



# The Passenger Pigeon

The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

October 2006

Vol 42 No. 7

## September Meeting:

Sharon Woods Visitor Center: Thursday, October 19, 7:00 p.m.: "Got Owls?"

## Upcoming Field Trips:

- Miami-Whitewater Wetlands, Sunday, October 8, 2006
- Muscatatuck NWR, Saturday, October 14, 2006.
- Caesar Creek State Park, Saturday, October 28, 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

## Inside this issue:

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## Cabins Coming to Bowles Woods?

Details are admittedly sketchy, but word is out that the Hamilton County Park district has plans under consideration that could lead to the construction of an unspecified number of cabins in the Bowles Woods section of Miami-Whitewater Forest.

Bowles Woods is not labeled on most park maps, but for readers who might not know where Bowles Woods is, it is the large wooded area in the southwest corner of Miami-Whitewater Forest. Using the official map from the Hamilton County Parks website, which is available at [http://www.hamiltoncountyparks.org/aboutus/mwf\\_map.pdf](http://www.hamiltoncountyparks.org/aboutus/mwf_map.pdf), for reference, Bowles Woods is bordered by West Road to the north and east, by Dry Fork Road to the west, and by I-74 to the

south. There are also private property owners who own sections of the woods. However, for our purposes, the heart of Bowles Woods is roughly 200 acres of contiguous, mature deciduous forest, one of the largest such tracts in the Hamilton County park system.

As local forests go, Bowles Woods also has a fairly well-developed understory, consisting of spice bush and other plants. Of course, there are also numerous problems with nonnative plants and shrubs, particularly garlic mustard. Overbrowsing by deer presents another serious concern. Nonetheless, Bowles Woods remains an important spot in Hamilton County for a number of breeding birds, including Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Wood Thrush, Summer and Scarlet

Tanagers, Red-eyed Vireo, and a number of other woodland birds. Bowles Woods is also an important area for migrating birds in spring and fall.

Currently, there are three picnic shelters clustered near the north entrance to Bowles Woods off of West Road: Bluebird Glen Shelter, Tanager Meadow Shelter, and Big Sycamore Shelter. Heading south along the road that winds its way up through the heart of Bowles Woods are four additional shelters and picnic areas of varying sizes and design: Peregrine Point, Bowles Woods Shelter, Flicker Bend, and Sassafras Dell. There are two small ballfields and one small playground along this stretch of road. There is also one marked trail, the Tallgrass Prairie Trail.

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## Bowles Woods (continued)

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It's not certain, yet, where exactly Hamilton County Parks is considering placing the cabins; nor are is it known how many cabins will be built, nor how the cabins will be designed.

Yet indications are that the cabins would be built on existing shelter or ballfield sites, which are located along the road. This would seem a better plan than to build the cabins in the interior of Bowles Woods, which would require cutting down a number of trees and intensively impacting the area.

Nonetheless, adding cabins to Bowles Woods is a plan that has to be given some scrutiny—careful scrutiny, to be precise!

Currently, public access to Bowles Woods is limited to the Tallgrass Prairie Trail and sections of the larger horse trail that winds throughout Miami-Whitewater Forest Park. There are also a number of “unofficial” trails that people occasionally wander along.

Introducing cabins into Bowles Woods, however, would invite constant use of the area by the public throughout the camping season, which depending on how the cabins are designed, could be on a seasonal or a year-round basis. At the least, one imagines that such cabins would be used throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

This would mean more traffic, more noise, more trash, more people wandering around, more pets, and more disturbance throughout Bowles Woods.

For now, word is that the proposed cabins are just that—a proposal. Should the cabin plans develop into something more specific, Hamilton County Parks will hold meetings and accept opinions from the public.

It's true that building cabins in *any* location within the park system would cause some sort of habitat damage and disturbance. That being said, Bowles Woods is

not a good choice for cabins. We encourage the Hamilton County Park district to consider alternative sites for new cabins, as they mull over the various options and sites available to them.

For “breaking news” concerning this issue, please see the message board at Ned Keller's “Birding In Cincinnati” website:

<http://www.cincinnatibirds.com>

And, of course, this newsletter will try to keep readers informed, as well.

### Letters:

From the Karl Maslowski family:

“Dear Peggy & Cincinnati Bird Club — The Bird Club was a pleasant part of dad's life for many decades, so it's very nice for him to be remembered by it through your gift to Oxbow, Inc.

As you may know, dad believed land preservation was the key to conservation, and Oxbow, Inc., has done wonder-

ful things and has plans for more.

