



THE CERULEAN

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www.ohiobirds.org info@ohiobirds.org

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



**THE OHIO CARDINAL:
TWO ISSUES COMING SOON!**

From the EDITOR



The Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II is getting bigger and better: OBBA II is extending through 2011. New atlasers are *still* needed.

Info: www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/. You can contribute data by phone (614-247-6458), hard copy, fax (614-292-7432) or internet.

Previous atlasers of “owned” blocks with few or no records are asked to get started this spring: please don’t wait until 2011 to begin. If you have sightings to report, please submit data from all past years by February 28 so atlasers, regional coordinators, and OBBA administrators can devise a 2010 plan.

Please talk to your bird club about organizing group field outings (block busting) in June and July: this contributes greatly to atlas data. Please contact OBBAII to have OBBAII speak at your bird or nature club.

Get some early season birding in: start your atlasing season now. OBBAII needs records of Great Horned and Barred Owls. American Woodcock are just around the corner!

A detailed update on OBBAII progress and plan for 2010 will be included in the spring issue of *The Cerulean*. Plus, you’ll meet new OBBAII Coordinator/Research Associate Matthew Shumar. Matt is taking over for Aaron Boone who has relocated to Illinois.

Ann Oliver, Editor of *The Cerulean*
-Cincinnati

As many subscribers have noticed, *The Ohio Cardinal* has fallen behind schedule. The last issue mailed was Spring 2008, Volume 31 Number 3. A color image of a Summer Tanager photographed by Robert Royse graced the cover when it arrived in members’ mailboxes in the early fall of 2008.

The blame for falling behind schedule falls on me as Editor: I apologize for the backlog. I had a major family matter where I grew up in East Tennessee keeping me from work and projects for several months in early 2009. As a result, all of my endeavors, including *The Ohio Cardinal*, were put on hold in early 2009: I am only now getting back to a semblance of my prior normal schedule.

The content for Summer and Fall 2008 is in hand, and I have nearly finished editing these issues. Both should be submitted to the printer in the next few weeks, and mailed to subscribers several weeks afterwards. I hope to be back on track soon.

Please keep *The Ohio Cardinal* in mind as you think about rare sightings, unusual behaviors, books you would like to review, or trends in Ohio’s bird life that you have documented: articles on these topics and more are welcome additions to the journal. Please visit the OOS website for guidelines for contributions: www.ohiobirds.org/publications/cardinal/aboutcardinal.php.

Dr. Andy Jones, Editor of *The Ohio Cardinal*
-Cleveland

Editor’s Note: Andy Jones Ph.D. is the William A. and Nancy R. Klamm Endowed Chair and Head of the Department of Ornithology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. *The Ohio Cardinal* is a quarterly journal of Ohio’s bird observations and a seasonal record of the abundance and distribution of Ohio’s regular and rare avifauna.



WATERFOWL SYMPOSIUM: FEBRUARY 26-28

Walk, swim, fly, or waddle your way to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center (GIAC) this February. The Ohio Ornithological Society, partnering with Columbus Audubon (CA), will present a Waterfowl Symposium, the weekend of February 26-28, 2010 at GIAC along the Whittier Peninsula in downtown Columbus.

Through lectures and speakers, we'll travel to the marshes of Iraq, visit the breeding grounds of the Arctic, fly above the stopover habitat of Lake Erie, and look inside nests to learn about the secret life of waterfowl. **Just \$80 for the entire weekend (Friday-Sunday) if you are an OOS or CA/GIAC member. Register now: limited space.**



Spectacled Eider. Photo Courtesy Dr. Gwen Myers.

The weekend swings into action Friday evening with a performance by *The Swinging Orangutangs* featuring Julie Zickefoose, Bill Thompson III, and musical friends. The event is a special fundraiser for Nature Iraq. Question: will they play "Disco Duck"? Bring your dancing shoes, leave your hiking boots in the vehicle, and find out! We'll serve beer, wine, and appetizers including a taste of the Middle East. Also, take a behind the scenes tour of the green-

design, LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) GIAC building while admiring the downtown Columbus lights. **Bring a friend or guest Friday night for a \$10 donation.**

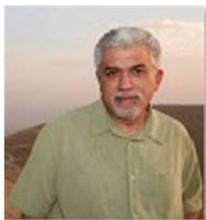


The Swinging Orangutangs rocked the casbah between sets on New Year's Eve in the Moroccan Theatre at Villa Devola. From left: Jessica Baldwin, Julie Zickefoose, Andy Hall, Bill Thompson III, Clay Paschal, Vincenzo Mele. Photo courtesy Bill Thompson, III.

the scenes tour of the green-

design, LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) GIAC building while admiring the downtown Columbus lights. **Bring a friend or guest Friday night for a \$10 donation.**

Saturday's line-up includes a day of great speakers. We're honored to present Dr. Azzam Alwash, the Chief Executive Officer of Nature Iraq, as our keynote speaker Saturday evening. Alwash, and NI's efforts to restore the critical Iraqi wetlands and marshes drained by



Dr. Azzam Alwash. Photo courtesy Nature Iraq.

