



Passenger Pigeon

Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

Vol. 41 No. 4

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Nesting Bald Eagles

Once extremely rare in Ohio, nesting Bald Eagles have become increasingly common. The expansion began along Lake Erie, and is spreading throughout the state. We now have a pair of Bald Eagles nesting near Cincinnati. Take U.S. 52 past Higginsport, in Brown County. Two miles past Route 221, look for Free Soil Road. A parking area is just beyond that.

As of April 5, one egg had hatched. Since Bald Eagles take ten to twelve weeks to fledge, we can expect to have some great eagle watching opportunities for the next couple of months.

April Program

This month's program will feature Ned Keller giving a slide presentation on the identification of Ohio's diurnal birds of prey. He will also cover vultures, which were formerly classified as raptors. We'll concentrate on the regularly occurring species, but if time permits we'll hit a few of the rarities as well.

Raptor identification involves looking at shape and flight style as much as looking for field marks. If you're not used to that style of birding, you can expect to pick up some useful tips.

We will meet at the usual time and place, 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month, April 21, at the Sharon Woods Visitor Center.



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April Field Trips

Gilmore Ponds

Date: Saturday, April 16, 2005

Time: 8:00 A.M.

*Leader: Mike Busam, 755-0057,
mjb@schaffer.cc*

Meet Mike for what should be a great day of birding. Gilmore Ponds' combination of marsh, swamp and brushy swales always produces interesting birds. Spring migration for a diverse number of species will be well under way and we expect to find a mixed bag. Mike will make an effort to attract rails, and flooded fields north of the railroad tracks should be attractive to shorebirds. Some waterfowl should be lingering and herons and egrets are likely. Several early returning resident songbirds should also be expected. Walking is flat and easy, but expect wet ground and muddy patches. This trip will end around noon.

Meet in the Gilmore Ponds North Gilmore Road parking lot. To reach the North Gilmore Road parking lot from I-275, take exit #39, Winton Road. Go north, past the mall, on Winton Road. Winton Road's name changes to South Gilmore Road at the Butler County line. Continue north for a few miles and you will come to the intersection of Route 4. Go straight through this light, but be prepared to take an almost immediate left turn onto North Gilmore Road. Follow North Gilmore Road past Jungle Jim's, and continue through the Symmes Road intersection. Go about half a mile and look for the Gilmore Ponds parking lot on the right. If you cross the railroad tracks you have gone too far.

Miami Whitewater Park

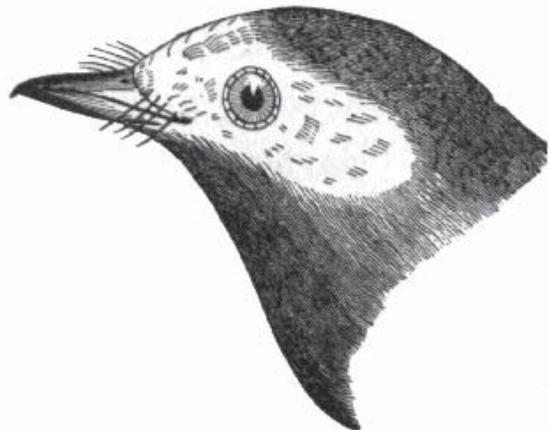
Date: Saturday, April 23, 2005

Time: 8:00 A.M.

*Leader: Paul Wharton, 353-3403,
pwharton@fuse.net*

Paul plans to look for returning summer residents and migrants (warblers, vireos, orioles etc.) in some of the forested sections of the park, then move over to the wetlands to look for marsh and grassland birds. Spring migration will be well underway and we expect to find a diverse number of species. Walking will be flat and easy, although expect muddy conditions in the wetlands. This trip should end a little after noon.

Meet near the entrance of the parking lot for the Miami-Whitewater Visitor Center/Ranger Station. From I-74, 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.



