



Winter RaptorLand! REPORT

For those who enjoyed the unusually mild temps, the Wilds Raptorland 2015 was a great success! A record number of species were observed (60) by the 120 birders enjoying the day. This was our 10th annual year at The Wilds, a 10,000 acre reclaimed strip mine in Muskingum County. Our groups explored many different areas, enjoyed spectacular views of 2 Golden Eagles, and visited the Rhino barn. Thanks to The Wilds staff, Brandon Good and Audra Hook for arranging the day and telling us a little bit about The Wilds during lunch. Also a big Thank you to Randy Rogers and Jason Larson for their hard work planning this event! Additional thanks to the selfless group leaders who skillfully led eight birding caravans along the hilly, gravel roads in the outback of the Wilds, and made sure all in their group saw each bird of interest. Please go online at www.ohiobirds.org/raptorlandlist for a list of birds seen. We will see you next year on Saturday, January 16, 2016!



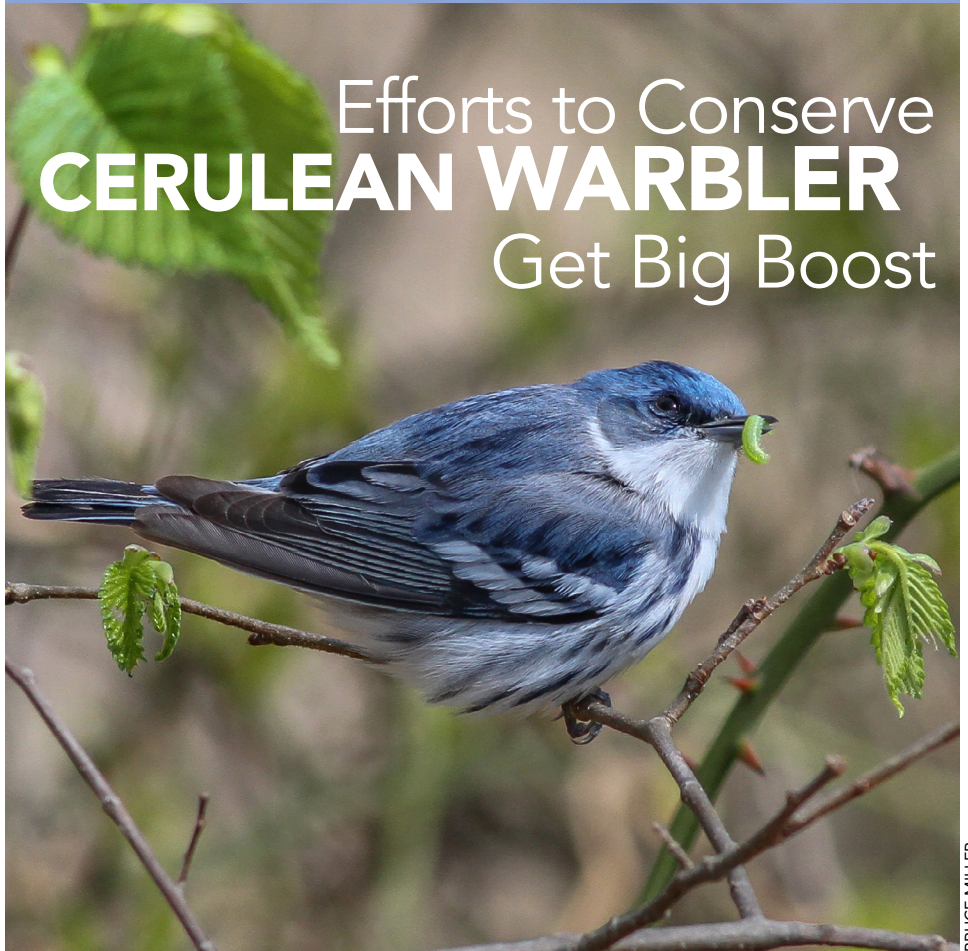
ALLAN CLAYBON

The Cerulean

Winter 2014-15 Vol. 11, No. 3

Quarterly Newsletter of the Ohio Ornithological Society

Efforts to Conserve CERULEAN WARBLER Get Big Boost



BRUCE MILLER

MEDIA RELEASE: Contact: Robert Johns, 202-888-7472—Washington D.C.

