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# The Passenger Pigeon

## The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

May 2010 Vol 46 No. 5

### **Red-shouldered Hawk Research: Jeff Hays** **Thursday, May 20 at 7 pm**

Please join the Cincinnati Bird Club at Sharon Woods at 7 pm on May 20, 2010 for our **final monthly presentation** until the fall. Our guest speaker is Jeff Hays of RAPTOR, Inc. Hays will share the latest research on Red-shouldered Hawks.

Jeff Hays has studied Red-shouldered Hawks in urban and rural settings since 1996. He has co-authored several papers on various aspects of his research. He has also been an active volunteer and has served on the board of RAPTOR, Inc., a Cincinnati-based organization that rehabilitates injured birds of prey and conducts educational programs for schools and other groups.

During this program we will hear what Jeff has learned from his local research on Red-shouldered Hawks. Learn about the status of this hawk in the Cincinnati area and the 160 nests currently under observation.

Here's an abstract from *The Wilson Journal of Ornithology* article by Cheryl Dykstra, Melinda Simon, and Jeff Hays from 2009 on the selection of fresh vegetation used by Red-shouldered Hawks:

“Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*) typically line their nests with fresh branches of coniferous and deciduous trees. We recorded all species of green material present in 63 nests from 2003 to 2005 in suburban Cincinnati in southwestern Ohio, and in 35 nests in Hocking Hills in southeastern Ohio, United States. We identified all trees within 0.08-ha plots at 33 nest sites in southwestern Ohio and 30 in Hocking Hills. Red-shouldered Hawks in southwestern Ohio and Hocking Hills used black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) branches as a nest lining more frequently than expected, based on Bailey's 95% confidence intervals. Black cherry was found in >80% of nests but present in only 57–58% of the vegetation plots, and composed only 4–5% of the trees in the forests of the study areas. White pine (*Pinus strobus*), red pine (*P. resinosa*), and eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) also were used more than expected in both study areas. Black cherry is a cyanogenic species and may provide an advantage to nesting Red-shouldered Hawks by functioning as a natural pesticide.”

Mark your calendar and plan to join the Cincinnati Bird Club at Sharon Woods, Thursday evening, May 20 at 7 pm.

*-Contributed by Bob Foppe, Program Chair*

**Monthly program meetings will resume in September!**

# Cincinnati Bird Club Field Trips for May

## “Warbler-palooza”: Shawnee Lookout

**Shawnee Lookout State Park:** meet at the boat ramp, upper parking lot

**Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am**

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

Smack dab in the middle of songbird migration, Jay plans to hit several spots at Shawnee Lookout, beginning with the boat ramp. If time permits, he may make a quick run over to the nearby Oxbow, to see if we can turn up any shorebirds or waterbirds. The trip will end around noon, depending on how things go. With Spring migration in full swing, you can expect an impressive number of birds for your list. Join Jay for what should be a great day of birding. Contact Jay if you have any questions

Directions: To get there from I-275, take the Kilby Rd. exit # 21 and turn right (south). Go south about a mile to U.S. 50 and turn right. Go about 1.5 miles to the traffic light (at Elizabethtown) at Lawrenceburg Rd and turn left. Just across the Great Miami River Bridge (aka Lost Bridge) turn right and go a little over a mile to the Shawnee Lookout Park entrance. Be sure to turn to the right at the park entrance: the **boat ramp upper parking lot is across from the main entrance**. A Park District auto sticker (\$5 annual or \$2 daily) is required and can be purchased at the entrance.

## “Thar’s Warblers in them thar hills”: Boone County Cliffs

**Boone County Cliffs & Middle Creek Park:** meet in the parking lot of Middle Creek Park on Kentucky Rt. 18

**Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am**

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

Boone County Cliffs, a Nature Conservancy property and the 230-acre Middle Creek Park, a Boone County property, are nestled in the wooded hills of western Boone County, Kentucky. The whole region is forested, but Boone County Cliffs particularly contains some old-growth forest habitat reliable for Worm-eating Warblers. Other forest birds are also expected, including Broad-winged Hawk, Cerulean, Hooded and Kentucky Warblers, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush and both tanagers. Middle Creek, which flows through the area, is loaded with Northern Parulas, Yellow-throated Warblers and numerous other breeding birds. Prairie Warblers are common in adjacent successional areas.

