



# The Passenger Pigeon

Volume 49, Number 8

The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

November 2013

**Program:**  
The Owls of Whitefish  
Point

**Speaker:**  
Bill Creasey

**Date:**  
Friday, Nov 22  
7 p.m.  
Sharon Woods  
Visitor Center

The speaker for our “holiday” program will be Cincinnati’s own Bill Creasey who will present a program to us entitled “The Owls of Whitefish Point”. Bill is no stranger to the Cincinnati Bird Club (CBC) as he has been a member since the 1970’s. For those of you who don’t know Bill, he is the Chief Naturalist and Travel Coordinator for the Cincinnati Nature Center (CNC). Bill has been with the Cincinnati Nature Center for 40 years and in addition to his duties as a naturalist and educator at the CNC he has organized and guided hundreds of trips in the United States and around the globe for the CNC.

Bill’s program will be a bit of a preview of a CNC trip he is planning to lead in April 2014 to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and more specifically, to the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory (WPBO). The Whitefish Point

peninsula juts out into Lake Superior, creating a natural funnel for birds migrating through the Great Lakes. Many thousands of birds including waterfowl, waterbirds, raptors and passerines migrate through here every spring and fall. In addition many boreal species spend the winter here and throughout the Upper Peninsula. Over 330 species have been recorded at WPBO including: Spruce Grouse, Rough-legged Hawk, Jaegers, Great Gray Owl, Boreal Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Black-backed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, and Bohemian Waxwing.

Ten species of owls are possible at or around Whitefish Point from November through early May (there is still snow on the ground up there at the end of April). It will be these owls that will be the focus of Bill’s slide presentation. He will also discuss the upcoming CNC trip to Whitefish Point, which is open to the public.

As this is our traditional “holiday” program, and one that promotes our annual Christmas Bird Counts, Bill is the perfect fit as a speaker. A “local” fellow, Bill has probably been on every Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count since he started at the CNC. He has been a section leader that includes the Nature Center for most of those years and is a major promoter of the event. Most importantly, the CNC, through Bill’s efforts, has hosted the Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count Grand Tally party for nearly the past 20 years. Bill has always been instrumental to this counts success.

So mark your calendar and join us for this holiday celebration of birds and community. You will be glad you did.

*-Jay Stenger, Program Coordinator*

## About the November “Holiday” Meeting

*(Contributed by Jay Stenger)*

The Cincinnati Bird Club annual November meeting is a Thanksgiving holiday tradition and a way of honoring our founders. From the first year of the Cincinnati Bird Club and for over 65 years, the CBC November meeting has been treated as a special gathering. Karl Maslowski started this tradition as he and his family hosted the meeting, presented the program and provided, at his cost, trays of fresh baked doughnuts, apple cider and hot chocolate for refreshments. For years he hosted this program at his home, but as the CBC membership grew and the program’s popularity soared, the location was moved to the Founders Room of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History on Gilbert Ave. When it became a little too much for Karl to handle, his son Steve, and daughter-in-law Karen, graciously continued the tradition for several years. The business portion of this holiday meeting was always the planning of the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts, always an important event of the Cincinnati Bird Club.

This November’s meeting will hold to those traditions. The meeting will begin with a **social period where refreshments such as apple cider, fresh coffee and donuts will be provided.**

During this period there will be **20 unlabeled bird skins on display**, provided by Dr. Herm Mays Curator of Zoology at the Cincinnati Museum Center. Thanks Herm! All the

