

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



Photos by Fred Russell

Volunteers such as the woman from Raptors Inc. (above) and the folks at the registrations tent (below) make events like the Bird Festival successful.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome new board members . . .

Please welcome Mark Gilmore and Libby Birch, elected as new Audubon Miami Valley board Members-at-large in May.

Libby Birch has been a very active volunteer with both the student Art Contest and the AMV Bird Festival. She brings creativity and great enthusiasm to our chapter projects.

Mark Gilmore is a regular at AMV programs and field trips. He is interested in conservation advocacy, from light pollution to the threat of Emer-

ald Ash borers.

Regretfully, we will lose Tim Tolford as Secretary, an office he held for several years. He is busy with his young family's activities and will be adding Scout leader to his schedule. Thank you, Tim, for launching our AMV website and getting us "connected." We've had memorable visits to your Saw-whet owl banding station and appreciate all your work with hummingbird and songbird banders in Ohio and Indiana. We'll miss you!

We are fortunate to have Mickey Simonds filling the office of Vice President, and Sarah Michael as Secretary. I will remain for one more year as President (we have a 3-year term limit in our by-laws), and Neil Poppendeck will continue as Treasurer. The complete list of officers and committee chairs is on the last page of the newsletter.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who made this year in AMV so suc-

(Continued on page 3)



Student Art Contest,
page 2.

Big Woods clean-up
photos, page 3.

More about both in the
E-extra newsletter, only for
e-mail subscribers



Earth
Clubs'
10th year,
page 6



270 share kid's-eye view of birds

Talented student artists, helpful teachers, enthusiastic volunteers and generous sponsors came together to make this year's Audubon Miami Valley Art Contest a tour de force

The resulting exhibit on March 9 showcased the work of 270 kindergarten through 12th-grade students. That's 100 more than had participated in 2012.

This year's entries had two themes: "Birds of the Midwest" and "Birds of the Mississippi Flyway."

Each student began by researching the physical characteristics of a bird, becoming familiar with its habitat and learning if the bird traveled within the Mississippi Flyway. All then painted or drew the birds they had chosen.

Ten participating art teachers from nine area schools made selections from their students' work and sub-

The student art at right is a sample of this year's Art Contest entries. See more photos and a list of all winners in AMV's E-extra newsletter, distributed only to e-mail subscribers.

mitted them for judging.

Close to 400 visited the exhibit in Alumni Hall on the Miami University campus.

At an afternoon awards ceremony, all 270 students were recognized.

And what happened behind the scenes? Audubon volunteers logged more than 1,200 hours completing such tasks as folding more than 400 origami cranes and attaching one to each entry and designing posters, certificates, and ribbons.

All were rewarded with exciting results!

— Janet Ziegler, Contest Chair



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 autumn 2013 issue is September 1. Send contributions to jhetrick@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.



The newsletter is printed by Letterman Printing in Oxford on 100 percent recycled paper.

Visit us online at amvohio.org





Dumping garlic mustard from the Big Woods are (above left) Nina Lapitan of the Aullwood Audubon Center, AMV President Gail Reynolds, Libby Birch, with AMV Conservation Chair Dick Munson and Chad Smith of Hueston Woods State Park. Miami University's Alpha Phi Omega volunteers (in right photo) show their project tools.

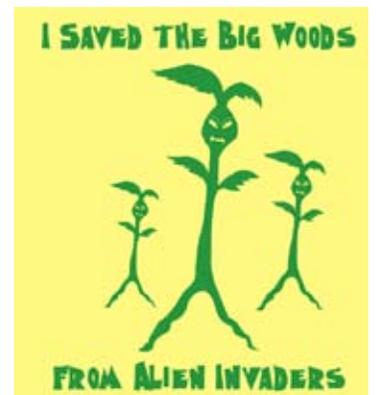
... and thank all our project volunteers

(Continued from page 1)

cessful. Community sponsors, donors, and supporters of our Bird Seed Sale and Native Plant Sale fund our activities, including Earth Clubs and Rosie Bloom scholarships. National Audubon Society awarded our chapter a Collaborative Grant and a Togethergreen Fellows Grant to support our bird-banding and "Save the Big Woods" conservation projects.

