



---

# The Passenger Pigeon

## The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

*January 2009 Vol 45 No. 1*

### **Hamilton County Park District Honors**

**Morris Mercer, Art & Ginny Wiseman, and Paul Wharton**

### **With the 2008 Stewart Welsh Award**

Congratulations are in order for long-time Cincinnati Bird Club member and past CBC President, Paul Wharton. Paul was the recipient of the Hamilton County Park Districts (HCPD) 2008 Stewart Welsh Conservation Award. This award was presented to Paul during the HCPD Winter Bird Survey tally on Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. Three other birding legends and long-time CBC members, Art & Ginny Wiseman and Morris Mercer, also received the award which was presented to them posthumously.

The Stewart Welsh Award is a new award the HCPD just began in 2008. The award honors the memory of Stewart Welsh who passed away in early 2008. Stu was instrumental in setting up the Park District's Stewardship Department, the 80/20-land management policy and many other important conservation initiatives for the HCPD. To quote Jim Mundy, who presented the awards, "Stewart put the Stu in the Parks Stewardship". Through this annual award, the HCPD hopes to recognize those who have demonstrated leadership or dedication resulting in a marked improvement to the environment in our region.

For the few CBC members who might not know Paul, he is an outstanding field birder and one of

our regional experts on the subjects of birds and birding. Paul has been involved in many good causes over the years, but the HCPD singled out Paul's achievements concerning his kestrel box project. Paul is an example of a grass roots naturalist and conservationist who makes a direct contribution to our native avifauna. For over ten years, on his own time and at his own expense, and seeking no recognition, Paul has built, erected and maintained kestrel boxes throughout western Hamilton and southwestern Butler Counties. The personal cost, time, and energy that Paul has put into this personal project of his must be enormous. Paul has erected hundreds of boxes but he generally maintains around 40 at any given time. Each year those 40 boxes produce well over a hundred young kestrels, so Paul's efforts have helped fledge over a thousand young kestrels over the years. While the American Kestrel may be declining in many areas of the country, they are doing pretty well in northwestern Hamilton County, thanks to Paul's single-handed efforts.

Many will remember Art & Ginny Wiseman, but if you were birding during their lifetimes, it was certain you would have known them. Art and Ginny were intimately involved with virtually

every birding and conservation organization in our area, and not just as members. Their roles were always as organizers, founding fathers (and mothers), board and committee members, educators and leaders. The Audubon Society of Ohio, Oxbow Inc., Raptor Inc., the Cincinnati Bird Club, The Museum of Natural History, the Cincinnati Nature Center, the Cincinnati Zoo and many other organizations benefited greatly by their involvement.

Morris Mercer was also involved in many of the same organizations as were his friends Art & Ginny. But Morris is best remembered for his role with Oxbow Inc. Morris loved the Oxbow and had a special affinity for it. A founding father of Oxbow Inc., Morris served continuously on the board right to the end of his life. From the hundreds of field trips and programs he gave for school kids and other groups, to the many articles he wrote about the Oxbow, Morris was the spokesman and the face of the Oxbow.

Contributed by Jay Stenger

## **2008-2009 Dues: Please Pay If You Are Overdue**

If you haven't yet sent in your dues for the September 2008-May 2009 birding year, please fill out the form on the back of the newsletter and mail it in along with your membership fees. Or, you can always pay your dues in person at the monthly meeting of the Cincinnati Bird Club. Dues are \$12.00 per year (summer to summer) for individuals (\$5 for students), or \$15.00 per year for families. Sorry, there's no online registration available. Thanks again to Lois Shadix for coordinating the membership for the Cincinnati Bird Club.

## **January 2009 Meeting**

### **Members Photo Night**

**Thursday, January 15, 7:00 pm**

### **Sharon Woods Visitor Center**

Our speaker for the January program will be... you. Or at least it could be you, if you have some photos of birds you would like to share with members and friends. The January program, as in past years, will again be the very popular members photo night. At this program, we encourage all members to show some of their favorite photos and maybe tell us a little something about them. We also ask that each person limit the number of photographs to about 10 to 20 pictures to make sure that everyone gets a chance.