Saddam Hussein, were featured on CBS's "60 Minutes" in November. But folks in Ohio have long known about the good works of Dr. Alwash and efforts to restore the Mesopotamian marshes deemed a Ramsar wetland site of international importance. Dr. Alwash, who fled Iraq in 1978, now divides his time between his work in Baghdad, his family in Southern California, and speaking internationally about the environmental issues of his homeland. As you may recall, CA's Randy Rogers, while serving with the Ohio Army National Guard in Iraq, mobilized an armada of support for Iraqi environmentalists and ornithologists through his fundraising efforts on behalf of Nature Iraq. Randy also provided NI his crucial bird sightings from the Al Asad Air Base.



CORNELL LAB of ORNITHOLOGY



Jessie Barry and Chris Wood. Photo courtesy Eric Liner, Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Two speakers from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will join us. Jessie Barry, the Assistant Curator of the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds, will share "The Secret Life of Ducks" highlighting fascinating and unique waterfowl life history traits through photos, audio, and video of courtship displays.

Learn more about evolutionary adaptations, intriguing natural history, and the role waterfowl play in wetland conservation. Also from Cornell, Mr. eBird himself, Chris Wood, will talk about the roles bird-watchers can play in tracking duck populations to ultimately better conserve species. Wood is the project leader for Cornell's eBird database and a tour leader for the birdwatching tour company WINGS.



Legendary birder, author, and duck stamp supporter Paul Baicich, will share the inside scoop on 75 years of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, better known as

Duck Stamps. More than \$750 million dollars has been raised since 1934 in Duck Stamp sales supporting 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge system. Thank a hunter or stamp collector next time you see one!



Spectacled Eider. Photo courtesy Dr. Gwen Myers.

Dr. Gwen Myers, Associate Veterinarian from The Columbus Zoo & Aquarium, will share research on Spectacled Eiders. Keith Lott, Ohio Division of Wildlife, will reveal what's currently being discovered about concentrations of migratory waterbirds during Lake Erie aerial surveys and how the future installation of wind turbines might be effected.

Early Saturday morning before the lectures, take a stroll on the grounds of GIAC/ Scioto-Audubon Metro Park, an Audubon Important Bird Area, with Jim McCormac. Throughout the day, visit the GIAC gift shop and explore more "green" design features of GIAC. The nature-based education center has three nature-themed classrooms, passive solar design, vegetated "green" roofs, a ground source geothermal HVAC system (geothermal wells), rain-collecting roof and native rain gardens, permeable paving, and special parking for fuel efficient vehicles!



Grange Insurance Audubon Center, Columbus. Photo courtesy Ann Oliver.

Sunday morning, we'll travel independently to Central Ohio's reservoirs, rivers, and ponds including Hoover Reservoir, Deer Creek Wildlife Area, Pickerington Ponds, Slate Run Metropark, the immediate vicinity of GIAC (the Grange-Scioto River area and Green Lawn Cemetery), and more! Details on field trips in registrations packets at the symposium.

You have two options for registration:

- 1.) online through the Columbus Audubon website, (www.columbusaudubon.org/), or
- 2.) paper "mail-in" registration through our OOS website via a downloadable registration form (www.ohiobirds.org/index.php). We've negotiated with **Hampton Inn South** (Stringtown Rd. Exit off I-71) for a group rate: please mention "WATERFOWL SYMPOSIUM" when making your reservation to receive the symposium rate. Lodging details on the OOS and CA websites.



LOST BIRD PROJECT EXHIBIT AT GIAC

GIAC is host to a sculpture installation called "Lost Bird Project" by Cornell art professor Todd McGrain. The exhibit laments the extinct Great Auk, Passenger Pigeon, Heath Hen, and Carolina Parakeet through larger-than-life, six-foot tall bronze versions. Because the last Passenger Pigeon died in Ohio in 1914, the artist will allow the bronze Passenger Pigeon to remain on permanent display at GIAC after the exhibit closes. Information: toddmcgrain.com/



GIAC Lobby: Lost Bird Project. Photo courtesy Ann Oliver.



WATERFOWL SYMPOSIUM SUNDAY FIELD TRIP SITES

At the Waterfowl Symposium, there are several options for Sunday birding. Experts with scopes will be in the field at each central Ohio location. Details in registration packets. Success with waterfowl contingent upon amount of open water available!

- Alum Creek Reservoir:** The largest, deepest reservoir in the Columbus area: especially attractive to diving ducks. Large rafts sometimes congregate in the largest part of the reservoir, above the dam, and interesting fowl sometimes are found in the rapids of the dam outflow. The largely undeveloped surrounding lands make for good terrestrial birding.
- Big Island/Killdeer Plains Wildlife Areas:** These two massive remnants of the former Sandusky Plains wet prairie are full of wetlands, and attract tremendous numbers of waterfowl.
- Dawes Arboretum:** One of Ohio's premier botanical showcases: sprawling grounds also feature large, recently restored wetlands. If there is open water in these shallow wetlands, a diversity of dabbling ducks should be present. The diverse array of habitats ensures a variety of interesting land birds.
- Deer Creek Wildlife Area:** A 4,000+ acre wildlife area surrounds Deer Creek Reservoir and many habitats for waterfowl occur here. Deep lake

waters attract mergansers and divers: shallow marshlands can produce dabblers. Lots of other interesting birds are possible – everything from gulls to sparrows.

