



The Passenger Pigeon

VOLUME 50, NUMBER 8

NOVEMBER 2014

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT TRIVIA NIGHT

Leader:
Jack Stenger

Date:
Friday, 21 Nov, 7 PM

Location: Sharon Woods Visitor's Center

What bird species was first recorded on a local Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in 1973 and has been recorded on every count since? What is the most frequently seen diving duck on the Cincinnati CBC? Which of our common winter songbirds ranges the furthest north in winter? What is the longest running local Christmas Bird Count? How many feathers cover a chickadee during the winter? How many birds are in this flock...? If you think you know the answers to these questions, or want to learn

them, our upcoming holiday meeting is for you. Traditionally, our November program is a celebration of the Christmas Bird Counts and local birding culture. This month's program is no different, except instead of a guest speaker we will have a series of Christmas Bird Count themed trivia games. With this format we hope to create an interactive environment where we can share stories and information about the most fun and important annual birding event – Christmas Bird Counts.

All questions will pertain to local Christmas Bird Counts with topics including: identification, local birding his-

tory, occurrence, and the natural history of our winter birds. Questions will run the gamut from basic birding facts to brain-teasing minutiae. Nobody will be put on the spot to answer questions and you will only share your answers at your discretion.

If the trivia is not enough to lure you out maybe the holiday snacks and refreshments will. If you'd like to volunteer to bring food (baked goods?) or have any trivia or topics you'd like to see asked e-mail [Jack](#).

~Jack Stenger
Program Chair

STATE OF THE BIRDS REPORT

One hundred years after the extinction of the passenger pigeon, the nation's top bird science and conservation groups have come together to publish *The State of the Birds 2014*—the most comprehensive review of long-term trend data for

U.S. birds ever conducted. The authors call the results unsettling. The report finds bird populations declining across several key habitats, and it includes a “watch list” of bird species in need of immediate conservation help. The report also re-

veals, however, that in areas where a strong conservation investment has been made, bird populations are recovering. The full report can be found at this [website](#).

Continued Page 3

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- State of the Birds *report released*
- Christmas Bird Counts *in our area*
- *Photo quiz*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS	2
FIELD TRIP	2
OCTOBER QUIZ ANSWER	5
PHOTO QUIZ	6
COMMUNITY CALENDAR	7

115TH NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



Northern pintail.
Courtesy Gregory Lis

**Ohio River "Oxbow"
Christmas Bird Count
(27th Annual)**

**Sunday, December 14,
2014**

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

**Hamilton-Fairfield
Christmas Bird Count**

**Saturday, December 20,
2014**

Compiler: Mike Busam
(513) 755-0057
mbusam@gmail.com

**Western Hamilton Coun-
ty Christmas Bird Count
(48th Annual)**

**Sunday, December 21,
2014**

Compiler: Ned Keller
(513) 349-3369
nekeller49@gmail.com

**Cincinnati Christmas
Bird Count
(67th Annual)**

**Sunday, December 28,
2014**

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

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

**East Fork Christmas Bird
Count
(31st Annual)**

Saturday, January 3, 2015

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

For more information on
Audubon Society Christmas
Bird Counts visit the [website](#).

FERNALD PRESERVE

Date: Saturday, 22 Nov

Time: 8 AM

**Leader: [Brian Wulker](#)
(513) 405-8373**

On Saturday, November 22, Brian Wulker will be leading the Bird Club on a trip to Fernald Preserve. We will Brian meet at 8 AM in the Visitor Center parking lot. Fernald Preserve is a DoE facility that is being reclaimed and managed for wildlife. Fernald has a large variety of habitat including wetlands, ponds, fields and woodland. Waterfowl and sparrows will be on the move and with the

great variety of habitat at Fernald a good variety of birds will found. eBird lists 235 species that have been logged at the Fernald Preserve hot spot. These can be seen at [eBird](#). Bird club members who use eBird are encouraged to submit lists for their visit and add to the base of knowledge of birds present in the preserve.

Many bird club members have known Brian since he was a very keen and interested young boy. These days Brian is about to receive his Masters degree in Biology with an

organism focus and he will be working at Fernald as an environmental scientist on the ecological restoration team. Brian has done a lot of work at Fernald and knows where to find birds in the preserve.

