



Autumn 2011
Volume 37
E-Edition

the quarterly newsletter of Audubon Miami Valley, in Ohio's Butler and Preble Counties

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Audubon working to find its niche

Since my term as Audubon Miami Valley chapter president began in May, I have been giving thought not only to my new role, but also to our chapter's role in the community and our local environment.

As it happens, National Audubon Society is also examining its goals, its organization and its effectiveness as an agent of conservation.

What is Audubon's "niche" in the world of conservation? That's the question National President David Yarnold is asking as the Society undertakes a strategic planning process this year. Some conservation organizations buy land to protect important habitat, some lobby to affect national policy, some deal with environmental issues in the courts.

Audubon is involved in several arenas, from providing hands-on efforts to save wildlife during the Gulf oil spill to fending off a recent congressional attack on the Endangered

Species Act. (See Audubon.org, News and Announcements, for updates.) But what is our focus? What are our conservation goals? How can we coordinate our programs at the national, state and chapter levels for the most environmental impact?

During August and September, comments, suggestions and questions are welcomed at strategic-plan@audubon.org. You can see Yarnold's PowerPoint presentation of the planning process at <http://bit.ly/davidyarnoldchapterslides>.

Audubon Miami Valley will be undertaking our own strategic planning effort this fall. In September, board members will meet with Doreen Whitley (our speaker last March) who was until recently the director of conservation for the Grange Audubon Center in Columbus. She is now working for National Audubon. Whitley speaks on the topic "Conservation Planning Tools

We will most definitely need your involvement.

— President Gail Reynolds

for Mobilizing Community Conservation." We are looking forward to having her expertise to guide us in setting local conservation goals and, just as important, involving the community in our efforts.

We need your input! Please look at the list of AMV Board members on the last page, and let one of us know your concerns for the local environment, now and in the future. Are there problem areas to be addressed? Suggestions for volunteer projects? We'd love to take your ideas into our planning session.

And we will most definitely need your involvement.

Our chapter does a fantastic job of promoting nature education

(Continued on Page 2)

Bird Fest set for May 12, 2012

Audubon Miami Valley has already reserved the Nature Center and surroundings at Hueston Woods State Park for the Fifth Annual Queen City Bird Festival, set for May 12, 2012.

Sarah Michael is chairing the committee for the event. Libby Birch will help with children's crafts and activities. Several volunteers from Bird Fest 4 have agreed to participate again, and the Hueston Woods staff is excited to host the festival.

We would love to have your help to participate on the planning committee, help fund raise for the event, seek raffle donations, or volunteer to help on festival day.



Jan Holmes works with a child at the 2011 "Bird Feet are Neat" booth

Please contact Sarah Michael at sk65michael@gmail.com or 513.523.3129.

We hope to make the 2012 Festival bigger and better than before.

— Sarah Michael

Audubon's niche

(Continued from Page 1)

by "spreading the word" through speaker programs, field trips, newsletters, Rosie Bloom scholarships for educators, and partnerships that make possible the after-school Earth Clubs and Queen City Bird Festival.

To expand our role in local conservation will take additional member participation, however, whether it is in stewardship of our local Important Bird Area at Hueston Woods, advocacy for environmentally friendly communities, or hands-on stream clean-up.

Please consider making this your year to get more directly involved with your chapter. If you would like to provide refreshments for a speaker program, work on the AMV Board, attend city council meetings, or rip out honeysuckle, we have a "niche" for you!

— Gail Reynolds, President



OUR VISION

We envision a world where humankind accepts the obligations of being part of nature, especially the obligation of stewardship. We seek to shape a culture in which the violation of nature is socially, politically, and morally unacceptable. In short, we seek a culture of conservation and an environmental ethic.

OUR MISSION

Audubon Miami Valley works to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

The Audubon Miami Valley newsletter is published four times a year, as the seasons change.