Delaware Wildlife Area: Mixed-emergent marshes attract scores of dabbling ducks and the reservoir produces lots of divers.

Greenlawn Dam/Green Lawn Cemetery: Behind the Grange Insurance Audubon Center is the mighty Scioto River, bowed out at this point by a dam. Waterfowl can be fabulous at this wide spot in the river, and rarities such as scoters and Long-tailed Duck sometimes turn up. To the west along Greenlawn Avenue is historic Green Lawn Cemetery, central Ohio’s fabled birding hotspot. It isn’t known for waterfowl, but is great for all manner of other birds from sapsuckers to Merlins.

Hoover Reservoir: Located just north of Columbus, Hoover ranks high among area waterfowl magnets. The rushing waters of the dam’s outlet often have dabblers and divers, easily studied at close range, and the pool above the dam often offers sensational waterfowling. Big numbers of Hooded Mergansers often occur, and scoters and other rarities often put in appearances.

Pickerington Ponds Metro Park: This park offers the largest restored wetlands acreage in Franklin County: shallow marshes can be full of wigeon, teal, pintail, and other dabblers in early spring. A large lake, Ellis Pond, also is on the property and often has diving ducks.

Slate Run Metro Park: Another crown jewel of Columbus-area metro parks: features extensive restored wetlands that can be hopping with waterfowl in late winter/early spring. The park also contains other habitats, from open fields to old woods, so quite an overall bird list can be compiled here.

Stage’s Pond: This site is within a few miles of Circleville. Stage’s Pond is a state nature preserve featuring a large kettle lake that attracts many divers and dabblers in migration.

Each attendee must provide their own *transportation: carpooling is encouraged*. Maps will be provided at the symposium. More information on field trip locations on the OOS website:

<http://www.ohiobirds.org/birdingsites/about.php>

Jim McCormac
-Columbus

RHINOS AND ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS: OOS AT THE WILDS



Date: January 16, 2010

Place: Muskingum County, Ohio

Temperature: 52 Degrees (not a typo!)

OOS members and friends enjoyed balmy weather and frequent sightings of Rough-legged Hawks during the Fifth Annual *Wilds* Winter Raptor Extravaganza. The spring-like 52 degrees was actually 64 degrees *warmer than last years’ low* when the thermometer indicated 12 below zero! If it’s warm at the *Wilds* in January, global warming must be real.

Golden Eagle was seen by several participants. But the true “golden” child of the day was this young African White Rhino, just 2 1/2 months old. A behind the scenes



White Rhino romping in an outdoor compound at the *Wilds*. Photo courtesy Emie Cornelius.



Up close and personal with the rhinos. Photo courtesy Emie Cornelius.

tour of the massive rhino compound was enjoyed by all, especially the rhinos themselves, who seemed fond of being scratched in their skin folds. Many thanks to the *Wilds*!

OHIO’S NEW LICENSE PLATE AND WILDLIFE STAMP



Ohioans now have two more ways to protect Ohio’s 134 state nature preserves. The new Nature Preserves license

plate features a purple coneflower and monarch butterfly. Fifteen dollars of the cost goes to educational and environmental programs.

Sales of the inaugural Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp will support habitat restoration, land purchases, conservation easements, research, and protection for endangered and threatened species. Sales begin March 1.



Photo of a Baltimore Oriole was the winning entry for the first Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp contest sponsored by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife. The inaugural \$15 stamp goes on sale March 1. www.dnr.state.oh.us/Home/ExperienceWildlifeSubHomePage/ohiowildlifelegacystamp/tabid/21476/Default.aspx. Photo courtesy Russell Reynolds.

OHIO BIG YEAR: EMIL BACIK, GABE LEIDY, AND DAN SANDERS HIT 300 GOAL

Part I: Gabe Leidy Tells Of Adventure

After not ‘officially’ attempting a January Century List, my tally on January 30, 2009 was 99 species. The next day, Emil Bacik and I relocated a hen Wood Duck on the Cuyahoga River — # 100 for me and # 109 for Emil (Mo, as most call him).



January: White-winged Crossbill, Lake Co. Photo courtesy G. Leidy.

I’d been kicking around the idea of doing a Big Year for a while. In 2008, I tallied 286 species. It was the combination of the early success in January of ‘09 and the tally from ‘08 that spurred me to declare I was going to give an Ohio Big Year a shot. Mo announced he was in, adding he was going to kick my butt. And so it was on...

The early months (Jan-Mar) were spent birding around northeast Ohio. The first major trip of the year came April 4 to Jefferson County in search of the elusive *Corvus corax*: we located a single Common Raven early in the afternoon and stood enraptured as it circled, hoarsely croaking.

