



The Passenger Pigeon

The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

May 2008 Vol 44 No. 5

May Bird Club Events

May Meeting:

**“Alexander Wilson:
The Father of American Ornithology”
Thursday, May 15.
7:00 p.m. Sharon
Woods Visitor
Center.**

This month’s meeting features Jed Burtt, professor of ornithology at Ohio Wesleyan University. Burtt will give a talk on Alexander Wilson, the artist and naturalist who many consider the father of American ornithology. Wilson is a fascinating figure in American history. Though largely overshadowed in public recognition by John James Audubon (who had a one-sided rivalry with Wilson—Wilson having died prior to Audubon beginning his career in ornithology), Wilson’s name lives on in a number of common bird names, as well as in the Wilson Society. Please join us for an interesting and informative program, which will also be our last of the year, as Jed Burtt

explains Alexander Wilson’s contributions to the art, literature, and natural history of North America.

Jed Burtt has been teaching in the zoology department at Ohio Wesleyan University for over thirty years. He is the current president of the American Ornithologists’ Union and a past president of the Wilson Society. Burtt is an active member of the Delaware Bird Club, and spends a great deal of time in the field studying birds. He is a birder-ornithologist in the best senses of both terms. He is currently working on a book about Alexander Wilson, and in addition to a number of published papers in scientific journals on feather degrading microorganisms and other topics, Burtt has also written on the contributions of amateur naturalists. The Cincinnati Bird Club is pleased to have Jed Burtt as our featured speaker this month.

May Field Trip

Location: Fernald Preserve

Date: Sunday, May 25.

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Meeting Place:

**Fernald Preserve,
Wiley Rd. entrance
driveway**

**Leader: Gary Stegner
CBC Contact: Jay
Stenger**

**513-522-4245,
jaystenger@cinci.rr.
com**

The Fernald Preserve consists of over 1000 acres and has a diversity of habitats that include 395 acres of woodlands, large pine groves, 33 acres of savannah, 327 acres of grassland and weedy fields, 81 acres of wetlands and a number of ponds totaling 60 acres of open water. These varied habitats attract a diversity of species. We should still find plenty of migrants as spring migration winds down and breeding birds will be numerous. Our day’s finds should include

raptors, shorebirds, marsh birds, Blue Grosbeaks, numerous warblers, flycatchers, thrushes, tanagers, orioles, grassland species and much more. Grasshopper and Henslow’s Sparrows are possible. This is also the best time of the year to see some of the rare late migrants. The cool thing about the Fernald Preserve is that it hasn’t been birded much and there is a lot to learn about the bird life there.

The preserve will still be closed to the public on the date of our visit, but it is scheduled to open to the public sometime this summer. A Visitors Center is nearing completion and will serve as a source of information on the history of the Fernald area.

Fernald staff member Gary Stegner will guide us around the area. I had the pleasure of having Gary show me around the area last

(Continued on page 2)

September and I can guarantee he goes out of his way to make a visit to the Fernald Preserve a pleasurable experience. We will meet Gary at the Wiley Rd. entrance gate at 7:30 AM. From there we will drive to different areas in the preserve, stopping frequently and walking. There are portable restroom facilities at the preserve, but there is no water, so be sure to bring plenty of liquids. We may take a long walk or two, but they will be along relatively level roadsides and trails. The trip will probably end around 1 PM or so.

The Fernald Preserve is located in northwestern Hamilton County just east of Miami Whitewater Forest. The main entrance is located in the 7400 block on the north side of Willey Rd, about 1/4 mile west of Rt. 128. From the I-275 Exit # 7 (Miamitown, Rt. 128) go north on Rt. 128 for 7 miles to Willey Rd. Turn left onto Willey Rd. and go 1/4 mile to the Fernald entrance on the right.

Feel free to contact me, Jay Stenger, if you have any questions.

Jinny (Wiseman) Witte

As this newsletter was in production, Oxbow, Inc., announced in their April issue of *Wetland Matters* that they had received a generous gift worth over \$1,500,000 from the estate of Jinny (Wiseman) Witte, who passed away in summer 2007.