A five year project targeting conservation of the imperiled and iconic Cerulean Warbler and focusing on the states of Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, and West Virginia

got a big boost following the granting of \$8 million in funding from the Dept. of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

The Cerulean Warbler Appa-
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From The OOS PRESIDENT Julie Davis.

Dear OOS Friends:

As the newly elected president of the Ohio Ornithological Society, I am so excited to be associated with OOS at this particular time. We are beginning our 11th year and starting a new chapter in our history. In the last 10 years, there has been an explosion in the number of birding groups and events in Ohio, as well as a huge increase in the numbers of folks taking up our great hobby of bird watching! Now, lucky Ohio birders have a wide range of birding events and field trips to choose from and we want to be your go to source for information and resources.

As we move forward, the OOS wants to give our members access to resources, activities, and fellow birders. We are migrating our web site to a new server and format in the next few weeks and hope it will be more user friendly and full of useful information. We were returning to Shawnee again this spring for another fantastic conference (see page 8 for more information). Since the Midwest Birding Symposium has moved on to Michigan, we are planning to use that time and energy to have more regional field trips and workshops, reaching out to every part of the state.

We also want to raise more conservation funds to support projects in Ohio. In the last few weeks we donated \$1500 to Cedar Bog Nature Preserve and the Friends



Julie Davis,
OOS President.

of Magee Marsh to help them replace boardwalks. We also have a specific fund for young birders and have just voted to give money to help a young birder attend the ABA camp this summer. We offer two great publications, *The Cerulean* newsletter and *The Ohio Cardinal*, both available to our members as part of their membership.

To achieve all this, we need input from you, our members. First, please let me or any board member know what you like and what you don't about our events, publications and anything else. We are here to serve our members, the Ohio birding community. To keep the OOS growing, our volunteer coordinator Jason Larson (East-central director) has opportunities for current and new

CORRECTIONS:

In the online version of the Fall 2014 issue, several photos were incorrectly attributed.

- Page 1,3 and 4: All photos of extinct species were taken by Sue Evanoff.
- Page 9: The photograph of the swamp sparrow was taken by Bruce Miller.
- Page 11: The photograph of Paul Knoop was taken by Cheryl Harner.

volunteers on various projects including: web site, events, publications, field trips, and conservation. Please consider using your talents to help the OOS. Contact Jason at: bairdstrogon@yahoo.com to help! And, please feel free to contact me with any ideas you may have.

I am looking forward to another great year and seeing you all out in the field!

Julie Davis
OOS President

Efforts to conserve Cerulean Warbler get big boost

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Appalachian Forestland Enhancement Project is one of 115 high impact conservation programs that recently received a total of about \$370 million through the RCPP program. This particular project will be carried out as a cooperative effort by the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture (AMJV), which is a regional partnership supported by American Bird Conservancy (ABC) that involves more than a dozen different organizations.

The AMJV project will enable partner organizations to work with private landowners to enhance 12,500 acres of forest habitat on private lands for Cerulean Warblers and other wildlife. Approximately 1,000 acres of reclaimed mine lands

will also be restored using American Chestnut plantings.

The project will be modeled after the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Working Lands for Wildlife Program for Golden-winged Warblers, using recently released Cerulean Warbler Habitat Management Guidelines to guide conservation practices in delineated focal areas.

"This project will create a tremendous opportunity for our partners to engage private landowners and promote the creation and conservation of contiguous areas of viable working forests to help ensure long-term protection of Cerulean Warblers," said Todd Fearer, who is the Appalachian Mountains Joint

Venture Coordinator from American Bird Conservancy (ABC). "Cerulean Warblers are one of our partnership's highest priority species and approximately 75 percent of their distribution occurs on private land," Fearer said. "Sustainable forestry practices on private lands can improve habitat for this species and multiple other game and non-game species, while enhancing forest health."

