



Join Your Local Chapter

The *Chat* is the newsletter of the Audubon Society of Ohio, which is the Cincinnati chapter of the National Audubon Society. All members of National Audubon are assigned to local chapters by zip code, unless they selected a particular local chapter when they signed up.

We have published the last few issues of the *Chat* in paper form, and have sent them to all the local members of National Audubon. This is an expensive undertaking, and we won't be able to continue it. But we do want to keep you informed of the local chapter's activities. We encourage you to sign up for email distribution of the *Chat*. You will receive email notifications when new issues are published, and also a monthly notification of the coming month's events. You can join our email list by clicking on the button on the home page of our website,

cincinnati.audubon.org. Or you can just email us, mail@cincinnati.audubon.org, and ask to be placed on the list. Every email that you receive from us will include an easy opt-out link, which will let you leave the list at any time. Your email address will never be shared with any other organization

We also encourage you to join the local chapter, ASO, as well as National Audubon. Joining us will help support our local activities, such as field trips, programs, and publication of this newsletter. But you are welcome to attend our events even if you are not a member of ASO. You can join by filling

out the membership form which is in this issue of the *Chat*.



Jack Stenger and student at this year's ASO bird class. Courtesy Rick Lisi

The 115th National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count

*Note: All National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts remain FREE.

The Audubon Society no longer charges the \$5.00 field participation fee. To offset this loss of income "American Birds" will no longer be printed on paper and mailed to participants

and Audubon will move to an online delivery of the summary results of the Christmas Bird Counts.

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 100 years of citizen science involvement. It is

an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the US, Canada and 19 countries in the Western Hemisphere, go out over a 24-hour period to count birds. Over 2,300 individual counts were

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Upcoming ASO events:

- **17 Nov... Yellow-winged Warbler Banding**, presented by Mark Shieldcastle, research director, Black Swamp Bird Observatory, formerly naturalist, ODNR, Department of Wildlife
- **19 Jan... The Legacy of the Passenger Pigeon and its Relevance in 2014**, presented by Dan Marsh, Director of Education, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens

Christmas Bird Count *(Continued from Page 1)*

conducted and over 71,000 people participated last year.

Count volunteers search for birds within a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle while counting every bird they see or hear throughout the day. It's not just a species tally; all individual birds are counted, giving an indication of the total number of birds within the circle that day. If observers live within a CBC circle, they may arrange in advance to count the birds at their feeders and submit those data to the count compiler. All individual CBC's are conducted during the period beginning December 14th through January 5th each season, and each count is conducted during one calendar day.

CBC participants are organized into groups or field parties by the compiler of the count. Each field party covers a prearranged and specific area within the 15-mile diameter count circle. And everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate regardless of one's birding skills. Compilers arrange field parties so that inexperienced observers are always out with seasoned CBC veterans. You don't have to commit to the whole day either. You are welcome to participate for as long as you like, a half-day or even a few hours.

The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other

surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years. The long-term perspective made possible by the Christmas Bird Count is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat - and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.

The first CBC was done on Christmas Day of 1900 as an alternative activity to an event called the "side hunt" where people chose sides, then went out and shot as many birds as they could. The group that came in with the largest number of dead birds won the event. Frank Chapman, a famed ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History and the editor of *Bird-Lore* (which became the publication of the National Association of Audubon Society's when that organization formed in 1905) recognized that declining bird populations could not withstand wanton over-hunting, and proposed to count birds on Christmas Day rather than shoot them.

There are many Christmas Bird Counts to choose from and we encourage you to take part in as many as possible. But we also hope you can find the time to participate in at least one of our local Christmas Bird Counts listed below. If you have any questions concerning a particular count feel free to contact that count's compiler.

For more information on Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts visit the following [website](#).

See next page for a list of local counts

Programs *(Contributed by Ned Keller)*

Audubon programs are held at Winton Center at 7:30 PM on the third Monday of each month from September to November and January through June. You are invited to our free programs at 7 PM to enjoy 30 minutes of fellowship and light refreshments before the meeting. Winton Center is on the west side of Winton Road just off of Valleyview Rd.

No meeting in July or August.

