



THE CERULEAN

Summer - 2008, Vol. 5, No. 2

www.ohiobirds.org info@ohiobirds.org

Quarterly Newsletter of the **Ohio Ornithological Society**: *Ohio's Birding Network*

from the EDITOR

In response to numerous member requests, the newsletter is now printed with soy ink on paper made with 30% recycled fiber and chlorine-free pulp using timber from well-managed forests. You can help save more trees by requesting to receive your copy of *The Cerulean* electronically. Send your name and email address to Andrea Cook, OOS Membership Coordinator at: andrealcook123@yahoo.com.

This issue marks the addition of Kathy McDonald to the behind-the-scenes efforts at *The Cerulean*. Kathy will serve as Design Manager for the newsletter. She brings twelve years of experience in computer information systems to the quarterly publication. Kathy is a current board member of Audubon Ohio, a founding member of the Cincinnati chapter of Wild Ones, Inc. (a nationwide organization promoting biodiversity through the use of native plants), and a 15 year volunteer and former board member of Raptor, Inc., a raptor rehabilitation and education group in Cincinnati. She is married to OOS board member Ned Keller.

I'm a nurse anesthetist by profession but I also worked outside of the medical field, including a stint as a news writer for a local television station and a decade as a music host in public radio. I'm a board member of Audubon Ohio and a supporter of bird organizations from coast to coast including Cape May Bird Observatory, Black Swamp Bird Observatory, and Point Reyes Bird Observatory. It's an honor to serve the OOS and a delight to meet Ohio birders at OOS events.

Hope to see you this fall, September 27th and 28th at the Lake Erie Raptor Seminar at Maumee Bay Resort and Conference Center. Look for a registration form inside of this newsletter.

-Ann Oliver
Cincinnati

COMINGS AND GOINGS

With heartfelt thanks, we want to thank board members whose terms expired at the May 2008 meeting. Bernie Master, Karen Menard, Greg Miller, Su Snyder, and Bill Whan were not only instrumental in the growth and development of the Ohio Ornithological Society, they each spearheaded important initiatives for the organization. Thanks to all.

We welcome new board members Tom Bartlett, Craig Caldwell, Cheryl Harner, and Dan Sanders, who were elected by the membership and have started their first terms. Each comes with an impressive resume and we look forward to their guidance and contributions over the next several years.

CARLISLE PRINTING JOINS OOS TEAM

OOS thanks Carlisle Printing for their collaborative effort with *The Cerulean*. Even though Carlisle is owned by a non-Amish family, about half of the 35 employees are Amish. Several employees bird along their route to the Sugarcreek, Ohio location while riding bikes back and forth to work.

Carlisle does many types of commercial printing including full-color catalogues, cookbooks, brochures, calendars, as well as *The Bobolink* for the Holmes Area Birding Society. Although marketing is primarily by word of mouth, Carlisle has done print jobs for people in Texas, Alabama, Florida, Colorado, Montana, Oregon and even Canada. A new *Optics Buying Guide* for Time & Optics is currently in the works.

You can visit Carlisle Printing at:
<http://www.carlisleprinting.com/>

THE CERULEAN

THE CERULEAN is the official newsletter of the Ohio Ornithological Society (OOS). THE CERULEAN is published four times a year. It contains timely information regarding upcoming field trips and meetings, recent bird sightings and current hot spots, trip reports, as well as other pertinent birding information. A subscription to THE CERULEAN is included among the benefits of the OOS. Members of the OOS are encouraged to contribute announcements, articles, photographs, drawings, and other birding related information to the newsletter. Seasonal deadlines for contributions to THE CERULEAN are as follows:

- Spring: 1 March
- Summer: 1 June
- Fall: 1 September
- Winter: 1 December

Send contributions for the newsletter to cerulean1@ohiobirds.org, or by regular mail to THE CERULEAN, c/o OOS, P.O. Box 14051, Columbus, Ohio 43214. For more information see the Publications page on the OOS web site at www.ohiobirds.org. Because the newsletter is sent as bulk mail, subscribers should remember that the Post Office will not forward this newsletter to a new address. Please notify Andrea Cook at andrealcook123@yahoo.com if you move.

Editor--Ann Oliver, Design Manager--Kathy McDonald.

THE OHIO CARDINAL MAGAZINE: PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

Ed Pierce, longtime publisher of the Ohio Cardinal magazine, recently transferred ownership of the magazine to the Ohio Ornithological Society. This move had been discussed between Ed and the OOS board for several years, and both parties had been making plans for the eventual transfer for some time.

Until this switch in ownership, the Ohio Cardinal was a separate 501(c) (3) organization with no formal ties to the OOS, although we worked with Ed to ensure that our members received a subscription as part of the OOS membership. We also donated logistical support related to subscription maintenance and mailing.

The Ohio Cardinal magazine has served Ohio's birding community since 1978, when John Herman founded it. In 1980, Ed took over as publisher and has ensured that Ohio has had a magazine dedicated to Ohio's bird life ever since. Ed deserves a huge debt of gratitude for his hard work on behalf of Ohio's birders.