The entire Maslowski family joins in thanking the Bird Club for scores of wonderful Xmas counts, dozens of meetings at our home or office (before the club outgrew them) and the thoughtful gift to Oxbow.

Best wishes,  
Steve Maslowski”

(*Editor's note:* A tribute to Karl Maslowski will appear in an upcoming issue of *The Passenger Pigeon*.)

The Hamilton County Park District recently announced that *Evergreen*, their hard copy calendar of events tabloid will no longer be distributed bimonthly after the forthcoming November issue within the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. I thought that this was a mistake, so I appeared before their September meeting and expressed that surely savings could be obtained in other ways. Every parcel of real estate in Hamilton County has a

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## “Got Owls?” The October Bird Club Meeting

The October Bird Club meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sharon Woods visitor Center. Featured speakers are Jen Sauter and Julie Davis, who will be presenting a program titled “Got Owls?”

Sauter and Davis provided the following program notes:

“Owls are some of the most fascinating raptors flying about our region. Even the one commonly recognized, the Great Horned Owl, has many unique and interesting habits. It is one of the very few animals willing to prey upon the skunk. Our most common owl, the Eastern Screech Owl is rarely seen because it is strictly nocturnal, but they will respond to a mimic of their call and quickly fly in to investigate.

Julie Davis of Columbus Audubon and Jen Sauter of the Ohio Ornithological Society will present a colorful Power Point program “Got Owls?,” detailing their experiences with Den-

ver Holt and the Owl Research Institute in Montana. Many owls and their calls will be explored and fledglings will be featured as well.”

### Jen Sauter’s Bio:

After being in the financial business for 17 years, Jen left to pursue a career closer to her heart. She returned to Ohio State University at the age of 35 and graduated in March of 2005 with a degree in Wildlife Management, with a specialization in Avian Ecology. She has always been a lover of nature and the outdoors, and was captivated by a Yellow-breasted Chat in the mid-90’s, and has been hooked on birds ever since. Jen became involved in the Ohio Ornithological Society in the inaugural year when she met Jim McCormac upon her discovery of a Long-tailed Jaeger on Hoover Reservoir. She has been volunteering for the society ever since as the event coordinator and is in charge of the membership database. Jen and her husband John live up

on Hoover Reservoir in Westerville, enjoying the large diversity of birdlife.

### Julie Davis’s Bio:

Julie Davis is an active birder, hiker and kayaker. She is currently on the board of Columbus Audubon, where she serves as vice-president & volunteer coordinator. Julie also helps run the CA Birdathon and is working on the new Whittier IBA project for CA. She has a degree from Purdue University and has served on various boards in the past. Julie is also a volunteer at Highbanks Metro Park, monitoring blue bird boxes, along with other activities. She currently is the director for the Worthington Art Festival and teaches classes at the Westerville Athletic Club.

### **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](mailto:mjb@schafter.cc). You can switch back to a paper copy at any time. Please consider giving it a try!

## October Field Trips

**Location: Miami White-water Wetlands**

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

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

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. (Additional details appear in the September newsletter).

**Location: Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge**

**Date: Saturday, October 14, 7:30 a.m.**

**Leader: Darlena Graham, (859) 341-4893, darlena@fuse.net**

What better place to go birding in October than Muscatatuck. October brings a mixed bag of species to our area. Winter residents are ar-

iving, late fall migrants are peaking and a few late migrant songbirds are lingering, raptors are moving, waterfowl migration is starting to pick up steam and some species of shorebirds can still be found. All of these species could be found in the 7800 acres of Muscatatucks diverse habitats. October has a bit of a reputation as a good month for rarities, so there is always the chance for a surprise. Fall colors will also abound, adding another wonderful dimension to this trip. Top off the trip with our skilled guide Darlena, who as a Muscatatuck regular, knows the refuge inside and out and we have the fixing's for a great day. We will meet at the Tanners Creek Boat Ramp at 7:30 a.m. and caravan to Muscatatuck from there, about an hours drive due west on US 50. See the directions to the Tanners Creek Boat Ramp below. We expect to stay at Muscatatuck until around 3:00 p.m. and arrive back at the Tanners Creek boat ramp by 4:30 p.m. Be sure to bring your lunch and drinks, as there is no food service at Mus-

catatuck. Decent restroom facilities are available at the refuge. The heated restroom facilities at the Visitor Center are downright fancy, compared to what normally awaits us on our field trips. The Visitor Center bird feeders are outstanding, and Purple Finches and Fox Sparrows are usually regulars. Darlena has a few walks planned; however walking is flat and easy and leisurely paced. To view the Muscatatuck NWR website, use the following links. Feel free to contact Darlena if you have any questions about this trip or directions.