But our chapter could not do all that we do without dedication from our board, our members, and the community. This year was exceptional for the number of volunteers, the time they put in, and the quality of their efforts. Thank you - enjoy your summer, and we'll look forward to seeing you in the fall!

— Gail Reynolds,
AMV President



Thanks to our 2013 sponsors!

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SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER CALENDAR

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 8

Miami University Formal Gardens

As a sequel to last year's acclaimed Miami Campus Outing, Dick Munson and Vinny Cirrito will open the AMV field trip season with a guided tour of the University's spectacular Formal Gardens.

Munson is Instructor in Botany and Conservatory Manager on the Hamilton Campus; Cirrito is the University's Landscape Architect/Designer in Planning, Architecture and Engineering.



As we found with the main campus, the Formal Gardens contain a wealth of interesting trees, shrubbery, flowering plants and other flora.

In our Sunday afternoon walk we'll become acquainted with many of these fascinating specimens.

We'll follow the Campus Tree Walk for the Formal Gardens to learn about tree and plant species both local and exotic.

We will also hear about campus landscaping: how it's done, how plants are prepared, and how plantings are maintained.

You can see maps of the Campus Tree Walks at <http://www.pfd.muohio.edu/treewalk/>

Trees have birds, so bring binoculars! Meet at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday Sept. 8 at the entrance to the Formal Gardens next to Marcum Center.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 9 AMV public program

On a Wing and a Prayer:

A Birding Colombia Extravaganza

**Hardy Eshbaugh, Professor Emeritus,
Miami University**

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

In January we were part of a Colombia Birding Safari, a great adventure in the mountains of the central Andes and Choco region. This trip was offered through the Cincinnati Nature Center and Manikin Tours, a small Colombian company that could not have arranged a more special experience. Winter is one of the best times to visit South America because in addition to all the resident bird species, a number of our North American neotropical migrants can be found there.

Colombia boasts the greatest variety of birds on Earth with 1871 species, twice the number found in the USA. Highlights of the trip included: time watching Andean Condors soaring over Mt. Ruiz, seeing various Antpitta species from bird blinds, spending time with an Andean Cock-of-the-Rock lek, and searching for the Yellow-eared Parrot.

Audubon notable Hardy Eshbaugh is an Emeritus Professor of Botany at Miami University.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 12

Fort Ancient State Memorial



In Warren County, Ohio, an isolated peninsula rises 80 meters above the muddy banks of the Little Miami River. There exists an immense monument to the dedication and technological savvy of the original inhabitants of prehistoric North America.

This 126-acre plateau is enclosed by embankment walls that stand 1.5 to 7 meters high, constructed by repeatedly dumping baskets loaded with soil upon one another.

The Hopewell, known for their engineering expertise, built walls and many other features here as a ceremonial space.

The site includes conical and crescent-shaped mounds, limestone pavements and circles, and many subsurface

elements both within the enclosure and on the steep valleys that surround the site.

Today, the Fort Ancient State Memorial is listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its importance to Ohio prehistory.

In addition to being an outstanding archaeological site, Fort Ancient is a beautiful natural area with great opportunities for spotting birds and other creatures as well as studying plant life.

More information is available at www.fortancient.org/ Sam Fitton will lead this outing. We will meet at 7 a.m. at the former Walmart parking lot (on Locust Street next to McDonald's) and return to Oxford in the afternoon. Pack a lunch and bring binoculars if possible.



OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER CALENDAR

MONDAY OCTOBER 14 AMV public program

Natural History through a Lens: A Journey to the Atlantic Coast of Maine

Casey Tucker, Director of American Avian Conservation & Research Institute

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

Gannets, and Razorbills, and Puffins! Oh My! A photo safari exploration of some of the more intriguing areas along the northern coast of Maine including the historic Audubon camp at Hog Island, and one of the most accessible breeding colonies of Atlantic Puffins in the world; Machias Seal Island.

You'll learn how photography can enhance your natural history travel learning experience beyond just simple vacation photos.

