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# The Passenger Pigeon

## The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

*April 2009 Vol 45 No. 4*

### **April Bird Club Program on Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at Winton Woods: Dr. Jed Burtt presents “A Bacterium’s Eye View of Color in Birds”**

**Note:** our April meeting will be held on a **different day and at a different location.**

The meeting will be held on **Friday evening, April 17<sup>th</sup>**, 2009 at the **Winton Woods Visitor Centre**. Beginning at 6:00 pm, there will be a one-hour social hour prior to the program. Please bring a small appetizer to share with your new and old friends in bird club (finger foods such as cheese and crackers, fruit tray, vegetables and dip, cookies, etc). Drinks will be provided by The Cincinnati Bird Club board members. **PLEASE bring your own cup and plate:** do the right thing for the environment!

After the social, The CBC program will begin at 7:00 pm with our special guest. Very few Bird Clubs across North America can boast that they will have the President of the American Ornithologists’ Union (AOU) present a program for them. That will be our good fortune on Friday evening, April 17<sup>th</sup>, when AOU President Dr. Jed Burtt presents his program “A Bacterium’s Eye View of Color in Birds”.

The topic of Jed’s program will be based on his primary research, which deals with the function and evolution of avian coloration, a subject on which he has published two books and numerous articles. Along with a number of students and faculty, Jed has studied the bacteria and fungi in

the plumage of wild birds. Jed’s program will reveal those findings and will prove to be a fascinating program. Don’t be scared off by the “heady” topic. Jed’s has a great sense of humor and his programs are always entertaining.

Jed is in his thirty-second year at Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU) where he is a professor in the Zoology Department and Co-director of the Ohio Wesleyan Honors Program. He teaches zoology, ornithology, scientific writing and island biology, the latter of which often takes him to the Galapagos and Costa Rica. He is heavily involved in the AOU of which, in addition to his current presidency (2008-2010), has served as Vice President, Associate Editor of the “Auk”, and in other capacities since 1968.

Jed’s list of accomplishments is mind-boggling. He is a past president of the Wilson Ornithological Society. He has served as Editor, Vice-president and President of the Association of Field Ornithologists. He was the Associate Editor of the British Ornithological Union from 1996-2005. From 1988-1994 he served on the board and as President of the Ohio Alliance for the Environment. In addition to his tenure at OWU he has held positions at the University of Tennessee, Ohio State, the University of Utah and Harvard University. He has authored countless research papers and three books and is

in the process of writing a book about Alexander Wilson, the father of American Ornithology. You will remember Wilson was the subject of a presentation Jed gave to our club last May.

All of his titles and academia aside, Jed is the down to earth type who has never forgotten his roots. He is an avid birder and active in his local community. He is the chair for the National Audubon-Ohio committee on Important Bird Areas. His name is synonymous with his local birding group, the Delaware Bird Club of which he is the current President and a long time board member. Jed is also the long time compiler for the Delaware Christmas Bird Count. He can often be found out birding with his students and members of the Delaware Bird Club.

Jed and his wife Pam live in a rural area north of Delaware, Ohio where he says he “feeds a lot of insects, birds and mammals”. Pam is a veterinary nurse and is an accomplished painter and photographer. Jed’s diverse interests include camping, reading, music, opera (Jed is a trustee of the Central Ohio Symphony), theatre, art museums and following the university teams.

Most impressively, Jed is beloved by all his students, fellow faculty, his many friends, and all that know him. He is an example of a true educator, a people person who is genuine, compassionate and witty. The Cincinnati Bird Club is honored to have Dr. Jed Burtt as our April speaker.

-Jay Stenger, Program Coordinator

*Don't forget: Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at Winton Woods, 6pm social hour and 7pm program. Winton Centre is on the west side of North Bend Road. For directions, see the Hamilton County Park District Website. Hamilton County Park District auto sticker (parking pass) required.*

***Bring a small appetizer to share, a plate, and a cup. See you at 6pm on Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>!***

## **Honeysuckle Removal at Gilmore Ponds April 11th**

The Gilmore Ponds Banding Station needs your help clearing honeysuckle from net-lanes on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 9am. Volunteers are asked to bring clippers, chain saws, or regular saws but extra tools may also be provided. Meet at the Symmes Road Entrance. Contact Eric Burgess at 513-505-7417. Email: [eric@lemicroscope.com](mailto:eric@lemicroscope.com)

## **Zoo Needs Volunteer Birders**

The Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden is looking for local birders to volunteer on Migratory Bird Days to help school children learn about birds. This is an opportunity to teach students something about nature and bird watching in particular. The three day event takes place Tuesday through Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am to noon each day. Zoo admission is free for the volunteer birders!

Busloads of school kids will visit various stations on the zoo grounds to explore the obstacles, challenges, plight, and successes of migratory birds. Volunteers are needed to help students learn to use binoculars and/or scopes to identify birds. Adult birders are asked to bring their own optics and extra binoculars if possible.

