



THE CERULEAN

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www.ohiobirds.org info@ohiobirds.org

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

Shorebird Symposium

Shorebirds. The very word fills some birders with delight – but strikes identification terror into the hearts of others. Both kinds of birders showed up on August 27 for the OOS Shorebird Symposium: the shorebirdophiles (surely there is such a word) as well as those doubting their ability ever to tell a godwit from a curlew. There were delights aplenty for both groups.

I could provide a series of session-by-session summaries for those who couldn't make it – but that's too tall an order. Instead, let me give you a few impressions and thoughts, purely from the perspective of an attendee.

When Mary and I arrived at the Maumee Bay State Park conference center a little after 8:00, we were certain that most of the OOS membership was there ahead of us. OK, a few were missing, but it was a great pleasure to see so many people interested in our mutual obsession. Indeed, it was all that the Symposium volunteers could do to persuade us to stop the conversations, visits, and general catching up so that the sessions could begin.

And what sessions they were! Where to begin? Perhaps with Ottawa NWR manager Doug Brewer assuring us that our perceptions of more shorebird habitat at Ottawa are no illusion, as management practices now emphasize a wider variety of birds and habitats than ever before – great news for shorebird fans. Or maybe with Bob Russell tempting us to think lovely thoughts of Eskimo curlews – could there really be a few out there yet? Hey, if ivory-billed woodpeckers can pop up, why not a few curlews? Or perhaps with Doug Helmers giving us new appreciation for the complexities of habitat management, and new respect for what Doug Brewer and his colleagues do every year.

For many of us, a highlight of the conference was seeing our old (really, he's quite young) friend Jon Dunn, who traveled back here to his former home state to discuss some niceties of shorebird identification and distribution. We also realized the wisdom of our symposium planners, who scheduled Bob Royse in the always dangerous just-after-lunch time slot – who could possibly fall asleep while his spectacular photographs graced the screen? (Check his Web site at www.roysephotos.com for a sample). We can't forget Mark Shieldcastle's insights into the well-known BSBO monitoring programs, nor Caleb Putnam's whole new

set of challenges – or are those opportunities? – for IDing shorebirds through their various molts.

Anyone who read the Ohio birding news after the conference knows that the afternoon field trip was a huge success – 30-some Hudsonian godwits?!?! Less well known were the results of the Sunday post-conference walks at Cedar Point NWR. Speaking only for the group I was with, I've never seen such a variety of dragonflies, damselflies, darners, and all sorts of other non-birdlike critters. How can Larry Rosche tell them apart? (That's exactly what my non-birding friends ask me about birds, but at last birds are a little bigger!) Oh, and did I mention the fine collection of chiggers?

While there was much to learn and much fun to be had at the conference, a few special points really stood out for me. First, let's not neglect the social aspect of these conferences. If you want to meet other birders, or catch up with those who you haven't seen in awhile, an OOS conference or symposium is a great way to do so.

On a related note, not only is it downright fun to share our common interest, but we should realize that we are a social and political force. Just think of it – two hundred people willing to pay good money to travel from all over Ohio (and a few nearby states) to hear about *shorebirds!* Count also the many more who have the patience to read this article about the conference, and it's easy to see that we should and do have a voice.

It's apparent that the management at Ottawa refuge complex has heard that voice. They opened up areas usually closed to the public, invited us in, and joined us on several of the field trips. And I have to think that they were impressed not only with the numbers but also with the enthusiasm of those attending the conference and field trips. Next time you're at Ottawa, or at any state or federal shorebird habitat, let those in charge know that you care!

And finally, I think it was Mark Shieldcastle who pointed out that the Lake Erie marshes may be the most important shorebird migration stopover point between the Delaware Bay and Cheyenne Bottoms. That's awesome – not only in the current sense of “impressive and cool,” but in the deeper sense, truly awe-inspiring. Shorebirds have been visiting these lands, these same marshes, for thousands of years. The next time you watch the sewing-machine feeding of a dowitcher or marvel at the chocolate brown elegance of a solitary sandpiper, you might stop to think that their fates, and the fates of races far older than ours, are in our hands right here in Ohio. --Bill Heck, Oxford

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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 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.

Design Manager--Delores Cole, Editor--Su Snyder.