For those into digital photography, there is a digital projector available. We will be able to show digital photos from CD, DVD and possibly slides. Apparently slides are a thing of the past as no one has showed any at this program for a few years. If you plan to show slides let us know in advance. If you have pictures on another type of drive, please contact me in advance of the meeting to discuss how to show your photos. There will be a laptop available, but if you have one, you might want to consider bringing it.

This is always a fun and interesting evening. I hope you can come out and share some of your photos with us. If you don't plan to present any of your own, you still won't want to miss this program, as I'm sure you will enjoy the diverse photos of our talented membership.

If you have any questions concerning this program feel free to contact me.

Jay Stenger, Program Coordinator  
[jaystenger@cinci.rr.com](mailto:jaystenger@cinci.rr.com), (513) 522-8147

# January 2009 Field Trip

## A Tour of the Little Miami River Valley: Camp Dennison, Rowe Arboretum, and Armleder Park

**Sunday, January 18, 12 Noon**

**Leader: Bob Foppe, 513-685-2739,  
fopsinc@aol.com**

**Meeting Place: AIM building  
parking lot near Camp Dennison**

Join Bob for what should be a great afternoon of local birding. Bob plans to start out viewing the abundant waterfowl, and maybe a Bald Eagle, at the Camp Dennison Gravel Pits. From there Bob may make several stops at various locations as we head south down the valley. A stop at Rowe Arboretum is scheduled to try for Pine Siskins and other conifer-loving species. Bob will end the day at Armleder Park to hopefully see the Northern Harriers, Short-eared Owls and other raptors and field species that have been wintering there. Expect to see lots of species if you attend this one.

**Remember, the meeting time for this field trip is 12 noon. The trip will continue until dusk.**

Meeting Place: We will meet in the parking lot of AIM, which is the name of the business located on the east side (same side as the pits) of Glendale-Milford Rd./ Route 126. The management of AIM has graciously agreed to allow us to park and view the pits from their parking lot. Thanks to Bob for setting this up. This is the business at the extreme north end of the Camp Dennison gravel pits, just south of Fletcher Rd. and the Little Miami River.

Directions from the North: Take I-275 exit # 54 /Wards Corner Rd. Go south about 1.5 miles into Miamiville. At the stop sign turn left on to Rt. 126 (called Center Rd.). Go east a short

distance to a stop sign and turn right. You are still on Rt.126. Go across the bridge and past Fletcher Rd. and turn left into the AIM lot.

Directions from the eastside of town: Take US 50 towards Milford. Just before the bridge leading into Milford, turn left onto Glendale-Milford Rd./Route 126. Go north on Route 126 about 2.5 miles, through the village of Camp Dennison and continuing past the gravel pits on your right. Turn right into AIM's parking lot.

## Rusty Blackbird Blitz

**February 7-15, 2009**

The International Rusty Blackbird Technical Working Group, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and National Audubon Society need volunteers from the Tristate to participate in a Rusty Blackbird Blitz. The species has abruptly declined by an estimated 85-98% in the last 40 years. Factors leading to the decline are unclear but degradation of habitat, including wintering sites, may be a factor.

The focus of the blitz is to locate Rusty Blackbirds and map their winter distribution across the central and southern US. During the nine-day count in February, Rusties are somewhat easier to find because of their mid-winter sedentary habits. Males also often sing during this period.

Rusty Blackbird Blitz organizers request volunteers record the number of birds present at each location along with basic habitat information. Information and instructions are available on Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's e-Bird site: [ebird.org](http://ebird.org)

Link to:

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/bird-watchers-urgently-needed-to-track-rusty>

## 2008 Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count Results (Unofficial)

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count was conducted on Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup> 2008. A breezy but clear and mild day contributed to what was another successful count. We had 132 people take part, 111 in the field and 21 at feeders. Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to this event.