As spring migration picked up, Mo stood a serious advantage—freshly retired, he was free to bird and chase every day. The vast majority of our weekend trips were spent together. At the end of springtime, our only serious misses were Ruffed Grouse and Brewer’s Blackbird. While we didn’t make much effort for the grouse, we did comb many a flock of blackbirds and pick through a few thousand Rusties



April: Golden-crowned Sparrow in Findlay. Photo courtesy G. Leidy.



Worm-eating Warbler, Magee Marsh. Photo courtesy G. Leidy.

in northwest Ohio to no avail. I also missed a Black-necked Stilt at Benton-Carroll Road when I pulled out of Magee, and assumed the crowd was gawking at yellowlegs and Dunlin, only to return home and read of the stilt on the internet!

In late May, my girlfriend and I drove to Myrtle Beach, and I parlayed a 4 AM stop for Chuck-will’s -widow into the trip. My girlfriend thinks I’m a nut! Mo and I had planned a route together to knock out some summer specialties, though ended up taking the trip separately: Upland Sandpiper, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Bell’s Vireo, Blue Gros-

beak, and Dickcissel. The itinerary had stops at Mansfield Airport, Bexley, Hilliard, and Charlie’s Pond. As summer wound down, we turned to serious shorebirding, knowing we needed to knock out all 34 routine Ohio shorebirds. Luckily, Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area turned out to be a gold mine and we had no misses in this category come late August.



Sunrise at Pickerel Creek: rightmost bird is a Red-necked Phalarope. Photo courtesy G. Leidy.

During September-October, new species continued: Nelson’s and Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Red Phalarope, Olive-sided Flycatcher. More surprises included a Yellow Rail in Amish Country and a wonderful Vermillion Flycatcher at Headlands Beach State Park. Undoubtedly the year’s highlight came October 17: arriving at Huron Pier before dawn, we headed to the



Amish Country Yellow Rail. Photo courtesy G. Leidy.



Juvenile Sabine’s Gull. Photo courtesy G. Leidy.

lighthouse. Mo found a juvenile Sabine’s Gull on the beach, barely visible in the darkness. We waited for dawn, took photos, and watched as the bird headed eastward, out of sight.

In early November, I attended the first BSBO Lake Erie Pelagic, adding Black-legged Kittiwake and Parasitic Jaeger. Mo and I headed westward to uron and back east through Lorain most weekend days, hoping to pick up lakefront species. During the week, Emil often birded with Jerry Talkington in the Headlands area. Jerry had # 298 for the year.

In conclusion, Mo tallied 306 species and myself, 303. I could have added Say’s Phoebe and Golden Eagle, but was content. Innumerable thanks to those adept birders who post sightings on the Ohio-birds listserve (birdingonthe.net/maillinglists/OHIO.html), the Bobolink RBA, and RareBird.org (www.rarebird.org/forum/default.asp), as well as those who called us when needed birds were seen.

Editor’s Note: Gabe Leidy is the OOS Northeast Regional Director. He compiles the Ohio Statewide Rare Bird Report on birdingonthe.net. Gabe resides in Cleveland, Ohio.

Ohio Big Year, Continued on Page 6

Part II: Dan Sanders' Big Year & Goals

I've actually reached "two" major Ohio goals this year: 1) 300 or more in a single year, and 2) 350 species for my Ohio life list. I didn't anticipate reaching Ohio's magic 300 species number as I was away for almost three months during three trips out of the country (Panama, Costa Rica, and Peru). But this was an *exceptional* year for Ohio listing, something you never know in advance. I've always said to have a shot at 300 for the year, you need at least 250 by the end of May: I was at 262.

During the last 15 years (since retirement in 1994), the number of my Ohio "year" bird totals has ranged from 250 species in 1995 to 301 species in 2009. I have been in the 290's four times and have averaged in the mid-280's over this 15-year time period.

Ohio 2009 life birds were Common Raven, Smith's Longspur, Allen's Hummingbird, and White Winged Dove (#300 for 2009), seen on December 26th near Shreve, in Holmes County. The slightly earlier Allen's Hummingbird was # 350 on my Ohio life list, and the WW Dove was # 351. I also added one more species for this year (total of 301), a first-cycle California Gull at the Avon Lake Power Plant, on December 30th.



A December White-winged Dove in Holmes County was Ohio Big Year bird #300 for Dan Sanders. Photo courtesy G. Leidy.

Why list? It's important to set high goals, and meeting these goals will require you get out "in the field" regularly every month of the year. This combination will make anyone a better birder.

Other "Big" efforts include a number of Ohio "Big Days": the biggest was 286 species in mid-May with Bernie Master and Jim McCormac several years ago. Another memorable year was my 2005 ABA Big Year, when I traveled far and wide, north of the Mexican border, and identified 715 different bird species in a year.

Other birding goals: I'd love to identify 800 or more bird species during my lifetime in the ABA Area: I recently saw # 797 at Bentson State Park, TX; a Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (opposite).