Darlena’s plan is to spend time birding Middle Creek Park, then slowly drive picturesque Middle Creek Road. From the parking lot at Boone County Cliffs, Darlena will lead us up the trail to the top of the cliffs. Middle Creek Road is an excellent birding spot, but is narrow and has limited space to pull off, so we won’t be able to stop

much along the way. The good news is many of the birds that can be found along Middle Creek Rd can also be found at Middle Creek Park.

**One thing to keep in mind is that this trip will involve climbing a very steep trail at Boone County Cliffs: there are NO restrooms. So be warned and prepared for an arduous walk.**

The trip will probably run just past noon. Contact Darlena if you have any questions.

Directions from I-75: from I-75 take Kentucky 18, exit # 18, at Florence and go west. When you reach Burlington, KY, continue for 6.5 miles to the Middle Creek Park entrance, which will be on your left (south side of KY 18). The entrance is just a short distance past Middle Creek Rd. Directions from the west: Take I-275 south and cross the Ohio River. After crossing the river take the first exit, which is KY 8, exit # 11. Turn right (west) onto KY 8, which immediately becomes KY 20 after a short distance. Continue west and then south on KY 20 for about 12 miles. At the intersection with KY 18, turn left or east onto Ky 18 and go about 1 mile. The entrance to Middle Creek Park will be on your right (south side of Ky 18). Middle Creek Rd. is just a short distance ahead.

## **“Other” May Birding Trips**

**Saturday, May 8 at 8 am**

**Bird Walk at Cincinnati Nature Center**

Meet at Rowe Woods Parking Lot

Leader: Mike Kravitz

Sponsor: CNC. Note: there is a \$5 entry fee if you are **not** already a member of Cincinnati Nature Center, located at 4949 Tealtown Rd., in Milford, Ohio.

**Saturday, May 15 from 7 am to 6 pm**

**Queen City Birding Festival**

**Hueston Woods State Park Nature Center in Butler County, Ohio**

A variety of family activities including workshops on birding by ear, bird photography, how to integrate birds into a classroom setting, and bird walks. Keynote speaker: Thane Maynard, Director of the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden.

Sponsor: Avian Research and Education Institute ([www.avianinstitute.com/](http://www.avianinstitute.com/))

**Saturday, May 22 at 8 am**

**Bird Walk at Cincinnati Nature Center**

Meet at Rowe Woods Parking Lot

Leader: Steve Bobonick

Sponsor: CNC. Note: there is a \$5 entry fee if you are **not** already a member of Cincinnati Nature Center, located at 4949 Tealtown Rd., in Milford, Ohio.

**Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 8 am**

**Oxbow Field Trip**

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

Sponsor: Oxbow Inc.

*-Contributed by Mark Gilsdorf,  
Field Trip Chair*

## Queen City Bird Festival: May 15 at Hueston Woods SP

Did you know that when you step outside, *you are more likely to see a bird* than any other animal (mosquitoes not included)? So, if we see more birds than anything else, why don't we know more about them and value them? People will take care of the things they value, right? The Queen City Bird Festival (QCBF), held in southwestern Ohio each May, hopes to promote conservation by inspiring people to care and value nature. Designed as a family event, the QCBF focuses on the beginning birder and uses birding as one example of how we can protect wildlife. By presenting everything from: basic birding skills; to local birds and rehab; to attracting birds with native plants; to birding clubs; to ecotourism; to bird banding; to international conservation collaboratives; the QCBF hopes to change awareness, attitudes, and behaviors toward conservation. What began as one person's passion has grown into an internationally recognized model for bird festivals.

After returning from teaching a course on avian conservation in northern Mexico, I felt driven to provide some type of community outreach that would help inspire a value for nature. Too many kids in the US have no idea how cool nature is, because they've not spent time exploring it. Regardless of the cause, "nature deficit disorder" (1), this lack of interaction with things wild, has been studied to the point of passage of the U.S. *No Child Left Inside Act* (2) as an amendment to the National Environmental Education Act, in an effort to enlighten kids

about the natural world around them. Being a bird bander with the Avian Research and Education Institute (AREI) and a faculty member at the College of Mount St. Joseph (MSJ), I use bird banding as both a research and educational tool. Our banding stations are outdoor classrooms and I've seen first-hand how an interaction with a bird can change people. I got an idea.

