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# The Passenger Pigeon

## The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

December 2009 Vol 45 No. 8

### Cincinnati Bird Club Sponsors Five 2009-10 Christmas Bird Counts

#### Hamilton-Fairfield Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Compiler-Mike Busam, (513) 755-0057, [mbusam@gmail.com](mailto:mbusam@gmail.com)

#### Ohio River Christmas Bird Count (23<sup>rd</sup> Annual)

Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Compiler-Paul Wharton, (513) 353-3403, [pwharton@fuse.net](mailto:pwharton@fuse.net)

#### Western Hamilton County Christmas Bird Count (44<sup>th</sup> Annual)

Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Compiler-Ned Keller, (513) 941-6497, [keller@one.net](mailto:keller@one.net)

#### Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count (63<sup>rd</sup> Annual)

Sunday, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009

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

#### East Fork Christmas Bird Count (27<sup>th</sup> Annual)

Saturday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

Compiler-Joe Bens, (513) 353-4229, [joebens@live.com](mailto:joebens@live.com)

To participate as a stay-at-home, “feeder watcher”, please contact the Compiler in your area. For a list of other counts including Indiana and Kentucky, please see page 6.

Below: “Hank and Vinny” webcomic by Cincinnati birder Kirk Westendorf. He was inspired to learn more about birds by participation in the Hamilton County Park District Bird Counts. His cartoons can be viewed at <http://www.hankandvinny.com/>. Kirk birds the Little Miami River Corridor and Armleder Park. He’s particularly interested in bird sounds.



## The 110<sup>th</sup> National Audubon Society 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 with thousands of volunteers counting birds a 24-hour period. Last year's count set an all-time high when 2,124 individual counts were conducted. Those counts included a total of 59,813 participants across the US, Canada and 19 countries in the Western Hemisphere.

Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear. It's not just a species tally—*all birds are counted all day*—giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle. If observers live within a CBC circle, they may arrange in advance to count the birds at their feeders and submit data to their compiler. All individual CBC's are conducted in the period from December 14 to January 5 (inclusive dates), and each count is conducted in one calendar day.

CBC participants are organized into groups—or field parties—by the organizer or Compiler of each Count. Each field party covers a specific area of the 15-mile diameter circle on a specific route. Anyone is welcome to participate: Compilers arrange field parties so inexperienced observers are with seasoned CBC veterans.

*There is a \$5.00 fee per field participant per count. Feeder watchers do not need to pay the fee: all observers 18 and under may count for free.* These fees help to cover the costs of generating materials for Compilers,

producing an annual CBC summary issue, and maintaining the CBC website and database.

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 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 Societies when that organization formed in 1905) recognized declining bird populations could not withstand wanton over-hunting, and proposed to count birds on Christmas Day rather than shoot them.

For more information on National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts:  
<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html>

*Contributed by Jay Stenger*

## The 63<sup>rd</sup> Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count: Sunday, December 27, 2009

The 63<sup>rd</sup> annual Cincinnati CBC will be conducted on Sunday, December 27th, 2009. Not only are you invited, but you are also needed. Last year's (2008) Cincinnati count was another great success. The count total of 92 species was two short of our record of 96 set in 2007. But it did tie our counts second highest total (92 in 2004). The total of 92 species in 2004 was the highest number in Ohio that year, but it was only good for second place last year when Toledo managed 96 total species.

Most importantly, the Cincinnati count continued our recent trend of great participation. We had a total of 135 participants, 111 in the field and 24 at feeders. While this number was also down from the 148 participants of the year before (2007), it was still a great turnout. The 111 field participant number led all of the 66 Ohio counts and the total participation of 135 was second only to the Cuyahoga Falls count (103 field, 41 at feeders).

We should also be proud that our total participation of 135 was the 14<sup>th</sup> highest in the United States and 21<sup>st</sup> overall of the 2,124 total Christmas counts conducted last year. We were also efficient, as our 992 party hours led the state effort last season.

Over the years, the Cincinnati count has often led all NAS counts with the highest number of individual species including 1.) Downy Woodpecker (24 times), 2.) Tufted Titmouse (18 times), 3.) Northern Cardinal (34 times), 4.) Carolina Wren (17 times),

and 5.) Carolina Chickadee. For the third consecutive year, and the 33<sup>rd</sup> time in 62 years, we again led the nation with 1,711 Carolina Chickadees, keeping our title as *the Carolina Chickadee capital of the world*.