Upon transfer of the magazine to the OOS, Bill Whan, Cardinal editor for the past ten years, decided to resign due to his opinions regarding the role and responsibilities of the editor position. A number of the state's best birders have also served as editors of the Cardinal over the years. We recognize and appreciate the roles that past

editors have played in the development and continuation of the magazine.

In the interest of further improving the Cardinal, and truly making it a collaborative effort amongst Ohio's birding community, we are delighted that several outstanding individuals have agreed to join forces and provide oversight of the Cardinal. The new editor in chief is Andy Jones, who serves as staff ornithologist for the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Andy's credentials are impeccable, and the OOS is honored that he would agree to serve our membership and lend his talents to the magazine. This is the first time that a professionally trained ornithologist has provided oversight of Cardinal editorial duties, and we look forward to Andy's input. We'll feature a birder's bio on Andy in an upcoming Cerulean newsletter.

Debbie Griffith, who was a past editor of Bird Watcher's Digest and has a tremendous background in professional editing, has taken on the role of assistant editor. Her services will be an enormous asset to the magazine.

We felt it was important to create more of a team approach to editorial duties associated with the magazine, and broaden its perspective. To that end, the following people have agreed to volunteer their services. Gabe Leidy and Ethan Kistler will co-edit the Spring season. These two are amongst Ohio's finest young birders, and already have developed a terrific understanding of Ohio's avifauna. Aaron Boone will edit the Summer season. No one is more qualified for this role, as Aaron is coordinator of the ongoing Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II. Craig Caldwell will oversee the Fall season. Craig is a very skilled longtime Ohio birder, who also has the perspective of one who has traveled extensively throughout North America. Finally, Jim McCormac will edit the Winter season. Jim has long been involved in the Ohio birding scene, and has served as past secretary of the Ohio Bird Records Committee.

The OOS is committed to carrying on the legacy and tradition of the Ohio Cardinal. We feel that a state ornithological journal is a valuable asset to Ohio's birding community, and believe that the new management team will allow the magazine to grow and improve, and better serve the interests of Ohio's bird watchers.

-The OOS Board of Directors

HAPPY 50TH OHIO CHAPTER

Congratulations to the Ohio Chapter of The Nature Conservancy on their 50th anniversary. Since bylaws were established in 1958, nearly 40,000 acres of important natural areas in the Buckeye State have been preserved to ensure biodiversity for future generations.

To read more about the first 50 years of TNC's Ohio Chapter, visit:

<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/ohio/>

CONRAD TRACT UPDATE

Since the acquisition of The Conrad Tract, folks from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) say they have been watching a parade of spring wildflowers and migrant birds. The Conrad Tract is a newly acquired property at TNC's Edge of Appalachia (EOA) Preserve in Adams County, Ohio. The 24 acre parcel was purchased in part with a \$10,000 grant from OOS and additional money from Clean Ohio Funds. The tract protects a globally rare plant community of Appalachian White Cedar Bluff woodlands. The critical acreage is adjacent to TNC's Wilderness Trail, a three-mile loop through some of the EOA's most beautiful forest. The Conrad Tract adds buffer and critical habitat for 107 nesting birds.

The Conrad Tract got a spring cleaning earlier this year. In April, with the help of 25 Proctor and Gamble volunteers as well as TNC and Cincinnati Museum Center staff, a 20 cubic yard dumpster was filled with debris left by prior occupants of the property. Pete Whan says "Now we can enjoy the true beauty of the area. We have wanted to clean that dump up for years. What a relief!" Lucy Miller adds that The Conrad Tract is easily observed by the public from The Wilderness Trail.

FERNALD PRESERVE OPENS AUGUST

What can you do with a former uranium processing facility closed in 1989 after the Cold War? Clean up the site with a \$4.4 billion environmental restoration project and turn the complex into a park. The Fernald Preserve, located just northwest of Cincinnati, is slated to open to the public August, 2008. More than 1000 acres of former US Department of Energy property has been restored with native trees, prairie grasses, and enhanced wetlands. Bird groups have already enjoyed sightings of Grasshopper Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks, Dickcissels, Bobolinks and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

For more information:

<http://www.lm.doe.gov/land/sites/oh/ferald/ferald.htm>

OOS logo merchandise is now available to all members. At the Fourth Annual OOS Meeting in May at Mohican State Park, several folks took advantage of the opportunity to be the first to place an order. Dan Sanders wore his hat while leading an OOS field trip.

GOT GEAR?

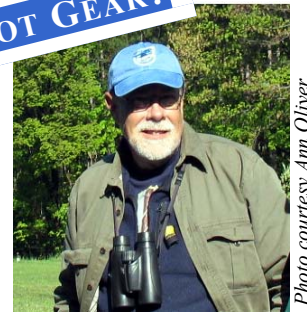


Photo courtesy Ann Oliver.

Your next chance to order will be at the Lake Erie Raptor Seminar at Maumee Bay State Park the weekend of September 27th and 28th. You can order an OOS light blue baseball cap for \$15; it's just like the ones all field trip leaders wear! Tote bags for \$10 and zip-up fleeces (sizes S-M-L-XL up to 6XL) for \$28 can also be purchased. Show your pride and your support of OOS in the field and on the boardwalk.

