

tunities to ask questions, share ideas and network with others interested in natural resource conservation and management.

For information please call 1.800.WILDLIFE, or watch for information on [www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife](http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife). 🦉

Spring Migration Sensation

The Shreve Business Association presents the fifth annual Spring Migration Sensation on Saturday, April 2, 2005, at Shreve Elementary School, 98 N. Market Street (St. Rt. 226), Shreve, Ohio. Registration begins at 7 a.m. Free maps are available for self-guided tours of the Killbuck Marsh, Shreve Lake, and Funk Bottoms Wildlife Areas. Free donuts and coffee will be available in the cafeteria until 9 a.m.

Volunteers with spotting scopes will be stationed at each site from 8 a.m.-noon. There will be a vendor hall and workshops beginning at 9 a.m. Scheduled speakers include:

**Chris Dwyer** - “River Otters”  
**Randy Carmel** - “Native Prairie Plants”  
**Merrill Tawse** - “Bats”  
**Roger Downer** - “Butterflies”  
**Jim McCormac** - “Waterfowl”  
**Don Beam** will be at Brown’s Bog giving guided tours.

Cost is \$10 per person—\$15 per family. For more information, please call Jacki Chamberlain at the Wayne County Convention Bureau at 1-800-362-6474. 🦉

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Mohican Wildlife Weekend

The fourth annual Mohican Wildlife Weekend is scheduled for April 22-24, 2005. This is billed as a “celebration of wildlife habitat, heritage, and natural history.” Choose from a dozen locations in Ashland/Richland County that will offer workshops and demonstrations. Site offerings include: trail & shoreline hikes, nature crafts, nest box workshops, birding boat tours, up close encounters with native wildlife, fly fishing demonstrations, barn dance, chicken BBQ, and more.

A welcome reception and Keynote Speaker, Guy Denny, start off the weekend on Friday from at the Mohican State Park Resort.

For more information, call 877-581-2345 in Ashland; 877-2-MOHICAN in Loudonville; and 800-642-8282 in Mansfield. For a schedule of events see [www.mohicanwildlifeweekend.com](http://www.mohicanwildlifeweekend.com). 🦉



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**THE OHIO ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

P.O. Box 14051 • Columbus, Ohio • 43214

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.

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Read a great bird-watching magazine and **Help Support the OOS**

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Weekdays from 8-5 EST. Mention this ad and the OOS when you call. Find out more about the magazine at [www.birdwatchersdigest.com](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com)

BWD is an Ohio-based, family-owned business located in Marietta. The Thompson family started BWD in their living room in 1978.



**THE CERULEAN**

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

A Symposium on the Gulls of Lake Erie

An 8 January snowstorm did nothing to discourage about 125 gull enthusiasts, who met in the comfortable setting of Rocky River Nature Center in North Olmsted to learn about these birds. Jointly sponsored by the OOS and the Kirtland Bird Club, the event brought together folks who are used to freezing toes and blowing snows in pursuit of their quarry, and gave us all a unique chance to hear from three experts, as well as a couple of hours of prime-time field experience on the Lake Erie shore.

OOS President Jim McCormac presided, and first introduced Chip Weseloh, a biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service, who has worked with gulls and other water birds in the Great Lakes for over thirty years. Weseloh described Lake Erie's twenty known species of gulls, giving special attention to our four breeding species. He cast light on many features of local gull ecology, including nesting, migratory movements, contamination by pollutants, habitats and foods, behavior, distribution, and changing status over time. Beyond pollution, major human affects on gull populations include eradication of nesting habitat and new food sources in the form of landfills and winter warm-water outflows. For example, only a single pair of great black-backed gulls is known to nest in the Lake Erie area, and this predator from the top of the food chain absorbs twice as many organochlorine contaminants as the smaller herring gull, which may have led to its poor reproductive success locally. Further, the still smaller and more numerous ring-billed gull manages to fledge about twice as many young as do herring gulls. Weseloh enlivened his informative talk with numerous anecdotes from decades of working with gulls; for example, gulls lay clutches of three eggs, and are so insistent on having three to incubate that a single female has been known to lay 13 or 14 eggs consecutively to replace single eggs repeatedly removed from a clutch.

The audience was next treated to a presentation from Larry Rosche, whose expertise with birds, and notably with gulls, is well known and deeply appreciated in forums such as this. Rosche treated the history and status of Ohio's nineteen accepted gull species, providing documentary photos and witty and illuminating commentary on the changing populations of gulls and humans' abilities to understand them, significant records of the past, the foibles of bird observers, as well as salient points of identification for each.

