



# The Passenger Pigeon

Volume 50, Number 1

The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

January 2014

**Program:**  
Birding the Colombian  
Andes

**Speaker:**  
Steve Bobonick

**Date:**  
Friday, Jan 17  
7 p.m.  
Sharon Woods  
Visitor Center

With nearly 1900 species recorded, Colombia boasts the largest bird list of any country on earth. Yet this marvelous destination has been considered “off limits” to birders (and everyone else!) for the past several decades. This is certainly understandable, given Colombia’s reputation for drug cartel violence and rebel group kidnappings. The current reality is that over the past ten years, the well-publicized incidents involving citizens and tourists have been reduced by 90%. Leading birding tour companies, such as VENT, are now scheduling trips to the various areas of the Colombia.

This presentation will discuss the January 2013 trip to the Central Andes region of Colombia that was organized by the Cincinnati Nature Center. Our group of 14 participants travelled from Bogota to

Medellin by van over a period of 16-days. We covered elevations from a low of about 2000 feet to over 14,000 feet and recorded 410 species in the process. Relying on photos of the places we visited and many of the birds we enjoyed, I hope to impart to attendees how safe and enjoyable a trip to Colombia can truly be.

For those who do not know me, I started birding at age 14, back in my home state of Connecticut. 40+ years later, I am still at it. I have birded across the ABA area and have also had the opportunity to do some global birding. I lead bird walks for both the Bird Club and the Cincinnati Nature Center.

*-Steve Bobonick, President*



*Andean Pygmy-owl. Courtesy  
Steve Bobonick.*

# Field Trips

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

## Location:

Ohio River East towards  
Meldahl Dam

**Date:** Saturday, Jan 25

**Meet:** 10 a.m. at

Armleder Park

(see directions below)

## Leaders:

Jay Stenger

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Join the Cincinnati Bird Club on a midwinter journey up the mighty Ohio River. This may be only trip that benefits from the debilitating cold of January. As the Great Lakes region freezes, waterbirds are pushed south into the Ohio River valley, providing gull-sick inlanders with a unique chance to bore their non-birding loved ones. We plan to bird the Ohio River from the Little Miami River to Straight Creek, near Higginsport. This consists of 10-12 stops with riverfront access, including Four Seasons Marina, the New Richmond waterfront, Meldahl Dam, Chilo Lock 34 Park, and various other landings.

Some stops will be brief, however we will be patient with any waterbird concentrations we find.

Even if our cold snap continues there should be some open water along the Ohio. Birding the river is often unpredictable, however this is the best local opportunity to see large concentrations of gulls with the chance of finding rare ones. In past years this area has hosted Iceland and Thayer's Gull along with all three scoters, Long-tailed Duck, and concentrations of eagles. This trip will focus on gulls and we will take time to scan all flocks in detail. Who knows what will show up this year?

Meet at 10:00 AM at Otto Armleder Memorial Park. We do not plan to bird at Armleder, however it provides secure parking close to our first stop. Meet in the circle parking lot next to the restrooms and playground. Access this lot by going straight through the first intersection within the park.

For a map and directions see:

[Armleder Park website](#). We will caravan from here to our first stop.

The trip will run into late afternoon, but of course you can leave at any time you wish. Bring your lunch and drinks – the town of New Richmond provides the only gas and fast food along our route.

## Local Calendar

### Audubon Society of Ohio

**Program:** *Conservation of Ohio's Endangered Salamander, the Hellbender*

**Date:** Mon, Jan 20

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

### Cincinnati Nature Center

#### Field Trips

Jan 25	Darlena Graham
Feb 08	Steve Bobonick
Feb 22	Lester Peyton

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

### Oxbow, Inc.

#### Field Trips

Jan 25	John Klein
Feb 23	Paul Wharton
Mar 02	Joe Bens

#### Programs

Jan 14	Devere Burt
Feb 11	Tim Sisson

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

## The 114th National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count Tallies for Southwest Ohio

### 2013 Cincinnati CBC Results

*(Contributed by Jay Stenger)*

On Sunday, December 29th, the 67th Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count was conducted. What follows are the results from the field portion of the count only and does not include the results from feeder watchers which will hopefully be totaled in the next few days.

Rain for much of the morning was likely responsible for the lower than expected participation of 71 field participants, down from last year's 103 field participants (plus 27 feeder watchers for a total of 130 count participants). Non-the-less we managed to find 93 total species which becomes our 3rd highest record, 2 species less than our all time high of 95 species set last year (2012). Those of you who attended the tally will note that our standing total of 93 species is two more than the 91 we ended the Tally with. This was because one of our leaders forgot to include a Chipping Sparrow in their section's total and informed me of this after the count ended and another couple had Sandhill Cranes they saw near the CNC on their way home from half-day participation.