Monday, November 17, 2014

Use of Migration Banding Data to Assess Population Trends – Case Study Golden-winged Warbler

For several years now, Mark Shieldcastle has been presenting our November program. We keep inviting him back because his programs are both interesting and informative. If this year's topic sounds too technical and intimidating, think again. Mark is an expert on using real data to back up scientific conclusions, in a way that can be easily understood by a non-technical audience (us!). What do we know about how the population of Gold-

en-winged Warbler is doing, and why do we know it? You can find out at the November meeting.

Mark is a co-founder of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory, and is now research director at BSBO, as well as being a retired ODNR Division of Wildlife biologist and USFWS biologist with the successful Bald Eagle Recovery Project. He has over twenty-five years of banding research records of the Western Basin of Lake Erie marshes region, and is highly respected for his methods, professionalism and knowledge about birds. We are honored and delighted to have him as our speaker.

November/December Field Trips (Contributed by Jay Stenger)

Waterfowl & Late Fall Migrants

Location: Brookville Lake & Hueston Woods

Date: Sunday, November 16, 2014

Meet: 8 AM Park & Ride Lot I-275 Exit#7 (See directions below)

Leaders: Jay Stenger
(513) 522-8147
jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

Jack Stenger
(513) 503-3389
jackstenger@gmail.com

The focus of this trip will be the fall waterfowl migration, which should be near peak at this date. Our trip leaders, Jay & Jack, plan to visit several spots around Brookville Lake and then make the short hop over to Hueston Woods before returning home. Both of these locations are hotspots and are excellent for attracting waterfowl and water birds at this season. The rural countryside surrounding these two large lakes has diverse habitats so we expect to find a great variety and diversity of species throughout the day. In addition to many species of waterfowl we also expect to see loons, grebes, gulls, Sandhill Cranes, late shorebirds (such as Dunlin & Wilson's Snipe), Bald Eagles, many hawks, numbers of seasonal songbirds and much more.

This will be an auto-type tour and will consist of driving from spot to spot interspersed with a few short easy walks. While the trip duration is long and does entail a lot of driving, the rewards, in terms of what we see, always make it worth the effort.

The trip will run into mid afternoon but of course you can leave at any time you like. Bring your lunch and drinks. It always seems colder around large lakes so dress accordingly. If you have a scope it will prove useful. Restrooms will be available. One important note, Indiana State Parks charges a daily per car entrance fee (\$5 resident, \$7 non-resident). At this time of year there are usually no attendants on duty but we cannot be sure of that.

We will meet at 8 AM at the park & ride lot, located right at the I-275 Exit #7 at SR 128 marked Cleves-Hamilton. This is the first exit just west of the Great Miami River at Miamitown. We will caravan

from there to the Brookville area, about a 30-minute drive. Call or email Jay or Jack if you have any questions.

Visit the Brookville Lake [website](#).

Visit the Whitewater Memorial State Park (at Brookville Lake) [website](#).

Visit the Hueston Woods SP [website](#).

Local National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts

Endorsed by the Audubon Society of Ohio

Ohio River "Oxbow" Christmas Bird Count (27th Annual)

Sunday, December 14, 2014

Compiler: Jack Stenger
(513) 503-3389
jackstenger@gmail.com

Hamilton-Fairfield Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 20, 2014

Compiler: Mike Busam
(513) 755-0057
mbusam@gmail.com

Western Hamilton County Christmas Bird Count (48th Annual)

Sunday, December 21, 2014

Compiler: Ned Keller
(513) 349-3369
nedkeller49@gmail.com

Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count (67th Annual)

Sunday, December 28, 2014

Compilers: Jay Stenger
(513) 522-8147
jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

Jack Stenger
(513) 503-3389
jackstenger@gmail.com

East Fork Christmas Bird Count (31st Annual)

Saturday, January 3, 2015

Compiler: Joe Bens
(513) 353-4229
joebens@live.com

For more information on Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts visit the following website:

www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/

Audubon News (See audubon.org)

New Minnesota Vikings Stadium Threatens Minnesota's Birds

The [new Minnesota Vikings stadium](#) may become a serious threat to Minnesota's birds without quick action by the team and the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA) to protect animal welfare. Despite [state guidelines](#) requiring bonded buildings to protect birds from window collisions, the Vikings and the MSFA rejected calls to use safer types of glass that could help prevent birds from fatally colliding with the stadium's huge glass windows as the birds migrate along the Mississippi River corridor each year.