Dan Sanders, OOS Central Regional Director
-Powell

Q & A WITH RICK NIRSCHL: A RARE BIRD & RARE PERSON!

Uber-birder Rick Nirschl divides his time between his residence in Ohio and the Lone Star State as a Winter Texan (December through March). But Rick can't escape from Ohioans, or great birds.



Photo courtesy Hans Bister.

What did you do before retirement?

I was a math teacher in Temperance, MI. I started birding in 1972, that's 37 years of birding.

Why winter in Texas? The Rio Grande Valley is a great place because of the variety of birds as well as the abundance of butterflies and dragonflies. There is a tropical feel...Green Jays, Buff-bellied Hummingbirds, Tropical Parula, and more. What I miss about Texas when I'm back in Ohio are the exotic dragonflies that occur during the spring and summer, but the brutal summer heat might take some of the enjoyment out of it! I return to Ohio in early April because I love birding Magee in the spring, Oak Openings in the summer, and Shawnee State Park.

You've put in a lot of time as a volunteer in Texas. I became a volunteer naturalist at Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park two years ago. I help visitors find and identify birds, dragonflies, and butterflies. I also help with any walks on the schedule. John Yokum, from northwest Ohio, used to work as a naturalist at Bentsen but he is now at Estero Llano Grande SP. Great guy.

You can't seem to escape from your fellow birders from the Buckeye State.... It's funny how I met some Ohio birders for the first time, not in Ohio but in Texas. My first winter in Texas, there was a major irruption of Mexican species into the valley and birders were coming from all over: one morning I drove to Los Ebanos to look for a Golden-crowned Warbler and was greeted by the only other birders there that morning... Bill Whan, Dan Sanders, and three others who had driven non-stop to Texas. About a week later, I sat down next to a couple at Frontera Audubon, introduced myself, and met Rob and Sandy Harlan for the first time!

Big discovery? Rick Snider and I found a potential North American bird species, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron at Bentsen on December 21, 2009. Pretty exciting stuff.



First ABA area Bare-throated Tiger Heron discovered at Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park by R. Nirschl and Rick Snider on December 21, 2009. Photo courtesy R. Nirschl.

TNA NAMES KIM KAUFMAN "2009 NATURALIST OF YEAR"

At their annual fall banquet, The Toledo Naturalists' Association honored Kim Kaufman as 2009 "Naturalist of the Year". The award cited her prior work monitoring Bald Eagles, banding tens of thousands of songbirds, surveys of waterbirds and butterflies, and educational outreach to people (especially young people) about birds and nature. Kim says "the award represents the great teamwork at BSBO rather than any individual's accomplishments".



Kim Kaufman and Mike Gordan, TNA President. Kim is holding an original Ann Geise painting of a Bald Eagle: TNA gave Kim the artwork in honor of her award and the thousands of hours she performed observing and monitoring Bald Eagle nests. Photo courtesy BSBO.

Editor's Note: Rick Nirschl was the recipient of the 2008 TNA Naturalist of the Year award.

NED KELLER: DOWNY WOODPECKER IN CLEVER DISGUISE?

If Ned Keller were a bird, he might be a Downy Woodpecker. Many ornithologists unleashed glowing tributes to the Downy Woodpecker. Audubon said: "(it) is perhaps not surpassed by any of its tribe in hardiness, industry, or vivacity". Alexander Wilson, the Father of American Ornithology, stated: "the principal characteristics of this little bird are diligence, familiarity, perseverance... (it works) with the most indefatigable diligence". Thomas Nuttall echoed Wilson's opinion of the meritorious woodpecker: "indefatigable diligence".



Ned's a lawyer by trade, but a birder at heart. Few Ohio birders work harder than Ned to further the cause of birding and bird conservation. That's why the Hamilton County Park District awarded Ned the 2009 Stewart Welsh Award in December, after the HCPD Christmas Bird Count.

Ned Keller keeps track during the Western Hamilton County CBC. Photo courtesy Ann Oliver.

Ned would never blow his own horn, but photographer/HCPD employee Jim Mundy wrote a tome to detail Ned's many activities (see insert below).

Ned was a founding member of the Ohio Ornithological Society, former President of The Cincinnati Bird Club and Raptor Inc, a former board member of the Audubon Society of Ohio (Cincinnati Chapter) and Audubon Ohio, and Oxbow Inc. He is currently the Secretary of the Ohio Birds Records Committee, a webmaster for the Ohio Ornithological Society, and owns and maintains the web site for cincinnatibirds.com. He's also a regional coordinator for the second Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas.

Ned is a compiler for the Western Hamilton County Christmas Bird Count. He writes the Ohio State report in the Ohio Cardinal, a yearly summary of all Ohio Christmas Counts. And if that is not enough, he's actively involved in Wild Ones and the Midwest Native Plant Society and promotes native plants. He is a member of the Ohio Young Birders Club and leads field trips for Oxbow Inc., Cincinnati Bird Club, and the Audubon Society. His 'lawyer services' have been called on by many of the local non-profit groups: Ned doesn't charge them for his time.