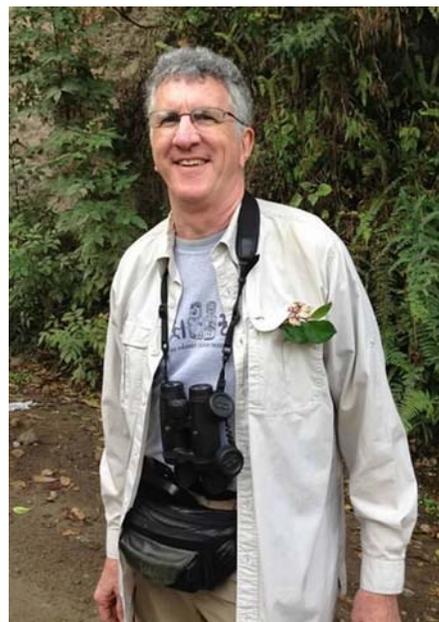
species displayed have been found at least once on area Christmas Bird Counts. Test your knowledge and ID skills. Don’t worry, there is no pressure in this game, as you can keep your answers and scores to yourself. But you might want to *bring a field guide* with you. Herm will reveal the species identities at the end of the program.

At this point the business meeting will begin. In addition to normal business, the upcoming **Christmas Bird Counts**, always an important event of the Cincinnati Bird Club, will be discussed.

Our speaker will be **Bill Creasey** of the Cincinnati Nature Center and he will present his program, **“The Owls of Whitefish Point”** (see program details above).

Before we head home there will be **drawings for door prizes** that will include many gifts, some quite nice.

So don’t miss the holiday camaraderie and just plain fun and make the effort for this special holiday meeting. All your friends and family are invited to this festive bird club event so bring them along. The more the merrier.



*Bill Creasey. Photo courtesy Doug Proctor.*

# Field Trips

*(Contributed by Jack Stenger, Field Trip Coordinator)*

## **Location:**

**Brookville Lake & Hueston Woods**

**Date:** Saturday, Nov 16

**Meet:** 8 a.m. at the Park & Ride Lot at I-275 Exit #7  
(see directions below)

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

The focus of this trip will be the fall waterfowl migration, which should be near peak at this date. Our trip leader, Jay Stenger, is planning on hitting several spots around Brookville Lake and then make the short hop over to Hueston Woods where we will check a few spots around Acton Lake before returning home. Both of these hotspots are excellent for attracting waterfowl and water birds at this season. We expect to see good numbers of many species. The rural countryside surrounding these two large lakes has diverse habitats so we expect to find a great variety of species along the way. In addition to waterfowl we expect to see loons, grebes, gulls, Sandhill Cranes, late shorebirds (such as Dunlin & snipe), Bald Eagles, many hawks, numbers of seasonal songbirds and much more. This will be an auto tour and will consist of driving from spot to spot interspersed with a few short easy walks.

While the trip duration is long and does entail a lot of driving, the rewards, in terms of what we see, always make it worth the effort.

The trip will run into mid to late 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 is usually no attendants on duty but we cannot be sure of that.

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the park & ride lot, located right 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. Call or email Jay if you have any questions.

Visit the Brookville Lake website at:  
[www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2961.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2961.htm)

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

Visit the Hueston Woods SP website at:  
[www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/745/default.aspx](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/745/default.aspx)

**Location:**

Lower Little Miami River  
Valley

**Date:** Sunday, Nov 24

**Meet:** 8 a.m.

Bass Island Parking Lot  
(see directions below)

**Leader:**

Mark Gilsdorf

(513) 253-6062

markg74@gmail.com

Join us for a day of birding in one of Ohio's most diverse urban landscapes. The Lower Little Miami River Valley is home to a surprising number of birding hotspots, all within the I-275 loop, including: Armeleder Park, Avoca Park, Camp Dennison Gravel Pits, Lake Isabella, and Valley View Nature Preserve. Our leader, Mark Gilsdorf, is a skilled birder who is very familiar with all these spots and many more. He will choose a handful of these locations that maximize our species diversity for the day.

Expect a balanced day of birding with opportunities to see both migrant waterfowl and wintering songbirds. During mid-November, and even through the winter, Camp Dennison hosts large number of waterfowl and waterbirds. Bottomland meadows in Armeleder Park and Valley View Nature preserve are a stronghold for wintering sparrows and grassland birds. It's only a matter of time before a Northern Harrier or Bald Eagle cruises overhead. Walking will be moderate and restricted to roadsides and park

trails. If you own a scope, bring it for waterfowl at Camp Dennison. The trip will end in the early afternoon.

