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Spring 2011
Volume 36

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

Bird fest returns to park May 14

Hueston Woods State Park Nature Center will again host the Queen City Bird Festival, this year on Saturday May 14 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The presenters hope to engage families with young children, as well as the general public, in basic birding activities that teach them both to explore and value nature and to learn ways to conserve and enhance our natural world.

The QCBF addresses the disconnect between children and nature, described as nature-deficit disorder in Richard Louv's book, "Last Child in the Woods."

Free activities, presented outdoors away from televisions and computer screens, will include:

- beginning bird hikes
- nature-related games such as "name that bird"
- making bird masks
- banding demonstrations
- raptor demonstrations
- feeder watching
- short talks on bird identification, birding by ear, gardening for birds, backyard birding, photographing birds and basic birding skills.

Each child will have the opportunity to earn a young birder's patch by completing a number of activities.

A keynote talk by Doug Feist from the Cincinnati Zoo will conclude the activities. The festival is organized entirely by volunteers, including members of Audubon Miami Valley, the Avian Research and Education Institute, Miami University, the Des Fleurs Garden Club, as well as representatives from local conserva-

(Continued on page 6)



The Queen City Bird Festival helps kids meet nature first-hand

Sale transplanted to festival

Audubon Miami Valley's 2011 native plant sale will be held along with the Queen City Bird Festival at Hueston Woods Nature Center on May 14.

We will still sell native plants, trees, and shrubs that attract and feed local butterflies. These include — but are not limited to — lobelia, cardinal flower, monardia, swamp milkweed, bald cypress, and pawpaw and persimmon trees.

Plants will be available on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the day. No orders will be taken.

— Marlene Hoffman, Special Projects Chair

CITIZEN SCIENCE

2010 Christmas counters find 65 species

More than two dozen local birders counted 65 different species of birds during Oxford's 2010 Christmas Bird Count, which took place on Dec. 18.

The weather was quite cold with temperatures ranging from 16 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit under a clear sky when teams went into the field around 7:30 a.m.

The total of individual birds tallied was 9,438, far above our 73-year average of 6,784. The top five species included 3,054 European Starlings (top as usual!), followed by 1,625 American Robins. Third highest was 555 Mourning Doves. Fourth highest was 490 House Sparrows, and fifth was 373 Horned Larks.

Duck populations in general remain in steady decline since Acton Lake was opened to duck hunting. Of special note this year, we saw one Bald Eagle and 97 Wild Turkeys.

Mike Minium provided detailed maps that assisted us in covering our 15-mile diameter circle (7.5 mile radius from the intersection of the bridge over Four Mile Creek and Ohio State Route 73). Dave Russell also took the initiative to get new GPS-derived maps of

our circle.

Special thanks go to Dave Russell, who took charge of collecting this year's data, as Larry Sherman who usually does this was out of state this year helping with the Fort Collins, Colo., count on the same day.

Oxford totals were recorded at noon at Miami University's Ecology Research Center while sharing a hot "potluck" lunch. Many thanks to Liz Woedl for organizing the food. Sherman organized and compiled the results and will make them available in the near future at <http://www.amvohio.org/>

A draft version of the results is available at: http://www.users.muohio.edu/shermalw/CBC_Oxford-12-18-20102.pdf

Data were submitted via the Internet to National Audubon's Christmas Bird Count Center. People interested in seeing the total results for North America are invited to go to their web site: <http://www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc/index.html>

This was National Audubon's 111th Christmas Bird

(Continued on page 3)



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 summer 2011 issue is May 15. Send contributions to Newsletter@amvohio.org or to Newsletter, P.O. Box 556, Oxford, Ohio 45056

- Judi Hetrick is editor.
- Celia Ellison and John Blocher are proofreaders.
- Caitlin Stone designed the Meadowlark logo.



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



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Many who succeed think outside the box

What is it like to think outside the box?

On the first expedition across what was to become the United States on July 20, 1805, Meriwether Lewis wrote: "I saw a black woodpecker today...It is a distinct species of woodpecker; it has a long tail and flies a good deal like a jay bird."

Alexander Wilson named it Lewis' Woodpecker, and subsequent descriptions have noted that, much like a flycatcher, it uses slow wing beats, prolonged glides and complex maneuvers in the pursuit of insects. Its breeding habitat includes an open canopy, bushy understory, dead or downed wood, available perches, and abundant insects. It also reuses existing nest holes in dead burned over trees. The dogma indicates that it avoids humans and does not use nest boxes.