If time allows after searching Fernald, Brian will take the Bird Club on to points in the Great Miami River Valley.

Directions are available on Fernald's [website](#).

~Bill Stanley
Field Trip Coordinator

WATERFOWL
AND SPARROWS
WILL BE ON THE
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THE GREAT
VARIETY OF
HABITAT AT
FERNALD

STATE OF THE BIRDS

Continued from Page 1

The State of the Birds 2014 is authored by the U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative—a 23-member partnership of government agencies and organizations dedicated to advancing bird conservation. The report is based on extensive reviews of population data from long-term monitoring. It looks to birds as indicators of ecosystem health by examining population trends of species dependent on one of seven habitats: grasslands, forests, wetlands, ocean, aridlands, islands and coasts. This year’s report is also a five-year check-in on the indicators presented in the inaugural 2009 State of the Birds report.

After examining the population trends of birds in desert, sagebrush and chaparral habitats of the West, the report’s authors identify aridlands as the habitat with the steepest population declines in the nation. There has been a 46 percent loss of these birds since 1968 in states such as Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. Habitat loss and fragmentation due to development are the largest threats. These are also significant threats in the nation’s grasslands, where the report notes a decline in breeding birds, like the eastern meadowlark and the bobolink, of nearly 40 percent since 1968. That decline, however, has leveled off since 1990—a result of the significant investments in grassland bird conservation.

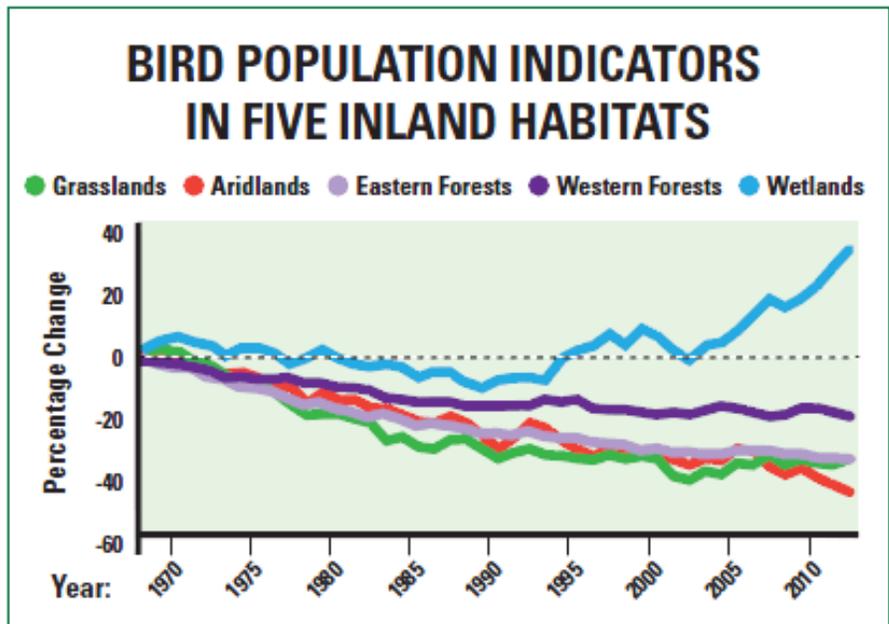
“This report highlights the threats that birds face, but it also offers hope for their future if we act together,” said Wayne Clough, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. “I am gratified that the Smithsonian contributed to this important effort, which shows that collaboration among agencies and

organizations can yield valuable insights into difficult challenges.”

While habitat loss and fragmentation are the most consistent and widespread threats across habitats, they are closely followed on the list by invasive species. Introduced species have a particularly strong impact on islands where native birds have a greater restriction on where they can live. In Hawaii, introduced animals such as mongoose, rats and domestic cats serve as unnatural predators and take a huge toll on native species, while graz-

a direct result of the establishment of 160 national coastal wildlife refuges and nearly 600,000 acres of national seashore in 10 states.