We will meet at 8:00 in the Bass Island Park parking lot, which is adjacent to the Little Miami Golf Center. To get to Bass Island, head south from the intersection of Newtown Rd. and US 50 (Wooster Pike). After you cross the Little Miami River, Bass Island is the first parking lot on the right (west). Bass Island is a birdy place so our trip may start with views of creepers and kinglets from the parking lot. From here we will travel to other spots in the valley.

## Local Calendar

### Audubon Society of Ohio

**Program:** *The Ohio Winter Bird Atlas, the Continent's First and Conservation Implications*

**Date:** Mon, Nov 18

See [www.cincinnati.audubon.org](http://www.cincinnati.audubon.org) for additional details.

### Cincinnati Nature Center

#### Field Trips

Nov 09

Steve Bobonick

Nov 23

Lester Peyton

See [www.cincynature.org](http://www.cincynature.org) for additional details.

## Oxbow, Inc.

### Field Trips

Nov 16                      Darlena Graham

See [www.oxbowinc.org](http://www.oxbowinc.org) for additional details.

## Regional Migration

### Forecast:

### 1-8 November 2013

*(From [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu), 01 Nov 2013. Reprinted with permission.)*

#### Continental Summary:

Scattered light movements will occur in portions of the West, as the East sees a substantial movement to begin and end the period. Birds on the move this week will include Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and American Tree Sparrow.

#### Upper Midwest and Northeast

A strong low moving East over eastern Canada shuts down most movements East of the Appalachians, but light to moderate movements follow farther West to begin the weekend. Some of these movements will be heavy, given previous nights' precipitation and unfavorable conditions. These movements become more widespread across the region by Saturday night, and some areas may experience local fallouts depending on the extent of precipitation where birds are migrating. Areas most likely to experience waterfowl or passerine fallouts and concentrations include the eastern Great Lakes and possibly portions of the Atlantic seaboard depending on how quickly the

passing front departs. Favorable conditions are primarily East of the Appalachians to end the weekend, as movements continue in these areas. However, much of the remainder of the week will see sparse movements in generally marginal to unfavorable conditions, as high pressure builds into the region and then drifts East. Some coastal areas of New England will continue to experience moderate flights on Monday night. Portions of the Upper Midwest will experience more light to moderate movements beginning as early as Wednesday night, becoming more widespread on Thursday, and finally shifting East to the Atlantic by Friday night. Birds on the move this week will include Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers, American Tree, Chipping, Field, and White-crowned Sparrows.

## The 114th National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts

*(Contributed by Jay Stenger.)*

#### **\*Note: All National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts remain FREE.**

The Audubon Society no longer charges the \$5.00 field participation fee. To offset this loss of income "American Birds" will no longer be printed on paper and mailed to participants and Audubon will move to an online delivery of the summary results of the 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, where thousands of volunteers across the US, Canada and 19 countries in the Western Hemisphere, go out over a 24-hour period to count birds.

Last year's count set an all-time high with 2,369 individual counts conducted. Those counts included a record total of over 71,531 participants.

Count volunteers search for birds within a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle while counting every bird they see or hear throughout the day. It's not just a species tally; all individual birds are counted, giving an indication of the total number of birds within the circle that day. If observers live within a CBC circle, they may arrange in advance to count the birds at their feeders and submit those data to the count compiler. All individual CBC's are conducted during the period beginning December 14th through January 5th each season, and each count is conducted during one calendar day.

CBC participants are organized into groups or field parties by the compiler of the count. Each field party covers a prearranged and specific area within the 15-mile diameter count circle. And everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate regardless of one's birding skills. Compilers arrange field parties so that inexperienced observers are always out with seasoned CBC veterans. You don't have to commit to the whole day either. You are welcome to participate for as long as you like, a half-day or even a few hours.