Deadline for the Winter 2011-12 issue is Nov. 1. Send contributions to Newsletter@amvohio.org or to Newsletter, P.O. Box 556, Oxford, Ohio 45056

- Judi Hetrick is editor.
- John Blocher is proofreader.
- Caitlin Stone designed the Meadowlark logo.



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Visit us online at <http://www.amvohio.org/>



CALENDAR

SATURDAY SEPT. 10

Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary

We will look for fall migrating birds at this 700-acre Indiana, Audubon site near Connersville Indiana with Amy and Carl Wilms, the resident managers. The site, with its forests and meadows, is a wildlife refuge for birds and other native organisms, and serves as a natural laboratory.



Meet in the old Oxford Wal-Mart parking lot next to Mc Donald's on Locust Street at 8 a.m. to car pool or caravan. We should return around noon. For more information, go to www.amvohio.com or call Linda Williams, trip leader, at 513.523.1538.

MONDAY SEPT. 12

AMV public program

Ghost Bird, a film

Dave Russell and Hardy Eshbaugh, Moderators

7:30 p.m., 2nd Floor, Lebanon Citizens National Bank,
30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

The award-winning documentary *Ghost Bird* takes an item from recent history, the alleged discovery of the extinct ivory-billed woodpecker near a small, depressed Arkansas town in 2005, and the media and scientific hoopla that ensued and turns it into a cosmic lament for the forest primeval and man's search for environmental redemption.

"Ghost Bird offers a nuanced deconstruction of the controversy surrounding recent sightings of the iconic Ivory-billed Woodpecker by examining the ontogeny of faith and eyewitness testimony in the context of mass extinction," wrote Ella Soper Jones of York University.

"Scott Crocker's documentary poses questions that will haunt you in their insistence that we have yet to reckon with the philosophical and spiritual ramifications of the diminishment of our natural world; imperative viewing for anyone searching for clearer insight into how our fondest hopes ... might impede our sounder judgments."



Audubon Miami Valley meets the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Oxford Community Room, Lebanon Citizens National Bank, unless noted otherwise.

All meetings are free and open to all.

The bank is at 30 Park Place West in the center of uptown Oxford, Ohio.

THURSDAY-SUNDAY SEPT. 15-18

Midwest Birding Symposium

Lakeside, Ohio

Myriad speakers, programs and fellow birders will greet attendees at this year's Midwest Birding Symposium in Lakeside, Ohio.



It is hosted by Bird Watcher's Digest, the Ohio Ornithological Society and the Lakeside Association.

The URL midwestbirding.org should get you to the Web site with program details and more information.

September and October at Aullwood

The Marie S. Aull Education Center and the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm north of Dayton, Ohio, have planned a full slate of family activities for September and October.

The activities include:

Sept. 24- 25 Aullwood Apple Fest, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Oct. 2 Draft Horse Wagon Rides, 1- 2:30 p.m.

Oct. 8 The A-Maize-ing Plant Called Corn - Farm Walk, 2:30 p.m.

Oct. 9 Amish Quilt Auction, 1:30 p.m.

Oct. 21-22 Enchanted Forest, 6 p.m.

Aullwood Farm is at 9101 Frederick Pike, Dayton.

The Marie S. Aull Education Center, is at 1000 Aullwood Road.

Some of the activities are free, but others have a charge.

You can telephone 937.890.7360 for more information.



CALENDAR

SATURDAY OCT. 8

Hiking Frank House's Farm

On this fall day we will spend the morning hiking the beautiful 180-acre farm near Camden in Preble County.



The farm offers great habitat for birds of the field and woodland. It also features a lovely part of Twin Creek.

Meet at 9 a.m. in the old Oxford Wal-Mart parking lot on Locust Street to car pool or caravan.

We will hike for two hours in the morning. If you wish to stay and hike further, bring a sack lunch.

For more information go to amvohio.com or e-mail trip leader Liz Woedl at liz.woedl@gmail.com.