BILL OF THE BIRDS RECEIVES ROBERT RIDGWAY AWARD

Congratulations to OOS board member and Bird-watcher's Digest (<http://www.birdersdigest.com>) editor Bill Thompson, III. Earlier this summer, The American Birding Association honored BT3 with The Robert Ridgway Distinguished Service Award for excellence in publications pertaining to the field of ornithology.

You can read more about the award, and events at the ABA Utah conference by reading *Bill of the Birds* blog from Monday, July 7th, 2008, at:

<http://www.billofthebirds.blogspot.com/>

IMBD TURNS 15

This past spring marked the 15th anniversary of International Migratory Bird Day. IMBD was founded in 1993 by folks from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Originally IMBD was celebrated on the second Saturday in May. Currently most Canadian and U.S. IMBD events are scheduled in the spring; several Central American and Mexican IMBD activities are held in the fall. In Ohio, IMBD is still celebrated on the second Saturday in May at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area.

For more information on other IMBD activities, link to Environment for the Americas:

<http://www.birdday.org/index.php>

OOS PARTNER: BLACK SWAMP BIRD OBSERVATORY

There's a buzz spreading across the country. It started in 1992 near the small town of Oak Harbor, Ohio, made its way across the state, and a few years ago began spreading rapidly across the country. What's the buzz all about? It's about birds, migration, conservation, ground-breaking bird education for young people, and an organization creating a powerful combination of all the above. That organization is the Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO).

For many years BSBO flew just under the public radar. Conducting songbird migration research in the critical stopover habitats of the Lake Erie Marsh Region of Northwest Ohio, BSBO lacked the physical presence needed to connect with the public. We needed a home base to share the valuable information we were collecting about bird migration and the critical importance of conserving stopover habitat. Three years ago our prayers were answered when the Park Ranger Station, located just inside the entrance to the former Crane Creek State Park and Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, became available. Our first spring in the building really proved that old real estate saying, "Location! Location! Location"! However, location is only part of the equation. A building means nothing if what you offer from it is lacking.

BSBO has made the most of our fabulous location. In addition to the important research projects the Observatory continues to conduct, our education and outreach efforts burst onto the scene in a major way when we created the Ohio Young Birders Club (OYBC). Creating a community for young birders, age 12 - 18, the OYBC has become a model program for bird education for young people -- and the entire country is taking notice.

Our songbird banding and migration programs for local school children and the public help to create a more informed society and inspire participants with detailed information about the amazing feats tiny birds accomplish during migration. Combined with stunning, up-close looks at some of the world's most beautiful songbirds, these programs also help to inspire a greater sense of the importance of conserving the habitat migratory birds depend upon to make their incredible journeys successfully.

Our website offers a treasure trove of information and the associated pages, *Kim Kaufman's Best Bets for Birding the Crane Creek / Magee Region*, offers up-to-date, accurate, and informative insight into this world-class birding area. It's an exciting time to be part of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory. Please consider becoming part of the buzz! Join BSBO and OOS September 27th and 28th at

Maumee Bay Resort and Conference Center for the Lake Erie Raptor Seminar. Find out more about BSBO by calling 419-898-4070 or go to the BSBO website at <http://www.bsbobird.org>.

-Kim Kaufman
Education Director
Black Swamp Bird Observatory

SITE HIGHLIGHT: LAKE ERIE METROPARK

Got hawks? Lake Erie Metropark does. Recognized as one of the premier hawk viewing areas in North America, Lake Erie Metropark offers an unforgettable raptor watching experience in the fall. Located in Brownstown, Michigan, this 1,700 acre site is a 45 minute drive north of Toledo, Ohio. The Metroparks' unique location offers tremendous views of south bound raptors as they lose altitude crossing the Detroit River.

As raptors fly toward their southern destinations, away from their summer homes in eastern Canada, they either have to wing it east around Lake Ontario or west around Lake Erie. That's because the northern shore of both lakes block a direct passage south. The birds flying the western route are funneled along the northern shore of Lake Erie to the mouth of the Detroit River. These migrants make an appearance overhead near Pointe Mouille State Game Area and Lake Erie Metropark. A good day in September may bring more than 50,000 hawks: that's one reason Lake Erie Metropark is an Important Bird Area.

Many different types of raptors can be seen depending on the date you visit. Migration *is* dependent on weather conditions and timing. In September, you might observe large kettles of Broad-winged Hawks in groups of 3,000 or more. September is also known for migrating Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, and American Kestrels. Kettles of Turkey Vultures appear in October as well as Red-shouldered Hawks. November brings spectacular Golden Eagles.

Even on a slow hawk migration day, there is always good birding at Lake Erie Metropark. Park habitat includes lagoons, three miles of Lake Erie shoreline, and nine acres of American Lotus beds amid freshwater coastal marshes. Numerous species of waterfowl and shorebirds use this area as stopover habitat during spring and fall migration. Resident Bald Eagles and Ospreys are often observed in the vicinity.