John Pogacnik spoke next, ably tackling a difficult subject, the many knotty problems inherent in gull identification. Drawing on decades of field experience with gulls on the Lake, Pogacnik offered an outline of the physical features most important to identification, the vagaries of field conditions, and problems associated with sexual dimorphism, racial differences, deformities, the effect of diet on soft-parts colors, albinism and melanism, and the seemingly growing problem of hybridism. For these challenges he offered a



Featured speakers at Gull Symposium: **Chip Weseloh, John Pogacnik, and Larry Rosche.** *Photo by Delores Cole.*

variety of helpful facts, hints, and analyses.

After lunch, an hour-long panel discussion among participants fielded questions from the audience that ranged from inquiries about predictions of gull population changes, the next new gull species for the Lake, inorganic contaminants, migratory pathways, marsh restorations, and of course a host of ID topics.

The Symposium ended with a field trip to the lakefront and nearby warm-water outflow at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Cleveland. Gull sightings in recent weeks had not been good, and few organizers had high hopes for being able to do more than show participants the age classes of three or four routine winter species, but good scouting, spotting, and leadership, plus persistence by those who were able to stick around till darkness began to fall around 5 pm led to sightings by many of the following species: ring-billed gull, herring gull, great black-backed gull, Bonaparte's gull, second-year Thayer's gull, adult lesser black-backed gull, adult California gull, and an adult hybrid (apparently a great black-backed X herring cross). Larry Rosche had pointed out earlier that looking for gulls was not like looking for warblers, and that seven species of gulls makes a good day. In more ways than one, we had a good day. 🦉

—**Bill Whan**  
Columbus

OOS Spring Conference!

Please join us for our inaugural conference, to be held April 29<sup>th</sup>-May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005. We'll meet in the 63,000-acre Shawnee State Forest, and our base camp will be the unbelievably scenic Shawnee Lodge and Resort, nestled in the heart of the forest. Located near Portsmouth in extreme southern Ohio, Shawnee is often called Ohio's “Little Smokies,” and our largest state forest does bear more than a passing resemblance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. First-time visitors here will hardly believe they are in Ohio, so spectacular is the landscape.

Shawnee is a birder's dream, and there *(Continued on next page)*



# 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 & meetings, recent bird sightings & 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:

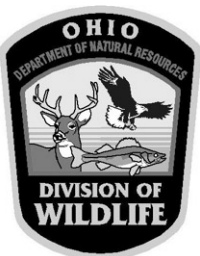
- ❖ Spring: 1 March
- ❖ Summer: 1 June
- ❖ Fall: 1 September
- ❖ Winter: 1 December

Send contributions for the newsletter to the editor, Su Snyder, at [cerulean@ohiobirds.org](mailto:cerulean@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](http://www.ohiobirds.org).

notice its staggering biodiversity, many of our ten field trips have secondary focuses, too. These include snakes and other reptiles, amphibians, plants, spiders, butterflies, and more. We have recruited some of Ohio's most knowledgeable naturalists, scientists, and birders around to guide these expeditions, and early registrants will have their choice among trips led by top experts in these other flora and fauna, as well as the history and geology of this unique area.

We'll also have entertaining and informative after-dinner programs both Friday and Saturday evenings, and several educational lectures late Saturday afternoon. This should be a fascinating weekend for any birder or natural history enthusiast, and a wonderful way to meet like-minded people from all parts of Ohio.

If you are interested in attending, please register soon. The number of attendees must be limited due to logistics of field trips and the lodging capacity of the resort. We will take people on a first-come, first-served basis. For complete information about this event, please visit our website at [www.ohiobirds.org](http://www.ohiobirds.org) or contact Jen Sauter at [jsauter@covad.net](mailto:jsauter@covad.net) or 614-901-4159. 🐾



is no better time to be there than late April. If you are weary of a long winter, and yearn to greet Ohio's first bright arrivals of spring, this is the occasion to do so. Many colorful neotropical species will be back on territory here, often long before they reach spots farther north. The forest abounds with worm-eating, cerulean, Kentucky, prairie, and yellow-throated warblers, waterthrushes, scarlet tanagers, rose-breasted grosbeaks, orioles, and well over a hundred other species. Ruffed grouses should be drumming, and we'll be making after-dark trips for owls, whippoorwills, and chuck-will's-widows. Twenty or more species of warblers should be singing, and there are some shorebird and waterfowl spots near the Ohio River. Wildflowers and butterflies, some found only here in the state, will be abundant.