“Because the ‘state of the birds’ mirrors the state of their habitats, our national wildlife refuges, national parks, national seashores, and other public lands are critical safe havens for many of these species—especially in the face of climate change—one of the biggest challenges to habitat conservation for all species in the 21st century,” said Secretary of the Interior Sally



ing livestock degrade habitat. One-third of all U.S. federally endangered birds are Hawaiian species.

However, as with many grassland birds, species in several other key habitats have benefited from targeted conservation. In general, shorebirds along the coasts are squeezed into shrinking strips of habitat due to development. But among the 49 coastal species examined, there has been a steady rise in population of 28 percent since 1968—

Jewell. “The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and other Interior agencies practice science-based, landscape-scale conservation of these lands and their wildlife in partnership with scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey. I am proud that these agencies have collaborated with the Smithsonian and many others on today’s report. The Department of the Interior looks

Continued next page

STATE OF THE BIRDS

Continued from previous page

forward to continued cooperation to address these habitat conservation challenges."

The creation and preservation of large swaths of forests through public-private partnerships in the Appalachian Mountains and the Northwest has helped declining forest-dependent species such as the golden-winged warbler and the oak titmouse. Efforts like this are essential, as forest-dependent birds have declined nearly 20 percent in the western U.S. since 1968 and 32 percent in the East.

Wetlands are one of the habitats to benefit most from conservation. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act has enabled strategic conservation projects covering a collective area larger than Tennessee. While wetland loss continues in some regions, the Act has helped protect and restore wetlands through public-private partnerships across the United States, thereby reversing declines in waterfowl populations such as the mallard and blue-winged teal.

In addition to assessing population trends in the seven key habitats, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative members created a State of the Birds Watch List. The 230 species on the list are currently endangered or at risk of becoming endangered without significant conserva-

tion. Forty-two of them are pelagic (open ocean) species. Birds like the Laysan albatross and black-footed albatross are facing increasing levels of oil contamination, plastic pollution and greatly reduced amounts of prey fish due to commercial fishing operations. Rising sea levels due to climate change also put their low-elevation breeding habitats in the Hawaiian and Marshall islands at risk of flooding.

More than half of all U.S. shorebird species are on the Watch List, including the piping plover, long-billed curlew and red knot. Loss of habitat and uncontrolled harvesting in the South America and Caribbean are some of their biggest threats.

"The State of the Birds report shows that public-private partnerships are working to successfully strengthen conservation efforts," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Partnerships facilitated through the National Resource Conservation Service and the Forest Service have improved habitat for bird species and other wildlife, as well as promoting more outdoor recreation opportunities and boosting related sectors of the economy. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program, created in the 2014 Farm Bill, will leverage further investment in innovative new conservation projects. We are forging a new era of

conservation partnerships by joining non-traditional conservation stakeholders with farmers, ranchers and foresters to do more together than we ever could have separately."

One of the more dire groups on the Watch List is made up of the 33 Hawaiian forest species, 23 of which are listed as federally endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The report's authors have deemed Hawaii the "bird extinction capital of the world"—no place has had more extinctions since human settlement. They point to proactive, partner-driven conservation as the best way to recover endangered birds and keep other species off the Endangered Species List, not only in Hawaii but in all key habitats.

Another group on the Watch List will require international cooperation: neotropical migrants. These species that breed in North America but migrate south of the U.S. border in winter hold 30 spots on the Watch List. Species like the Bicknell's thrush, a bird that breeds in the mountains in the Northeast, faces rapid deforestation of its already limited wintering grounds on the island of Hispaniola. A positive precedent, however, lies with the cerulean warbler, a species that

Continued Page 6



Red knot.
Courtesy Gerrit Vyn



'Iwi.
Courtesy Jack Jeffrey

WETLANDS ARE
ONE OF THE
HABITATS TO
BENEFIT MOST
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OCTOBER PHOTO QUIZ - ANSWER

The answer for the October Quiz Bird is laughing gull. All three respondents were correct: Joe Bens, Bill Stanley, and Jay Stenger. Ron Bradley took this magnificent picture of a first cycle laughing gull on Lake Charleston, Illinois (Coles County) on October 2nd, 2011. The bird's all-black primaries and long, slightly-curved bill rule out the similarly looking Franklin's gull, which is much

more expected in the Midwest during early October.

