



The Passenger Pigeon

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The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

February 2013

Program:

INTO THE FURNACE: The Birds and Ecology of Vinton Forest

Speaker: Jack Stenger

Date:

Thursday, Feb 21

7 p.m.

Sharon Woods

Visitor Center

Our February program will feature Jack Stenger. During the summer of 2012 Jack worked for Ohio State University on the first year of a bird monitoring program in Vinton Furnace State Experimental Forest (Vinton County, OH). Jack will discuss the unique habitats, birds, and history of Ohio's newest state forest. Topics will include whip-poor-will abundance, tree-nesting chimney swifts, and breeding bird communities. He will present all this in the context of personal experience and ecological context.

Jack spent his childhood birding with his father, Jay, and other friends in the Cincinnati area. In 2010 he graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University with a degree in zoology. In the past seven years Jack has worked on multiple bird research projects for Idaho Bird Observatory, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Ohio State University,

University of Illinois, and Ohio Wesleyan University. His ornithological fieldwork has spanned many topics and many states, but his favorite pastime remains birding the river bottoms of southwest Ohio. membership.

-Steve Bobonick

Special Program:

Green Fire, the story of Aldo Leopold

(Co-sponsored by Oxbow, Inc.)

Date:

Tuesday, Apr 09

7 p.m.

Sharon Woods

Visitor Center

Join us at the Sharon Wood Centre for a screening of *Green Fire!* See the first full-length, high-definition documentary film ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold and his environmental legacy! *Green Fire* shares highlights from his extraordinary career, explaining how he shaped conservation and the modern environmental movement. It also illustrates how Leopold's vision of a community that cares about both people and land continues to inform and inspire people across the country and around the world, highlighting modern projects that put Leopold's land ethic in action in a multitude of ways.

Oxbow, Inc. and the Cincinnati Bird Club are hosting a screening of *Green Fire* for the community. Join us!

The event is FREE to the public but reservations are requested. Call 513-375-1025 to reserve seating.

Contact Jon Seymour at jlsjks@hotmail.com and put Green Fire in the title. For more information about the movie see www.GreenFireMovie.com.

Field Trips

(Contributed by Jay Stenger, Field Trip Coordinator)

Location:
Fernald Preserve

Date: Saturday, Feb 16

Meet: 8 a.m. Visitor Center parking lot
(see the directions below)

Leader: Brian Wulker
(513) 405-8373
bdwulker@gmail.com

Fernald Preserve has a variety of habitats that include grasslands, marshes, ponds, savannah, woodland, pine plantings and riparian corridor. But the focus of this trip will be waterfowl, a diversity of winter residents and maybe an early spring migrant or two. The habitats at Fernald Preserve are quite diverse but the many ponds in the area attract numerous migrant and wintering waterfowl and its extensive grassland habitat

is home to many open country species such as raptors, including Northern Harriers, and numerous sparrows to name just a few. Our leader, Brian Wulker, is a skilled young birder who is very familiar with Fernald Preserve and holds an internship there. Brian has the benefits of youth; enthusiasm, sharp eyes and great ears, so we can be sure we won't miss much. Brian plans to cover Fernald Preserve for the first few hours, but he will likely move to another nearby location or two by late morning. Miami Whitewater, Kilby Ponds and Lost Bridge are among the possible locations but Brian wants to hold off on any specific plans until seeing what the participants want to do at the time and birding reports closer to the date. This trip will consist of a good amount of walking roadsides and trails, but the terrain is relatively flat and even. This is not scheduled as an all day trip but will last a bit past noon, depending on the birding. Restrooms are available at the Visitor Center. Dress warmly and wear appropriate footwear for walking damp trails. Feel free to contact Brian if you have any questions.

Fernald Preserve is located in Northwestern Hamilton County. The entrance is located on Wiley Road about ¼ mile west of State Route 128. Follow the entrance road to where it ends at the Visitor Center.