Art and Jinny Wiseman were two of the most influential people the Cincinnati-area birding scene has ever been graced with. The bird skinning classes they held in their home were essentially a salon for local naturalists and

birders for many years. It's hard to estimate just how many people were inspired by the Wiseman's to become active conservationists and naturalists.

A more thorough appreciation of Jinny (Wiseman) Witte's legacy will appear in the September issue of *The Passenger Pigeon*. By then, additional details of the various bequests that Witte's estate have granted will have been made public.

2008 Oxbow Birdathon

There is still time to join the 21st Annual Oxbow Birdathon. This year's event will be held on Friday, May 9th & Saturday, May 10th. It begins at 5:00 p.m. Friday and ends at 5:00 p.m. Saturday. The Grand tally and pizza party begins at 5:00 p.m. Saturday at the Winton Woods Visitor Centre.

Birders may register as individuals or as teams. The goal is to have fun birding, raise a little

money for Oxbow, Inc., and other worthy conservation causes, and then get together with other birders to share bird sightings and pizza, and to tell tall tales and outrageous stories.

Seriously, the Oxbow Birdathon is a lot of fun, and it's a celebration of what makes birding great. Please consider taking part. For more information or to register, contact Jay Stenger, 513-522-8147, jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

VOA Grassland Bird Workshop

The Conservation Partnership for the VOA Grasslands will hold a half day grassland bird workshop on Saturday, June 14 at the Voice of America Park. There will be an optional field trip beginning at 7:30 a.m. For those who wish to arrive later, there will be refreshments available at the VOA lodge beginning at 9:30 a.m., with the programs beginning at 10:00 a.m. and running until 2:00 p.m., with a break for lunch.

Scheduled speakers include Joe Robb of Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge, who will speak about Henslow's Sparrows and other grassland birds found at the refuge; Danny Ingold, professor at Muskingum College, who has studied the breeding grassland birds at The Wilds for a number of

years; David Nolan of Five Rivers Metroparks, who has been involved in that park system's prairie restoration and creation projects; Paul Wharton, who will speak about his Kestrel box projects in Hamilton and Butler Counties, and Jeff Brown, who will provide an overview of the grassland birds at the VOA and at other sites throughout Butler County.

This event should be a nice opportunity to share and exchange information with other people interested in grassland birds and grassland habitat at the local and regional levels.

The VOA Grassland Bird Workshop is presented by The Conservation Partnership for the VOA Grasslands, with assis-

tance from the Cincinnati Bird Club. The event is sponsored by Audubon Ohio, Butler County MetroParks, and the Dornette Foundation.

Registration for the workshop costs \$10.00 and covers parking, morning refreshments, lunch, and a workshop folder with handouts relating to grassland birds and grassland habitat.

To register, please send a check for \$10.00, payable to Audubon Ohio, to the attention of John Ritzenthaler Audubon Ohio 692 N. High St., Suite 303, Columbus, OH 43215

For more information, please contact John Ritzenthaler at Audubon Ohio by phone: 614.224.3303 or Email: jritzenthaler@audubon.org

Ohio Young Birders Club

The Ohio Young Birders Club (OYBC), sponsored by the Black Swamp Bird Observatory, is forming a chapter in the Miami Valley/Greater Cinti Area.

The goals of OYBC are: Creating a community of young birders

throughout Ohio and beyond; fostering an interest in natural history and encouraging young people to spend time outside; connecting young birders between the ages of twelve to eighteen with adult mentors willing to share

their time, knowledge and transportation; offering encouragement and support to Ohio's future ornithologists and naturalists.

To help organize this newly formed chapter, please email

kmc@one.net or call Kathy McDonald at 513-941-6497.

—Kathy McDonald



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See You in September

The Cincinnati Bird Club takes its annual summer break beginning in June. Meetings and newsletters will continue in September. Have a great summer!

VISIT US ON THE WEB:

www.cincinnatibirds.com/birdclub/index.php

Bird Club Membership

Name _____

Address _____

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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