Ned's leadership in bird conservation has directly impacted Hamilton County, Ohio and Tri-state area residents. Ned Keller exemplifies everything you could ask for in a true leader and supporter of conservation, he gives a lot and asks for nothing in return.

-Jim Mundy, HCPD, Land Management Assistant

Whether is it studying pint-sized Cackling Geese through a scope, lying on his belly inspecting an endangered mustard, or admiring a lichen-encrusted tree, Ned has an overwhelming interest in the natural world. Fortunately for the rest of us, he puts his multifaceted talents to work helping to conserve the environment, other wildlife, and promoting birds to the public. Next time you cross paths with Ned, be sure to thank him for all his hard work!

Jim McCormac
-Columbus

Editor's Note: The "Stewie" award honors the memory of Stewart Welsh, the late Deputy Director of the Hamilton County Park District. During Welsh's tenure, the HCPD grew from three parks to 16 parks: nearly 9250 acres of additional land was preserved. Welsh also forwarded the Land Management Policy which states 80% of all HCPD property must remain in a natural state and those natural areas will be managed to promote biodiversity.



WEST VIRGINIA: THE COSTA RICA OF NORTH AMERICA!

Southern West Virginia has long been an undiscovered treasure when it comes to neotropical migrants. But that “secret” is “out” thanks to a festival Bill Thompson III of *Bird Watcher’s Digest* named a “Top 10 Fun Event in North America”: The New River Birding and Nature Festival, April 26 - May 1, 2010.



Waterfall near Gauley Bridge. Photo courtesy Kathi Hutton.



Swainson’s Warbler. Photo courtesy New River Birding and Nature Festival.

The event combines world-class field guides and great birding—averaging more than 150 species including 30+ warbler species—with incredible mountain scenery and astonishing biodiversity. That’s why Julie Zickefoose calls the Mountain State “the Costa Rica of North America”. This is also one of the best places in North America to see breeding Swainson’s, Golden-winged, and Blue-winged Warblers.



Bill Hilton, Jr. holds a hummingbird. Photo courtesy Kathi Hutton.

Festival presenters joke the event is kin to “summer camp for bird nerds”, with guides and speakers such as Mark Garland, Jeffery Gordon, Bill Hilton Jr., Bill Thompson III, and Julie Zickefoose, but the true focus is habitat preservation and education.

According to Dave Pollard, festival co-chair, “The real message is one we deliver to local youth. We have no paid staff, so once we pay for guides and food, every single penny we have goes into providing programming for young people to let them know birds are not only beautiful, but they are a source of economic development. In seven years, we have brought this message to more than 1,000 students with raptor rehab programs, development of bluebird trails, banding workshops, and a host



Red Efts live a terrestrial life for 1-3 years before assuming adult characteristics of the adult Red-spotted Newt. Photo courtesy Kathi Hutton.

of other events. This summer, local students helped restore a streambed while receiving watershed training on a 1,000-acre tract soon to be home to the New River Birding and Nature Center.”



New River Gorge Bridge. Photo courtesy Hugh Rose.



West Virginia birding. Photo courtesy Hugh Rose.

Judy Kolo-Rose, an OOS member who has attended on several occasions, calls The New River Birding and Nature Festival a “must see” event. Judy remarks: “The festival is one of the most fun events that my husband and I have ever experienced. For the novice birder, there are plenty of experienced birders eager to help you see fantastic birds arriving to nest or migrating through the area. For the experienced birder, there are so many birds and areas to explore that you cannot NOT get excited about seeing the variety, breadth, and rarities. You will not regret the experience.”



Indigo Bunting. Photo courtesy Kathi Hutton.

Weeklong package prices, including daily field trips, evening presentations, three meals, transportation, and seven nights at a deluxe cabin: \$1,800 for two people. **This year, organizers are offering a 10% discount to OOS members!** Learn more: www.birding-wv.com or call festival organizer Dave Pollard at 304-574-4258.



FLORA-QUEST MAY 1-2: SHAWNEE STATE PARK

The spectacular paradise of Southern Ohio’s Shawnee State Forest and the Edge of Appalachia Preserve will be explored during the two-day event Flora-Quest. Field trips include Botany and Bugs, Photography and Flora, Feathers and Foliage, Intro to Wildflower ID, just to name a few. Evening programs: The Nature Conservancy’s Sunshine Corridor which will link botanically rich forest segments in Southern Ohio, Ohio Heritage Botany, and the amazing violet (the genus *Viola* is both host plant for several butterflies and source of cyclic peptide proteins with anti-tumor properties). A special FREE program Friday evening, April 30 will preview the diversity of Shawnee State Park. Info: <http://www.flora-quest.com/>



Bird-foot violet. Photo courtesy John Howard.

WALKIE-TALKIE RADIOS: USEFUL FOR BIRDERS?