We recorded 92 total species on this year's count, down from last year's record setting number of 94 species. The total of 92 species does tie our second highest all-time total previously recorded in 2004. We added two new species to our record book, one Orange-crowned Warbler (photographed at a feeder) and a Harris's Sparrow (documented). The Harris's Sparrow was seen on private property where access was granted for the count. It is unlikely that further admittance will be allowed. We also set individual highs for several species and those are noted with an asterisk (\*) below. We have only had Chipping Sparrows on this count twice in 25 years and only once in the previous 10 years. This year we had a total of 23, for a new count record. The majority of these birds were seen in two flocks of 12 & 8. All of the sightings were by a number of experienced birders, all of who are well aware of the ID problems with similar species and the rare winter status of this species in Ohio.

Our feeder watcher data has not yet been tabulated and those numbers are not included in the following totals. This report only reflects our field efforts. Our unofficial results:

Canada Goose 1547, Mute Swan 7, Gadwall 5, American Black Duck 42, Mallard 833, Northern Shoveler 57, Northern Pintail 12, Green-winged Teal 5, Canvasback 55\*, Redhead 73\*, Ring-necked Duck 74, Greater Scaup 12\*, Lesser Scaup 6, Bufflehead 43, Common

Goldeneye 9, Hooded Merganser 31, Common Merganser 1, Ruddy Duck 33, Wild Turkey 48, Pied-billed Grebe 14, Great Blue Heron 42, Black Vulture 118, Turkey Vulture 391\*, Bald Eagle 2\*, Sharp-shinned Hawk 7, Cooper's Hawk 21, accipiter species 2, Red-shouldered Hawk 26, Red-tailed Hawk 117\*, buteo species 4, American Kestrel 9, Peregrine Falcon 2\* (tied), American Coot 855\*, Killdeer 2, Bonaparte's Gull 1, Ring-billed Gull 36, Herring Gull 6, Rock Pigeon 406, Mourning Dove 705, Eastern Screech-Owl 1, Great Horned Owl 7, Barred Owl 1, Short-eared Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher 21, Red-headed Woodpecker 2, Red-bellied Woodpecker 390, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 28, Downy Woodpecker 293, Hairy Woodpecker 50, Northern Flicker 104, Pileated Woodpecker 56, Eastern Phoebe 3, Blue Jay 188, American Crow 1268, Horned Lark 56, Carolina Chickadee 1642, Tufted Titmouse 736, Red-breasted Nuthatch 3, White-breasted Nuthatch 259, Brown Creeper 31, Carolina Wren 363, Winter Wren 9\* (tied), Golden-crowned Kinglet 118, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 4, Eastern Bluebird 168, Hermit Thrush 8, American Robin 4507, Northern Mockingbird 102, European Starling 7689, Cedar Waxwing 603, Orange-crowned Warbler 1\*, Yellow-rumped Warbler 98, Eastern Towhee 119, American Tree Sparrow 335, Chipping Sparrow 23\*, Field Sparrow 109, Savannah Sparrow 40, Fox Sparrow 3, Song Sparrow 924, Swamp Sparrow 71, White-throated Sparrow 761, Harris's Sparrow 1\*, White-crowned Sparrow 129, Dark-eyed Junco 399, Northern Cardinal 1255, Red-winged Blackbird 1530, Eastern Meadowlark 11, Common Grackle 5038, Brown-headed Cowbird 520, Purple Finch 25, House Finch 276, Pine Siskin 6, American Goldfinch 685, House Sparrow 481.

