



Passenger Pigeon

Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

Vol. 41 No. 6

September 2005

Ohio Bird Banders Association Meeting

The OBBA will hold their fall meeting this year at the visitor center at Miami-Whitewater Forest on Saturday, October 1. Several of the speakers will be local birders, and there will be a bird banding demonstration. Everyone is welcome to attend, but there is a registration fee. For more information, see OBBA's web site, or contact Tim Tolford at (513)200-5130 between noon and six p.m. To get to the web site, you will need to type in the following rather complicated URL. You'll need to type both lines into your web browser, without any spaces:

<http://www.ohiobba.org/Meetings%20Page%20Fall%202005.html>



September Program

Birding Alaska

Date: Thursday, Sep. 15, 7:00 p.m.

Jay Lehman will present a program on birding Alaska. You'll get a taste of some of the best locations for birding our largest state, along with photos of birds that you just can't find anywhere else in North America. We've heard about birding at Attu before, but this month's program will feature some of the other areas in the state that are easier to visit.

We'll meet at our usual time and place, 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month, at the Sharon Woods Visitor Center. Remember that you will need a Park District auto sticker.

For more information, call Jay at 527-4701 or email him at lehman.jg@pg.com.

In This Issue

Ohio Bird Banders Association Meeting	1
September Program	1
Field Trips	2
Ida Suttman	3
Nature in an Unnatural Place - A Tale of Nesting Killdeer	4

Field Trips

Location: Brookville Reservoir

Date: Sunday, Sep. 25, 7:30 a.m.

*Leader: Joe Bens, 353-4229,
jbens@cinci.rr.com*

Location: Indian Creek Wildlife Area

Date: Saturday, Sep. 10, 7:30 a.m.

*Leader: Jay Stenger, 522-4245,
jaystenger@cinci.rr.com*

Fall migration should be in full swing and the diverse habitats (woods, fields, riparian, wetlands) at this quiet and little visited wildlife area should provide us with a diversity of species. There is a small wetland complex that should produce a few waterbirds and hopefully some shorebirds. Our primary focus however, will be on migrating passerines, especially warblers. On last years trip we had warblers and other migrant species in abundance. We will walk a bit, mostly on or near the area's quiet gravel roads, all of which are level and easy. We will stay as long as the birding is good, but will most likely break up by 1:00 P.M. or thereabouts. You might want to bring your lunch and at least drinks. There are little if any amenities at Indian Creek, so be prepared. There are a few places in nearby Fayetteville (restrooms, gas, food). If you have any questions feel free to contact Jay.

Meet in the United Dairy Farmers parking lot on US 50 at Roundbottom Rd. in Perintown (see directions below). We will caravan to Indian Creek from there, about 20 minutes due east on US 50. From I-275 take the US 50/Milford exit # 59 . Follow the sign to US 50/Hillsboro. At US 50 turn right and go east a couple of miles to the Perintown UDF.

We have high hopes for this trip! We have 3 specific goals, however no birds are ignored. They are 1) migrating raptors, 2) shorebirds, and 3) migrant songbirds, especially warblers. All of these species move through the Brookville region in pretty good numbers at this time of year. The north end of Brookville Lake can be very good for shorebirds and herons if the lake levels are reasonably low, as they often are at the end of September. Finding migrant songbirds should not be a problem, as Joe expects to spend a good portion of the morning walking some quiet roadsides. We will spend a good portion of that time looking up. Each year thousands of Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned Hawks, as well as lesser numbers of other raptors, migrate through our region during the second half of September. The ridges along Brookville Lake have always seemed to attract a more than fair share of these hawks during this season. Favorable conditions such as clear days, with winds out of the north can produce sizable movements. The date we picked is right around peak time. Even if nature works against us, the Brookville Lake region is an excellent overall birding area which has a diversity of habitats and we are sure to have a good, if not spectacular day of birding. This trip will last well past noon, so bring drinks and food. Restrooms are available throughout the area. We will walk for a part of the morning but it will be fairly easy and liesurely. Feel free to contact Joe if you have any questions.

Meet at the park & ride lot, located at the I-74 Miamitown exit, exit number 7. From here we will caravan to the Brookville area.

Ida Suttman

contributed by Jay Stenger

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Ida Suttman, who died August 12, 2005. Ida was 97. Her advanced age kept her out of the limelight the past several years, but many of us will remember, with fondness, the many accomplishments of this ardent birder, naturalist and conservationist. She was a grand lady. Ida was a charter member of the Audubon Society of Ohio, the Nature Conservancy and the first woman member of the Cincinnati Bird Club, and she served long stints on the boards of these groups. I first met Ida around 1982 when she was a fixture at Audubon and Bird Club programs and field trips. I was fortunate to have become her friend, and since we lived close, we were able to go birding together from time to time. Already in her senior years at that time, she was wise, sharp as a tack, an excellent birder and extremely independent. She loved birding and all the natural world. She was an avid botanist/gardener. Karl Maslowski just told me a story about an Audubon Society board meeting that was held at Ida's home one December, many years ago. Everyone had to go out to Ida's garden to see a Christmas rose, a plant that blooms in mid-winter and is considerably north of its normal range in Cincinnati. Karl also remembers Ida as the only person who ever found an active mid-winter American Robin nest, which was placed on a steam pipe at the P&G Ivorydale Plant. I remember one late September in the late '80s, I asked her if she wanted to go birding. She said she couldn't, that she was going to northern Michigan for a few days to see the fall "color" and do a little birding up there. I asked her who else was going and she said no one, she was going alone. Ida was 81 at the time. Ida may have had the secrets to a long healthy life. Once after Ida and I had hiked a trail at

