



The Passenger Pigeon

The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

February 2010 Vol 46 No. 2

February Program Meeting: Ned Keller to Talk about OBBA II

This year, 2010, was supposed to be the final year of a five year project known as the 'second' Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas (OBBA II). But, the project has been *extended* through 2011: your help is needed in southwest Ohio and beyond. **Find out about OBBA II at our February 18 Cincinnati Bird Club meeting, Sharon Centre (Sharon Woods Visitors Center) at 7 pm.**

The goal of OBBA II is to document the current distribution of breeding birds throughout the state. When complete, an OBBA II statistical analysis will officially document changes in distribution since the first atlas, conducted 1982 through 1987. Although paid staff will conduct numerical studies as part of OBBA II, and fill in some of the gaps in distributional work, *collecting the bulk of the mapping data will fall to volunteer birders.* In other words, you!

OBBA II began in 2006. It was originally planned to end this year, but funding has been obtained for a sixth year, matching the first atlas. A great deal has already been accomplished, but a lot of work still remains. Urban areas and popular parks are being well covered, but big gaps in coverage remain in less intensively birded parts of the state.

Previous atlasers of "owned" blocks with few to no records are asked to get started this spring: don't wait until 2011! If you have sightings to report, please submit data by February 28 so atlasers, regional coordinator, and OBBA administrators can devise a 2010 plan. You can contribute by phone (614-247-6458), hard copy, fax (614-292-7432), or internet.

Get some early season birding in now: OBBA II needs records of Great Horned and Barred Owls. American Woodcock will follow soon.

Ned Keller, one of the Regional Coordinators for OBBA2, will be our speaker for the February program. Ned will explain how the atlas is being conducted, focusing on the role of volunteer birders such as Bird Club members. Ned will look at how you can contribute to this important project, regardless of your level of birding skill or the amount of free time you have available. Ned will also look at trends emerging: several species have ranges that are expanding, such as Bald Eagle and Wild Turkey, and some species are losing ground including Northern Bobwhite.

7 pm Thursday, February 18 at Sharon Centre (Sharon Woods Visitors Center)

February: Cincinnati Bird Club Field Trips

“Of Musket Balls and Pelicans”: A Trip Along the Great Miami River Banks

Date: Saturday, February 6

Time: 8:00 a.m. to noon

Meeting Place: Hamilton Riverside Natural Area parking lot

Leaders: Mike Busam and Charlie Saunders

mbusam@gmail.com or (513) 259-3262.

Over the last month, the banks of the Great Miami River between Hamilton and Fairfield, Ohio have played host to some pretty good finds: American White Pelican, Wilson’s Warbler, Least Sandpiper and American Pipit, just to name a few. Join Mike and Charlie as they retrace the steps of General Arthur St. Clair in the hopes of turning up some good birds. Interesting assortments of geese, ducks, and waterbirds are possible along the river in winter. The riparian corridor along the Great Miami bike trail between Fairfield and Hamilton can also be productive.

We’ll be doing a lot of walking on this trip -- probably upwards of 2 miles by the time we’re done -- but over moderate terrain, much of it on or near a paved bike-hike trail. Other possible stops, depending on how the birding on the river is, could include Joyce Park in Fairfield, "Tetanus Beach," which is a large gravel bar along the Great Miami River south of Joyce Park, and additional stops in downtown Hamilton.

Directions: Meet at the parking lot for the Hamilton Riverside Natural Area on Fairview Avenue, west of River Road. (The street address is 2451 East River Road, Hamilton, OH 45015-1432). This is accessible from I-275 by taking Pleasant Avenue/127 into Hamilton then turning left on St. Clair, right onto East River Road, and then left onto Fairview Avenue. Fairview Avenue dead ends at the parking lot behind the Hamilton Waste Water Treatment Plant.

“Mmmm ... Donuts” - Westside Waterfowl Tour

Date: Sunday, February 28

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Meeting Place: Shawnee Lookout boat ramp, upper parking lot

Leader: Mark Gilsdorf, (513) 253-6062, markg74@gmail.com

Depending on temperatures and wind patterns from the south, the last weekend in February can often see large movements of ducks through our area. This combined with the beginning of courtship rituals by many birds reminds us that, despite what the weather may look like, spring is here.