Because no one can visit Shawnee and fail to

## Seagull Art

The paper placemat was a revelation. "It says here," my mother read, "that there are at least three, and sometimes four, species of seagulls right here in Huron." We were sitting in the Showboat restaurant at the base of the Huron Pier, eating dinner, looking west over Lake Erie toward Cedar Point. That caught my attention. Four species of seagulls? "Yes," my mother continued. "Ring-billed gull and herring gull. Something called a Bonaparte's gull in fall and early winter, and a black-backed gull of some kind in winter. And they're not called seagulls, they're just gulls."

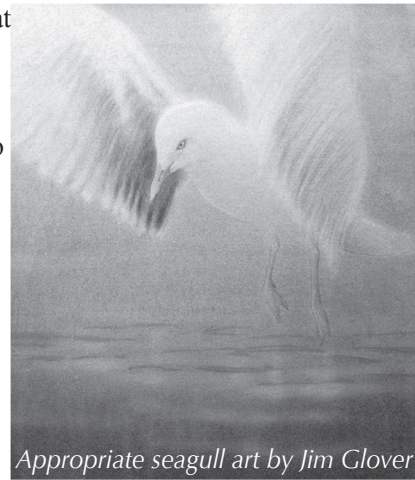
Prior to this, my experience with gulls had been exclusively with *seagulls*, primarily through Seagull Art. A visit to Ohio's North Coast in summer offers visitors ample opportunities to enjoy Seagull Art, which is characterized by a warm tableau of a rocky pier, a lighthouse, and a lone fisherman, all drawn to scale, a bunch of small white Ms in the background, which represent a flock of seagulls, and one enormous seagull, approximately the size of an *Archaeopteryx*, swooping over the light house in the foreground. It's a terrifying scene if one thinks too much: a seagull that big could eat a puny fisherman in one bite, maybe two. But that's not the point, really. It's the sense of the lake itself that is the most important characteristic of Seagull Art—quiet waters, warm summer evenings, leisurely fishing, a beautiful sunset, the melancholy lighthouse, and a seagull or twenty. And better make one of them *really* big to get the point across about the squiggly white Ms.

In addition to a seagull aesthetic, I had acquired by this time ample experience as a seagull undertaker during yearly cleanups of Nickel Plate beach. While other kids were picking up paper plates, beer can pull-tabs, shoes, undergarments, and pieces of driftwood shaped like President Ford's profile, I would recruit a couple friends to collect dead seagulls, which we buried with great solemnity along the tree line at the edge of the Nickel Plate pier. But to learn there were upwards of four different species of seagulls—I mean, gulls—that one could see in Huron during the course of a year . . . wow. That was news. I wondered how many different species I had buried during the spring cleanups. That was probably my first birding life list, though I didn't know it at the time, and "life" is probably the wrong word to use, in any case. Instead, I wondered aloud what kind of gull Jonathan Livingston was. A good question. The Neil Diamond soundtrack album was all the rage in the land of Seagull Art at the time, and the Seagull Art galleries about town played Diamond's inspiring soundtrack constantly. The placemat didn't provide an answer, though. Soon it was on to a rainbow sherbet desert, and the matter of the gulls of Huron was forgotten until some years later when, long after moving away, I became interested in birding, and particularly in gulls.

On infrequent fall and winter visits home to Huron, I always try to spend an hour or two at the Huron Pier. Huron is not a gull hotspot that compares well with places such as Lorain, Avon Lake, Cleveland, and other points east. But the pier is a good spot for the occasional glaucous in winter, and there are a few records of black-legged kittiwake, Thayer's gull, and lesser black-backed gull, as well. I had my best day of gulling at Huron on December 24, 2002 as tens of thousands of gulls poured into the Huron Pier and river ahead of a snow storm that brought over ten inches of snow to Erie County by Christmas morning. Among the throngs were upwards of five glaucous gulls, a lesser black-backed, and a first-winter Thayer's, but a day like that has been the exception for me in

Huron. Indeed, returning that Christmas day, I found less than a hundred gulls total, whereas the evening before they had been streaming into Huron in an unbroken cloud stretching all the way west to Sandusky. Still, there's nothing like the sight of hundreds of Bonaparte's gulls winging nighthawk-like over the ConAgra plant, below the violet light of a November sunrise reflected on cirrocumulus clouds and the empty spot along the river the Showboat once held before the parking lot began to crumble into the water, the restaurant was bulldozed, and its remains unceremoniously torched by a delinquent arsonist. When you love gulls and have limited time to appreciate them, you take what you can get. But I wonder why the ConAgra plant or the limestone mountains next to it are never featured in Seagull Art? 🐾

—Mike Busam  
West Chester



Appropriate seagull art by Jim Glover

## New Publication

A new book, *Noteworthy Birds Records of Wayne and Holmes Counties, Ohio*, lists all significant bird records for these two counties. This reference work was written by John Herman, and published in 2004. The introduction was written by Dennis Kline.