Use this link for further directions:
http://www.lm.doe.gov/Fernald/Visitors_Center/Directions.pdf
Visit the Fernald Preserve website at:
http://www.lm.doe.gov/Fernald/Visitors_Center/Visitors_Center.pdf

Location:
East Fork State Park and
Meldahl Dam

Date: Saturday, Feb 23

Meet: 8 a.m. East Fork
Water Craft Office
parking lot
(see the directions below)

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

The focus of this trip will be wintering and early migrant waterfowl, gulls and other waterbirds. Bill lives near East Fork SP and knows the area as well as anyone. Add to this Bill's exceptional birding skills and a great day is virtually guaranteed. The plan is to first visit a number of sites around East Fork SP and Harsha Lake. After a couple of hours birding at East Fork, Bill will lead us to Meldahl Dam, about a 20 mile/30 minute drive. Bill will probably wrap up the trip at Crooked Run Preserve, a Clermont County Park property located along the Ohio River within sight of Meldahl Dam.

Meldahl Dam usually has large concentrations of gulls and may be the best place in our immediate area to find rare gulls. The majority will be Ring-billed Gulls but there is always a chance for several other species. Waterfowl should be found in good numbers at both locations. Bald Eagles and other raptors, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and many other winter residents and early migrants should also be seen in good numbers.

The trip will be mostly auto-touring (driving from spot to spot) with short walks interspersed. Restrooms will be available. Spotting scopes will prove useful but don't let not having one stop you from coming. Birders are always willing to share their scopes. And remember, it is still winter and it always seems colder near the water, so dress accordingly. Contact Bill if you have any questions.

We will meet at the watercraft office on the south side of East Fork State Park. To get there, enter the park from the south side as if you were heading toward the beach. The park office will be on the right. To get to the south side entrance to East Fork SP from I-275 take exit # 65, SR 125 (Beechmont Ave./Ohio Pike) and go east about 9 miles to the junction of Rt. 222. Turn left onto Bantam Rd. (opposite Rt. 222) and follow the signs to the park entrance.

Visit the East Fork State Park website for a Park map and other info at:
<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/parks/parks/eastfork/tabid/732/Default.aspx>



*Tufted Titmouse. Photo courtesy
Lana Hays.*

Location:
Brookville Lake Region

Date: Sunday, Mar 10

Meet: 8 a.m. Park & Ride at
I-275 Exit # 7

(see directions below)

***NOTE: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
TIME BEGINS TODAY**

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

The focus of this trip will be the spring waterfowl migration, which should be near peak at this date. But we can also expect to see much more because the diversity of habitats and sheer size of this region attracts a great variety of species. Our trip leader, Jay Stenger, is a veteran birder who has been birding the Brookville area for over 30 years. Jay plans to visit several spots around Brookville Lake and if time permits make the short hop over to Hueston Woods to take a quick look around Acton Lake before returning home.

Both of these locations are hotspots and are excellent for attracting numerous 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 of species along the way. Finding 18+ species of Anatidae (ducks, geese, and swans) is quite possible. We also expect to find numbers of loons, grebes, gulls, Sandhill Cranes, eagles, other raptors, and songbirds including early spring migrants and lingering winter visitors. Rarities have often

occurred on this trip. Field birds such as American Pipits (fairly-common) and Horned Larks (common) should abound and even longspurs and Snow Buntings are possible. This may be the best location in our region to see large numbers of Bald Eagles.

Because Brookville Lake is so large this field trip will be an auto-tour type, which will consist of driving from spot to spot interspersed with a few short easy walks. While the trip duration is long and does entail considerable driving, the rewards, in terms of what we see, always make it worth the effort. The trip will last well into the 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 the Park & Ride lot, located on SR 128 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. Contact Jay if you have any questions.

Visit the Brookville Lake website at:
<http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2961.htm>

Visit the Whitewater Memorial State Park
(at Brookville Lake) website at:
<http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2962.htm>

Local Calendar

Audubon Society of Ohio

Program: *Member Photo Night*

Date: Mon, Feb 18

See www.cincinnati.audubon.org for additional details.