Thanks, Linda!

Linda Williams keeps our field-trip program active. Send her ideas at Fieldtrips@amvohio.

MONDAY OCT. 10

AMV public program

Fall Harvest: Facts and Lore

Karen Cody,

Fernald Preserve Naturalist

7:30 p.m., 2nd Floor Community Room,
Lebanon Citizens National Bank,
30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

Do you know what tree nut was a precursor to today's campaign buttons?

Do you want to predict what this winter will be like just by cutting open a seed?

During this program we'll explore the facts and lore of the wild autumn harvest. On display will be various nuts, berries, roots and other native natural offerings of the Eastern forest. Sampling is a must for a real taste of the season!

Did you know, some people carry a nut as a good-luck charm and prefer it to a left hind foot of a rabbit or a four-leaf clover?

Down on your luck, need the nut? Join us this evening and you will get to take home your very own good luck charm!

Karen Cody, Fernald Preserve naturalist, believes that few things influence people of all ages as much as a first-hand encounter with the natural world. Please join us. She'll have you looking at the ordinary in quite extraordinary ways.



SATURDAY OCT. 22

Hike-A-Thon Plus!

Miami University Natural Areas

Hiking, birding and more are on the schedule for this year's Hike-A-Thon, set for 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Oct. 22 in the Miami University Natural Areas. Activities include:

- Walks of 1, 3 or 5 miles starting anytime between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Audubon-led Bird Walks at 8, 9, and 10 a.m.
- Naturalist-led nature hikes for first-, second-, third- and fourth-grade students at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- Hueston Woods naturalists (and live birds) Raptor Rehabilitation talks from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Dewitt House history and tours 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Additionally, members of Audubon Miami Valley will staff the Bird Blind throughout the event.

All activities are free; no registration required. Moon Coop is providing refreshments and music, and every participant will receive a free "Take A Hike" T-shirt.

Park in the lot off Route 73 east of Oxford, past the stables on the north side of road, beside soccer field.

Hike-A-Thon is sponsored by the Oxford Community Foundation, Miami University Health and Well Being and Miami University Special Events.

Direct any questions to Jim Reid, Field Manager for the Natural Areas, at reidje@muohio.edu.



CALENDAR

THURSDAY NOV. 3

Miami University's Robert A. Hefner Lecture

David E. Guggenheim, The Ocean Foundation

8 p.m., 102 Benton Hall, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

David E. Guggenheim, the “Ocean Doctor,” offers a unique perspective — ranging from a tiny submarine 2,000 feet beneath Alaska’s Bering Sea to the hallways of Washington, D.C. — on the wonder of the oceans around us and the critical issues they now face.

The marine scientist, ocean explorer and submarine pilot is also a Washington-based conservation policy leader at The Ocean Foundation where he serves as Senior Fellow and Director of its Cuba Marine Research and Conservation Program.

One of his most interesting re-

search areas is the Gulf of Mexico, particularly the waters and reefs off Cuba. His March 2011 journey from Cape Horn at the tip of South America to the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of South Africa (with stops in the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island, and the Nightingale Islands), followed the footsteps of some great explorers and encountered incredible wildlife including penguins, albatross, seals, dolphins and whales.

His lecture is scheduled for 8 p.m. in 102 Benton Hall, on Miami University’s Oxford campus.



Photo by Shari Sant Plummer

David Guggenheim

MONDAY NOV. 14 AMV public program

Bahamas Birds, Babes and Beaches

**John and Karen Shrader,
Dayton Audubon Society**

7:30 p.m., 2nd Floor Community Room, Lebanon Citizens National Bank, 30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

The Bahama Islands, just a short distance off the coast of Florida, are famous for their “babes and beaches.”

But did you know that the islands are home to a few endemic species of birds — including a swallow, hummingbird, and yellowthroat — found nowhere else on earth?

