.php

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