Read complete press release abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/150129



Nightjar Survey to begin 9th season

From The Nightjar Survey Network (nightjars.org)

Nine years ago The Center for Conservation Biology implemented a national survey program intended to close a significant data gap on the health of North America's nightjar populations. Nightjars are a group of nocturnal species that include night-hawks, whip-poor-wills, common poor-wills, and chuck-will's-widows, among others. These species had been widely ignored by other national bird survey programs for the simple reason that those programs target species active during daylight. Prior to implementing the nighttime survey focused on nightjars, there was a general belief that nightjar

populations were declining based on anecdotal reports and stories shared by many people who now conduct annual surveys.

Over the past nine years, the Nightjar Survey Network has been able to provide information that is critical to the conservation of these species. Some examples include gaining a better understanding of the relationships between nightjar abundance and regional landcover, defining distribution of the Mexican Whip-poor-will in high elevation habitats in Arizona, and providing benchmarks throughout the country to compare population changes into the future. Nightjar survey

data collected in Florida will now be implemented into the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas to help bolster their effort to document statewide occurrences.

Dates for the 2015 survey have recently been chosen. These dates are specifically selected to coincide with the nights of brightest moonlight and greatest Nightjar calling frequency and are standardized to specific regions. Visit the Nightjar Survey Network website to see available routes, survey instructions, and data summary. 2015 Survey Window #2: 25 May to 9 June for any location in the country.



Ohio YOUNG BIRDERS Conference

By Sue Evanoff

The 8th Annual Ohio Young Birders Club Conference held at The Wilderness Center in Wilmot, Ohio, is now a memory. It was an exceptional event with over 150 attendees; young birders, parents and many influential Ohio birders, including Vic Fazio III and Greg Miller, there to support these amazing kids

OYBC conferences are coordinated by adult mentors, but the entire program is run by the youth. The strength of the OYBC comes from the fact that it doesn't merely teach young people, it empowers them.

The day started with bird/nature walks at 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. led by Sue Evanoff, OOS Executive Secretary and Carrie Elvey, TWC Naturalist. Birds, fungi, ferns, trees – all were a part of the very informative time spent. Birders were introduced to just a small area of this exceptional wilderness area.

Programs began around 10:15 a.m. Speakers, aged 11 to 17, provided a series of talks that brought in science, conservation, travel, humor, art, and the sheer wonder of birds and nature. Need I say, these kids just 'blow you away' with their hope and optimism for the future. Emcee, May Martineau, did an outstanding job introducing speakers, running the door prizes and overall 'running the show'.

The Keynote Speaker was Alec Wyatt from Texas, winner of the 2014 Ohio Young Birder of the Year. Alec is 16 years old and was



SUE EVANOFF (2)

struck with the 'birding bug' in 4th grade when he was chosen, along with 51 other kids, to attend the School In The Woods in Colorado. SITW is a public school with the same curriculum but teaching is outside in nature. What an awesome opportunity! Alec was the first OYBC speaker to receive a standing ovation. This young man will certainly go far!

The conference, as always, ended with the OYBC Conference Photo Quiz compiled by Kenn Kaufman. Throughout the day attendees had the opportunity to guess the species on 12 photos. This year there were 12 kids who got all 12 correct and 12 kids who had 11 – (no adults!).

As we concluded, Executive Director of the Black Swamp Bird

Observatory, Kimberly Kaufman, made a surprise presentation of the first **OYBC Conservation Mentor Award** to Darlene Sillick of the Ohio Wildlife Center. An expert on cavity nesting birds, Darlene is involved annually mentoring youth all over the state in nest monitoring and banding of Eastern Bluebirds, American Tree Swallows, and Purple Martins to name a few. She is mentor of the Columbus Chapter of the OYBC, member of Audubon, and spends most of her days involved with youth in the birding community. This was a well-deserved award. Our Thanks to Darlene for all she does for the Ohio birding community, especially Ohio's youth.

Name that NEST!

Habitat: Along the edge of a little used mountain road in Logan County, West Virginia. The road is surrounded by a large expanse of forest with a small creek within 100' of the nest.