A number of unique subspecies are also found on the islands, including a parrot and the very rare Bahama Nuthatch.

If you are eager to plan a trip to get out of the cold this winter, join John and Karen Shrader, Dayton Audubon Society members, to explore our neighbors in the sunny Bahama Islands.

The Shraders are avid world birders and also enjoy photography.

Over almost two decades, they served as field-trip chairs for the Dayton Audubon Society, and John has served as chapter president and on the board of directors.

John is an M.D. associated with the Kettering Medical Center.

(The Calendar continues on Page 8)

November at Aullwood

The Marie S. Aull Education Center and the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm north of Dayton, Ohio, have numerous activities planned for November.

Nov. 5 **Happy Bird Day**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Nov. 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27 **Candle Dipping**, 2:30 p.m. (Nov. 28: 1:30 & 3 p.m.)

Nov. 12 **Museum Shop Around**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Nov. 26 **Aullwood's Holiday Art Fair and Open House**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Aullwood Farm is at 9101 Frederick Pike, Dayton. The Marie S. Aull Education Center, is at 1000 Aullwood Road.

Some of the activities are free, but others have a charge. Telephone 937.890.7360 for information.



EDUCATION

Dater grant will help fund multiple school projects

EMU is once again on the move!

The non-profit Environmental Mobile Unit has received a grant from the Charles H. Dater Foundation to develop environmental learning resources at seven Butler County schools.

Last year, interested teachers each chose a project to fit their needs. They will help with much of the on-site work, but EMU has committed to finding matching funds and volunteers to complete the projects listed below. (See the box on Page 7 for how to help.)

Marshall Elementary Project Dry Feet

A new drainage tile delivers lots of water onto the Bird Blind Loop trail, making much of it too muddy most of the year for students to use. The bird blind is also flooding, and the roof needs some minor repairs now to avoid major repairs later. Our goal is to re-route part of the 1,100-foot trail to avoid the worst of the mud, bridge some parts, and add gravel or paving stones to raise other parts to keep feet dry and custodians happy. These improvements would enable all 450 Marshall students to use the trail and blind for many years without tracking excessive mud into the school.

Twenty-four programs will help about 270 K-4 students conduct biotic surveys and collectively gather data for each school month. These programs would also introduce many teachers new to Marshall to



EMU's Sharon Edwards shares her love for nature with children in many area schools both in the classroom and in the field.

The kids' verdict: SCIENCE RULES!

their nature area resources and science activities they could continue to do with their students, making them a part of a long-term science study and correcting the image of science as something done in labs. (Marshall's total bird count, begun in 1992: more than 41.)

Bogan Elementary Project Bird Observe

Thanks to Tosh Augspurger, Bogan students, teachers, and families, volunteers and donors to EMU and to the Marius P. Garofalo Memorial Fund, Bogan has a BIRD BLIND! Now we need feeders, poles and storage containers. Volunteers are also wanted to remove non-native

garlic mustard and honeysuckle. We hope to raise enough matching funding to provide all 12 interested classes (260 students) with naturalist-led programs to observe and record sightings and signs of animals, compare seasonal changes and species in different habitats, and to learn about humans' negative and positive impacts on their schoolyard environment. (Bogan students have identified 36 bird species since the school opened.)



(Continued on Page 7)



EMU launching multiple programs in area schools

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Elda Elementary

Invisible Bird Blind

Elda's quarter-acre nature area is surrounded by a highway, a busy road and gas station, a parking lot, and a very noisy playground. A mix of ages and species of trees does afford birds an oasis of cover, seasonal food supplies and, for some, a place to nest. (Total avian species recorded by Elda students: 17). After a tree crushed a tiny bird blind, EMU continued to take students outdoors to sit on the grass and observe a few feeders. Despite traffic noise and wiggling children, many birds do come to feed, so we plan to create an "invisible bird blind" by surrounding the existing benches of a lecture area with a variety of bird baths and feeders. We will need feed for the school year, feeders and poles, metal garbage cans for storage, and funding for 17 programs for the 400 kindergarten through third-grade students who want to observe birds. Students will use data they collect for writing, discussions and other activities.