Cincinnati Nature Center

Field Trips

February (Thurs/Fri)	Project Feeder Watch
February 23	Lester Peyton (LBFT)
March 09	Darlena Graham
March 23	Lois Shadix

See www.cincynature.org for additional details.

Oxbow, Inc.

Program: *The American Bald Eagle*

Date: Tues, Feb 12

Field Trip: *Paul Wharton*

Date: Sat, Feb 23

See www.oxbowinc.org.

Ohio Division of Wildlife, et al.

Program: *Mothapalooza*

Date: Jun 14-16

See www.mothapalooza.org

Make eBird Your New Year's Resolution!

(From Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Jan 2013. www.ebird.org. Reprinted with permission.)

As 2012 gives way to 2013, this is the time for New Year's resolutions. This year, why not make your New Year's resolution to use eBird...or to use eBird more often. In 2012 eBird received 33,862,411 observations on 2,460,415 checklists from 38,899 observers-- a 45% increase over 2011. eBird thrives on data, since the models used to create animated migration maps and guide conservation efforts, such as those highlighted in the State of the Birds report, perform best with large amounts of data. In eBird, *every* observation matters and no sighting is insignificant--daily counts of House Sparrows at an urban feeder are just as valuable as surveys of remote islands full of rare birds. Our goal is to understand what's happening with birds anywhere, anytime, and in order to do that best, we need all of your sightings. In 2013, please consider committing to submitting one eBird checklist a week. If you are ambitious, shoot for one a day. Each checklist can be as simple as 5 or 10 minutes spent watching birds in your backyard or a 30 minute walk in a nearby park.

Another good New Year's resolution is to try to get at least one other person involved as a regular contributor to eBird. If you have a lot of friends, maybe you can help five new people become eBirders. The more people submitting, the better the database, and the better the tools for everyone who loves birds.

eBird is constantly evolving, and we are always working on new features to make eBird more fun, more interesting, and more useful. If you or your friends have not checked out eBird in a while, here is a short list of some recent enhancements.

In 2010 eBird went global, making it possible to submit sightings from anywhere in the world!

In 2011 we redesigned the data entry, making it much easier to enter a checklist. Quick keys let you use the keyboard more effectively, advanced sorting lets you modify the data entry list for well-birded locations so that the commoner species appear at the top, and the whole process was simplified. Once complete, you can copy the checklist to a friend's account using our "checklist sharing" feature or you can let others know what you have seen by copying the checklist link in an email or listserv post, like this:
<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S12412913>.

Also in 2011, we added a way to display photos right in your checklist, turning your eBird checklists into beautiful, illustrated journals of your birding. Here are some wonderful ones from our holiday break: Chris Wood was in Costa Rica enjoying chlorophonias, Marshall Iliff was in Florida, Brian Sullivan was in Belgium, and programmer Tim Lenz has been enjoying rare Common Redpolls back in Nevada where he grew up.

In 2012, BirdLog was released as a way to enter sightings into eBird directly from a smartphone (iPhone, iPad, Android). The ability to record your bird counts on a phone and submit them instantly cuts your data entry time in half (no need to transcribe notes from your notebook) allowing more time for birding, exploring eBird, or even attending to other things! See more on BirdLog at the BirdLog website to get yourself a copy!

Also in 2012, our data quality system was substantially revised, with the main change being a shift from a monthly flagging system to a daily flagging system. Although most won't be apparent to eBird users, you will

notice that data entry lists and rare species flagging in spring will be much more accurate, with fewer requests for details for expected spring arrivals.

Below is a quick tutorial to eBird for those who have not explored the site much recently. Be sure to click the blue links.

1) Explore range maps -- Redesigned range maps let you explore sightings of any species worldwide, from Seaside Sparrow to Seaside Cinclodes and Osprey to Ostrich. Zoom in to see points (or click the checkbox on the right) and click the points to see the actual sighting info.