Nest Site: The nest is in an American Beech which has a diameter of 9" at chest height. It is 8' from the trunk on a horizontal branch where a much smaller branch forms a fork. The nest is 9' off the ground in the lower most level of the canopy and several feet above the shrub layer. The sides and top are well hidden by a rather thick layer of surrounding leaves allowing entry from below.

Nest Construction: This particular nest is a somewhat atypical form of an otherwise distinctive woodland nest. The nest has an outside diameter of about 3.5" and an outside height of almost 2". The nest itself is built of smaller diameter pieces of plant matter with no obvious twigs of any size. The streamers of grass blades are diagnostic and in this case trailed 18" below the nest. A rather unkempt exterior does not hold a well formed interior as an egg was visible through the bottom of the nest.



SCOTT PENDLETON (2)

(Answer on page 9)

TREE CAVITY USE BY CHIMNEY SWIFTS: Implications for forestry and population recovery

Partial Abstract: The Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) is an aerial insectivore and a cavity-nesting/roosting specialist designated as threatened in several jurisdictions. As the occurrence of suitable chimneys declines, Chimney Swifts may increasingly nest and roost in tree cavities. It is therefore important to identify characteristics of suitable nest or roost trees and assess their frequency of occurrence. We reviewed 59 historic and modern

records of trees used by Chimney Swifts to understand characteristics of suitable nest or roost trees. ... Whether the current total supply of suitable nest or roost trees is sufficient to carry the anticipated increase in use by Chimney Swifts as chimney habitat is modified or deteriorates is unknown. Monitoring the frequency of use of tree cavities by nesting and roosting Chimney Swifts over time, and more robustly quantifying the availability of suitable tree

cavities in different forest types for nesting and roosting Chimney Swifts, particularly in unlogged versus logged forests, are fruitful areas for future research.

Zanchetta, C., D. C. Tozer, T. M. Fitzgerald, K. Richardson, and D. Badzinski. 2014. Tree cavity use by Chimney Swifts: implications for forestry and population recovery. *Avian Conservation and Ecology* 9(2): 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ACE-00677-090201>



WEB OF LIFE: Downy Woodpecker and Goldenrod Galls

By Scott Pendleton

Many a birder has enjoyed watching the ubiquitous Downy Woodpecker forage among the trees. In winter though, they can also be found in old fields working at extracting a tasty maggot from a goldenrod gall. The relationship between the two is as interesting as it is complex.

The Downy is the smallest of the North American woodpeckers and, compared to Ohio's other species, its beak is small and pointed, used more like tweezers than a chisel. Because of its size, it is our only woodpecker that can exploit food sources found on herbaceous (non-woody) plants. Because of its beak, it can remove fleshy maggots with surgical precision.

Next time you see a Downy flying across an overgrown field, watch it. When they alight on a goldenrod gall, they systematically tap it until the insect burrow is found. Compared to the fly's emergence hole, which is round and smooth-edged, the hole will be conical and rough-edged. The bird will remove the juicy maggot and devour this much needed winter food. What exactly is its prey and how did it get there?

It is the goldenrod gall fly (*Eurosta solidaginis*). The species name, *solidaginis*, refers to the genus name of goldenrod, *Solidago*. In spring, the adult emerges from a gall and lives for 10-15 days. In that time, it does not eat; it only reproduces. The female lays a single egg on the end buds of its preferred goldenrod spe-

Right: The fine beak of the downy woodpecker helps chisel out their prey. The Downy makes small holes and grasps prey with surgical precision using its tweezers-like bill. Lorain County, OH
Below: Downy entry holes are rough edged and conical in shape. An emergence hole would be round and smooth edged.



DANE ADAMS

cies. The larva produces a chemical that causes the gall to form.

The maggot feeds off of the fluids and tissues of the gall. It will make a chamber where it will feed, grow, pupate and emerge as an adult. As fall arrives, the maggot excavates a tunnel, leaving only the outside layer of the plant. Without this the adult would not be able to escape the gall. This weakness is what woodpeckers are looking for when they tap on the gall. After excavation, it replaces the water in its body with glycerol, nature's antifreeze, and waits until spring when it will pupate and emerge as an adult. When these galls are cut in half, one finds a large plump maggot in a tidy well-formed chamber.