"We're talking about a billion dollar stadium here, and the cost to save perhaps thousands of migratory birds – and make the Vikings a global leader in green stadium design – is about one-tenth of one percent of that," said Audubon Minnesota Executive Director Matthew Anderson. "Hundreds of millions of dollars of public money is going to build this stadium, and we know the people of Minnesota do not want their money killing birds. The Vikings recently approved spending millions and millions of additional dollars to make sure the stadium is 'iconic' – surely

they also want to make sure it's not a death trap. We're asking them to change their minds and do the right thing."

According to scientists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Smithsonian Institution, up to [988 million birds](#) are killed annually in the United States by collisions with buildings, especially glass windows. The new Vikings stadium will feature nearly 200,000 square feet of glass.

Audubon has worked with building owners and managers in Minnesota and nationally for many years to reduce bird collision mortality through its [Bird-Safe/Lights Out](#) program. As part of this program, Audubon volunteers survey downtown buildings in the Twin Cities and have found more than 125 species of native migratory birds that have fatally collided with windows since 2007.

Audubon first met with MSFA and the Vikings in May 2013 after the stadium design was unveiled to the public.

As early as December 2012, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources had urged the stadium to incorporate bird-safe design into the new building. A

few months later, a special committee of the Minneapolis City Council specifically recommended that the stadium adopt Audubon's suggestions to create a bird-safe structure through glazing techniques and special site lighting.

Audubon staff communicated regularly with stadium developers until April 2014, when they were told that another meeting would be scheduled before a July 15 decision on the type of glass to be used. That meeting was canceled, and Audubon staff were told on July 17 that there would be no change in the stadium glass choice to protect birds.

"We are grateful that the MSFA will be incorporating some of our recommendations regarding lighting design and operations, but lighting is just one part of the problem" said Joanna Eckles, bird-friendly communities manager for Audubon Minnesota. "The huge expanses of glass, especially facing a new park, are a real cause for concern. Our request was that they meet either the state requirement or the nationally recognized LEED standard for bird safety. In the end, they did neither."

Mysterious Moose Die-Offs Could be Linked to Global Warming by Simone M. Scully

One of North America's largest land mammals is in trouble, and so far, scientists haven't been able to pinpoint the culprit. Moose have recently experienced alarming declines across the continent. For example, in Minnesota, the [north-western population of moose](#) has declined from 4000 to less than 1000. Predation, parasites, hunting and heat stress may all be contributing to the moose die-offs across the United States. But some scientists are fingering another culprit – climate change – which affects nearly all of those factors by shortening winter seasons and driving up temperatures.

However, the link between moose mortality and climate change is a difficult one to prove. Wildlife biologist Mike Schrage told [Minnesota Public Radio](#):

"I do think global warming is having an

impact on our moose. I think it gets complicated between climate change and a dead moose. Because I don't think I'm ever going to walk up on a moose carcass and be able to say, oh, it died of climate change. I think there's a lot that happens in between."

That said, there has been a notable rise in temperatures across moose habitats. Over the last 40 years in Minnesota, the [average winter temperature](#) has risen 11 degrees Fahrenheit, which is undoubtedly bad for the moose.

In New Hampshire, the state population of moose has dropped from 7000 to just 4,600. Ticks, which seem to be the leading factor contributing to moose deaths, have been thriving due to the shorter winters. Up to [150,000 ticks](#) can swarm a single moose.

The New York Times reports:

The winter tick problem in New Hampshire is particularly vexing. The animal can lose so much blood they can become anemic. Worse, the ticks drive the moose crazy; they constantly scratch, tearing off large patches of hair.

Some moose lose so much hair they look pale, even spectral; some people call them "ghost moose." When it rains in the spring, the moose, deprived of their warm coats, then become hypothermic.