Birder's Bio—Larry Gara

Birds have interested me since I was a youth in Reading, Pennsylvania, where I bought a 1934 edition of the Peterson guide and paid \$25 for used prewar Zeiss binoculars. In 1982, after auditing an ornithology course taught by Bob Thobaben at Wilmington College, I became a serious birder. Bob convinced me to volunteer for the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas, which I did with my son Brian. Through Frank Renfrow I found the late Worth Randle, whom I had known when we were in our twenties. It was wonderful to bird with Worth, especially during our annual trips to Hocking Hills State Park. In 1992 I retired after 40 years teaching history at Wilmington College and began making regular birding trips to nearby Cowan Lake and Caesar Creek state parks. Although I try to bird when we travel, most of my birding has been in southwestern Ohio. I am not a lister, though I do keep careful records. I enjoy watching birds and marveling at their color and behavior, and such rare sightings as a Piping Plover on two different occasions give me real thrills. On eight family trips to Texas and three to Montana, a week in Maine with Jon Dunn's warbler seminar, a dozen May visits to Magee Marsh and a few to Bombay Hook, Hawk Mountain and Cape May, I have become totally hooked on birding. It is a kind of spiritual experience for me, providing a much-needed escape from the world's troubles and a chance to meet other members of the birding community. My other interests include studying the role of dissent in United States history, promoting Gandhian nonviolence, listening to classic jazz and most other music, and watching offbeat movies.

--Larry Gara, Wilmington

Christmas Bird Counts and Winter Bird Atlas

It's that time of year again! No matter what your birding skill level, please consider participating in one or more winter bird counts. For a list of Ohio's Christmas Bird Counts and other winter counts see http://www.ohiobirds.org/calendar/winter_counts/winter.php. Information on the Winter Bird Atlas for Ohio, that takes place during the month of January, can be found at <http://aves.net/winter-atlas/atlas-I.htm>.

Thank You Greg Links, Welcome Karen Menard

Greg Links recently resigned as a board member for the OOS. We thank Greg for his many months of service to the board and wish him much luck with his future endeavors. Karen Menard of Toledo kindly agreed to replace Greg on the board.

A lifelong Toledoan, Karen has been an avid birder since the age of 8. For the past 9 years, she has worked for the Metroparks of the Toledo Area, and, presently, she is the Manager of Environmental Programs. Karen has been involved in the coordination of the Oak Openings Cavity Nesting Bird Program, has presented many public programs on birds and various other topics, and enjoys conducting point counts at Oak Openings Metropark. In addition to birds, she also has interests in rare and endangered plants, butterfly monitoring, native plant gardening, and, most importantly, educating people about the environment.

To read other OOS board member biographies go to <http://www.ohiobirds.org/about/who/bios.php>.

OOS Board Member Election

The OOS Conference, at Shawnee State Park April 28-30, 2006, includes our annual meeting and election of four Board members. OOS members may nominate a qualified person, and our bylaws provide nomination information: <http://www.ohiobirds.org/about/who/bylaws.php>.

If you know of someone who is an active OOS member, could serve the organization well, and would be interested and able to be a participating member of the Board, please submit your nomination to Executive Secretary Laura Kammermeier (1040 Elno Ave., Kent, Ohio 44240) by 20 January 2006 in order to qualify.

Board positions require an ability to be active in the organization, attend up to four annual Board meetings, and a willingness to help actively advance birding and ornithology in Ohio.

New Site Guides

We recently added 59 new Site Guides to the OOS web site at <http://www.ohiobirds.org/>; look for "Ohio Bird Sites" in in the menu. We apologize for having allowed such a backlog to develop, but are glad to see them available to all at last. Many thanks to the contributors who shared knowledge about favorite birding spots to help visitors find and enjoy them.

If you know a site of similar significance that does not appear there or on the list of those in preparation, please let us know and we'll send you a format to use in preparing one.

American Birding Association Convention, Young Birder Track---20-22 July 2005

This year the American Birding Association (ABA) developed a special Young Birder Track (YBT) within the main ABA Convention. I only got to do the YBT, but it was still yet the best birding trip I have ever done. I left my small town of Newton Falls, OH and got on my flight in Pittsburgh. After changing flights in Dallas, I finally arrived in Tucson. When I got to the Doubletree, my mom, sister and I went to check in and found out that all the ready rooms were full and they had to clean one for us. What did I do? I dropped my suitcase and I went outside to go birding. Since I never had been west of the Mississippi before, I was immediately adding lifers to my list, including Lesser Goldfinches and a Gila Woodpecker. After a half an hour I went inside and they got us a room. That's when I met one of our trip leaders, Jennie Duberstein. That night all the young birders met and took turns saying a little about themselves. There were young birders from all over the US, including Massachusetts, Florida, California, and South Dakota.