In the web of life, gall flies have more than woodpeckers trying to



ADAMS (5)

cut short their life cycle. There are two parasitoid wasps, *Eurytoma gigantea* and *Eurytoma obtusiventris*, which also feed on these flies. They have different strategies for survival.

E. obtusiventris lays its egg in the host larva while it is still in the end bud. There it will remain in suspended development until fall when



Left: The three types of galls found on Ohio goldenrods. The two on the left are a small and large version of the round gall produced by the goldenrod gall fly. The third one is the elliptical gall formed by the larva of the goldenrod gall moth (*Gnorimoschema gallaesolidaginis*). The right is a rosette gall formed by the goldenrod gall midge (*Rhopalomyia solidaginis*).



Left: Chickadees also feed on goldenrod galls. Unlike the Downy, they brutishly remove chunks of gall until the maggot is found. Right: Three insects can be found in a goldenrod gall. Left is the larva of the parasitoid wasp *Eurytoma gigantea*. Middle is the larva of the goldenrod gall fly, *Eurosta solidaginis*. The right is the prematurely pupated case of the gall fly.



SCOTT PENDLETON (3)

The interaction between host, parasite and predator is occurring in overgrown fields all across Ohio. As birders we can enjoy the complexity of these interactions while winter birding.

it induces early pupation of the gall fly. It then feeds on the pupa and emerges in early spring to repeat the process. When these galls are cut in half, one finds a small pupa in a tidy well-formed chamber.

E. gigantea uses its ovipositor to drill a hole in the formed gall and lays its egg in the chamber. The

voracious larva then consumes the gall fly maggot and continues to eat plant tissue. It overwinters as a larva in the gall. Because the cellulose that makes up plant tissue is not digestible, the larva produces a dusty frass as its excrement. When these galls are cut in half, one finds a poorly formed chamber full of brown dust and a small larva.

How do these species interact in the web of life? Downy Woodpeckers preferentially choose large galls. In areas where they are prevalent, gall flies that produce smaller galls are more likely to survive and small galls are naturally selected for, resulting in smaller galls being more preva-

lent. *E. gigantea*'s ovipositor is too short to penetrate large galls and therefore in areas where they are prevalent, gall flies that produce large galls are more likely to survive and are naturally selected for, resulting in a field full of larger galls. In areas where both predators are present, the galls tend to be medium sized.

The interaction between host, parasite and predator is occurring in overgrown fields all across Ohio. As birders we can enjoy the complexity of these interactions while winter birding.

There are many resources to be found on this subject. The best comes from the Abrahamson lab at facstaff.bucknell.edu.




11TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

APRIL 24-26, 2015

SHAWNEE STATE PARK

By Cheryl Harner,
OOS Conservation Chair

There was no limit to the good times being had in Shawnee State Park and Forest during the Ohio Ornithological Society's 11th Annual Conference. It was cool and often cloudy, but our spirits were not dampened.

Tim Colborn was the bird leader on our field trip, Birds and Butterflies. Tim expertly led us through the low lands and forest, accruing a decent bird list in spite of some overcast and occasionally downright wet weather.

We had some great looks at a Worm-eating warbler and a female Purple Finch who was vocalizing from an elm tree. She was burbling her little heart away and might have been mistaken for a young male- due to all of that song.

This is a good time to explain that author, Wil Herberger, was our conference keynote speaker. He gave an amazing program on the songs of birds and his recordings were a joy to hear. His expertise in the field of sound recording is undeniable and his field knowl-

edge: encyclopedic.

Lisa Rainsong also spoke on bird song during the break out sessions of the conference. She was amazing as usual, and the other offering was Andrew Gibson's program on Orchids. Being the weedpicker that I am, it was my privilege to introduce Andrew's program and see his gorgeous orchid photos.

The late afternoon speaker was the OOS' past-president, Jim McCormac. He delighted the audience with photos of birds and all other manner of nature. He taught us quite a few tips, which should improve our photos from the field.