Our highlights included 19 species of waterfowl (Anatidae: swans, geese & ducks) including Tundra Swan and Cackling Goose, Gray Catbird and the aforementioned Chipping Sparrow and Sandhill Cranes. Other good finds included Northern Pintail, Common Merganser, Northern Bobwhite, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Short-eared Owl, Eastern Phoebe,

Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher and Rusty Blackbird.

The total list (as it stands at 93 + 3 count week):

Cackling Goose 2, Canada Goose 2144, Mute Swan 4, Tundra Swan 1, Wood Duck 7, Gadwall 3, American Wigeon 37, American Black Duck 28, Mallard 957, Northern Shoveler 10, Northern Pintail 7, Canvasback 2, Redhead 25, Ring-necked Duck 5, Bufflehead 20, Common Goldeneye 4, Hooded Merganser 83, Common Merganser 1, Ruddy Duck 14, Wild Turkey 57, Northern Bobwhite 6, Pied-billed Grebe 41, Great Blue Heron 28, Black Vulture 109, Turkey Vulture 27, Bald Eagle 2, Northern Harrier 3, Sharp-shinned Hawk 7, Cooper's Hawk 16, accipiter species 1, Red-shouldered Hawk 31, Red-tailed Hawk 69, buteo species 1, American Kestrel 12, Peregrine Falcon 3 (tied count high), American Coot 239, Sandhill Crane 115, Killdeer 7, Ring-billed Gull 173, Herring Gull 1, Rock Pigeon 416, Mourning Dove 1306, Eastern Screech-Owl 3, Great Horned Owl 11, Barred Owl 1, Short-eared Owl 1, Belted Kingfisher 21, Red-bellied Woodpecker 287, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 27, Downy Woodpecker 260, Hairy Woodpecker 32, Northern Flicker 129, Pileated Woodpecker 23, Eastern Phoebe 4, Blue Jay 414, American Crow 1462, Horned Lark 15, Carolina Chickadee 1148, Tufted Titmouse 536, White-breasted Nuthatch 162, Brown Creeper 44, Carolina Wren 580, Winter Wren 8, Golden-crowned Kinglet 335 (count high), Ruby-crowned Kinglet 7, Eastern Bluebird 193, Hermit Thrush 14, American Robin 6965, Gray Catbird 2, Northern Mockingbird 180, Brown Thrasher 1, European Starling 16455, Cedar Waxwing 83, Yellow-rumped Warbler 78, Eastern Towhee 158, American Tree Sparrow 403, Chipping Sparrow 1, Field Sparrow 70, Savannah Sparrow 17, Fox Sparrow 10, Song Sparrow 1014, Swamp Sparrow 83, White-throated Sparrow 824,

White-crowned Sparrow 153, Dark-eyed Junco 499, Northern Cardinal 1784, Red-winged Blackbird 73, Eastern Meadowlark 21, Rusty Blackbird 10, Common Grackle 112, Brown-headed Cowbird 1, Purple Finch 7, House Finch 156, American Goldfinch 505, House Sparrow 1223.

Count Week Species: Green-winged Teal, Horned Grebe & Pine Warbler  
Notable misses: Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Greater Scaup, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin.

## 2013 Ohio River CBC Results

*(Contributed by Paul Wharton)*

The 27th Ohio River Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday December 15, 2013 and 17 participants shattered the previous high count of 84 species with a new record total of 92 species. Highlights included 19 species of waterfowl with 5 Tundra Swans, a record 81 N. Shovelers, all 3 mergansers, and a new species for the count, 2 Surf Scoters. Other highlights included an impressive 16 Bald Eagles seen throughout the count circle, an amazing 5th count record of Osprey (crappy photo), and record high counts of Redhead (32), Greater Scaup (5), Horned Grebe (7), Red-tailed Hawk (70), Winter Wren (4), Golden Crowned Kinglet (45), American Pipit (17), Yellow-rumped Warbler (146), Lapland Longspur (404), and Eastern Meadowlark (49). 4 Chukars were seen in N. Kentucky, while cool were not countable, as they were certainly released birds or escapes.