In 1990, fire transformed 3,000 acres of forest between Bend and Deschutes National Forests in Oregon. Thousands of burned snags were left standing after the fire. During the next 10 years the forest went from being dominated by Downy, Hairy, and Black-backed Woodpeckers to increasing numbers of Northern Flickers and Lewis' Woodpeckers.

In 2003, Diane Kook and friends at the East Cascades Bird Conservancy decided to increase the number of nest cavities at the burn site by installing some large nest boxes on some trees that had survived the fire. To

their amazement, one box attracted a pair of Lewis' Woodpeckers that laid a clutch of eggs.

The following summer they had no success. In 2005, they attached Ponderosa Pine bark to the front of five nest boxes with still no success.

In 2006, they had a total of 16 nest boxes at their site. When the Lewis' Woodpeckers returned, eight pairs staked out the boxes and nested. Seven boxes fledged young. In 2007, 18 of 25 boxes were occupied and 16 fledged young. In 2009 they had essentially the same success as in 2008.

But the dogma says Lewis' Woodpeckers won't nest in artificial boxes!

Don't tell Diane Kook and her friends that. If you only think within the box you will only get the results that have already been predicted or reported.

Many have thought outside the box, and the contributions of these innovators are legend.

Just consider what Steve Kress has done for seabirds by thinking outside the box when you see an Atlantic Puffin nesting on an island off the coast of Maine.

All of us need to think outside the box when it comes to conservation!

— Hardy Eshbaugh

(with acknowledgement to *Living Bird*/Winter 2011)

Counters find 65 species

(Continued from page 2)

Count. They were started in 1900 as an alternative to killing birds.

The Oxford Christmas Count was initiated by Dr. Robert Hefner in 1937 and has gradually increased in numbers of species reported since Acton Lake was fashioned from Four Mile Creek in the 1950s.

The highest number of species recorded so far (74) was in 1974, when Town Peterson organized that year's count. It was one of five counts above 70 species, the latest of them being 71 species in 1987, when Bill Pratt was compiling our local CBC.

— Larry Sherman, CBC Coordinator

27 made the trek

Three new counters at this year's local Christmas Bird Count were Todd Stevens, and Brian and Gale Wulker.

Nineteen veteran counters were Paul Anderson, Janelle Duncan, Sharon Edwards, Barb and Hardy Eshbaugh, Larry Gersbach, Bill Heck, Anne Hooke, Jack Keegan, Tom Klak, Jim and Sarah Michael, Dave Osborne, Jim Reid, Gail Reynolds, Dave and Jill Russell, Beverly Thomas and Bill Wilson.

Five feeder watchers were Liz Woedl, Lydia and Rich Hofmann, Dick Munson and Bob Rauen.



CALENDAR

MONDAY MARCH 14 AMV public program

Using Education to Meet Measurable Conservation Goals

Doreen Whitley, Director of Conservation, Grange Insurance Audubon Center, Columbus

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

Join Doreen Whitley for a discussion of two case studies from the conservation program of the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in Columbus.

These case studies illustrate how pre-K to adult education programs can be used as strategies to reach measurable conservation goals for threatened wildlife.

After the case studies, Whitley will provide training in conservation planning and identifying target audiences. She also will share opportunities for our chapter to collaborate within the Audubon network and take advantage of related funding opportunities.

Whitley is Assistant Director and Director of Conservation for the Grange Center (GIAC) and the Ohio Important Bird Area (IBA) program. She authored the conservation plan for the Important Bird Area associated with the GIAC, and she now directs the resource management of the GIAC grounds and IBA. Whitley



Doreen Whitley

assisted in GIAC's building design and has been responsible for its exhibit and program design for the last four years.

She currently runs the only central Ohio bird banding station during spring and fall migration.

In her statewide role, she provides conservation planning and support for IBAs throughout Ohio.

Before joining GIAC, Whitley worked for Audubon helping organize communities to reach conservation goals in cities including Brooklyn, N.Y., and Miami, Fla. She also has worked as a National Park Service Ranger in the Everglades and as a New York City Public School science teacher, specializing in work with students suffering severe emotional disturbance.

MONDAY APRIL 11 AMV public program

Movements, Habitat Use and Stopover Duration of Migratory Songbirds in the Western Lake Erie Basin of Northern Ohio

Ashley Buchanan, Wildlife Refuge Specialist, Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge, Madison, Ind.