I have never been disappointed anytime I have visited this wonderful area. Countless numbers of bird species

are always possible during the fall. I still remember the drizzly day one October that I witnessed streams and streams of migrating Blue Jays, American Crows, American Pipits, and Horned Larks just overhead—not many raptors that day, but certainly an unforgettable sight. Of course, the day I saw thousands of soaring Broad-winged Hawks stands out first and foremost, but each visit has its unique memories.

Lake Erie Metropark is definitely on my trip list this fall. I hope you'll add this one to your calendar and join the OOS the last weekend in September for the Lake Erie Raptor Symposium. Especially for our featured excursion on Sunday, September 28th to Lake Erie Metropark.

For more information: http://www.metroparks.com/parks/pk_lake_erie.php

- Karen Menard
Toledo

BRIAN WHEELER BOOK REVIEW

***Raptors of Eastern North America*, by Brian K. Wheeler. 2003. Princeton University Press. 439 pp. Available in cloth and paperback.**

***Raptors of Western North America*, by Brian K. Wheeler. 2003. Princeton University Press. 544 pp. Available in cloth and paperback.**

Brian Wheeler's companion volumes on the raptors of North America were published in Eastern and Western editions in 2003. Many birders and raptor aficionados quickly snapped up both books, but some found the combined purchase price of the two titles (nearly \$100 list price) a bit much, and didn't buy either book. Others simply bought the book that covered their home region: "I'll buy the other one when it's out in paperback" many reasoned. A year ago, the paperbacks arrived. The list price for each volume is \$29.95. Many online retailers offer the books at lower prices.

It's a mistake to assume a correlation between list price and author royalties. Wheeler was working full time as a truck driver during the years he researched, collected photos, and wrote these books. When he gave a talk in Cincinnati in fall 2004, he still had his day job, driving a truck for Kroger in Colorado. We birders might spend a lot of money on bird books, but that doesn't mean the authors are making a fortune.

Raptors of Western North America covers 33 species, versus 26 in *Raptors of Eastern North America*. Thriftier souls suggest birders should simply buy the Western book since the only eastern raptor not covered in the Western volume is Snail Kite. However, Wheeler's coverage splits North America (the U.S. and Canada, specifically) at the Mississippi River. Range maps and text pertaining to status and distribution, as well as migratory and other general movements are decidedly focused on either the western or eastern "view". So maybe you really want the Aplomado Falcon chapter, and though you live in Ohio, you buy the Western book. The range maps and text leave out, for the most part, any information concerning the eastern lives and haunts of raptors east of the Mississippi. Buying only the Western volume basically leaves unopened the other book on whatever Wheeler has to say about raptors in the east. And he's got a lot to say!

Here's what you *don't* get if you have the Eastern book but not the Western besides detailed western range maps and text on western status and distribution: California Condor, Hook-billed Kite, Common Blackhawk, Harris's Hawk, Gray Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, Zone-tailed Hawk, and Aplomado Falcon. There are a few other region-specific differences in treatment between the two volumes: no treatment of the "California" Red-shouldered Hawk in the Eastern book and nothing about the "South Florida" Red-shouldered in the Western book. Eastern-only buyers will have to go elsewhere for their "Fuertes" Red-tailed Hawk fix.

Likewise, the treatment of Peregrine Falcon in the Western book considers the "Peale's" subspecies, but the Eastern book does not.



The first reviewers of Wheeler's raptor books were united in their admiration for Wheeler's photographs. Princeton University Press, often awarded the black hat for first publishing books in the more expensive clothbound format, should be given credit for not skimping on production. Wheeler began this project initially with Academic Press and the books were supposed to be published in paperback.

Continued Page 6

Wheeler Book Review, Continued.

Before Wheeler had completed the books, Academic Press sold their natural history titles to Princeton University Press, which made the decision to publish hardbound copies of Wheeler's books.

I don't believe Princeton University Press's decision was out of greed; rather it's the habit of many university presses to publish cloth editions. The practice is better for library collections: more permanent, durable, and serious. But note Beadle and Rising's *Tanagers, Cardinals, and Finches of the United States and Canada*, also published by Princeton University Press, came out straight to paperback in 2006. Other ornithology titles on their list are also available in paperback. Perhaps PUP is adjusting to the field guide market?



American Kestrel-female

While the quality of the photos is praised, some quibble with Wheeler's approach to plumage and molt terminology and point out repetition in the two volumes. (See David Lukas's overall positive 2003 review in *Western Birds*, which is available online at <http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/wb/v34n04/p0252-p0253.pdf>).

There is some validity to such criticisms. Since many species are covered in both books, and many of the same photos are used in both volumes, there is a lot of repetition of photos and text. As an example, there are 82 Red-tailed Hawk photos in the Eastern book and 83 in the Western. Almost all the photos are shared. However, Wheeler's use of plumage and molt terminology seems consistent to me. Granted, it might seem consistently *wrong* to some readers, but in the context of Wheeler's species descriptions, I've never had trouble figuring out what he is trying to say. Throughout the books, key identification points are bolded for easier reference.