I encourage everyone to participate in this season's Cincinnati CBC and help us keep this great community birding tradition strong. CBC's are a wonderful way to spend a day with old and new friends. Everyone is welcome from beginner to expert.

You can participate in many ways. If you can bird an entire day, that's great. But if you can only do half of a day or even just a couple of hours, that's great too.

Or, if you live within the count circle, you can also stay home and count the birds at your feeder and in your yard. Remember feeder counters and people aged 18 and younger are free.

At the end of the day most participants head to the Cincinnati Nature Center where we hold a Grand Tally in a festive party atmosphere.

Please contact me and join us for what is a great Cincinnati holiday birding tradition. We need you to help us keep the Carolina Chickadee title. Please contact me if you have any questions or to register.

Jay Stenger  
Cincinnati CBC Compiler  
513-552-8147  
[jaystenger@cinci.rr.com](mailto:jaystenger@cinci.rr.com).

## Christmas Bird Count History and the Cincinnati Bird Club

The Cincinnati Bird Club has a long tradition with the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Counts. From 1911 through 1914 a Christmas count was conducted in Cincinnati by a single intrepid birder whose name escapes me. Twenty-four years passed before Cincinnati birders again organized a Christmas count. That effort began in 1938 and continued until 1941, at which time the US entered WW II and the Christmas count was again put on hold. In early 1947, not long after the war ended and things began to return to normal, 12 avid Cincinnati birders and naturalists formed the Cincinnati Bird Club. One of their primary objectives was to resurrect, revitalize and sponsor the Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count. They felt that prior to WW II the Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count had been casually conducted. Our club's 12 original founding members, a virtual who's who of Cincinnati birding pioneers that included legendary names such as Karl Maslowski, Emerson Kemsies, Worth Randle, Paul Hellmann and a 17 year old Ron Austing, among others, decided it was high time to take the Christmas count seriously and they began a tradition that we continue today. The newly formed club kept the Cincinnati count circle center in Mt. Carmel, the same center as the previous counts had used. Most of the count circle was quite rural at the time. We continue to use the exact same count circle today, although urban sprawl has dramatically changed its appearance since those early days.

In addition to the Cincinnati count, the Cincinnati Bird Club sponsors 4 additional Christmas Bird Counts. In 1959 our club decided that we should conduct an additional Christmas count on the rural western side of Cincinnati. That first version was called the Wyoming (the neighborhood) count but in 1966 the count center was moved further west and was renamed to how we know it today, the Western Hamilton County Christmas Bird Count.

In the early 1980's, as urbanization was quickly chopping up quality habitat in our two existing Christmas count circles, two young (then) and avid area birders thought it would be a good idea to begin a couple of new Christmas Bird Counts and take advantage of the still fairly rural areas to the east and west of Cincinnati. So it was that Tony Leukering and Joe Bens, with the support of the Cincinnati Bird Club, first began the East Fork Christmas Bird Count in 1983 and the Ohio River (including the Oxbow area) Christmas Bird Count in the 1987-88 season (the actual date was 01/02/88).

The fifth count our club actively promotes actually has an independent history. Since 1919 and with just a few interruptions thereafter, there has been a Hamilton Christmas count. For the first 53 years this count only had 1-2 participants and was basically a family affair that consisted of Frank Harbaum and his son, Will (who became the Outdoor editor for the Hamilton Journal). In the early 1970's other birders

began to join Will and the count began to grow. Since many Cincinnati Bird Club members live in that count circle and several others have recently taken an active part in the count, the CBC now officially supports the Hamilton-Fairfield Christmas Count.

There are many Christmas Bird Counts to choose from and the Cincinnati Bird Club encourages 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 the traditional Cincinnati Bird Clubs sponsored Christmas counts.

*Contributed by Jay Stenger*

### **Have You Paid Your Club Dues?**

Cincinnati Bird Club Treasurer Lois Shadix thanks everyone who has already joined or renewed for the 2009-2010 year. Lois has been very busy this fall depositing Bird Club memberships to our club bank account!

If you have not yet paid your 2009-2010 Cincinnati Bird Club dues, there is still time! Just use the form on the back of the newsletter to renew. **Please include your email address to reduce our costs and save a few trees.** We'll email you updates and reminders on events and sightings in the Cincinnati area.

If we don't hear from you by the end of December, we'll assume you no longer wish to be a member. But please, keep in touch, and renew or join today.

