



The Passenger Pigeon

Volume 50, Numbers 2/3

The Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

Feb/Mar 2014

Program:
Re-Viewing Recent Rare
Birds of the Cincinnati
Region

Speaker:
Allan Claybon

Date:
Friday, Feb 21
7 p.m.
Sharon Woods
Visitor Center

Our guest speaker for the February meeting will be Allan Claybon who will present a program “Re-Viewing Recent Rare Birds of the Cincinnati Region”. Allan will present many of his photos of some of the outstanding finds made by many area birders over the past few years in and around the Greater Cincinnati region. Allan will also include several of his more interesting shots of local birds, such as “snipe on ice” and dark and light morph Rough-legged Hawks at Fernald Preserve. They say every picture has a story and Allan will elaborate some of that to us.

Allan is a local birder and photographer and is well known to most of us. If you have ever chased a rare bird locally, chances are you have run into Allan somewhere over the years. Without having asked for the position,

Allan has quietly become somewhat of the rare bird visual historian for our region. Coupling his great interest in birds and photography, Allan has, since his retirement in 2001, pretty much chased every local rare bird report he heard about, and in most cases ended up taking hundreds of pictures of them. When nothing particularly rare is around, Allan can usually be found somewhere at one of our local hotspots, binoculars and camera at hand, getting great pictures of the more regular species in the area.

Allan was born and raised in Cincinnati and worked as an accountant until his retirement in 2001. Allan lives in Kenwood with his wife Donna. They have two grown kids and 4 grandchildren. Allan got a late start on birding but he has made up for it since. When he retired he began taking regular walks for exercise at the Cincinnati Nature Center and started noticing the birds along the trails. At this time he knew very little about birds or photography, but he did try getting some pictures with a small pocket camera. Over the next couple of years Allan interest in birds was growing and he joined local groups like the Cincinnati Bird Club, the Audubon Society and Oxbow Inc. and participated on many field trips. By 2005 his interest in photography began to expand and he got pretty heavy into digiscoping. He cites the Higginsport Bald Eagle nest in March 2005 as a turning point for him. From then through the present, Allan pretty much taught himself the ins and outs of photography and has become a quality photographer. Today, Allan humbly considers himself just a guy with a camera, but in actuality he has some great stuff and continues to reset his own bar on a

regular basis. As far as the birding goes, Allan gets out literally on an almost daily basis, 52 weeks a year, and credits his retirement for allowing him the time. He enjoys the camaraderie that comes along with chasing rare birds, meeting and catching up with other area birders that have also come looking.

Through the Internet Allan stays abreast with current reports and when something unusual is reported he almost always follows it up. In most cases he is able to relocate the bird and is prepared to pretty much stay at the sight, sometimes over several days, always trying to get a better shot. Of course he also gets tons of shots of all the peripheral birds in the area during these stretches as well. Allan's personal photo library is huge and includes images of many of the rarest birds that have come through our region. Some examples of fairly recent rare species that Allan has photographed locally includes; Garganey, Eurasian Wigeon, Pacific Loon, Neotropic Cormorant, Sabines Gull, Iceland Gull, Little Gull, Least Tern, Purple Sandpiper, White-faced Ibis, Ferruginous Hawk, Swallow-tailed Kites, Mississippi Kites, Snowy Owl, Scissors-tailed Flycatcher, Northern Shrike and White-winged and Red Crossbills to just name some. These birds, among others, will be the stars of Allan's program.

So mark your calendars and come out and join Allan as he revisits, through his great photography, some of the areas outstanding bird sightings over the past few years and the stories that go with them.

Some of Allan's photography has appeared in print. One example is his Garganey (Fernald) shots that appeared in the Ohio Cardinal. Allan's photography can be seen on his Flickr page.

www.flickr.com/photos/nsxbirder/

-Jay Stenger, Program Chair

Program:
Jay's Big Year

Speaker:
Jay Lehman

Date:
Friday, Mar 21
7 p.m.
Sharon Woods
Visitor Center

Our guest speaker for the March meeting will be the bird clubs own Jay Lehman. Jay is a skilled and experienced birder that has been pretty much involved with the Cincinnati Bird Club as either a past president, long time board member, VIP rep, field trip leader, occasional speaker and active member for the past 20 years, ever since he first came to Cincinnati in 1994. Jay has pretty much been attuned to birds his whole life. Born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Jay remembers his mom encouraging him to draw pictures from her bird books at age 5 and he remembers a local bird club he and a few buddies formed around age 10. They would actually go bird watching with hand-me-down optics. Jay went on to the University of Delaware where he earned a doctorate in analytical chemistry. It was during this period that Jay became the serious and hard-core birder he is today. He birded a lot through his college years and was an active member of the Delmarva Bird Club. He continued to be an active birder in upstate New York birding community where he moved to take a job after college. That business was eventually bought out by P&G, who retained Jay and eventually brought him to Cincinnati in March of 1994. Jay has travelled extensively in pursuit of birds

throughout his adult life. When he recently retired from P&G in 2013, everyone who knows him knew he was going to spend all of his newly found free time birding