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

Migration is often considered the most energy-demanding and stressful period during the life cycle of migratory landbirds. Because migrating birds spend the majority of their time in stopover habitats rather than in flight, it is important to our understanding of migration ecology to examine spatial and temporal patterns of bird movements during stopover periods.

Ashley Buchanan used radio telemetry to quantify local movements, stopover duration, habitat selection, and patch residence times for two species of landbird migrants, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Red-

eyed Vireo. The goal was to evaluate movement behavior and habitat selection of forest patches by migrant songbirds in a highly fragmented, agriculturally dominated landscape.

After completing a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Ecology at Oklahoma State University, Buchanan worked seasonal field biology positions in Iowa, Georgia, North Carolina, Kansas, Oklahoma and Ohio. Most of her work has been with for-



Ashley Buchanan

est and grassland birds, but she also studied snakes and small mammals. She completed an M.S. in Natural Resources at The Ohio State University. Her graduate research focused on habitat use, local movements, and stopover duration of migratory songbirds during spring stopover in the Lake Erie marsh region of northern Ohio, primarily Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and Crane Creek State Park.

She grew up in Oklahoma and enjoys the outdoors, birding, working in the yard and music.

Buchanan will be speaking about her graduate research.



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.

SATURDAY APRIL 16
Earth Day

Oxford, Ohio, Uptown Park

Oxford will celebrate Earth Day Saturday April 16 in the Uptown Park in Oxford. You are invited to attend between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to visit the many displays by local conservation organizations.

And of course, please stop by Audubon Miami Valley's booth at this celebration.

SATURDAY APRIL 30
John Bryan Park and Clifton Gorge

Join Dick Munson, Saturday April 30 for a visit to John Bryan State Park and the adjoining Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve overlooking the Little Miami River Gorge.

The U.S. Department of the Interior has designated the Little Miami River Gorge as a National Natural Landmark. More than 100 different trees and shrubs and more than 340 species of wildflowers have been identified in the park. More than 90 different varieties of birds live in or visit the park area during the year.

Dick Munson is the manager of the conservatory on the Miami University Hamilton campus.

Meet in the old Wal-Mart parking lot on South Locust Street, just to the north of McDonalds in Oxford, at 7 a.m. on Saturday April 30 to carpool or caravan. Bring water and a sack lunch. We should be back in Oxford by early afternoon.

TUESDAY APRIL 19

The Race Is On and Here They Come!

**Dave Russell, Department of Zoology,
Miami University**

7 p.m., 218 Pearson Hall, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

When a wave of warblers descends on Oxford, that must mean that spring is here. They are the vanguard of more than 200 Neotropical migrant species that will flood into North America. As they began to fill the forests and fields with the melodious songs of spring, your eyes may not deceive you but your ears are another question. It isn't easy!

Join Dave Russell for an evening of fun in this refresher course designed to hone your identification skills.

Russell, a certified bird bander and banding trainer, teaches ornithology. Through the Avian Research and Education Institute, whose mission is "to protect and conserve avian populations through research, education, and advocacy," many in the area have learned about birds and the thrill of bird banding. Audubon Miami Valley sponsors and supports the Avian Research and Education Institute.

This talk is at 7 p.m. in Pearson Hall on the Oxford campus of Miami University in Room 218.



Dave Russell and friend

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**SATURDAY
MAY 7**
**Warbler
Walk**

Join us for the annual Warbler Walk at Kathy Hunter and Ron Huffmeier's nearby Indiana farm to search for these neo-tropical jewels.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the old Wal-Mart parking lot on South Locust Street, just to the north of McDonalds in Oxford. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy on the deck overlooking the woods.



The above photo of a Yellow-Rumped Warbler was taken by Donna Dewhurst and is from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service digital library.



MONDAY MAY 9

AMV public program

Voyage to Points South

Paul and Anne Lucky,

Cincinnati

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

Paul and Anne Lucky did not know what to expect when they headed south of South America on a three-week voyage.

In this presentation, they will share some of the sights and sounds they discovered, including millions of penguins and pelagic birds, seals, plants, rocks and, of course, icebergs.

The Luckys, both dermatologists in Cincinnati, have traveled extensively.

The voyage to Antarctic took them to their seventh (and last) continent.