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 that came in 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 Society's when that organization formed in 1905) recognized that declining bird populations could not withstand wanton over-hunting, and proposed to count birds on Christmas Day rather than shoot them. There are many Christmas Bird Counts to choose from and we encourage 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 our local Christmas Bird Counts listed below. If you have any questions concerning a particular count feel free to contact that count's compiler.

For more information on Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts visit the following website:  
<http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

## **National Audubon Christmas Bird Counts**

*(Sponsored by the Cincinnati Bird Club)*

Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count (66th Annual)  
Sunday, December 29, 2013  
Compiler Jay Stenger, (513) 522-8147,  
[jaystenger@cinci.rr.com](mailto:jaystenger@cinci.rr.com)

Western Hamilton County Christmas Bird Count (47th Annual)  
Sunday, December 22, 2013  
Compiler Ned Keller, (513) 941-6497,  
[keller@one.net](mailto:keller@one.net)

East Fork Christmas Bird Count (30th Annual)  
Saturday, January 4, 2014  
Compiler Joe Bens, (513) 353-4229,  
[joebens@live.com](mailto:joebens@live.com)

2012 Ohio River “Oxbow” Christmas Bird Count (26<sup>th</sup> Annual)  
Sunday, December 15, 2013  
Compiler Paul Wharton, (513) 353-3403,  
pwharton@fuse.net

Hamilton-Fairfield Christmas Bird Count  
Saturday, December 14, 2013  
Compiler Mike Busam, (513) 755-0057,  
mbusam@gmail.com

For more information on Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts visit the following website:  
<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>

## Meet the Black Vulture, Our Halloween Muse

*(ABC’s Bird of the Week. Reprinted with permission, [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org).)*

It’s Halloween season, a time when spiritual connections are brought to the forefront. This mystical occasion is a great time to celebrate a species that has at times inspired spirituality—and at times been abhorred. Meet the common, but frequently unappreciated, Black Vulture.

In Egyptian mythology, the nurturing ways of vultures, in general, led the birds to be respected as sources for maternal inspiration. Priestesses, called mothers, wore robes made of vulture feathers. Early Egyptians believed that vultures would reveal the site of a future battle by appearing there seven days prior to bloodshed, while in other cultures the bird was believed to play a role in releasing the spirit of the deceased to the heavens.

In the early 20th century, ill-founded concerns arose about vultures spreading disease. The birds were killed by the thousands until the 1970s, when their role in the environment became better understood and accepted.

Today, Black Vultures are mostly regarded as the beneficial scavengers that they are.

Black Vultures have limited vocal abilities; since they have no syrinx, the vocal organ of birds, they communicate through raspy hisses and grunts. They also lack a keen sense of smell, instead relying on birds that do—such as Turkey Vultures—to lead them to carrion, their main source of food.

Black Vultures are monogamous, staying with their mates for many years, all year round. They maintain strong social bonds with their families throughout their lives and will aggressively prevent non-relatives from joining them at roosts or following them to food sources.





## The Passenger Pigeon

### Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

Cincinnati Bird Club  
c/o Newsletter Editor  
15 Sherry Rd  
Cincinnati, OH 45215

**President: Steve Bobonick**

email: steve.bobonick@gmail.com

**Program Chair: Jay Stenget**

email: jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

**Field Trips: Jack Stenger**

email: jackstenger@gmail.com

**Newsletter Editor: Harris Abramson**

email: harrisabramson@hotmail.com

**Treasurer: Lois Shadix**

email: lcshadix@fuse.net

**Park VIP: John Stewart**

2013-2014 Dues:

If you haven't sent in your dues yet for the September  
2013 - May 2014 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](http://www.cincinnatibirds.com/birdclub/index.php)

---

## Bird Club Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Yes I would like to receive my newsletter via e-mail. E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 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**