Some birders believe hybrid FRS/GMRS radios are “really old technology”. These radios were fine, six years ago, but have they been surpassed? Are cell phones more reliable? There are Blackberries and iPhones. We can Twitter to stay in touch.

Of course, cell phones can help birders share sightings, but so can standard walkie-talkie radios. To date, there have been 20-50 million hybrid FRS/GMRS radios sold.

Family Radio Service (FRS) is an improved walkie-talkie radio system authorized in the United States since 1996. This personal radio service uses channelized frequencies in the ultra high frequency (UHF) band. It does not suffer the interference effects found on citizens' band (CB) at 27 MHz, or the 49 MHz band also used by cordless phones, toys, and baby monitors. FRS uses frequency modulation (FM) instead of amplitude modulation (AM). Since the UHF band has different radio propagation characteristics, short-range use of FRS may be more predictable than license-free radios operating in the HF CB band.

General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) is a licensed land-mobile FM UHF radio service in the United States available for short-distance two-way communication. GMRS radios are typically handheld portable devices much like FRS radios, and share some frequencies with FRS. Mobile and base station-style radios are available as well, but these are normally commercial UHF radios as often used in the public service and commercial land mobile bands. These are legal for use in this service as long as they are GMRS type-approved. They are more expensive than the walkie-talkies typically found in discount electronics stores, but are higher quality.

Source: Wikipedia

That's a lot of blister-packs opened! These radios are inexpensive: you purchase them by the pair and good ones sell for just \$40 a set. I know birders who *always* carry spares.

Cell phones have limitations when communicating between groups in multiple vehicles. Some birding locations don't have adequate cell phone coverage, such as the *Wilds*. Plus, using cell phones while driving is dangerous. Additionally, hand-held cell phones are illegal while driving in six states including California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington.

The FRS/GMRS radios are the best way for birders to communicate with each other in the

same general area. The devices are superb for ongoing searches when birders are spread out. When birding in car caravans, the radios are ideal. With FRS/GMRS radios,

you don't even have to know the birders to communicate with a commonly used channel/subcode.

So, what channel/subcode could be used? At one time the American Birding Association (ABA) suggested the use of FRS channel 11 with subcode 22 but that predates the popular spread of GMRS frequencies. In Iowa, the recommendation has been channel 5 with subcode 0 as the bird choice, but channel 6 with subcode 0 as a backup. Many birders with radios in Minnesota use channel 6 with subcode 6 which allows both FRS and GMRS to communicate (yes, they can overlap). You learn more about radio information on a Minnesota birding website:

www.birding-minnesota.com/Radio.htm.

Birders in this part of the country might pick up either the MN or IA standard for their Scenic Byway, birding trail, or birding boardwalk, or they might combine the mix. Perhaps using channel 6 subcode 0 as the primary choice, with channel 6 subcode 6 as the backup if there is a problem.

But that's just a recommendation to consider. In the meantime, don't simply think of walkie-talkie radios as “old technology”. So are binoculars!

Paul Baicich
-Oxon Hill, Maryland



Editor's Note: Baicich will speak at the OOS/CA Waterfowl Symposium, February 27. Birding since his early teens, Baicich writes for several birding magazines, edited 14 ABA Birdfinding Guides, and co-edits the Birding Community E-bulletin.

Ohio Birding Locations with Unreliable Cell Phone Coverage

- 1.) the *Wilds*
- 2.) Hocking Hills Region
- 3.) Shawnee State Forest/ State Park
- 4.) Amish Birding sites in the vicinity of Holmes County
- 5.) Lake Hope and parts of Vinton County



An iPhone (top), two standard FRS/GMRS radios on either side of a quarter, two standard cell phones (bottom left and right). Photo courtesy Paul Baicich.

EXPANDING HORIZONS: BIRDS, BIOLOGY, & BOTANY



OHIO INVASIVE PLANT CONFERENCE

Thursday, February 18th: Emerald ash borer, garlic mustard, *phragmites australis*, and Callery pear are some of the topics at the Third Annual Invasive Plant Conference at the Franklin Park Conservancy in Columbus. Information: www.oipc.info



OHIO NATURAL HISTORY CONFERENCE

Saturday, February 20th: The Ohio Biological Survey and the Ohio Division of Wildlife present the Sixth Annual Ohio Natural History Conference in Sunbury at Big Walnut High School. Poster/oral presentations will encompass a broad range of “natural history” topics including biodiversity, field biology, biogeography, and taxonomy. The keynote speaker is world-renowned birder Kenn Kaufman, presenting his talk “Fresh Fields: The World View of a Perpetual Beginner”. To register: www.ohiobiologicalsurvey.org/whatsnew.html



OHIO CERTIFIED VOLUNTEER NATURALIST

Wednesdays: March 3-May 5: Ten-week, hands-on program with the Miami Valley, OSU Extension in Montgomery County. Info: montgomery.osu.edu/