If you are interested in working one, two or all three days, please give your name, address, email address and telephone number to Allan Beach at 513-761-0728 or [abeach@cinci.rr.com](mailto:abeach@cinci.rr.com).

## **Catesby on WCET-TV April 22**

Watch the documentary film “The Curious Mr. Catesby” on WCET-TV, Channel 48 this April 22<sup>nd</sup>. That’s also Earth Day. The Catesby Exhibit at the Lloyd Library, 917 Plum Street, which honors the lifework of the British Naturalist (1683-1749), has been extended to April 25<sup>th</sup>.

# April Bird Club Field Trips

## Spring Valley WMA

8am Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>

**Leader: Darlena Graham**

**859-341-4893**

[darlena@fuse.net](mailto:darlena@fuse.net)

**Meeting Place: Spring Valley  
boardwalk parking lot**

**Directions:** from Cincinnati, take I-71 North to Exit # 28 (St. Rt. 48). Turn right onto Rt. 48 and drive west about 5.5 miles. At US 42, turn right and travel about 6.4 miles north (through Waynesville). Turn right onto Roxanna New Burlington Road. After 1.5 miles, turn right on Pence Jones Road. Turn right: boardwalk parking is about ½ mile on right.

We expect to find a diverse number of species due to the varied habitats in this area and the time of year, as spring migration will be well under way. We will walk around the loop trail at Spring Valley, which leads through marsh and woodlands. Afterwards Darlena will probably take a look at the nearby Roxanna gravel pit, which has been very good as of late. Also, if time remains, Caesar's Creek will be an option.

By this date and a number of migrants should also be found. Waterfowl, early migrants and several species of raptors should be seen. Early April is a great time to be out birding, so consider joining us for what we hope will be a great day.

Darlena expects we will return home by early afternoon, so pack a lunch and beverage and plan accordingly. Feel free to contact Darlena for any questions.

## Miami Whitewater Forest & Wetlands

7:30 am Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>

**Leader: Paul Wharton**

**(513) 353-3403**

[pwharton@fuse.net](mailto:pwharton@fuse.net)

**Meeting Place: MWW Visitor  
Center Parking Lot**

**Directions:** from I-74 west, take the Dry Fork Road exit and turn right. Turn right again at the first stop sign, onto West Road. Just past a small bridge, turn left into the park. Turn left again at the first intersection to get to the Visitor Center.

Spring migration will be well under way, and we expect to find a wide variety of species on this trip. The habitats in this park are diverse, ranging from mature woodlands to wetlands and grasslands. Paul will start the day by looking for returning resident and migrant warblers, songbirds and other species in the forested areas of the park. We will then work our way over to the wetlands where we hope to find rails, bitterns, shorebirds and other wetland and grassland species. Miami Whitewater Park is one of our areas best birding sites and this is a near peak time for spring migration, so we expect a really great day of birding.

There is no set end time for this field trip, but it will probably run to about 1:00 P.M. A Park District auto sticker (\$5 annual or \$2 daily) is required and can be purchased at the entrance. Contact Paul if you have any questions. See the Hamilton County Park District website for a map of the park.

## **FLORA-QUEST, May 1-3 Shawnee State Park**

Established in 2007, Flora-Quest is a hands-on learning adventure focusing on plants and natural areas. Flora-Quest features a special birding excursion called “*Feathers and Foliage*”, workshops, three educational speakers, and the most spectacular views this side of the Great Smokey Mountains. Centered at the lodge within beautiful Shawnee State Park, a mind-boggling array of plants and breeding birds are at our fingertips within the surrounding 65,000-acre forest. The lodge facilities are top-notch and nearby cabins and camping are also available.

We are fortunate to have some of Ohio’s most gifted botanists and naturalists leading Flora-Quest expeditions. One of Ohio’s foremost naturalists, Paul Knoop, will begin the weekend at Shawnee State Park with an introduction to the fantastic floristic diversity of Adams County, and will lead one of the Saturday quests to his private preserve. Ian Adams’ photography will speak for itself during a “Photo Tour of Ohio’s Natural Areas.” Ian will also be offering a photography and flora workshop as part of the event. As an added bonus, Past Chief of Ohio’s Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, Guy Denny, will ably address conservation of native plants and natural areas. Other special field trips are scheduled, including “Moonlight Moth Madness” with Dr Jaret Daniels, author of *Butterflies of Ohio*.

Just to the west of Shawnee is the sprawling 14,000 acre Edge of Appalachia Preserve System. Filled with unusual habitats and one of the state’s densest concentrations of rare plants, The Edge is the pride of Adams County. Flora-Quest trips are split between Shawnee and the Edge, and these packages offer participants the greatest botanical adventure to be had in Ohio, at the best time of year to explore this region. Upwards of 1,000 species of native plants are found in this

region – there are only about 1,900 natives in all of Ohio. Plus, you might hear a chorus of Chuck-will’s-widows and Whip-poor-wills break the stillness of the night.