Greater Prairie Chicken Revisited

contributed by Darlena Graham

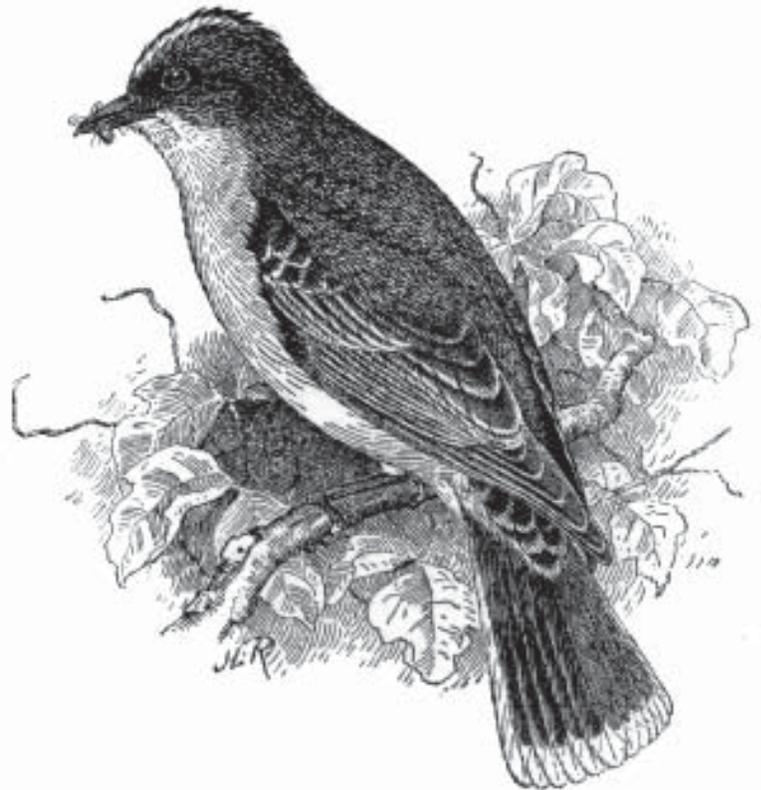
Several years ago some friends and I went to Newton, Illinois to visit the Prairie Ridge State Natural Area which was established to protect the Greater Prairie Chicken. At that time one stood at the Visitors' Center and looked out over a long distance of more than 150 yards to get a strained glimpse of the birds on their lek. Well, times have changed.

You can now reserve a spot in a blind (must be done a year in advance) to get an up close and very personal viewing of the birds. The procedure is that you meet at the Visitors Center about 1 hour before daybreak and are escorted by a volunteer to the blind. There are two blinds, each holding six viewers and having comfortable benches with cushions. You have been warned to dress for cold and not have any beverages before arriving. When the morning breaks and the birds begin to arrive you are not permitted to leave the blind until all of the females leave the area, typically two to three hours.

The first week-end in April of this year Katherine Miller, Marty Dermody, Sara Krailler and I went out there and met Jim and Joan Clapp to enjoy the spectacle. We were very fortunate to have Illinois Audubon member and wildlife photographer, Richard Day as our escort. He was very knowledgeable and funny. We were also fortunate in that we had great weather, sunny and calm. There were at least 19 males and 13 hens on display so close we could count their feathers. You can imagine the jokes that were flying around our blind as the Chickens were jumping, puffing, booming and strutting within 30 - 50 yards from us. If a female is sufficiently impressed she chooses a male and after mating she leaves the area and goes about the business of raising a family. She does not return to the party until next year and the male does not

participate in the raising of the brood. Eventually the females tired of the posturing and left to spend their day elsewhere. At that point the males settled down to only the occasional practice pose.

The surrounding area can be good for Harriers, Short-eared Owls, and other grassland birds. There are several nice nearby wetland areas and lakes but our timing was after the major waterfowl movement and before the major song bird migration. It was about a four hour drive from Cincinnati, not too bad. The nearest town of any size is Effingham, about 30 miles from the refuge. Nearby Newton has a nice mom and pop motel which was inexpensive and clean with good beds and a hot shower as well as a refrigerator and microwave. Dining is an issue, there is a Hardees and a bowling alley that serves meals or you can drive to Effingham which has the usual expressway interchange restaurants.



<http://cincinnatibirds.com/goodbird/sighting.php>

Recent Bird Sightings

Field Trips:
Jay Stenger
522-4245

President:
Jay Lehman
527-4701

Treasurer:
Peggy Gatch
831-3378

Programs:
Jay Lehman
527-4701

Newsletter:
Ned Keller
941-6497

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