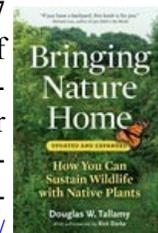
ADAMS COUNTY AMISH BIRDING SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, March 6: The Adams County Travelers and Visitor’s Bureau sponsors the Adams County Amish Birding Symposium at a new location, and new building, on Wheat Ridge Road. Speakers include Donald Kroodsma, Professor Emeritus of the University of Massachusetts- Amherst, and author of *The Singing Life of Birds*. Kroodsma was the keynote speaker at the 2007 OOS Spring Conference at Mohican State Park. Learn the secrets of wildlife photography with Ron Austing. Thane Maynard, President of the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, will talk about his book *Hope for Animals and Their World: How Endangered Species Are Being Rescued from the Brink*, co-authored with noted chimpanzee-researcher Jane Goodall. To register: www.adamscountytravel.org/



OHIO BOTANICAL SYMPOSIUM

Friday, March 26: The Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, The Nature Conservancy, and Ohio State University present the 2010 Ohio Botanical Symposium at Villa Milano in Columbus. Keynote speaker is Dr. Douglas Tallamy, Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, and author of *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*. The 2007 best-seller details how the interaction of insects with plants determines the diversity of animal communities. Other topics: sedges, pollination, and the restoration of Agave Ridge Prairie in Adams County. Information: <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/20259/Default.aspx>



10TH ANNUAL SHREVE MIGRATION SENSATION

Saturday, March 27: Ohio’s largest natural inland wetland complex (Killbuck Marsh, Shreve Lake, Brown’s Bog, and Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area) will be explored and celebrated during a daylong event featuring self-guided field trips, a family activity center, a birder’s marketplace, and six workshops. Activities are centered at the Shreve Elementary School. Special emphasis is placed on children and families including dip-netting for marsh creatures with The Wilderness Center, an owl program with The Medina Raptor Center, and representatives from the Akron Zoo. For information: http://www.shreveohio.com/sensation/shrevemigration_2010.pdf



IN HARMONY WITH NATURE: CREATING GREEN SPACE WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Thursday, April 1: Rain gardens, how to plant locally with native species to save species globally, and EPA mandates. Mulberry Community Center in Pomeroy, Ohio in Meigs County. Info: meigs.osu.edu/events/in-harmony-with-nature

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!

Brenda Baber	William Bosstic	Michele Manzo
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Welcome New Members!

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

Dane Adams	Jacqueline Corson	Steve Revard
Louise Armstrong	Mary Ann Graessle	Tom Rooney
Jacqueline Augustine	Kim Hall	Pam Satterfield
Paul Baicich	Anton Harfmann	Betsy Savage
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Mary Bremner	Cheryl Mattevi	Deborah Van
Tony Briskin	Patrick McElheney	Konigsveld
Sandy Burris	Kurt Monnier	Charlotte Waskielis
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Thanks for your support!

Please consider subscribing to the online newsletter. Get the latest issue delivered directly to your email address. No more waiting for snail mail! Plus, you'll save a tree or two in the process. Email OOS Member Coordinator Andrea Cook: andrealcook123@yahoo.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 the Post Office will not forward this newsletter to a new address. **Please notify Andrea Cook at andrealcook123@yahoo.com if you have moved.**

Editor--Ann Oliver

Calendar of Events

Rusty Blackbird Blitz: January 30 to February 15, 2010

To gather a snapshot of wintering populations. Record flock size, foraging behavior, habitat, etc. Sponsored by International Rusty Blackbird Technical Working Group, and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's and National Audubon Society's eBird. Info: ksbirds.org/kos/RustyBlackbirdBlitz.pdf

Waterfowl Symposium at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, Columbus: February 26-28, 2010

Sponsored by OOS and Columbus Audubon. Details page 2 through 4. Register online with Columbus Audubon (www.columbusaudubon.org/) or download a mail-in registration form at the OOS website (www.ohiobirds.org/).

Managing Wetlands for Biodiversity Conference in Ashland, Ohio: April 10, 2010

Sponsored by the Friends of Wetlands and the Greater Mohican Audubon Society. Info: fowl.org/events/

The Biggest Week in American Birding: May 6-16, 2010. Eleven-day event sponsored by Black Swamp Bird Observatory, Tropical Birding, Kaufman Field Guides, Ottawa NWR, and Magee Marsh WA. Info:

www.biggestweekinamericanbirding.com/

Avian Photography Workshop at the Wilds: May 21-23. Info: www.thewilds.org

Breeding Bird Workshop: May 28-30. Sponsored by OOS and the Edge of Appalachia Preserve. Details TBA.

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 updates, special events, and field trips)

\$ _____ **Donation Amount - Additional donation to the OOS Conservation Fund**

\$ _____ Membership Dues

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

How did you hear of OOS? _____

Are you interested in:

Volunteering? How? 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

Volunteer with OOS: become an OOS volunteer at special events and assist with projects. Email: cerulean1@ohiobirds.org (subject line: "volunteer") and tell us how you'd like to help!

Mail to: Ohio Ornithological Society ♦ P.O. Box 14051 ♦ Columbus, Ohio 43214



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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.

OUR MISSION . . .

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