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November 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

November Calendar

- **01...** Field trip: Waterfowl migration, [Cincinnati Bird Club](#)
- **07...** Field trip: Saw-whet owls, [Fernald Preserve](#)
- **09...** Field trip: Saw-whet owls, [Fernald Preserve](#)
- **11...** Program: Swan's Island, Maine, [Oxbow, Inc.](#)
- **16...** Field trip: Waterfowl migration, [ASO](#)
- **17...** Program: Yellow-winged warbler banding, [ASO](#)
- **23...** Field trip: Waterfowl migration, [Oxbow, Inc.](#)

December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

December Calendar

- **14...** Field trip: Christmas Bird Count, [ASO](#)
- **20...** Field trip: Christmas Bird Count, [ASO](#)
- **21...** Field trip: Christmas Bird Count, [ASO](#)
- **28...** Field trip: Christmas Bird Count, [ASO](#)

Count 'Em All (Contributed by Jack Stenger)

The main purpose of a Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is not to have fun, yet when done right, CBCs are by far the most rewarding form of birding. In fact, I enjoy CBCs more than any type of birding: more than a red-letter day of May migration, more than a day of birding in the Rio Grande. And I'm not just saying that. My reasons are many, but one of them is the satisfaction that comes with contributing to important citizen's science in an effective way.

Like birding, there are many ways to approach a CBC. On one end of the spectrum there are birders who hike miles of trail-less, mushy river bottoms and only see their car a few times during the day. And then there are feeder watchers who sleep-in and check their home feeders once an hour while sipping hot toddies and wearing a Slanket. And there are many people in between, all of which are necessary for a successful count. Nobody has to bird outside their comfort zone. But despite this diversity there is still a correct way to do a CBC.

The correct way lies in distinguishing the difference between a normal day of birding and a day of Christmas counting. In a normal day, the goal is usually to see "cool" birds and cover the best areas to find these birds. On a CBC the goal is to cover every inch of your area and accurately count the birds, even the common ones, within it. The fun lies not in the cards you are dealt, but how you play them.

On a CBC, you will not be birding hotspots all day long. All CBCs take place in a 15-mile diameter count circle. That is about 177 square miles of area to count. Sounds like a lot, right? Well con-

sider the fact that most of the Cincinnati CBC is developed or private land which birders cannot access. And remember that you will be sharing the area with about 100 other birders. This is why it is important to cover a small area very well instead of large areas cursorily.

This challenge, finding birds in unconventional areas, is part of the fun. My favorite areas on local counts include a field behind the Milford Walmart, Rumpke Dump, a graffitied railroad spur, an overgrown Christmas tree farm, and a degraded honeysuckle hedge in Winton Woods that has yielded Fox Sparrow and Brown Thrasher for two straight years. There are ways you can squeeze the most out of these areas that are ignored for the other 364 days in a year.

Go slow. There is no rush on a Christmas Bird Count. Be thorough and leave no bush un-pushed. Take joy in finding every bird you can in a small area. If you bird an area and are surprised to miss expected species, bird it again later. For example, there is a pine stand in your area that you know harbors Red-breasted Nuthatches. If you can't find nuthatches in the morning, visit again in the afternoon and take your highest count for each species. From a scientific perspective, thorough coverage yields data that more accurately estimate bird populations. If you are covering areas hastily you will only detect a fraction of species present, which yields incomplete data fraught with biases.

Bird roadsides. There is very little public green space in most count circles. Because of this we have to get creative. One way to do this is to utilize roadsides.

If at anytime throughout the day you see a safe, wide pull-off or parking lot that is near any sort of vegetation, pull into it. At the very least step out of your car and spend a few minutes birding nearby. If the area seems birdy and the roadside seems safe, take a little stroll.

Document unusual sightings. If you are lucky enough to find a rare species or unusually large concentration of common birds, spend time getting detailed looks and documentation. Take notes on field marks and numbers. If you have a camera take a picture. All this information will be used later to support your sighting.

Enjoy it. Don't worry that you're not birding the best area in the circle; you can visit those areas any other day of the year. Take pride in the thoroughness of your surveys. And pat yourself on the back for contributing to a rich birding tradition that supports conservation, science, and the local birding community.

I'll see you then.

Originally appeared in the Chat, The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club, Volume 47, Number 9, December 2011.

Moose (Continued from Page 4)

Kristine Rines, a wildlife biologist at the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, told the [*Washington Post*](#):

"It's a pretty tough way to go. There's no question that climate plays a huge part in this. If we had winters that lasted as long as they used to, we might not be having this conversation."