In addition to learning about common plants, Flora-Quest participants will also have the opportunity to observe a number of great rarities. Each trip option includes two expeditions – a special feature trip of your choice on Saturday, and Shawnee State Forest and vicinity on Sunday.

May is a time of rebirth in the natural world, and there is no better place to be than in the wildlands of Adams and Scioto counties to experience spring. Please visit our website at [www.flora-quest.com](http://www.flora-quest.com) for more information.

### **Keystone Flora: Native Plants**

Help your backyard become friendlier for wildlife including birds, butterflies, and bees by making habitat available in the form of native plants. Keystone Flora, LLC, native plant nursery of southwest Ohio, officially reopened on March 28<sup>th</sup> for the spring planting season.

Native genotype is the specialty of Keystone. Their plants are nursery grown from local sources from either seed or cuttings. Keystone has plants suitable for restoration projects, retention basins, rain gardens, and residential landscaping. Plus, local plants are drought-tolerant once established and will attract butterflies, pollinators, and birds naturally.

Keystone Flora is located on a private road in Wooden Shoe Hollow, Cincinnati.

Regular hours are Tuesdays 10-2 and Saturdays 10-3. Phone: (513) 961-2727.  
[nativeplants@keystoneflora.com](mailto:nativeplants@keystoneflora.com)

Website and plant list:

<http://keystoneflora.com>

## OBBA2: Woodcocks & Owls

The Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II needs **your help** listening and submitting documentation on several species: American Woodcock and Great Horned, Barred, and Eastern Screech-Owls.

Only a tiny portion of hours devoted to OBBA2 efforts have occurred at dusk or at night. So far, only 8 % of blocks have detected Great Horned Owls. Barred Owls have been reported in only 7 % of blocks. Safe dates for both owl species began February 1<sup>st</sup>.

April 1<sup>st</sup> (no fooling!) is the safe date for Eastern Screech-Owl observation.

Safe dates for American Woodcock begin April 10th, but the species doesn't fit well within the atlas framework. Current OBBA2 data show a peak in detection of courtship flights around March 25th and again in mid-to late-April.

During the first Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas (Peterjohn and Rice), aerial displays recorded before April 15th were not included, probably because woodcock are known to do courtship flights during northbound migration. There is now uncertainty about this behavior and some evidence suggests males may mate with females and then migrate north to breed again (females rear young on their own). This might explain why male woodcock put so much energy into displaying in "migration" in the first place! **Because it is difficult to determine breeding status of displaying woodcock, it is important to record all woodcocks seen or heard in Ohio prior to safe dates** (courtship flights should be coded as "CC"). This will allow OBBA2 to make decisions later, hopefully after more is known about displaying male woodcock behavior in early spring. **The bottom line: please contribute all displaying woodcock observations to the Atlas, even if they occur in late-February to early April!** If you observe birds in March, you may want to check for them again after April 10th to see if they are still present.

To increase the value of your woodcock observations before safe dates, consider plotting your observations on the interactive block maps or recording latitude and longitude of the display sites. A general description of the habitat in the notes section might also be useful to OBBA2. Nests have also been found in orchards, grassy fields with planted pines, and even a cultivated field, with egg-dates as early as mid-March and fledgling woodcocks recorded (rarely) as early as the first week of April.

During the first Atlas, woodcocks were detected in 35% of all blocks surveyed, in every county except Logan and Monroe. So far, data from the second atlas show woodcocks are missing from key regions, and increased detections are needed.

To contribute data, go to the OBBA2 website: <http://www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/index.php>

Contact Aaron Boone (OBBA 2 project coordinator) for more information on surveying nocturnal species in Ohio: 614-247-6458 or [obba2@osu.edu](mailto:obba2@osu.edu)

## Queen City Birding Festival Hueston Woods, May 16-17<sup>th</sup>

The Second Annual Queen City Birding Festival is scheduled May 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> at Hueston Woods State Park Nature Center. Dr. Jill Russell, of The College of Mount St. Joseph, and her husband Dr. Dave Russell, of Miami University, are the driving force behind the festival and also behind AREI (Avian Research and Education Institute).

This year's event promises to be even bigger with eleven (yes, 11) stations of children's birding activities. There will be bird walks, face painting, musical entertainment, vendors, and up-close looks at birds.

To volunteer or to become a vendor, contact Jill Russell at 513-244-4783, or [jill\\_russell@mail.msj.edu](mailto:jill_russell@mail.msj.edu)



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**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.

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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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Email** (Save trees and \$: we'll send the newsletter to your inbox!) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 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