The next day with our trip leaders Jennie Duberstein, Louise Zemaitis, and Michael O'Brien, we left the Doubletree at 3:30 a.m. to go to California Gulch. On the way there we stopped on the side of the road to look and see what we could find. We got to see Varied Buntings, Botteri's Sparrows, Black-throated Sparrows, Mexican Jays, and a Loggerhead Shrike. After a few minutes there we got back in the vans and went down by far the bumpiest road I have ever been on in my life. After the ride of our lives we arrived at the Gulch. Soon we found a Grey Hawk's nest with a juvenile in it. After we got a good look at it we went on. The main bird to see on the trip was the Five-striped Sparrow. We did see several, which we took time to look at through scopes, and named out all of the details on them. Other birds we saw were Phainopepla, Thick-billed Kingbird, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Western Tanager, Purple Martin with a nest in a cactus, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, and a Bronzed Cowbird. Our next stop was lunch at Arivaca Lake where we saw Vermilion Flycatchers, a Great Egret, and a Broad-billed Hummingbird while doing our checklists for the day. After that we headed back to Tucson, adding a Greater Roadrunner and a Swainson's Hawk to our lists.

The second day we went to Mt. Lemmon with trip leaders Jennie Duberstein, Louise Zemaitis, Micheal O'Brien, Steve Howell, Jon Dunn, and Lori Fujimoto. On the way there we saw Gambel's Quail, Verdins, and a Desert Cottontail. Our first stop on the Mt. Lemmon Highway was the campgrounds where we saw Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Canyon Towhees, and White-throated Swifts. We also got to see emerging queen ants by the thousands and beetles that would do a headstand and fall over. After we went up the mountain, past the desert, our surroundings turned into a coniferous forest. We parked and walked a couple of times, seeing a Zone-tailed Hawk, Acorn Woodpecker, Yellow-eyed Juncos, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Mountain Chickadee, Olive Warbler, Steller's Jays, Lazuli Bunting, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Cordilleran Flycatcher.

After we got back to the Doubletree we had our first class, "Tyrant Flycatchers," with Jon Dunn. It covered all the flycatchers of the U.S. and some accidentals. It was really helpful to learn the characteristics of each bird because some species are almost identical. After a break we went to our next class, "Improving Observation Skills: Sketching and Note Taking," with Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis. This was a challenging class. First we looked at birds in the slideshow and took notes on their size, structure, habits, voice and color. Then we had to draw the birds and label them. After this class and another break it was off to the YBT dinner. After dinner, Walt Anderson gave a program, "Sky Islands: A Naturalist's Perspective." In this program, Walt gave a slideshow and explained about the four major bioregions and how they are important to birds and other wildlife.

The last day we went to Carr and Miller Canyons with trip leaders Jennie Duberstein, Louise Zemaitis, Michael O'Brien, Jenny Brumfield, and Lori Fujimoto. On the way to Carr Canyon we saw a couple dozen Lesser Nighthawks circling around a light along the road. When we got to Carr Canyon we stopped for a short time and got Anna's Hummingbird, Bridled Titmouse, and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher to name a few. After that we were off up the canyon. On the way up, the first van stopped and everyone piled out, so we followed. Michael O'Brien showed us a bird and asked if we knew what it was. We all looked at it briefly before it flew away. It was an Arizona Woodpecker. Other than that we also saw a Scott's Oriole. Farther up the road we stopped again to look at a Black-throated Gray Warbler and a Calliope Hummingbird. We also heard a Buff-breasted Flycatcher behind us, which we could not spot. At our last stop in the Canyon we chased after and finally saw a Buff-breasted Flycatcher. Other birds of note were Plumbeous Vireo, Grace's Warbler, and a Greater Pewee. Then we were off to Miller Canyon. Our only stop in Miller Canyon was at Beatty's Guest Ranch, where you can find three hummingbird feeding areas. After visiting all the feeders we had nine hummingbird species and one hybrid. Some highlights were Magnificent, White-eared, Rufous, and the hybrid Berylline/Magnificent Hummingbird. After the hummingbird show, we had lunch and went back to the hotel. At the end of the YBT, I had 78 lifers.

I am glad that I could attend YBT, where I met other birders my age that shared the same interest as me. I would like to thank the trip leaders who took us on this amazing trip. I would also like to thank the American Birding Association for the scholarship and for setting up the YBT. Also thanks to the Ohio Ornithological Society, Audubon Society, and the anonymous donors that sponsored me.

--Ethan Kistler, Newton Falls

Membership Application Ohio Ornithological Society



For an online version of this application visit: <http://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. **NEW** **RENEWAL**

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

How did you hear of OOS? _____

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- \$100 Patron or Business**
- \$250 Sustaining Member**
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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, fellowshipping 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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