<http://www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/index.cfm?id=31530>

Or

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/muscatatuck/>

Tanners Creek Boat Ramp is located just south of US 50 in Lawrenceburg Indiana, just west of the Tanners Creek bridge. From the Cincinnati area take I-275 west to the Lawrenceburg, Indiana (The Oxbow) exit. Take US 50 west through Lawrenceburg. You will cross the US 50 bridge over Tanners Creek. Approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile past the

bridge, look for the small boat ramp sign, and turn left (south) onto a paved road that will take you down to the boat ramp parking lot. There is a McDonalds you can't miss right at this corner. Over the years this road has been called various names, but I think it now says Tanners Creek.

**Location: Caesar Creek State Park**

**Date: Saturday, October 28, 8:00 a.m.**

**Leader: Jay Lehman H 527-4701; W 622-2399**

**lehman.jg@pg.com**

The focus of this trip will be waterfowl (ducks & geese) and water bird (i. e. loons, grebes, gulls etc) migration, which should be well under way. Caesar Creek Lake has attracted numerous rarities during the fall over the years and there is always a good chance for a surprise to show up. Franklin's Gulls have been fairly regular over recent years, but rarer gulls are always possible. Of course the diverse habitats of this large area attracts a host of other species, which will not

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 be ignored, and we expect to find a number of raptors, late fall migrants and winter residents. In addition to checking many sites around the lake, Jay expects to visit nearby Spring Valley Wildlife Area as well. This will be a day trip, extending well past noon, so be sure to bring a lunch and drinks. Jay L. wants to remind participants that they are welcome to leave the trip at any point, so don't stay home just because you can't do a whole day. The trip will consist of driving from one lake view to another, interspersed with short walks here and there, especially at Spring Valley. Restrooms are available throughout the area. Scopes will of course be useful, but again, if you don't have one don't let that stop you from coming as birders are always willing to share. Make note that the meeting time is 8:00 a.m. on Saturday and the time change takes place later that night when we set our clocks back an hour. We will meet at the Caesar Creek swimming beach parking lot. From Cincinnati, take I-71 north to

the State Route 73 exit # 45. Turn left (west) onto SR 73 and go about 5 miles. After crossing the SR 73 bridge over Caesar Creek Lake, turn right at the State Park entrance and follow the signs to the swimming beach. If you have any questions about this trip or directions contact Jay.

And a bonus trip . . .

**Location: Mitchell Memorial Forest**  
**Date: Saturday, October 14, 8:30 am**  
**Leaders: Sr. Marty Dermody & Ann Oliver, 513-307-0929**  
**annieobirder@yahoo.com**

Join Marty and Ann for a field trip to Mitchell Memorial Forest, 5401 Mount Zion Road, on the west side of town. The outing is sponsored by Wild Birds Unlimited.

Although not an "official" Cincinnati Bird Club event, this walk is for novice or new birders, including folks who have backyard bird feeders but have never gone on an organized birdwalk.

Meet either at Wild Birds Unlimited (6496 Glenway Ave: 513-598-4645) at 8:00 a.m. for coffee & donuts and then carpool to the site: binoculars for loan will be available.

Or meet at 8:30 a.m. directly at Mitchell Memorial Forest at the first parking lot on your left by the Wood Duck Trail.

If you can't make the early morning ramble, join Raptor, Inc. and birds of prey at Wild Birds Unlimited from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Young children are welcome and invited to partake in face-painting, balloons, and snacks.

*(Editor's note: If you know someone who might be interested in getting a sense of what birding is all about, please consider encouraging them to attend one—or more—of the field trips listed above. Birders of all ages are welcomed on Cincinnati Bird Club field trips.)*

**Letters** (continued from page 2)

1.03 mills per thousand assessment towards the County Parks on its semi annual tax bills. I pay \$34.07 per half year or \$68.14 per year. To me the *Evergreen* is an entitled investor report. The citizen accessible knowledge that our wonderful County park system has available in the present informational format and distribution will have to be retrieved in another manor. I told the Commissioners that the potential of finding knowledge now offered by the direct hard copy *Evergreen* will no doubt pass by many citizens; they will be left out.

—Albert E. Lane, member of Cincinnati Bird Club since 1954.



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### **Are Your Dues Due?**

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VISIT US ON THE WEB:

[www.cincinnatibirds.com/birdclub/index.php](http://www.cincinnatibirds.com/birdclub/index.php)

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## Bird Club Membership

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\_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$12.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$15.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$6.00

**Make your check payable to Cincinnati Bird Club, and mail to:  
Peg Gatch, 11 Mound Avenue, Milford, OH 45150**

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