There aren't a lot of "here is a diagnostic field mark," moments. But could that be because when you discuss western and eastern forms of Red-tailed Hawk for example, what exactly *is* a simple, unchanging diagnostic field mark? Certainly not the red tail! Looked at from a broad perspective, the variability of many of our common, wide-

-ranging, polymorphic raptors creates challenges for student and expert, not to mention the author. To me, Wheeler's text is clear, consistent, and informative.

It is too bad those who own just one of the books have only half the full range maps for species on both sides of the Mississippi—that's saying something for the detail of the maps produced by John Economidy. Looking at the eastern range map for Golden Eagle, for example, one wants to see what the western range map looks like. The range maps strike me as being of similar quality and specificity as those prepared by Sue Tacket and Larry Rosche for Dunn and Garrett's *Warblers* field guide.

Field guide authors of tomorrow now have more headaches to deal with—ultra detailed range maps will be demanded by readers (and reviewers) of future books. "What do you mean you don't have a dot for that Bell's Vireo nest I found in southeastern Butler County in 2005 or in Hilliard in 2008?" someone may someday exclaim while paging through *The Photographic Guide to Drab Passerines of the U.S. and Canada*.

As Wheeler explains in his introduction (nearly identical in both books), the intention was to make regionally focused books on raptors. Granted, the eastern U.S. and Canada and the western U.S. and Canada are mighty big regions. But the text in the two books is significantly specific to the east/west to such an extent that readers in our region who "cheat" the dual format by buying *only* the Western volume are going to miss out on useful information. Does that mean I'm going to end this review like the standard *Birding* book review? That is, "despite the assorted objections, costs, and short comings etc., etc., every serious birder should have *[Fill in the blank]: The Identification Guide* on his or her shelf." No. It's not my business to tell anyone what to buy.

Having said that, I like *Raptors of Eastern North America* quite a lot, and I'm glad I bought it. It gets used often and has never gathered dust. While my life doesn't feel incomplete without the Western book, having borrowed it from a friend to write this article, and having paged through it for a few days, I have to admit, I might buy it someday. Especially, now that it's in paperback.

-Mike Busam
West Chester

Editor's Note: Brian Wheeler is known as illustrator, co-author and co-photographer of Peterson Field Guides: Hawks. Wheeler will be the keynote speaker for the Lake Erie Raptor Seminar in September. Online conference registration can be found on the OOS website at:

http://www.ohiobirds.org/calendar/society_events/current/raptors/raptors.php. Photos by permission Brian Wheeler.

MIDWEST BIRDING SYMPOSIUM

Mark your calendars and save the dates! Bird Watcher's Digest, in partnership with the Ohio Ornithological Society, is bringing back one of North America's premier birding festivals, the Midwest Birding Symposium. MBS is held every other year, and was last in the Buckeye State in 1999, when it attracted about 1,000 birders!

Planning is already in full swing to make this *the* North American birding event of the year. There will be plenty of well-known speakers, vendors galore, interesting field trips, and perhaps best of all, the opportunity to meet birders of all stripes from nearly everywhere imaginable.



The venue will be beautiful and serene Lakeside, Ohio, smack on the shore of Lake Erie on the scenic Marblehead Peninsula. Lakeside has an abundance of lodging for everyone, and excellent facilities to house a massive gathering of birders. Information about Lakeside can be found at: <http://www.lakesideohio.com/>

Save those dates, and watch future editions of this newsletter and the OOS website: <http://www.ohiobirds.org/> for more information.

BIRDER'S BIO: GREG MILLER

Today is June 6, 2008. Ten years ago I was doing a North American Big Year. On June 6, 1998 I was just finishing a one-week "layover" in Minnesota. I returned to my home in Maryland out of money, out of vacation, sick and exhausted. My list was at 611. But June, 1998 was a turning point in my Big Year: it was then I decided to go for 700.

A lot has changed since then. In 1998 a gallon of gas was a mere \$1.15 a gallon. A dozen eggs was 88 cents. The average home price was \$129,300. There was no Homeland Security. There were no iPods. Now you can get access to the Internet on a cell phone. Travel by air is more complicated: driving is far more expensive.

In 1998, I lived in Lusby, Maryland. Today I live in Sugarcreek, OH. Then I was a contract computer programmer working at Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant. Today I am a contract computer programmer for Timken (steel bearings) in Canton, OH.

In May of 2001, I was diagnosed with Leukemia (Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia). I spent over 100 days in the hospital during 2001. I was given a 50-50 chance of surviving beyond 5 years. I'm really happy to be on the good side of that statistic! I am in remission. Each day above ground and not in the hospital is a good day. Birding was a wonderful distraction during my recovery. It gave me focus during the dark times.

Things are better now, even though I don't get to bird as much as I used to. 2008 is the healthiest year I have enjoyed since years of chemotherapy. I am working out regularly now (for the first time since chemo) and attempting to lose some of the weight I put on during the inactive years.