2) Check out eBird Alerts for your area -- These rare bird alerts display unusual birds for a given area, with checklist links and photos. See examples for British Columbia, New Mexico and the ABA Area (USA and Canada). You can sign up to receive these reports via email too!

3) Check the Top100 -- See who the active eBirders are in your area and see where your checklist submissions and total species lists rank relative to others. Here is the 2012 list for Iceland!

4) Make a bar chart -- eBird bar charts are a great way to explore and understand seasonal bird occurrence in your area. Click on the species name or "map" link for more info. These can be made at the state level (example, Iowa), county level (example, Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland), or even an individual site, like the Dry Tortugas off Florida or Central Park in New York City

5) Plan a birding trip -- Whether a weekend trip or week-long trip, try using eBird to help you plan your route. Make a bar chart for the state, province, or county you are visiting, and refine the date range to show the species that may be present when you are there.

Click "map" to see where the birds you are interested in have been reported, and zoom in and click for more info.

6) Check out your lists -- The My eBird page has all your listing needs -- country lists, state lists, county lists, year lists, yard lists, patch lists, and more. Try for a good 2013 list and track it here! Obviously, you have to have data entered to see any lists here!

Happy New Year to all and we hope to see your bird sightings on eBird this year!

The Biggest Public Land Grab: The 'Green Energy Boom' & Mainstream Environmentalism

by Jim Stiles

(excerpted from the Canyon Country Zephyr, Feb 2013, www.canyoncountryzephyr.com)

One night when I was a ranger at the Arches National Park campground, I encountered a woman so terrified she could barely speak. She was from New York City, camping for the first time in her life, and had pitched her tent next to the campground "comfort station." She felt comforted by the 200 watt security lights. When our generator failed that evening, the lights in the toilet went out as well and the woman was on the verge of a breakdown. Through stifled sobs, she explained that she had never been in total darkness before.

What a tragedy. I can't imagine anything more breathtaking than a night in the desert or out on the high plains or, best of all, up on the flank of some mountain, with nothing but a big dome of starlight and moonshine to show the way. There are still places out here where you only realize just how empty and

untouched parts of the West are after the sun goes down. It's the absence of lights. I can still name a few places, even in 2013, where I'm stunned by the perfect darkness.

Those light-less vistas are getting rarer every year as more and more development comes to the rural landscape. Not long ago, I was up at Arches at night for the first time in years and was shocked at the changes. I once loved doing night patrols when I was a ranger and practically wallowed in the dark of the desert evenings. Even on the higher ridges, there was a notable absence of horizon glow. All that has changed—it's easy to discern the city of Grand Junction, 70 miles east as the crow flies. And now even Moab brightens the night. The 2000 foot cliffs of Moab's West Wall practically glow with reflected light from the city.

A few hundred miles north of Moab, satellite images recently picked up an odd glow near the Canadian border in North Dakota. Photo analysts were puzzled at first; the glow suggested a metropolitan area comparable to Denver. But there's no city within hundreds of miles.

What the night images revealed were gas burn-offs and drill rig lights from thousands and thousands of gas and oil wells that have been developed by the oil and gas industry in the last few years. Environmentalists were shocked and a national movement to shut down fracking makes headlines daily.

But go elsewhere, from the Great Plains to the Intermountain West to the Mojave Desert, and you can't miss another industrial blight, on a scale comparable to North Dakota, if not bigger. It is taking a dramatic toll on the landscape, and becoming more pervasive by the month. And worst of all? It proceeds with only minimal opposition from the mainstream environmental community.



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Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

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2012-2013 Dues:

If you haven't sent in your dues yet for the September
2012 - May 2013 birding season, please fill out the form
below and mail it in along with your membership fees.

Visit us on the Web at:

www.cincinnatibirds.com/birdclub/index.php

Bird Club Membership

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