Totals for the count are as follows:

Canada Goose 2084, Tundra Swan 5, Wood Duck 3, Gadwall 119, Amer. Wigeon 3, Amer. Black Duck 57, Mallard 1063, N. Shoveler 81, N. Pintail 3, Canvasback 6, Redhead 32, Ring-neck Duck 129, Lesser Scaup 6, Greater Scaup 5, Bufflehead 27,

Hooded Merganser 145, Common Merganser 4, Red-breasted Merganser 1, Surf Scoter 2, Ruddy Duck 4, Wild Turkey 152, Pied-billed Grebe 17, Horned Grebe 7, Great Blue Heron 58, Black Vulture 32, Turkey Vulture 9, Osprey 1, Bald Eagle 16, N. Harrier 4, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Cooper's Hawk 11, Red-shouldered Hawk 2, Red-tailed Hawk 70, Amer. Kestrel 39, Peregrine Falcon 1, Amer. Coot 111, Sandhill Crane 22, Killdeer 3, Bonaparte's Gull 15, Ring-billed Gull 319, Rock Pigeon 537, Mourning Dove 284, E. Screech Owl 7, Great Horned Owl 1, Belted Kingfisher 8, Red-bellied Woodpecker 48, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 2, Downy Woodpecker 64, Hairy Woodpecker 7, N. Flicker 40, Pileated Woodpecker 18, Blue Jay 58, Amer. Crow 674, Horned Lark 721, Carolina Chickadee 159, Tufted Titmouse 70, Red-breasted Nuthatch 1, White-breasted Nuthatch 36, Brown Creeper 17, Carolina Wren 101, Winter Wren 4, Golden-crowned Kinglet 45, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1, Eastern Bluebird 65, Hermit Thrush 1, Amer. Robin 1523, N. Mockingbird 36, European Starling 11214, American Pipit 17, Cedar Waxwing 11, Yellow-rumped Warbler 146, Eastern Towhee 35, Amer. Tree Sparrow 511, Field Sparrow 2, Savannah Sparrow 9, Fox Sparrow 4, Song Sparrow 436, Swamp Sparrow 223, White-throated Sparrow 199, White-crowned Sparrow 213, Dark-eyed Junco 306, Lapland Longspur 404, N. Cardinal 329, Red-winged Blackbird 142, Eastern Meadowlark 49, Rusty Blackbird 5, Common Grackle 17, Brown-headed Cowbird 6, House Finch 28, Pine Siskin 3, Amer. Goldfinch 148, House Sparrow 48

Many thanks to the participants!

## 2013 East Fork CBC Results

*(Contributed by Joe Bens)*

Some observations. We found 2 new birds for the Count - White-winged Scooter, and Cackling Goose.

We had all time high counts of Canvasback, Tree Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow. The last time a Woodcock was found on the count was 1986.

Generally we had nice weather (for a Christmas Count), and average totals. The number of berry-eating birds like Cedar Waxwing was way down from recent years. Winter finches were absent. 84 species total.

Canada Goose 3458, Cackling Goose 4, Gadwall 20, Wood Duck 2, Black Duck 32, Mallard 813, Pintail 8, Canvasback 75, Lesser Scaup 15, Redhead 18, Ringneck Duck 2, White-winged Scooter 8, Bufflehead 6, Ruddy Duck 11, Common Goldeneye 2, Common Merganser 9, Hooded Merganser 10, Red-breasted Merganser 1, Pied-billed Grebe 62, Great Blue Heron 6, Turkey Vulture 59, Black Vulture 81, Bald Eagle 3, N Harrier 8, Sharp-shinned Hawk 3, Copper's Hawk 3, Red-shouldered Hawk 24, Red-tailed Hawk 26, Rough-legged Hawk 2, Kestrel 13, Turkey 12, Coot 4, Killdeer 27, Woodcock 1, Ring-billed Gull 2825, Herring Gull 15, Rock Pigeon 55, Mourning Dove 313, Screech Owl 2, Barred Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher 5, Red Headed Woodpecker 26, Red-bellied Woodpecker 65, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 3, Downy Woodpecker 56, Hairy Woodpecker 5, Flicker 24, Pileated Woodpecker 8, Phoebe 1, Blue Jay 193, American Crow 219, Horned Lark 219, Carolina Chickadee 169, Tufted Titmouse 109, White-breasted Nuthatch 37, Brown Creeper 5, Carolina Wren 77, Golden-crowned Kinglet 39, Eastern Bluebird 55, Hermit Thrush 2, Robin 317, Mockingbird 23, Brown Thrasher 2, American Pipit 3, Starling 1413, Cedar Waxwing 23, Yellow-rumped Warbler 53, Eastern Towhee 42, Tree Sparrow 459, Field Sparrow 64, Song Sparrow 215, Swamp Sparrow 54, White-throated Sparrow 218, White-crowned Sparrow 2, Junco 271, Cardinal 298, Redwing Blackbird 252,

Meadowlark 15, Common Grackle 399, Rusty Blackbird 2, Brown-headed Cowbird 1, House Finch 39, Goldfinch 115, House Sparrow 138.