So what does a recently retired birder do? Well Jay decided to do something he had often thought about doing over the years. If you didn't see Jay around much during 2013, it was because he was off doing a Big Year, which will be the topic of his March program. And what a year he had! Back in 2012, before Jay began his quest, he wasn't sure what to expect. Being an ardent life lister, Jay already had accumulated a lot of experience chasing rare birds throughout the ABA area. But he had never undertaken anything like this before, so he really had no expectations. Only 16 birders had cracked the vaunted number of 700. Maybe that was a bit too optimistic, he thought. He figured, at worst, he would see some great birds and take some time to work on his life list. And then again, he thought, maybe I'll do all right.

Well, he did all right. When the smoked cleared and 2013 came to an end, Jay had recorded 735 total species! That includes 2 provisional records (1st time ABA area records awaiting state and ABA review). He didn't set a record, but he got close. His number of 735 is the 4th highest total ever recorded for an ABA Big Year. And as for bumping up his ABA area life list; Jay began his year with 790, added 22 during the year and finished with 812 species. His two provisional species were Common Redstart and Eurasian Sparrowhawk, both seen and photographed in Adak, Alaska, while in the company of three other birders. One of those, not so incidentally, was Neil Hayward, who was also undertaking a Big Year and ultimately set a new record of 750 species including 3 provisional records.

Jay's first and last species recorded on his Big Year were Northern Cardinal and Smith's

Longspur, respectively. The cardinal is appropriate for a Cincinnati birder who now holds the 4th highest Big Year record. Wow.

Jay has an amazing array of bird photographs he took during his quest, some quite rare to say the least, and dozens of stories. So mark your calendars and come out and see what should be an entertaining program. Congratulations for your achievement Jay, from all of us in your local bird club.

Jay kept a blog during his Big Year which can be found at:

jaysbigyear2013.blogspot.com

Big Year Standings

Big Years are monumental efforts of planning, networking, and birding. Here are the top efforts recorded so far in the ABA area.

1. Sandy Komito	748 (1998)
2. Neil Hayward	747+3 (2013)
- provisional species: Rufous-necked Wood-Rail, Common Redstart and Eurasian Sparrowhawk	
3. John Vanderpoel	743+1 (2011)
- provisional species: Hooded Crane	
4. Jay Lehman	733+2 (2013)
- provisional species: Common Redstart and Eurasian Sparrowhawk	
5. Robert Ake	731 (2010)
6. Lynn Barber	723 (2008)
7. Sandy Komito	722 (1987)
8. Greg Miller	715 (1998)
8. Dan Sanders	715 (2005)
10. William Rydell	714 (1992)
11. Benton Basham	711 (1983)
11. Al Levantin	711 (1998)
11. Steve Perry	711 (1987)
14. John Spahr	704 (2010)
14. Chris Hitt*	704 (2010)
16. James Vardaman	699 (1979)

*Lower 48 only

Big Year numbers are listed as ABA birds + provisional. Provisional species were new to the ABA Area and so not on that year's ABA checklist, and are still awaiting listing by the state records committee and ABA Checklist Committee. Acceptance by the relevant BRC can move birders up in the rankings and we will update this list accordingly.

-Jay Stenger, Program Chair

Field Trips

(Contributed by Jack Stenger, Field Trip Coordinator)

Location:

Ohio River East towards
Meldahl Dam

Date: Saturday, Feb 15

Meet: 10 a.m. at
Armleder Park
(see directions below)

Leaders:

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

Jack Stenger
(513) 503-3389
jackstenger@gmail.com

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 February. 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. Dress warm. If you have a scope it will prove useful.

Location:
Caesar Creek State Park

Date: Sunday, Feb 23

Meet: 9 a.m. at
Caesar Creek Swimming
Beach
(see directions below)