Fairwood Elementary

Project Butterfly

Teachers at this Hamilton City school would love to have a working garden where students can plant, weed, water, observe, record, explore and discover plants, animals, soils, rocks and more throughout the year. Sixteen teachers (370 students) want to participate in two EMU programs each. The children will

meet insects eyeball-to-eyeball, spy on spiders, watch worms and collect data as various species move into the raised-bed garden — once we get the timbers, soil, and plants to the site. Students will also dissect seed-heads, study plant parts, examine soil, and look for ways plants and animals are interdependent. This will give them a new perspective of science as something they can do and enjoy, rather than something they read about or watch people in lab coats do. For the increasing numbers of children who have never played in the soil or met a sowbug, these garden experiences open their minds to new worlds, and they learn that learning is fun. EMU also hopes to start Earth Club at Fairwood this year and recruit former members from the nearby middle school to assist both with Club meetings and the garden.

Bridgeport, Kramer and Ridgeway Elementaries

BiograTrees

A total of 48 teachers (1,175 students, K-6) in Hamilton and Talawanda schools are interested in having students "interview" their schools lawn trees and record their observations throughout the year. These guides also will include: Digital pictures of each species in different seasons; close-ups of bark, twigs, leaves, flowers and seeds; tips for identifying; species' historic and present uses by people and wildlife; information about and digital pictures of animals or signs of animals

You can help EMU reach the kids

EMU has committed to finding matching funds and additional volunteers to complete these projects and to provide naturalists to lead outdoor programs.

Earth Club members at four schools (Bogan, Marshall, Kramer, and Fairwood) will be involved in raising funds and creating their schools' projects

We need help with all of the projects — physically, technically, financially, or otherwise.

Contact EMU at 513.523.9849 (leave your number) or emu.edwards@roadrunner.com or 5431 Talawanda Lane, Oxford, Ohio.

Our AMV chapter supports EMU and Earth Clubs with financial contributions and volunteers.

living on or visiting school trees; and a map identifying yard trees. Each school will receive a hard copy and a CD guide for their particular trees which can be a learning resource for years to come. Because it is THEIR project about THEIR trees, the students will be more enthusiastic about the work and have positive feelings about science.

Or, as more than one student has announced: SCIENCE RULES!!



CALENDAR

SATURDAY DEC. 3

Brookville Lake Birding

Join Dave Russell for this popular annual trip — a good warm-up for Dec. 17 Christmas Bird count.

Meet on the west side of Oxford's new Wal-Mart parking lot on U.S. 27 at 7:30 a.m. to car pool.



SATURDAY DEC. 17

Christmas Bird Count

Watch for details in the winter edition of the newsletter.

MONDAY DEC. 12 AMV public program

Eyes Along the River: A Journey through Time

Jim Williams, naturalist, educator

7:30 p.m., 2nd Floor Community Room, Lebanon Citizens National Bank, 30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

Join us for a story of the Ohio River. We will explore some of the natural and cultural history of the river from the late 1700s to the present. We will look at some of the changes in the flora, fauna and people and how transportation changed the face of the river forever.

Jim Williams was born and raised in Greater Cincinnati. His ancestors came to Southwest Ohio in the late 1700s by flatboat.

He attended the University of Cincinnati, earning a bachelor's degree in education with a major in the biological sciences.

While teaching high school in Cincinnati, he earned a Master of Arts in Teaching at Miami University.



Jim Williams

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the newsletter of Audubon Miami Valley

Audubon Miami Valley is an incorporated, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization in Butler and Preble Counties of Ohio

“We have known for some time that when species invade a new environment or ecological niche, a common result is the formation of a great diversity of new species.”

— Daniel Funk