~*Jack Stenger*
Program Chair

THIS IS A FIRST
CYCLE LAUGHING
GULL ON LAKE
CHARLESTON,
ILLINOIS



Laughing gull. Courtesy Ron Bradley

STATE OF THE BIRDS

Continued from Page 4



Cerulean warbler.
Courtesy Gerrit Vyn

breeds in forests of the eastern U.S. and winters in the tropics. While its numbers are still declining, it has benefited by international collaborations to not only create healthy breeding habitat in the U.S., but good wintering habitat in Colombian coffee-growing landscapes.

The passenger pigeon, once numbering in the billions, is a strong reminder that even species considered common can become extinct without careful attention, as it did Sept. 1, 1914. Another focus for *The State of the Birds 2014* is the importance of keeping common birds common. The report identifies 33 species, like the northern bobwhite quail, grasshopper sparrow

and bank swallow, that do not meet the Watch List criteria but are declining rapidly in many areas. These birds have lost more than half their global population, and the 33 species combined have lost hundreds of millions of breeding individuals in just the past 40 years.

The report points, once again, to conservation as the most valuable solution to stopping these species from joining the Watch List. Addressing the conservation needs of these birds will result in healthier, more productive land and water for other wildlife, as well as for people.

The strongest finding in *The State of the Birds 2014* is simple: conservation works.

Ducks fly once again in great numbers up the Mississippi River and across the Chesapeake Bay. California condors are rebounding from just 22 birds to more than 200 today. Bald eagles, brown pelicans, peregrine falcons—all species once headed the way of the passenger pigeon—are now abundant. To prevent future extinctions like the passenger pigeon, the report's authors point to science, technology and knowledge as the foundation of proactive partner-driven conservation.

ANOTHER FOCUS
FOR THE STATE
OF THE BIRDS
2014 IS THE
IMPORTANCE OF
KEEPING
COMMON BIRDS
COMMON

PHOTO QUIZ

Rules: Anybody is welcome and all are encouraged to participate. However, only paying members (it's only \$12 per year) are eligible for prizes and unadulterated bragging rights. To participate send your answers to me (jackstenger@gmail.com) by 21 November. It's a toughy!

All responses must be the official common English names used by the American Ornithologists' Union checklist ([Link](#)). This means they must be correctly spelled, capitalized, and hyphenated

or else they are counted as wrong. Mind your plovers and quails. Also include any comments you have about the quiz bird, such as how you arrived at your ID, or how you felt about the picture. Venting is welcome. Any bird that is on the state list for Ohio, Indiana, or Kentucky is fair game. Whoever has the highest number of correct answers by the end of the Bird Club season (May) "wins." Any public discussion of quiz birds will result in a trap door opening up beneath the violator.

Prize: To be determined.

Answers: I will post the answer with a brief analysis in the next Bird Club newsletter. This will include a list of all those who guessed correctly. Don't worry, wrong guesses will not be published, so fire away: it's better to get a CBC quiz wrong than to have never participated. I think Alexander Wilson said that.

~Jack Stenger
Program Chair

Continued next page

COMMUNITY
CALENDAR

- 15... Field trip: Wendy Park, [OOS](#). *Cancelled due to inclement weather*
- 16... Field trip: Waterfowl migration, [ASO](#)
- 17... Program: Yellow-winged warbler banding, [ASO](#)
- 21... Program: Bird Count trivia, [Cincinnati Bird Club](#)
- 22... Field trip: Waterfowl migration, [Cincinnati Bird Club](#)
- 23... Field trip: Waterfowl migration, [Oxbow, Inc.](#)

NOVEMBER 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

PHOTO QUIZ



November photo quiz. Courtesy Jack Stenger



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

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2014-2015 DUES:
IF YOU HAVEN'T
SENT IN YOUR
DUES YET FOR THE
SEPTEMBER 2014 -
MAY 2015 BIRDING
SEASON, PLEASE FILL
OUT THE FORM
AND MAIL IT IN
ALONG WITH YOUR
MEMBERSHIP FEES