Special attention was given to waterfowl records at Funk Bottoms and Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Areas, and to shorebird records at Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area. Bird records were obtained from numerous sources, including *The Bobolink*, *Bird-Lore*, *Audubon Field Notes*, *American Birds*, *The Ohio Cardinal*, O.A.R.D.C. bulletins, and the unpublished field notes of several birders from the area.

Cost of the first edition of the book is \$14.00, which includes tax and mailing costs. Send payment to John Herman, 7159 Leesville Rd., Crestline, Ohio 44827. 🐾

## OOS Partner— Toledo Naturalist's Association

The Toledo Naturalists' Association was formed in 1933 when the Toledo Nature Study Society and the Toledo Field Naturalists' Association merged. TNA has been the official compiler for the Toledo Audubon Christmas Count since its inception. Many of the early TNA members created the first local bird book, written by Lou Campbell, and first published in 1940. Members receive bulletins and an annual yearbook. In addition, there are approximately eight presentations given by local naturalists, an annual spring chicken barbecue and fall banquet, and numerous field trips specializing in birding, insects, and botany. TNA welcomes you to explore its Web Site at <http://www.toledonaturalist.org>.

Membership categories are: Contributor (\$25 or more), Family

(\$20), Single (\$15), and Junior - 18 and under (\$2). To join, please send a check or money order, along with your name, address, and phone number to:

The Toledo Naturalists' Association  
19800 Sugar Creek Rd.  
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

**Editor's note:** From time to time in this publication, we will provide information about organizations that partner with the OOS. To learn how your organization can become an OOS partner, please see our web site at [www.ohiobirds.org](http://www.ohiobirds.org). 🐾

## Adams County Bird Symposium

The 2nd Annual Adams County Bird Symposium will be held on Saturday, February 19 starting at 9:30 a.m. The topics this year include: *Eyes to the Sky - The Visible Migration - A Holmes County Birder's Perspective* presented by Ed Schlabach; *Visitors to the Northland - A Look at Bird Migration* presented by David Russell, Miami University; *Barn Owls in Ohio* presented by Kathy Shipley, ODNr; and *Hawk and Owl Identification* presented by Ned Keller. A field trip to Adams Lake State Park to look for winter waterfowl will follow the speakers. The cost is \$12 per person which includes donuts, coffee, and a box lunch from Murphin Ridge Inn (Children 12 and under are free). For information please call Chris Bedel at 937-544-2880 or e-mail him at [eoab@bright.net](mailto:eoab@bright.net). If you would like to send a check to register please make it out to Cincinnati Museum Center and mail to Chris Bedel at the Edge of Appalachia Preserve, 3223 Waggoner Riffle Road, West Union, Ohio 45693. Deadline for registration is February 15, 2005. 🐾

## 2005 Wildlife Diversity Conference

March 9, 2005—Aladdin Shrine Complex, Columbus, Ohio

Ohio abounds with wildlife species and ventures that are big, bold and/or beautiful. The American bald eagle is certainly a big and beautiful raptor but it also commands a bold presence symbolizing freedom and power. On the other end of the scale, individual ants aren't large but their communities can be immense and awe-inspiring.

This year's Wildlife Diversity Conference will feature presentations involving wildlife issues and species that are either big, bold and/or beautiful. Our keynote speaker, Wildlife Biologist Mark Shieldcastle, will begin the day with a salute to the recovery of the American bald eagle in Ohio. Then, discover how extensive reclaimed surface-mined areas are benefiting birds. Explore the bold behavior of the American bullfrog. Hear details of significant undercover law enforcement operations protecting native reptiles and amphibians from poachers. Find out about the current status of Ohio's river otters, another big comeback story. Learn more about darters that call the Big and Little Darby Creeks home. What they lack in size, they make up for in color. You will be amazed at the industrious nature of Ohio's ants and gain insights to their vast underground communities. The day's presentations will wrap up with a stimulating revelation of the beauty of bird and other animal sounds.

Come celebrate with us some of Ohio's major wildlife players and affairs: the big, the bold and some things beautiful. The conference will also provide oppor- (Continued on back page)