I do occasionally work as a birding guide usually through Robert Hershberger of Time and Optics. My availability varies based on my contract work load. I have to work at something that pays more than birding since I am now a high health risk and my health insurance is very expensive. But that's ok. Being alive sure beats the alternative.

Breaking 700 species in North America in one year is still possible, even without a trip to Attu. It still requires a lot of luck, good planning, and even more money now than before. Technology has come a long way and more information is available than ever before. I did my 1998 Big Year without a laptop or a cell phone. It's easier now to learn bird songs than ever before with a huge selection of mp3 players and an abundance of available recordings.

Continued on page 8

I have much for which to be thankful.

Since 1998 (and even after 2001) I have done big days, big Januarys, big years in Ohio, and gone on many bird chases. Much of my birding during the cancer recovery years is due to the help of the Columbus Avids and especially Dan Sanders and Doreene Linzell. Dan and Doreene selflessly carted me around Ohio and took me on chase trips all over the country when I was quite incapable of doing things on my own.

What does the future hold? I don't know. For 2008 I am focusing on my health. I am doing what I can to overcome my current giants: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, sleep apnea, and acid reflux. When I feel these are under better control, I may do more aggressive birding again. For now, I am content to observe birds with a curious mind and learn their habits, plumages, and songs better.

-Greg Miller
Sugarcreek

Editor's Note: *Greg Miller is a former OOS Board member. He is one of three birder's profiled in Mark Obnascik's "The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession".*

MOHICAN 4TH ANNUAL OOS CONFERENCE

"Sound The Alarm" was the *unofficial* theme of the OOS's Fourth Annual Conference held May 16th-18th at Mohican State Forest. Alarms included an *actual* alarm (malfunction of the Mohican Resort & Conference Center warning system causing evacuation of the entire lodge just before daybreak Sunday), and several *figurative* alarms including a caveat on startling declines in avian species (Dana Bollin's lecture "Bird Populations and Climate Change: Consequences and Conservation"), a proviso on nature deficit disorder in children (Bill Thompson III's "No Child Left Inside"), and message on understanding the cultural disconnect between people of color and nature (Dudley Edmondson's "A Photographer's Visit to Nome, Alaska").

Friday evening started off with a somber topic: population decline in birds. Dana Bollin's excellent presentation about global climate change focused on at-risk birds including migratory species, mountain-dwelling populations, wetland obligates, birds endemic to islands, Arctic & Antarctic nesters, and seabirds. Dana's talk included take-home conservation suggestions for everyone to implement in their own lives and

yards to counter potential impact of human-caused global climate change.

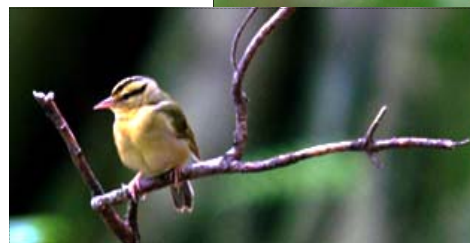
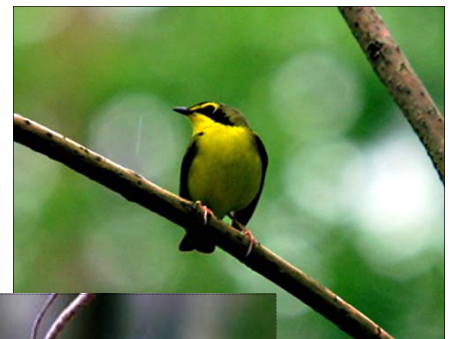
Bill Thompson III's Saturday afternoon talk offered advice on countering nature deficit disorder in children. Bill gave examples from his own life such as making his son the "scout" on family hikes.

Saturday night's keynote speaker, photographer Dudley Edmondson, said his introduction to the natural world occurred during family outings to Hoover Reservoir near Westerville. Dudley says his younger self was rescued by nature during these forays. As an adult, he consciously merged his artistic talents with his love of the outdoors. For nearly 20 years, his global photography career has allowed him to integrate nature's restorative properties into a daily mantra. Dudley closed his presentation with excerpts from his book *The Black and Brown Faces in America's Wild Places: African Americans Making Nature and the Environment a Part of Their Everyday Lives*.

Best of all, nearly 115 people had an *alarmingly* productive weekend collectively finding almost 140 species in the vicinity of Mohican State Forest, enjoying the companionship of fellow birders, making new friends, dining at the lodge, drinking in the beauty of the area, celebrating Tom Bain's conservation work as the recipient of the annual Wood Duck Award, making purchases from a variety of vendors, and gaining inspiration from speakers through their messages, photographs, and life stories.

For more conference information, follow this link to Jim McCormac's blog at:

http://jimccormac.blogspot.com/2008_05_01_archive.html



Field trip highlights: Kentucky Warbler & Worm-eating Warbler singing and perched. Photos courtesy Ernie Cornelius.

OBBA II AT OOS CONFERENCE

This year, during the 4th annual OOS meeting, the Saturday morning field trips had an added twist: a contest with the promise of fabulous prizes for the winners. Each field trip leader was given an OBBA atlas card and groups were encouraged to record confirmed breeding of as many species as possible.