## Western Hamilton County CBC Results

*(Contributed by Ned Keller)*

Snow Goose (white) 6, Cackling Goose 5, Canada Goose 4994, Mute Swan 2, Gadwall 74, American Wigeon 4, American Black Duck 44, Mallard 827, Northern Shoveler 8, Northern Pintail 2, Green-winged Teal 42, Redhead 2, Ring-necked Duck 286, Bufflehead 1, Common Goldeneye 1, Hooded Merganser 16, Wild Turkey 82, Pied-billed Grebe 11, Great Blue Heron 32, Black Vulture 26, Turkey Vulture 12, Bald Eagle 6, Northern Harrier 8, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Cooper's Hawk 14, Accipiter, sp. 3, Red-shouldered Hawk 6, Red-tailed Hawk 61, American Kestrel 16, Merlin 2, American Coot 8, Killdeer 5, Wilson's Snipe 1, Ring-billed Gull 145, Herring Gull 1, Rock Pigeon 692, Mourning Dove 887, Eastern Screech-Owl 2, Great Horned Owl 1, Barred Owl 2, Short-eared Owl 2, Belted Kingfisher 16, Red-bellied Woodpecker 113, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 9, Downy Woodpecker 142, Hairy Woodpecker 20, Northern Flicker 67, Pileated Woodpecker 12, Eastern Phoebe 2, Blue Jay 242, American Crow 1505, Horned Lark 8, Carolina Chickadee 521, Tufted Titmouse 152, Red-breasted Nuthatch 3, White-breasted Nuthatch 95, Brown Creeper 26, Carolina Wren 303, Winter Wren 2, Golden-crowned Kinglet 100, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1, Eastern Bluebird 135, Hermit Thrush 2, American Robin 5668, Gray Catbird 1, Northern Mockingbird 126, Brown Thrasher 1, European Starling 19426, Cedar Waxwing 17, Yellow-rumped Warbler 44, Eastern Towhee 35, American Tree Sparrow 179, Field Sparrow 36, Fox Sparrow 7,

Song Sparrow 347, Swamp Sparrow 20, White-throated Sparrow 399, White-crowned Sparrow 46, Dark-eyed Junco 236, Northern Cardinal 690, Red-winged Blackbird 622, Eastern Meadowlark 1, Rusty Blackbird 661, Common Grackle 16454, Brown-headed Cowbird 2750, Purple Finch 1, House Finch 202, American Goldfinch 235, House Sparrow 559.

88 species total.

## Best Binoculars of 2013: The Cornell Lab Review

*(From [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org). Reprinted with permission.)*

In our Autumn 2013 issue we reviewed more than 100 pairs of binoculars, narrowing them down to a total of 28 top picks in five price ranges. But there's no one perfect pair to recommend to everyone—so check out these six steps to decide what you like, then scroll down to [browse our Top Picks](#):

### Six Steps to Choosing Binoculars

1. **Decide on your price range.** Top-of-the-line binoculars give you a pristine image in a comfortable, durable package. Lower price ranges also offer some great options, thanks to technological advances in the last decade. See [our chart of Performance vs. Quality Index](#) to look for your best value. Note that we provide MSRP (from October 2013), but many retailers sell binoculars at below this price.

2. **Pick a magnification.** Deciding between 8x and 10x binoculars is a personal choice. In general 10x are better at distance birding. But it usually also means a narrower field of view, a slightly darker image in low light, and more noticeable hand-shake.



An 8x gives you a smaller image that's wider, brighter, and easier for finding and following birds.

3. **Test a lot of models.** No two birders look through binoculars exactly the same way. Size of hands, shape of face, how you focus, how you carry the bins when you're not using them—all matter. So pick up as many pairs as you can to get a feel for what suits you.

4. **Look for bright, crisp, true color.** Image quality has an overriding importance. How bright are the bins? How sharp? How true are the colors? How well do they resolve details in a backlit image? Most optics stores are better lit than your average forest—find somewhere dark to compare low-light performance. In our ratings, pay special attention to the **Clarity/Crispness** score to decide on image quality. Note that because of poor image quality, we don't recommend any compact-style binoculars with objective lenses smaller than about 30 mm.

5. **Check the eye relief.** Most binoculars have eyecups that retract to accommodate eyeglass wearers or extend to provide shading for those without. Look for durable, multi-adjustable eyecups. If you wear glasses, adjust the eyecups to their minimum position and make sure there's enough eye relief—you shouldn't see black rings around the image. Our **Eyeglass Friendliness** score helps indicate this.

6. **Review additional features and warranties.** Pay attention to field of view and close focus, two measures that affect how much you'll see. See our report on [field of view and close focus](#) to understand how these factor into your choice. Also pay attention to durability, waterproofing, and warranty—many major optics companies now offer excellent warranties. Check our full review spreadsheet for these details.



*Barred Antshrike. Courtesy Steve Bobonick.*



*Red-headed Barbet. Courtesy Steve Bobonick.*



## The Passenger Pigeon

### Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

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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)

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## Bird Club Membership

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