Leader:
Joe Bens
(513) 353-4229
joebens@live.com

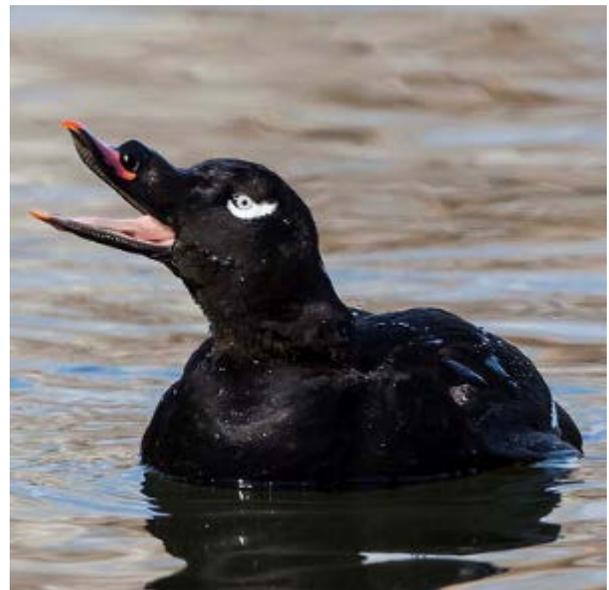
Caesar Creek is one of the premier locations in our region to witness large numbers of winter and early spring waterbirds. Although “early spring” may be optimistic for this trip, there is no doubt that waterbirds will be on the move as water opens from the winter freeze. In past years Caesar Creek has regularly attracted a diversity of waterfowl, loons, grebes, and gulls, including a surprising number of rarities. Although this trip will focus on winter waterbirds, other birds will not be ignored. The Caesar Creek area has diverse habitats including wetlands, grassland and forest. The nature center may be one of the best places in our local area to see Purple Finches. Our leader Joe is an expert birder and will maximize chances to see a diversity of species.

In addition to checking many sites around Caesar Creek Lake, Joe may make stops at nearby Spring Valley Wildlife Area and the Roxanna gravel pits as well. This will be a day trip, extending past noon, so be sure to bring a lunch and drinks. The trip will be mainly an auto-tour which consists of driving

to multiple views of open water, interspersed with short walks to focus on songbirds. This type of birding is much better if you have a scope, but if you don't have one don't let that stop you; bird club members are well known for generously sharing their scopes. Car-pooling is encouraged, but if you are on a schedule or have to be home early it is not advised. All of these locations have ample restroom facilities. Be sure to dress warm and expect wet weather.

We will meet at the Caesar Creek swimming beach parking lot. From Cincinnati, take I-71 north to the State Route 73 exit # 45. Turn left (west) onto SR 73 and go about 5 miles. After crossing the SR 73 Bridge over Caesar Creek Lake, turn right at the State Park entrance and follow the signs to the swimming beach. If you have any questions about this trip or further directions feel free to contact Joe.

Visit the Caesar Creek SP website at:
[Caesar Creek SP](#)



White-winged Scoter. Courtesy Allan Claybon..

Location:
Brookville Lake Area

Date: Sunday, Mar 16

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

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

3,521... That number sums up why Brookville Lake is a mid-March destination for birders.

3,521 is the number of Redhead our trip leader and others counted on Brookville Lake on March 5, 2006. Perhaps no other area in our region regularly hosts such large numbers of waterfowl during the peak of spring migration. This is an annual field trip for the Bird Club and it is not unusual to record more than 15 species of waterfowl in a good year. It seems that every year we find something odd, whether a scoter or an odd loon or grebe. Of course we will take our time enjoying the good looks at eagles, cranes, and confusing third-cycle gulls. In the past the rural countryside between stops has yielded a plethora of Horned Larks with occasional pipits, longspurs, and snow buntings. And who knows, we may even find Eurasian Collared-Doves behind the best gas-station-fried-chicken joint this side of the Mississippi.

Our leader, Jay, is extremely familiar with the Brookville region and may stop at other nearby locations such as Hueston Woods

State Park and the Great Blue Heron rookeries along the Whitewater River. Because Brookville Lake is vast, this field trip will be an auto-tour, which consists of driving from spot-to-spot with a few short 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:
[Brookville Lake](#)

Visit the Whitewater Memorial State Park (at Brookville Lake) website at:
[Whitewater Memorial SP](#)

Local Calendar

Audubon Society of Ohio

Program: *Bird Photography; Embrace the Challenge*

Date: Mon, Feb 17

Program: *The World of Bats*

Date: Mon, Mar 17

Field Trips

Location: *Fernald & Miami Whitewater*

Date: Feb 22

Leader: Jeff Hays

Location: *Oxbow*

Date: Mar 22

Leader: Ned Keller

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

Oxbow, Inc.

Program: *Western Wildlife Corridor*

Date: Tue, Feb 11

Program: *18th Century Ohio Wilderness*

Date: Tue, Mar 10

Field Trips

Feb 23	Paul Wharton
Mar 02	Joe Bens

See www.oxbowinc.org for additional details.

Cincinnati Nature Center

Field Trips

Feb 22	Lester Peyton
Mar 08	Bill Stanley
Mar 22	Debra Hausrath

See www.cincynature.org for additional details.



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

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Make your check payable to Cincinnati Bird Club, and mail to our Treasurer:

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