The winning list was submitted by Ethan Kistler, co-leader of the Killbuck/Funk Bottoms trip. In addition to confirming 20 species, Ethan and his group found a Brown Creeper nest which is typically located behind loose bark on a dead tree. Ethan won a Great Crested Flycatcher nest box and his three co-leaders received chickadee/wren nest boxes.

Next in line was the list provided by Jim McCormac, co-leader of the Mohican Outdoor School trip. His group tallied 11 confirmed species including some open-area species such as Tree Swallow and the dreaded House Sparrow (yes, introduced species count).

The trips to the dense woods of Mohican State Park had the fewest confirmed breeders (4-9 per group). However, some groups found uncommon and hard-to-confirm birds. Notable confirmations included Belted Kingfisher, Blue-headed Vireo, Veery, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Scarlet Tanager. Many specialty birds of the area, including territorial Canada, Blackburnian, and Worm-eating Warblers, were observed though breeding could not be confirmed.

OOS has been a sponsor of the second Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas (OBBA II) since its inception in 2006 (see the OBBA II web site <http://www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/>).

-Janet Duerr
Athens



More trip highlights: Swainson's Thrush and Northern Long-eared bat at Mohican Gorge during bat-banding demos by Merrill Tawse, bat researcher. Photos courtesy Jim McCormac.

OOS CONSERVATION FUND UPDATE

In just four years, the OOS has raised over \$42,000 from donations and fund raisers to support avian conservation, education, and research projects. Your generosity has funded research into Cerulean Warblers, Northern Saw-whet Owls, and rails. OOS has shared profits with many partners including the Ohio Young Birder's Club, Friends of Cedar Bog, the Kirtland Bird Club, the Toledo Naturalists' Society, Holden Arboretum, and the Black Swamp Bird Observatory. Our largest endeavor was a \$10,000 grant to The Nature Conservancy that provided a Clean Ohio Program match to purchase the Conrad track, an important addition to The Edge of Appalachia Preserve.

Our latest project is a partnership with American Electric Power and the Wilds: we're placing American Kestrel nest boxes and raptor perches throughout AEP's ReCreation Lands and The Wilds in Muskingum County.



American Kestrel nest box.
Photo courtesy Craig Rieker.

Even more money was added to the fund in May at Mohican State Park. Saturday afternoon at the 2008 OOS Annual Conference, Bill Thompson III gave a lively talk featuring his new book, "The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of Eastern North America." Most importantly, he focused on the need to encourage kids to become Ohio's future birders. During his talk Bill put up \$250.00 and Bird Watcher's Digest, of which Bill is editor, provided another \$250.00 to create an OOS Young Birder's Fund. He then passed the hat to garner further support to this endeavor.

Well, how did the OOS membership respond to Bill's hat-passing at our annual conference? We matched his donation, adding a total of \$1,002 to our combined Conservation Fund, which now totals nearly \$31,000! Be assured the OOS will continue to use your donations for worthy projects supporting our birds and their habitat, as well as the interests of the birding community.

-Peter King
OOS Treasurer
Westerville

DUDLEY INSPIRES STUDENTS AT MANSFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mansfield Middle School children ventured to the arctic and beyond during a special presentation in mid-May to inspire young birders. Dudley Edmondson, nature photographer and author, presented programs to four classes of kids as an educational outreach with Greater Mohican Audubon Society. These programs were sponsored by a gift from The Richland County Foundation to encourage interest in outdoor activities.



Dudley Edmondson photo courtesy Cheryl Harner.

The image of a Great Grey Owl suspended in mid-air captured the audience's attention, while a particularly photogenic Red-throated Loon brought audible approval from the youngsters. Edmondson said "I talk to students because I want them to know it is not scary to venture outdoors, and that nature belongs to them, and they need to protect it." Originally from Columbus, Ohio, Edmondson has traveled extensively throughout the United States as a freelance photographer.

As keynote speaker for the OOS Fourth Annual Conference, Edmondson presented images from the wild, including birds, previously featured in numerous publications and on his website www.raptorworks.com. A portion of his program included audio excerpts of interviews from his 2006 book, *Black and Brown Faces in America's Wild Places: African Americans Making Nature and the Environment a Part of Their Everyday Lives*. Dudley awed the local youth and conference participants, alike. All of Dudley's additional travel expenses were covered by the Ohio Ornithological Society.

*-Cheryl Harner
Mansfield*

BIRD POPULATIONS AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: CONSEQUENCES & CONSERVATION

Dana Bollin's lecture at the OOS Fourth Annual Meeting was a spellbinding combination of photos, maps, and sobering predictions for avian population declines related to global climate change. We invite you to link to the OOS website: www.ohiobirds.org/webextras/0807_bollin.pdf for a web-extra to read a condensed version of her spoken presentation.