A recent study also says that warming climate has also allowed [pine bark beetles](#) to thrive in the Cariboo Mountains of British Columbia, killing the forests and leaving moose exposed to hunting and animal predators.

The population decline spells trouble not only for the moose, but also for the

entire ecosystem. Moose provide nourishment for large carnivores, such as bears, and they help create habitats for nesting birds and rabbits by eating back shrubs and bushes.

Read the full story [here](#).

Common Spiders of North America by Richard A. Bradley, illustrated by Steve Buchanan (Contributed by Ned Keller)

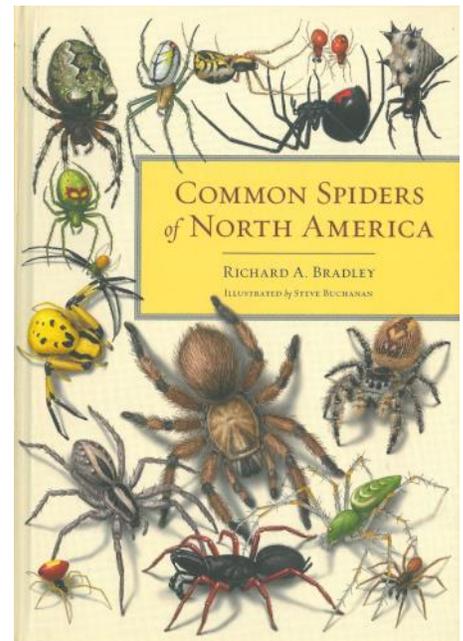
Most people have one of two reactions to spiders. One is an emphatic ICK, and if you're in that category, read no further. But others are fascinated by these miniature predators. If that describes you, then you should consider getting this book.

Common Spiders of North America is an identification guide, but it's also much more. It starts out with an introduction to what spiders are, including how they differ from other creepy-crawlies, their role in the environment, a generalized life history of spiders, and tips on how to find spiders. The book then moves on to a discussion of how to identify living spiders (as opposed to specimens). It stresses using the types of web they build as a good clue to identification, followed by the more important physical features that will narrow your choices.

The heart of the book is the species accounts. There are 82 full-color plates, each showing several related species, and totaling 469 common species. The plates are followed by descriptions of the illustrated species, and notes on other species which might be confused with the ones that are illustrated. This brings up a note

of caution for the field naturalist. The illustrated species represent not much more than a tenth of all the species found in North America north of Mexico. It is simply not possible to identify many spiders to the species level without a microscope and detailed keys to identification. This book is not for the specialist, but for the general naturalist who wants to identify the more distinctive spiders that he or she is likely to encounter in the field.

Richard Bradley will be familiar to many Ohioans with an interest in spiders. He is associate professor emeritus at The Ohio State University, in the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology. He previously authored *In Ohio's Backyard: Spiders*, a publication of the Ohio Biological Society, as well as the *Common Spiders of Ohio* field guide published by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. He is a noted professional arachnologist, who has quite a knack for providing accurate information to the layperson.



ASO Fishes Trip Report (Contributed by Bill Zimmerman)

The trip went great! The weather was perfect. We only caught one sunfish so missed on basses. Lots of other species we could have gotten but cleaned up on darters so all and all, a very good trip.

Approximately 16 people showed up for an entertaining morning. About one species per person! This turned out to be a good size for us to handle. Everyone could take turns netting, returning specimens to the holding tank and describing species. The little kids were great and a lot of fun. A couple of UC students showed up and were, as expected, great help and typically curious.

The best part is that people were very enthusiastic about what we found. One veteran naturalist, not typically a person to exclaim anything, kept saying, "I can't believe all this stuff is in here and I never knew it!" It was a really fun time and I think there would be interest for another trip. There was a specific request for a trip during breeding season. But planning for a trip when the water levels are higher

can be tricky. That said, people would be amazed if they could see some of these species in breeding colors. Perhaps we can arrange something next year.

This trip took place Saturday 27 September at Bass Island along the Little Miami River.



Banded Darter. Courtesy Brian Wulker



AUDUBON SOCIETY OF OHIO

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Become a Friend of the Audubon Society of Ohio

Membership form for the Cincinnati Chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Enclose a check or money order payable to "ASO."

Membership: _____ 1 year - \$15 _____ Family - \$25

Name: _____

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