Beginning at the Shawnee Lookout boat ramp, we should be able to pick up a number of songbirds, many of which will have begun singing. With an eye towards ducks and waterfowl, we will head over to Lost Bridge, check the nearby gravel pits, and depending on river levels, plan on stopping in the Oxbow. We will end the day around

1:00 p.m. at Fernald, checking for ducks, as well as raptors.

If you have a spotting scope, bring it. If not, members of the Bird Club are notoriously easy to bribe into taking a peek through their scopes: day-old donuts work well.

Directions: To get there from I-275, take the Kilby Rd. exit # 21 and turn right (south). Go south about a mile to US 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 right here, at the entrance to the boat ramp. We will be meeting in the upper parking lot.

Mark Gilsdorf says: in addition to the two field trips with the Cincinnati Bird Club, local birders are encouraged to participate in field trips sponsored by Cincinnati-area birding and conservation organizations.

***Early Spring Waterfowl Migration at East Fork State Park**

Date: Saturday, February 13

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Location: East Fork State Park

Leader: Bill Stanley, (513) 724-2663, tyrannus@fuse.net

Sponsored by: Audubon Society of Ohio
Directions: Meet at the park office near East Fork's south entrance at SR 125 and S. Bantam Rd.

***Waterfowl and Other Early Spring Migrants in the Oxbow**

Date: Saturday, February 20

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Oxbow

Leader: Jon Seymour, (513) 851-9835, jlsjks@hotmail.com

Sponsored by: Oxbow, Inc.

Directions: Meet at the Oxbow, Inc. office, at 301 Walnut Street, in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. From I-275, take the Lawrenceburg exit, and turn left onto U.S. 50. Go past the entrance to Hollywood Casino, and turn left onto Walnut Street.

*** Owl Prowl - Search for Owls, including Short-eared and Nesting Great Horned**

Date: Saturday, February 20

Time: 3:30 p.m.

Location: Miami Whitewater Forest

Leader: Jeff Hayes, (513) 821-9822, JLHAYS@fuse.net

Sponsored by: Audubon Society of Ohio

Directions: From I-74, take the Dry Fork Road exit and go right. Turn right at the first stop sign onto West Road. Just past the small bridge, turn left into the park and follow the signs to the visitor center.

*** Bird Walks at Cincinnati Nature Center Saturday, Feb. 13 & Feb. 27 at 8:00 a.m.**

Meet your guide in the Rowe Woods parking lot. Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather! Veteran and new birders welcome: \$5 charge for non-members of CNC. Feb. 13 leader: Dave Helm, Feb. 27 leader: Steve Bobonick. Directions:

<http://www.cincynature.org/directions.html>

Great Backyard Bird Count: February 12-15, 2010

The 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, a joint project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, is February 12 through February 15. Birders from across the continent (more than 90,000 last year!) will pool their observations to contribute to a detailed snapshot of our late-winter birds. Anyone can take part in the GBBC, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds at their location of choice for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report sightings online at www.birdcount.org. You can do the count on your own, or join a group.

The Audubon Society of Ohio (the Cincinnati chapter of Audubon) will sponsor a count on the Mt. St. Joseph Motherhouse Grounds on Saturday, February 13, from 9:00 am to noon. Come for all or part of the count. You can watch at the feeding station, or join in a short – or a long – hike. Western Wildlife Corridor will help to lead hikes through the surrounding woods.

Members of the Ohio Young Birders Club, Queen City Chapter, will get a certificate for participating. For more information, contact Kathy McDonald at 513.941.6497 or by email at: whocooksforyou@gmail.com.