Here's an excerpt of her excellent talk: "As the vast boreal forests of Canada shift in composition from evergreens to deciduous trees, boreal birds will suffer. Gray Jay populations have declined as much as 60% along the southern portion of their range. Known for their omnivorous diet, Gray Jays will eat seeds, berries, beetles and other insects, eggs, nestlings and carrion. Prolific hoarders, they will mix bits of food with saliva and stash these morsels by the hundreds for retrieval during winter and early spring. Researchers attribute declining Jay numbers to rotting food caches and a subsequent inability of adults to feed their young."

Editor's Note: *Dana Bollin is an OOS board member and a naturalist at Maumee Bay State Park.*

"ICE HUNTER" TO SPEAK AT AUDUBON ASSEMBLY

Dr. Lonnie Thompson, member of the International Panel on Climate Change, will be the keynote speaker at the Audubon Ohio 2008 State Assembly on Saturday night, October 18th in Bellville, Ohio. Dr. Thompson, Ohio State University Distinguished Professor Geologic Sciences, was awarded the 2007 National Medal of Science. Dubbed "The Ice Hunter" by Rolling Stone Magazine, Thompson is a Senior Research Scientist at the Byrd Polar Research Center. Thompson's research focuses on searching glacial ice, including Mt. Kilimanjaro, for clues to global warming with the use of new technologies in the emerging science of paleoclimatology. Ice cores reaching back 700,000 years have allowed researchers to study a frozen library of Earth's climate.

Audubon Ohio is partnering with OOS, Black Swamp Bird Observatory, and the Greater Mohican Audubon Society for the weekend of activities October 18th and 19th. Other speakers include Ted Eubanks, founder and president of consulting firm Fermata, Inc. which promotes nature-based tourism including the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail, and blogger Sharon Stuteler a.k.a. the "Birdchick". Link to the Audubon Ohio website for additional information: <http://oh.audubon.org/>



MEMBERS' CORNER

Thank you for your donations!

We would like to thank and acknowledge the following members who have given generous donations. These donations have been deposited into the Ohio Ornithological Society's Conservation & Education Fund. These funds will be used towards promoting conservation, education and research of Ohio's avifauna. Thank you!

Anonymous	William Hull	Suzanne Kral	Albert Troyer
Nancy Brundage	Catherine Hunziker	Carolyn May	Susan Walker
Dansen & Leanne Brown	Randy Jones & Leslie Warren	Robert Odon	Dorinda Whitsett
Deborah Fafrak	Peter King	Don Plant	Maureen Wootton
Henry Fortlage	Ethan Kistler	Alan & Marjorie Poorman	
Bob Hopp		Robert Powell	

Welcome New Members!

We would like to welcome our new members who have joined us since our last issue:

Akron Summit County Library	Christopher Grimm	Donna Murrey	Tim & Carrie Tolford
Michael Bailey	Olga Harbour	Ronald Myers	Rufus Troyer
Jeff Brown	Catherine Hunziker	Caryn Neumann	James Vogus
Randy Centner	Jan & Gary Kennedy	Patricia Callis Nicholson	Don & Pat Voydanoff
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Bill Fisher	Diana & John Malas	Laura Simms &	
Arthur Foreman, Sr.	Ned McMillen	Nancy Stemmer	
Virginia Gielow	Dr. Scott Moody	Ruth Tkacz	

OOS Calendar of Events!

Lake Erie Raptor Seminar: Maumee Bay State Park: September 27-28, 2008

Join The Ohio Ornithological Society and our partner Black Swamp Bird Observatory for an interesting event that's all about birds of prey and their incredible fall passages around western Lake Erie. We'll have an interesting and expert slate of speakers, capped by keynote speaker Brian Wheeler. Brian is author of Peterson Field Guides®: *Hawks* and *A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*. He is one of North America's foremost authorities on raptors, and is an outstanding photographer. Field trips will include a visit to Lake Erie Metropark in nearby Michigan where late September raptor migrations can be phenomenal.

Midwest Birding Symposium: Lakeside, Ohio: September 17 -20, 2009

Save the date for The Midwest Birding Symposium sponsored by The Ohio Ornithological Society & Bird Watcher's Digest to be held at Lakeside, Ohio. Keep your eyes peeled to The Ohio Ornithological Society's and Bird Watcher's Digest web site for announcements!

Ohio Ornithological Society Membership Application

For an online version of this application visit: www.ohiobirds.org/join.php



Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

(For electronic news updates)

\$ _____ Donation Amount - Yes I would like to make a one-time donation to help support OOS.

\$ _____ Membership Dues.

\$ _____ Total Payment Enclosed (Please make checks payable to OOS.)

How did you hear of OOS? _____

Are you interested in:

Volunteering? Distributing OOS flyers within your club or community?

- \$15 Student/Limited Income
- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Family or Nonprofit
- \$100 Patron or Business
- \$250 Sustaining Member
- \$500 Benefactor
- \$1,000 Lifetime Benefactor

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OUR MISSION . . .
Welcoming backyard birdwatchers and researchers in the field alike, the Ohio Ornithological Society is the only statewide organization specifically devoted to fostering a deeper appreciation of wild birds, fellowship and collaboration in advancing our collective knowledge about them, and our ability to speak with one voice to preserve Ohio's bird habitats.

THE OHIO ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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