*Contributed by Ann Oliver*

### **Bird Conservation Job: Apply Now**

The Ohio Biological Survey seeks a part-time Program Coordinator for the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative. OBCI goals focus on conservation and effective management of birds through voluntary partnerships among governmental agencies, conservation organizations, businesses, and the public.

Duties include: 1.) fostering partnerships for bird conservation among OBCI partner organizations, 2.) working with committees to develop funding proposals for OBCI and partners, 3.) working to modify the OBCI All-bird Conservation Plan as needed, 4.) providing technical information & guidance to partner organizations regarding the conservation of Ohio avifauna, 5.) organizing OBCI Coordinating Council and committee meetings, 6.) communications.

Minimum requirements: B.S. degree in wildlife biology, ecology, biology, or related field. Evidence of experience in partnership building and a solid understanding of bird conservation issues, conservation planning, Midwestern ecosystems/habitats, and basic natural history of North American birds are required. Knowledge of GIS applications and population monitoring are preferred. Excellent oral and written communication skills and high motivation level are required.

**Deadline for application is 15 December 2009.** To apply, contact Julie Shieldcastle, Black Swamp Bird Observatory, 13551 West State Route 2, Oak Harbor, Ohio 43449. Phone: 419 898-4070.

## Other Area Christmas Bird Counts and Winter Bird Surveys

**Hamilton County Park District Winter Bird Count:** Saturday, December 12, 2009  
Jerry Lippert, (513) 521-7275, ext. 240

**Caesar Creek Christmas Bird Count:**  
Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
Jim O'Boyle, (513) 897-1050,  
[James.F.OBoyle@lrl02.usace.army.mil](mailto:James.F.OBoyle@lrl02.usace.army.mil)

**Adams County Christmas Bird Count:**  
Saturday, December 19, 2009  
Mark Zloba, [coa@bright.net](mailto:coa@bright.net)

**Big Oaks N.W.R. Christmas Bird Count:**  
Saturday, December 19, 2009  
Joseph Robb, [Joe\\_Robb@fws.gov](mailto:Joe_Robb@fws.gov)

**Northern Kentucky Bird Club  
Warsaw Winter Bird Count:**  
Saturday, December 19, 2009  
Lee McNeely, [lkmc9@netscape.net](mailto:lkmc9@netscape.net)

**Paint Creek Christmas Bird Count:**  
Sunday, December 20, 2009  
Steve Wagner, (513) 831-7606,  
[sjdmwags@gmail.com](mailto:sjdmwags@gmail.com)

**Whitewater State Park (IN) Christmas Bird Count:** Sunday, December 20, 2009  
Jim Seaney, (765) 962-1902,  
[rlwill@550access.com](mailto:rlwill@550access.com)

**Muscatatuck N.W.R. Christmas Bird Count:** Friday, January 1, 2010  
Donna Stanley, (812) 522-4352

**Michela Farms (Oldenburg, IN)  
Christmas Bird Count:**  
Saturday, January 2, 2009  
Wayne Wauligman, (513) 922-4430 or  
[wrwpgw@aol.com](mailto:wrwpgw@aol.com)

**Northern Kentucky Bird Club  
Burlington Winter Bird Count:**  
Saturday, January 2, 2010  
Lee McNeely, [lkmc9@netscape.net](mailto:lkmc9@netscape.net)

**Clermont County Park District Winter Bird Count:** Saturday, January 9, 2010  
Keith Robinson, (513) 876-9013,  
[krobinson@co.clermont.oh.us](mailto:krobinson@co.clermont.oh.us)

*Compiled by Jay Stenger*



**Saturday, January 2, 2010**  
**Michaela Farm/Oldenburger, Indiana**  
**Christmas Bird Count**

**National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count**

**Meet 7:30 AM at Michaela Farm to hike or carpool.**

*(lunch provided at 1 pm tally)*



*Dress appropriately for the weather.*

*Bring binoculars and beverage.*

**Fee: \$5 for lunch provided by Srs. Of St. Francis**

**\$5 Audubon Society fee also required**

Species and numbers of birds in this count area are tabulated for use in a national database which the National Audubon Society uses to determine trends in bird populations.

The national annual summary will be sent to paid participants.

To register contact Annette Swain at 812-933-6437 or email [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com)

Or contact compiler Wayne Wauligman at 513-922-4430 or [wrwpgw@aol.com](mailto:wrwpgw@aol.com)



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**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 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