Waterfowl Symposium at GIAC: February 26-28, 2010

Walk, swim, fly, or waddle your way to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC) this February. The Ohio Ornithological Society (OOS), partnering with Columbus Audubon (CA), presents a Waterfowl Symposium, the weekend of February 26-28, 2010 at GIAC along the Whittier Peninsula in downtown Columbus. Through lectures and speakers, we'll travel to the marshes of Iraq, visit the breeding grounds of the Arctic, fly above the stopover habitat of Lake Erie, and look inside nests to learn about the secret life of waterfowl. **Just \$80 for the entire weekend (Friday-Sunday) if you are a member of OOS or CA/GIAC.**

The weekend swings into action Friday evening with a special performance by *The Swinging Orangutangs* featuring Julie Zickefoose, Bill Thompson III, and musical friends. The event is a special fundraiser for Nature Iraq. Question: will they play "Disco Duck"? Bring your dancing shoes, leave your hiking boots in the vehicle, and find out! We'll serve beer, wine, and appetizers including a taste of the Middle East. Also, take a behind the scenes tour of the green-design, LEED-certified GIAC building while admiring the lights of downtown Columbus in the distance. **Bring a friend or guest Friday night for just \$10.**

Saturday's line-up includes a day of great speakers. We're honored to present Dr. Azzam Alwash, the Chief Executive Officer of Nature Iraq, as our keynote speaker Saturday evening. Alwash, and NI's efforts



to restore the critical Iraqi wetlands and marshes drained by Saddam Hussein, were recently featured on CBS's "60 Minutes". But folks in Ohio have long known about the good works of Dr. Alwash and efforts to restore Mesopotamian marshes deemed a Ramsar wetland site of international importance. As you may recall, CA's Randy Rogers, while serving with the Ohio Army National Guard in Iraq, mobilized an armada of support for Iraqi environmentalists and ornithologists through his fundraising efforts on behalf of Nature Iraq. Randy also distinguished himself by providing crucial bird sightings from the Al Asad Air Base.

Two speakers from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will join us. Jessie Barry, the Assistant Curator of the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds, will share "The Secret Life of Ducks" highlighting fascinating and unique waterfowl life history traits through photos, audio, and video of courtship displays. Learn more about evolutionary adaptations, intriguing natural history, and the role waterfowl play in wetland conservation. Also from Cornell, Mr. eBird himself, Chris Wood, will talk about the roles birdwatchers can play in tracking duck populations to ultimately better conserve species. Wood is the project leader for Cornell's eBird database and a tour leader for the birdwatching tour company WINGS. GIAC also hosts a sculpture installation called "Lost Birds" by a Cornell professor of art: the display laments the extinct Great Auk, Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet, and Heath Hen through larger-than-life bronze versions.

Legendary birder, author, and duck stamp supporter Paul Baicich, will share the inside scoop on 75 years of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, better known as Duck Stamps. More than \$750 million dollars has been raised since 1934 in Duck Stamp sales supporting 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge system. Dr. Gwen Myers, Associate Veterinarian from The Columbus Zoo & Aquarium, will share her research on Spectacled Eiders. Keith Lott, Ohio Division of Wildlife, will reveal what's being discovered about concentrations of migratory waterbirds via Lake Erie aerial surveys and how the information relates to future wind turbine installation.

Sunday morning, travel independently to Central Ohio's reservoirs, rivers, and ponds including Hoover Reservoir, Deer Creek Wildlife Area, Pickerington Ponds, Slate Run Metropark, the immediate vicinity of GIAC (the Grange-Scioto River area and Green Lawn Cemetery), and more!

You have two options for registration: 1.) online through the Columbus Audubon website, or 2.) paper mail-in registration through OOS (PO Box 14051, Columbus, Ohio 43214).



www.ohiobirds.org/index.php
www.columbusaudubon.org/.

Hotel: Columbus Hampton Inn South: 614-539-1177. *Please mention the **Waterfowl Symposium** to receive the discount rate: book by February 12, 2010.*



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Cincinnati Bird Club
4624 Joana Place
Cincinnati, Ohio 45238

President: Jay Stenger

-Email: jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

Newsletter Editor: Ann Oliver

-Email: annieobirder@yahoo.com

Program Chair: Bob Foppe

-Email: fopsinc@aol.com

Field Trips: Mark Gilsdorf

-Email: markg74@gmail.com

2009-2010 Dues:

If you haven't sent in your dues, 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

Bird Club Membership

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Address _____

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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), 2928 Saddleback Dr, Cincinnati, OH 45244