Giant bug sculptures, like this lady beetle posing next to a life-size human, are on display at Glenwood Gardens

SATURDAY JUNE 4

Big Bugs

This family field trip with Gail Reynolds will delight young and old alike. Marvel at a 20-foot tall praying mantis, enormous ants marching over the hill and a colossal dragonfly hovering over the pond as sculptor David Rogers brings his gigantic, realistic insects made from natural materials to Glenwood Gardens.

For more information and pictures, visit GreatParks.org/BigBugs. Admission; \$7 adults, \$5 for children 2 to 12. Children under 2 are admitted free.

Meet at 8:30 a.m in the old Wal-Mart parking lot on South Locust Street, just to the north of McDonalds in Oxford. Bring a sack lunch.

Rosie Blooms to help two

Picture sparkling coastal waters, deep evergreen forests, and the sound of seabirds overhead.

Danette Hickey, first-grade teacher at Marshall Elementary School, will spend part of her summer at the Audubon camp on Hog Island, Maine, for "Sharing Nature, an Educator's Workshop," with the support of a Rosie Bloom scholarship from Audubon Miami Valley.

Rosie Bloom was a founding member of AMV who exemplified the qualities of a passionate conservationist. Scholarships are awarded annually in her honor to local environmental educators.

Hickey has been a dedicated teacher and advisor with the af-

ter-school Earth Club program at Marshall for several years. In addition, she works to get her classroom students outside and actively learning. She hopes to return from camp with new ideas and renewed resolve to provide these opportunities in a test-focused school climate.

Sarah Michael, AMV board member, will attend the summer Audubon Chapter Leadership Program at Hog Island with scholarships from AMV and National Audubon Society. Michael will return with ideas gleaned from Auduboners from all over the country.

Congratulations to them both!

— Gail Reynolds,
Education Chair

QCBF

(Continued from page 1)

tion groups including Oxbow, Inc., Three Valley Trust and Environmental Mobile Unit.

The planning committee welcomes volunteers to help with the various craft and educational activities, set-up, clean-up, and registration.

We also need sponsors.

If you have questions or want to help, please contact Sarah Michael, festival chair, at 513.523.3129 or skmichael@hotmail.com.

We hope to see you there.

— Sarah Michael,
QCBF Chair



Study trips blossom into local inquiry projects

My good friend Doug Horvath and I had the privilege of traveling to Baja, Mexico, as participants of an Earth Expeditions class on field methods. He has very well captured this incredible experience in his story in the fall issue of this newsletter. This experience was supported by the Audubon Miami Valley Chapter's Rosie Bloom Scholarship, which I am very thankful for.

But why would Audubon Miami Valley want to help pay a teacher's way to see these incredible plants and animals, when many local residents have never seen a warbler?

This experience had one primary focus: Teach ways to get kids exploring their own world through inquiry. Inquiry is a teaching method that will become more common in Ohio's schools as teachers get more comfortable and standards change. It proposes the idea that children can learn better if they discover their own questions, then develop methods and conduct experiments to answer them, thus contributing to science. Through inquiry, children start to think critically about their environment.

As naturalists, Horvath and I are in positions of influence with teachers throughout the area. We work with many school districts and offer teacher training. As early as this past summer, one of our sessions at the Ohio Educator's Conference evolved to include inquiry, in the form of Project Dragonfly's QUEST. We are also exploring ideas on developing a QUEST program for schools that visit MetroParks to give



You don't need to join Facebook to see more of Josh's images from the Baja trip. Go to <http://www.delicious.com/juhetric> and click on Joshua



teachers tools to conduct scientific studies on our natural habitats.

Another part of Earth Expeditions is the Inquiry Action Project. It involves making a discovery or change in behavior in our local communities. My IAP, partially funded by the EPA, explores an effective way to get kids away from screen-based entertainment so they can spend more time outdoors, while educating parents about the dangers of an indoor childhood.

Both of these ideas involve get-

ting children outside and exploring their environments, fostering connections with nature and a love of the outdoors. I hope that, as they grow to adults, they make better environmental decisions. Despite the current shape of the planet, it's still possible to drive a culture of conservation, thanks to the National Audubon Society, its Miami Valley Chapter and the Rosie Bloom Scholarship.

— By Joshua York



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Audubon Miami Valley is
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**“I’m youth, I’m joy, I’m a little
bird that has broken out of
the egg.”**

— Sir James M. Barrie

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