We heard and saw a myriad of singing birds, but butterflies were a little harder to produce. The temperatures were downright unfriendly to them, as lepidoptera are flightless under 50 or so degrees.

However, one sharp eyed member of our group found this Tiger Swallowtail going for a swim in a mud-puddle. She thought it was dead, until the temperature of her

continued on page 10



CHERYL HARNER (3)

Birding at Picnic Point, with leader Tim Colborn (left, in blue) with conference speaker Lisa Rainsong next to him. Marilyn and Michael Shade, and Dwayne are warbler watching.



Wil Herberger, walking toward us in camo. Can you see him?



OOS Conservation Chair Cheryl Harner holds a Tiger Swallowtail

"Name that NEST" Answer

Continued from page 5



AUDUBON

The Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*) is a common nesting bird in

Ohio's forests. Headstrom, in his *A Complete Field Guide to the Nests in the United States* (1970), describes it appropriately, "often resembles a bunch of 'drift' left in the crotch of a low branch by the high water of the stream which it overhangs." The long streamers of grass or grape bark are diagnostic. Placement of the nest in the lower canopy is typical, as is entering it from below. Although associated with beech by Peterson, it uses other trees which have long, thin, horizontal to slightly drooping branches such as sugar and black maple, basswood and witch hazel. Placement a fairly long distance from the trunk on relatively thin branches may be an adaptation to reduce predation from tree climbing predators. This particular nest perches on the much thicker of the two branches and is atypical in that the branches are usually very close in diameter and the nest is hung hammock-like between them. When typically built, it is common for the nest to be so flimsy that one can easily see the eggs from below. This not only decreases the weight but perhaps it also allows the wind to pass through this rather exposed nest without dislodging it. This is the opposite strategy of the Eastern Kingbird nest shown two issues ago which was big, bulky and well attached.

Common and distinctive, look for and enjoy this nest in Ohio's woods.



White-eyed Vireo

BRUCE MILLER

continued from page 8

hands warm the poor fellow's body temperature. Once it started to crawl around a bit it was passed off to me. Our group showed proper admiration for its stamina. After our close inspection he was safely retired to a nearby hemlock tree.

Although we were near skunked on butterflies, both days we were able to get good views of Eastern tent caterpillars. The pre-moth life forms live communally in a white, sticky "tent" and tend to specialize on wild cherry trees. Viewing them though a reversed binocular allowed our folks to see the stiff hairs which make them unpalatable to most birds. However, the Baltimore Oriole and both Cuckoo species are known to whack them about to remove the hairs before eating them. So even our lepidopteran studies were placed into a birding context.

The beauty of Shawnee is startling, with picturesque natural stream-beds where nature abounds.

Yet it is a fragile ecosystem which deserves our concern and protection. It is subject to invasive plants, insect and even bird species when the canopy of the forest is pried open by man. Subtle changes in road maintenance, forestry practices and mowing have profound results on the land. Most of those results are negative, like erosion, siltation of streams and reduction of biodiversity. Our treatment of this very special land should be gentle. We will want to leave something beautiful for our children, and their children to visit as spring unfolds in the decades and centuries to come.

These babbling brooks with flowing banks, the morning song of birds and the flight of colorful butterflies should make us reflect upon the honor endowed to our species. We were given the ability to care for this land.

Let us not disappoint.



Using the binoculars to magnify caterpillars.

CHERYL HARNER (2)



*The streams of Shawnee were lined with blooming Redbud, *Cercis canadensis**

11TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE | SHAWNEE STATE PARK
WARBLERS AND FRIENDS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRUCE MILLER



Blue-grey Gnatcatcher



American Redstart

BRUCE MILLER (6)



Cerulean Warbler



Black-and-White Warbler



Ovenbird



Prairie Warbler



Ohio Ornithological Society Membership Application

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*All members will receive the *Cerulean* and the *Ohio Cardinal* electronically. For Print Publications, please add \$20 to the membership fee. Membership is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

JOIN US TODAY!

The *Cerulean* is our quarterly newsletter that includes up-to-date birding news around the state.

The *Ohio Cardinal* is our quarterly periodical that includes the current season's bird sightings and scientific articles.

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