Casey Tucker is the director of the American Avian Conservation & Research Institute, a bird organization working to engage people in bird conservation and research through science education.

He has worked as a conservation educator for the Columbus Zoo, as a research associate for a bioacoustics research lab, and as an education specialist for the Na-

tional Audubon Society in Ohio.

He is currently pursuing his master's degree through Miami University's Project Dragonfly Advanced Inquiry Program.

Tucker is an amateur wildlife and natural history photographer whose photos have appeared in the "National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Birds of North America"



Casey Tucker

by Edward S. Brinkley, the "National Geographic Bird Coloration" book by Geoff E. Hill, the "Stokes' Field Guide to Birds of North America" by Don and Lillian Stokes, and the recent Eastern and Western editions of that guide.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 9 Great Miami River Tour

Join Chuck Holliday as he leads us on a tour of the Great Miami River and its environs between Middletown and Hamilton.

This riparian corridor comprises public parks, gravel pits, natural areas, stream



beds, and other interesting sites where we'll look for wading birds, ducks, geese and hawks as well as migrating passerines.

The group will meet at 7:30 a.m. at the old Walmart parking lot (on Locust Street next to McDonald's) and return to Oxford in the afternoon.

We'll be driving between sites and walking at each location. Pack a lunch and bring binoculars.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 24 The Hefner Lecture

101 Genomes: Studying Dogs in the Genomic Era

Adam Boyko, Department of Biomedical Sciences,
Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

Watch for details about this year's Miami University's Hefner Lecture by Dr. Adam Boyko of Cornell University.

His home page says: "His research: is research focuses on genomic investigation of dogs as a model of genetic disease and evolutionary genetics. One aspect of this work is understanding the evolution and genetics of village dogs, the semi-feral pariah dogs found in much of the world today."

Save these Dates

MONDAY NOVEMBER 11 Public meeting. *Green Fire, the story of Aldo Leopold* is the first full-length documentary film about the legendary environmentalist. It traces how Leopold shaped and influenced the modern environmental movement. Leopold, author of the conservation classic *A Sand County Almanac*, is also renowned for his work as an educator, philosopher, forester, ecologist, and wilderness advocate.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 7 Field trip to Brookville Lake

MONDAY DECEMBER 9 Public meeting. "The World Around Us as Seen Through the Lens of a Wildlife Photographer," will feature Jim Chagares of Richmond, Ind.



EDUCATION

AMV helps Earth Club kids own the globe

Decade has passed since program's start

Ten years ago this summer Ann Geddes, Chris Parker, Debra Bowles and I met to hatch a plan for an after-school environmental club.

Elda Elementary teachers ran a Nature Club which we used as a starting point, but Chris Parker kept calling it "Earth Club." And so Earth Club became a joint venture among Audubon Miami Valley, the Environmental Mobile Unit, teacher-advisers, and enthusiastic, curious, caring children.

AMV continues to support Earth Club financially and with volunteers. Our peak membership was in 2007 with 148 members in seven schools.

Family health issues put EMU into semi-hibernation this school year, but thanks to many volunteers, we kept Earth Club active in three schools. Kramer had 40 members (3rd through 5th graders); Fairwood 33 (4th-6th); and Bogan nine (3rd-5th). Because of scheduling problems, we started in January at Bogan and had two meetings a month which probably accounts for our low membership there.

Our teacher-advisers Joanne Williamson, Karen Shearer, Debbie Shadrach, Rhonda Roberson, and Tricia Duffy generously make time and space to let us meet.

We held 23 meetings, despite sev-



Sharon Edwards leads Kramer Earth Club members during their May field trip to Miami University's natural area.

eral weather and last-minute scheduling cancellations.

AMV members gave roughly 100 hours to keep the meetings fun, safe, efficient, and interesting. Despite crowded conditions at Fairwood and Kramer, the members were collectively the most cooperative hordes we've ever had. It's not easy being 10 years old and sitting quietly and following directions for half an hour after a full school day of the same. But we were able to keep the business part of our meetings short thanks to Mickey Simonds and Linda Williams refilling snack bowls for members to help themselves, Pat Gifford and Ellen Phelps listening to members explain what they made with their food. (The rule is you can't

eat until you have made a flower, or a bird's habitat, or whatever we will be studying, and have explained it to an adult.)