Count week species stands at two, American Wigeon and Northern Harrier. Other notable misses for this count included Wood Duck,

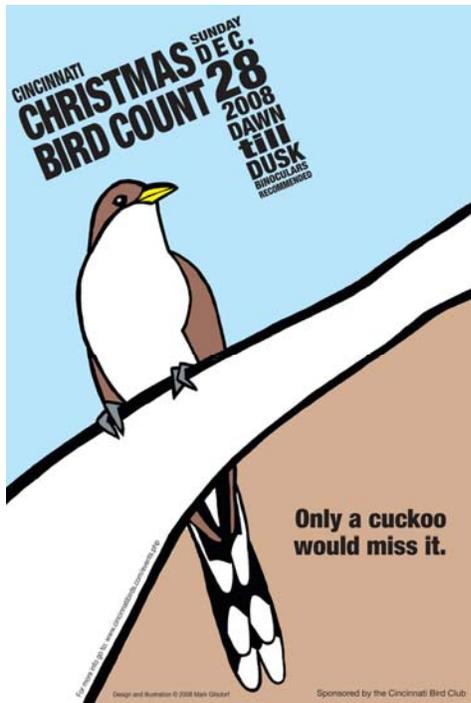
Northern Bobwhite, Brown Thrasher and Rusty Blackbird.

Jay Stenger, Compiler

Cincinnati, Ohio

## Cincinnati's 2008 Christmas Bird Count Poster

Graphic artist Mark Gilsdorf had an idea to publicize the 2008 Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count that wasn't crazy. But the poster he designed was cuckoo.



With the encouragement and approval of Cincinnati CBC Compiler Jay Stenger, Gilsdorf designed, printed, and distributed the poster. If you visited Sitwell's Coffee House in Clifton's Gaslight District, Pleasant Perk Coffee Shop in Pleasant Ridge, Wild Birds Unlimited or Panera Bread on Montgomery Road, or many other local shops, you may have seen the eye-catching image. Additionally, Gilsdorf participated in four CBC's this past season.

Hopefully, the poster campaign will be repeated next year prior to the 2009 Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count. If you'd like to distribute or display a copy or two, there should be extra copies at the November 2009 Cincinnati Bird Club meeting. Details will appear in *The Passenger Pigeon* sometime next fall.

Special thanks to Gilsdorf's employer, Josh Guttman of *The Spanish Journal*, which serves the Hispanic community in the Tristate. FYI: *The Spanish Journal* or *La Jornada Latina* is a weekly newspaper published in Cincinnati. Local editions are also available in Detroit, Columbus, and Pittsburgh.

## Ohio Young Birders Club Local Chapter: Queen City Birders Club

The Queen City Birders Club is a local chapter in Greater Cincinnati of the Ohio Young Birders Club, a statewide organization. The Ohio Young Birders Club (OYBC) was formed in 2006 for young birders and nature enthusiasts between the ages of 12 to 18 as a way to encourage, educate, and empower tomorrow's conservation leaders. The parent organization Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO) is located in Oak Harbor, Ohio. More information can be found at <http://www.cincinnatibirds.com/oybc>.

Local partners include the Cincinnati Bird Club, Audubon Society of Ohio (local Audubon chapter), RAPTOR, Inc., OXBOW, Inc., Avian Research and Education Institute (AREI), and Wild Birds Unlimited (Cincinnati's westside location on Glenway Avenue).

There is also a new young birders network on-line at <http://ohioyoungbirders.ning.com/>. The forum connects young birders in Ohio and across the US. Field trips, postings, photos, petitions and nature discussions are featured.



# The Passenger Pigeon

The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

January 2009

Vol 45 No. 1

---

Cincinnati Bird Club  
President: Mike Busam  
7577 Whitehall Circle West  
West Chester, Ohio 45069  
Email: [MBusam@gmail.com](mailto:MBusam@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Ann Oliver  
Email: [annieobirder@yahoo.com](mailto:annieobirder@yahoo.com)

**2008-2009 Dues:**

If you haven't sent in your dues yet for the September 2008 - May 2009 birding year, please fill out the form below and mail it in along with your membership fees.

---

VISIT US ON THE WEB:

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

---

## Bird Club Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$12.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$15.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$5.00

Make your check payable to **Cincinnati Bird Club**, and mail to our Treasurer:  
Lois Shadix, 2928 Saddleback Dr, Cincinnati, OH 45244