The first QCBF (2008) was held at MSJ two months after my return from Mexico. Advertising was done on a shoestring budget (4 sponsors) and included 2000 flyers sent home with school children and a nice write up in the community newspaper. Hoping for more visitors than the 20 volunteers working the QCBF, we held our breath as the weather forecasters projected rain. To our amazement, the storms broke mid-morning, and we tripled our projected attendance, with the number of grade-school age attendees just about equal to the number of adults (3). I was blown away. We were getting kids out in nature, and they and their parents (sometimes grandparents) were having fun! Feedback from visitors and volunteers indicated we had a good thing going, and we received international recognition for our festival model (4).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> QCBF was organized by a planning committee and held at Hueston Woods State Park (HWSP) over two days instead of one (like the 1<sup>st</sup> yr). HWSP was an ideal location for the QCBF because it has a great Nature Center, and it has been designated an

*Important Bird Area* (IBA) by BirdLife International, the National Audubon Society and Audubon Ohio. This means that HWSP provides essential habitat where birds gather to rest and feed during migration and/or to breed. Because of this IBA designation, we were able to link the importance of habitat and bird conservation to the local community. With fourteen sponsors and advertising in the local newspapers, we doubled both the number of people who visited the QCBF and the number of volunteers who helped plan and work it (5). Over 120 grade school kids spent the weekend at the festival, including several Girl Scout Troops. As if that wasn't enough, we had several people return who had attended the previous year's festival.

*Where Birding Begins* is the focus of the QCBF, May 15, 2010, and again, we hope to promote conservation by inspiring people to care and value nature. We have found that the majority of our visitors are either non-birders or beginning birders and that they are very interested in nature. So, our planning committee is in the process of organizing activities around the beginning birder. Thane Maynard, from the Cincinnati Zoo will be giving our children's Key Note presentation and he is sure to be inspiring and motivating. What better place for a family to learn to explore nature, than at a birding festival in their own backyard? Local school teachers have begun incorporating birding activities in their classrooms and they will be showcasing their projects at the QCBF this year. In our small way, we are changing awareness, attitudes, and behaviors toward conservation

and we are getting more kids and families out in nature. It's working!

*-Dr. Jill Russell, Executive Director of the Avian Research and Education Institute*

#### **Bibliography**

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3. **Avian Research and Education Institute, Inc.** Queen City Bird Festival 2008. *AREI*. [Online] May 2008. [Cited: November 27, 2009.] [http://www.avianinstitute.com/?page\\_id=80](http://www.avianinstitute.com/?page_id=80).
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## **The Biggest Week in American Birding: May 6 – 16 at Lake Erie**

The Lake Erie Marsh Region of Northwest Ohio is the focus of the “Biggest Week in American Birding” during the peak of spring migration. The inaugural bird festival at “The Warbler Capital of the World” offers multiple, free, daily bird walks on the Magee Marsh Wildlife Area board walk. For a small fee, you can also sign-up for workshops, lectures, half-day and full-day guided trips, and keynote speakers.

Sponsored by Black Swamp Bird Observatory, Tropical Birding, Kaufman Field Guides, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, and Magee Marsh Wildlife Area.

**Please register in advance:**

[biggestweekinamericanbirding.com/](http://biggestweekinamericanbirding.com/)

**MAY 7 & 8, 2010**

# BIRDATHON

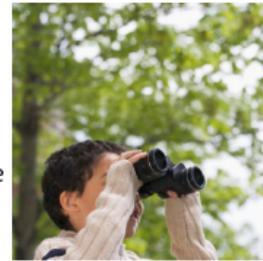
**Team:** Queen City Young Birders Club\*

**When:** Friday, May 7 & Saturday May 8, 2010

**Where:** Friday-Mitchell Memorial Forest 8pm-9:30pm (Owls)  
Saturday-Shawnee Lookout Park 7am-9:30am  
Spring Grove Cemetery / Arboretum - 10am to 3:00pm.  
Tally at Winton Woods Visitor Center - 5:00 pm.

The Annual **Oxbow Birdathon** will be held on May 7 & 8, 2010. A team has been formed for the **Queen City Young Birders Club**\*.

Join us – Bird Migration has begun! This is a great opportunity to view birds returning from southern wintering grounds. Some will stay for the summer, and others are only briefly passing through to nesting grounds further north. Some nearly guaranteed warblers are Cerulean, Yellow-Throated, Blue-Winged and Hooded Warblers, Northern Parula, and American Redstart-to name just a few. Other likely species of interest will be Baltimore & Orchard Orioles, Scarlet Tanager, Brown Thrasher, Barred & Screech Owls, Black Vulture, Wood Thrush and maybe a Peregrine Falcon or a Bald Eagle. Migration is full of surprises and you never can tell what you might hear or see.