While they are chewing, we answer the mystery of the day and I try to give a brief briefing for the day's activities: safety rules, equipment use, questions to get them thinking, important information, etc. Then we get to work.

My memories of our meetings this year include Barbara Eshbaugh's relating a wildlife encounter to a rapt audience, Mary Johnson's asking guiding questions about insect specimens (all were collected post mortem!) and Ruth Overly's giving art and life advice to youngsters

(Continued on page 7)



EDUCATION

AMV alum Tucker wins Rosie Bloom Scholarship

When Casey Tucker was an undergraduate zoology student at Miami University, he was a member of our local Audubon chapter.

Since graduating, he has spent most of his career as an educator, working with university zoology students, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

While working for Audubon Ohio, he engaged thousands of Ohioans in backyard bird conservation through the Audubon At Home initiative.

He has been awarded the Audubon Miami Valley

Rosie Bloom scholarship to attend this summer's "Art of Birding" session at Hog Island, a National Audubon camp off the coast of Maine. He will present a program on his week at Hog Island to a chapter meeting in October. (See details on page 5.)

The Rosie Bloom scholarship is given in honor of a founding member of our chapter. It is awarded to a local educator interested in environmental education to attend a session at Hog Island.

— Linda Williams. AMV education chair

AMV, Earth Clubs celebrate 10-year partnership

(Continued from page 6) drawing mammal study skins. Emily Marks kept track of equipment and members with loose shoestrings. Anna Kelly, Janet Ziegler, and Marlene Hoffman ran bird ID sight and song tests; Gail Reynolds became our master *plaster of Paris* mixer for making track casts to take home; and Libby Birch taught us how to observe bird mounts (deceased and stuffed in life-like positions) for detailed drawings for the Art Contest. Everyone helped mix the ingredients and clean up after we made peanut butter pine cone bird feeders.

We managed to meet on many freezing days, wet days, and wet and freezing days, so indoors we made milk jug bird feeders; learned that there are many other countries in the world by doing jigsaw map puzzles; learned how to use binoculars and field guides; made animal adoption banks; measured and compared cat sizes (leopards, tigers, et al) and made cardboard dioramas for scale-model cats. Outdoors we hiked, did

observation tests and biotic surveys, filled bird feeders and observed birds at the school bird blinds, and studied tracks. Bogan members also pulled garlic mustard and honeysuckle. Kramer members had a great day for a hike, Seton Walk, and stream study in the Miami University Natural Areas. Thank you, Denise Richter, for coming on the hike and managing the paperwork to make Earth Club possible!

EMU, AMV, and the Charles H. Dater Foundation helped Fairwood Elementary in Hamilton start a butterfly garden last year. It is thriving with lots of care from students and staff. Thank you summer waterers! Members collected, observed, and released insects and spiders; learned to weed; planted bulbs and flowers; and made detailed observation drawings and clay models of insects. The teachers organized a sunflower seed sale to buy tools and plants, and one meeting we made advertising posters and decorated and packed seed envelopes.

I was amazed at how the members worked increasingly harder for the whole meeting, becoming very dedicated entrepreneurs as they figured out how to estimate how much money they would make. We also learned how to plant seeds and transplant spider plants and begonias so every member was able to take a plant and some potted pea seeds home. For graduation we had chocolate cake and then the most enthusiastic Fox & Squirrel game I've ever been in.

So, thank you Audubon Miami Valley members, for providing Earth Club members with snacks, graduation books (second-hand nature books, of course!), plaster of Paris, peanut butter, and other supplies. This year we found some very inexpensive inflatable globes, so everyone received their own Earth. And thank you to the volunteers who expedite and enrich our meetings!

— Sharon Edwards, Naturalist,
Environmental Mobile Unit



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Audubon Miami Valley is
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Audubon Miami Valley
works to conserve
and restore natural
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