Winton Woods, we took a break at our cars. I was drinking water, but she was eating a light lunch of oranges and chicken soup. She offered me some of her orange sections, but I passed. I told her the citrus acid sometimes gave me indigestion. She was shocked and told me that she could not remember ever having a case of indigestion in her entire life. She was special. Ida was retired from P&G, and in her spare time volunteered at Provident and St. Francis-St. George Hospitals. She was an award winning amateur photographer, with birds and plants of course being many of her subjects. And this was back in the 40s and 50s, way before today's technological advances.



Nature in an Unnatural Place - A Tale of Nesting Killdeer

contributed by Mike Kravitz

This account is based on observations from June 13 to 24 on a gravel/cobble ~ 1600 sq ft flat rooftop about 20 ft high, with parapets about 5 in high at its lowest. The place of observation was from an office building 20 yd away overlooking the rooftop.

June 13: two adult killdeer take turns sitting on a nest

June 14: parents continue to nest; 2 chicks noted early in the day; 3 chicks noted later (5:30 PM). Chicks alternate between scurrying about and nestling beside the parent (brooding)

We sent the following message to the colleagues in our department:

If anyone is interested, there is a pair of nesting killdeers, with one chick, on top of the containment building that can be viewed from A-220. The parents take turn sitting on the clutch. We have a pair of binocs, if anyone would like to observe.

Soon after reporting the killdeer family, co-workers trickled up to our suite of cubicles to have a look. You could feel their enthusiasm as they observed the creatures through our binoculars and the spotting scope that was set up. One day went by, then another, a few more people stopped by.

June 15-16: parents leave the nest; 4 chicks noted, again alternating between scurrying about and nestling beside parent

Finally it dawned upon us, what will the young eat? We did some research on the Internet and learned they eat mainly insects. Could there be insects living on that hot sterile-looking roof? In a natural environment, chicks

are accompanied by at least one parent for up to 24 days, though they feed on their own. One afternoon we noticed one parent continually leave the roof, and return a few minutes later. Perhaps, the parent would defy its genetic wiring and feed the young. No, it was not to be.

June 17: 2 chicks noted in late morning; walking about then hid under parent for a few minutes before leaving. Parents observed mobbing an approaching starling. Only 1 chick noted from late afternoon until 8:30 PM. Chick was a bit "wobbly"; observed pecking at gravel with beak; spent much time under parent

That evening, one of us - Mike - learned that "*Gravel rooftops attract Killdeer for nesting, but can be dangerous places to raise a brood. Chicks may be unable to leave a roof because of high parapets and screened drain openings. When adults lure chicks off the roof, the chicks may die from the fall. However, some chicks have been observed leaping from a seven-story building and surviving.*" (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/programs/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Killdeer.html>)

Mike returned the next day, on his day off, to check on the birds. He scanned the ground surrounding the roof (the roof was off limits) for possible chicks - there were none - and went to his office for a brief observation of the rooftop. Both parents were present, with one sitting as if on a nest. No chicks were observed. Two days later (June 20), one non-moving and two lethargic chicks were observed (no parents). The next day only one parent and no chicks were observed. Our spirits turned south. The joy felt a week earlier turned to sorrow. We sent the following message to our colleagues.

The chicks observed June 20 on a Cincinnati roof were six days old. Perhaps they were able to obtain some food on the roof, but based on their condition, the roof parapets, and the absence of the parents that day, it is unlikely that any survived.

On June 22, the lone parent was observed performing a posturing display (leaning to one side with wings lowered, and fanning its tail) to attract a mate. The day after we noticed two adult killdeer on the roof. Hoping they would fly away to greener pastures, we were puzzled to find on the next day (June 24, eleven days since our first observation) one lone killdeer on the rooftop. We don't know when and how this saga will end, but we enjoyed sharing it with you.

Are Your Dues Due?

If you haven't sent in your dues yet for the September 2005 - May 2006 birding year, just fill out the form below and mail them in. If you've already sent your dues, why not give the form to a birding friend who isn't a member?

Passenger Pigeon by eMail

You can choose to receive your copy of the Passenger Pigeon by eMail instead of getting a paper copy through the regular mail. Getting the newsletter by eMail will save the Bird Club the expense of printing and mailing your copy, and you will receive it several days sooner than the paper copy would arrive. You will need to have the free Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. If you do not already have it, a free copy can be downloaded from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

To sign up for this service, send an eMail to the editor at keller@one.net. You can switch back to a paper copy at any time.

Bird Club Membership

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

eMail _____

_____ Individual \$12.00 _____ Family \$15.00 _____ Student \$6.00

Make your check payable to Cincinnati Bird Club, and mail to:
 Peg Gatch, 11 Mound Avenue, Milford, OH 45150

<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

Bird Club Officers

Ned Keller
Cincinnati Bird Club
7899 Bridgetown Road
Clevs, OH 45002