Adults are welcome to join us. Come at any time and stay for as long as you want. Bring a lunch and snacks. Pledges will go to Oxbow, Inc and to Queen City Young Birders Club to help fund our Fall Raptor Workshop on September 24th at Winton Woods Visitor center.

To RSVP, contact Kathy McDonald at 513.941.6497 / 513.748.0281 or email [kmc@one.net](mailto:kmc@one.net) by May 5.



Ohio Young Birders Club  
a non-profit organization

\*Queen City Young Birders Club is a chapter of the Ohio Young Birders Club, [www.ohioyoungbirders.com](http://www.ohioyoungbirders.com). Made possible by [Black Swamp Bird Observatory](http://www.blackswampbirdobservatory.org). To make a birdathon pledge, go to [www.oxbowinc.org](http://www.oxbowinc.org).

# Support the Oxbow Birdathon: May 7 & 8, 2010

The annual Oxbow Birdathon is fast approaching. This Birdathon is especially significant as we celebrate Oxbow Inc.'s 25th anniversary. The Birdathon has become an exciting local birding and conservation tradition in our area since it first began 23 years ago in 1988. Last year, 25 teams took part and helped raise important funds for Oxbow Inc., for use towards projects supporting wetland habitat improvement and accessibility. During last year's event, twenty-five teams identified an outstanding group total of 195 species of birds. If you would like to register as a team or individual participant in the Oxbow Birdathon, **please email me at [jaystenger@cinci.rr.com](mailto:jaystenger@cinci.rr.com) or (513) 522-8147 for a registration form.**

Obviously anyone reading this message has a great interest in local birding. I ask that you seriously consider participating in this year's event. Chances are you will be out birding anyway. Get a birding friend and create a team or just go out for a few hours on your own. You don't have to be competitive, you can bird wherever or however you want and a \$5.00 per person registration fee is all that is required.

The Birdathon will be held over a 24-hour period during the peak of spring migration. This year it begins at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 7th and ends at 5:00 p.m. Saturday, May 8th. It culminates in a grand tally and pizza party at the Winton Woods Visitor Centre in Winton Woods. Over the 24-hour period, teams or individuals, will try to find

as many species of birds and collect pledges for each species found. Fifty percent of the pledges (or 100% of Oxbow Inc. sponsored teams) will be contributed to Oxbow Inc., to be used specifically for improving bird habitat and birding access in the Oxbow area. The other fifty percent is contributed to the organization of each team or participants choice. **Remember all Oxbow Inc. contributions are tax deductible as is the mileage driven for the event.**

We view this as more than a friendly birding competition. We see this fund-raising event as a community celebration of local birding and conservation efforts and as an opportunity to raise much-needed funds for Oxbow Inc. and other area conservation and environmental groups. This is a chance for like-minded individuals and organizations to come together in the spirit of camaraderie for a common purpose and to help make a difference. Anyone can participate on any skill level. There are several competitive categories to chose from, or you are welcome to participate as a non-competitor in any manner you would like. If you can't physically participate we welcome your donation to the cause. Any amount is appreciated. The bottom line is that we will raise some money for a worthwhile cause and have fun doing it during the peak of spring migration.

*-Contributed by Jay Stenger,  
Oxbow Inc. Birdathon Committee*



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May 2010

Vol 46 No. 5

Cincinnati Bird Club  
4624 Joana Place  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45238

**President: Jay Stenger**

-Email: [jaystenger@cinci.rr.com](mailto:jaystenger@cinci.rr.com)

**Newsletter Editor: Ann Oliver**

-Email: [annieobirder@yahoo.com](mailto:annieobirder@yahoo.com)

**Program Chair: Bob Foppe**

-Email: [fopsinc@aol.com](mailto:fopsinc@aol.com)

**Field Trips: Mark Gilsdorf**

-Email: [markg74@gmail.com](mailto:markg74@gmail.com)

**2009-2010 Dues:**

If you haven't sent in your dues yet for the September 2009 - May 2010 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.php](http://www.cincinnatibirds.com/birdclub/index.php)

## 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 (under 18) FREE

Make your check payable to **Cincinnati Bird Club**, and mail to our Treasurer:  
Lois Shadix ([lcshadix@fuse.net](mailto:lcshadix@fuse.net)), 2928 Saddleback Dr, Cincinnati, OH 45244

