



THAT FELLOW TO THE LEFT WAS AMONG THE HUNDREDS AT THIS YEAR'S HIKE-A-THON, WHERE AMV WAS BUSIER THAN EVER. MORE ON PAGE 3.

DON'T STOP FOR WINTER! CALENDAR, PAGES 4-6.

GRANTS WILL AID CHAPTER ACTIVITIES, WORK ON ASH PROTECTION, DETAILS, PAGE 7.



Winter 2013 14
Volume 39

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

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Christmas Bird Count produces important data

On Saturday Dec. 14, Audubon Miami Valley will hold its annual Christmas Bird Count.

The data collected from this count, combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, provide a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past 40 years

Local trends provide strategies for protecting birds and their habitats. They also signal immediate environmental threats, such as groundwater contamination or poisoning from improper use of pesticides

Everyone is welcome to participate, regardless of experience. New participants can join groups led by experts covering portions of the count area.

We will break out in teams to cover an area of approximately 176 square miles around Oxford. Count areas include Springwood, Four Mile Creek, Bachelor Wildlife Preserve,



Photo from Morguefile.com credited to Juditu
Last year 200 Cardinals were reported in the AMV Christmas Bird Count.

Indian Creek Valley, Rush Run, Hueston Woods State Park-Acton Lake and the Miami University Airport.

At any time during the day, bird-watchers at home can email counts to Larry Gersbach at lgersbach@amvohio.org.

Soon after the count, results will be available at Audubon Miami Val-

Come count with us!

Meet at 7 a.m. at the Miami University Ecology Research Center, 5806 Somerville Road.

Bring your own table service and a covered dish to share for lunch after the count.

Dress warmly and wear boots for walking. Wear a bright jacket and bring binoculars if possible.

The Brookville, Ind, count will be Sunday Dec. 15. Counters should meet at the Dunlapville boat ramp at 7 a.m.

ley's website: www.amvohio.org.

Data collected is sent to National Audubon Society and published annually in a special issue of "American Birds."

Larry Gersbach and Dave Russell are coordinators of the event.

— Mickey Simonds,
AMV Vice President

SPECIAL PROJECT

Seed sale success guarantees winter feeding

The 35th annual Audubon Bird Seed sale was a great success. It was the coldest pick-up day we have had, so the winter birds were ready for lots of visits to your feeders.

Black sunflower seeds are among the most popular sale items. They pack a lot nutritious energy for the cold winter days ahead.

Thanks to local photographer Bob Scholl for the Great Blue Heron mounted picture he donated as a door prize.

Winner Pris Berry was thrilled and already has it on her wall.

Thanks to all who helped this year: Neil Poppendeck, Jim Reid, Jan and Bob Holmes, Hardy and Barb Eshbaugh, Ken Grabach. The Whistle Stop is a great host. Kelly Hansel and John Jones are wonderful to work with.

I look forward to next year's event and seeing more of you feeding our feathered friends.



Jan and Bob Holmes, backed by reinforcements.



Neil Poppendeck and John Jones



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 spring 2014 issue is February 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.



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Visit us online at amvohio.org





One young hiker is absorbed in learning about birds at the seventh annual Hike-A-Thon on Sept. 28.

AMV's increased participation in the event allows us to spread our volunteers' efforts more evenly throughout the year.

We won't hold a Bird Festival in spring 2014.

Hike-A-Thon photos by Jim Reid

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hike-A-Thon Plus showcases MU natural areas

Were you part of the record turnout of nearly 1,000 people for the seventh annual Hike-A-Thon Plus?

A beautiful fall day brought hikers, bird-watchers and dog-walkers of all ages out to explore a portion of the 17 miles of hiking trails preserved as green space around Oxford. These lands were donated by former owners to Miami University for permanent protection — what a treasure for our community!

If you walked up the cinder trail past the Oxford Museum Association activities at the DeWitt House, you saw that Audubon Miami Valley expanded our participation this year. In addition to having volunteers at the bird blind handing out bird ID materials and leading bird walks, we had an origami booth, a plant quiz and live plants to take home, and an information booth about Emerald Ash Borer & other invasive pests.



Peter Carels adds music to the occasion. He is a member of the Oxford Gourd and Drum Ensemble.

Participating in this fall event will help us spread out our efforts more evenly throughout the year. If

you were a volunteer last year at the Student Art Contest in March, the Conservation Project in April, and the AMV Bird Festival in May, you may have said, “Whew!” as we did after a very busy spring!

So, at the board planning session in June, we made the difficult decision not to hold the Bird Festival in the spring of 2014.

We love to get people outdoors enjoying nature, so we will offer family-friendly bird-watching hikes at Hueston Woods in May, AND you will find more of our nature activity booths at the Hike-A-Thon 2014!

Thank you to Jim Reid, Field Manager of MU Natural Areas, for welcoming AMV to this very popular event.

Thank you to ALL our volunteers throughout the year. We couldn't do it without you!

— Gail Reynolds, AMV President



DECEMBER 2013 CALENDAR

SATURDAY DECEMBER 7

Brookville Lake

David Russell will again lead us on a birding tour of the Brookville Reservoir area between Liberty and Brookville, Indiana.

We'll visit a number of good spots around Brookville Lake as well as Whitewater State Park, looking for migrating ducks, geese, gulls, terns, Sandhill Cranes and other species.

A map of the area can be found at http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/files/brookville_trail.pdf

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the west end of the Walmart parking lot on U.S. 27 north of Oxford.

Pack a lunch and bring binoculars.

We'll return to Oxford in the afternoon.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 14

Christmas Bird Count

We'll meet at 7 a.m. at Miami University's Ecology Research Center, 5806 Somerville Road, to head out for the 2013 Christmas Bird Count.

Details on Page 1.

Information about Audubon Miami Valley field trips is posted at amvohio.org/field-trips/

For instructions on meeting at the trip site or information on last-minute changes, consult the site or e-mail the field trip coordinator at jmichael@amvohio.org.



Jim Chagares in the field

MONDAY DECEMBER 9 AMV public program

The World Around Us as Seen through the Lens of a Wildlife Photographer

Jim Chagares, Richmond, Indiana

7:30 p.m., 2nd Floor Community Room,

Lebanon Citizens National Bank, 30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

If you spend any time out of doors you may have encountered Jim Chagares. He can be found lurking around Brookville Lake photographing Bald Eagles. If there is an unusual sighting in nature around the tri-state area, anticipate that he will have been there before you. His unique photographs require careful planning, superb timing, flexibility, and a little bit of luck.

Chagares will share his avian photography along with his camera equipment and techniques. Be sure to bring your photography questions.

Chagares is a professional photographer and owner of Chagares Photography in Richmond, Indiana.

He has been awarded the Master of Photography, Master of Electronic Imaging, Photographic Craftsman and Certification degrees from Professional Photographers of America. He is also a Fellow of the American Society of Photography. He is a nationally approved photographic exhibition judge with Professional Photographers of America.

Learn more at www.chagaresphotography.com.

Join us for an evening with a master craftsman.



JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2014 CALENDAR

SUNDAY JANUARY 12, 2014

Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area



The first field trip of 2014 will take us to the Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area in north central Ohio to see waterfowl and owls.

Killdeer Plains encompasses 9,230 acres of one of Ohio's best remaining prairies. It contains grassland wildlife habitats dominated by tall grasses such as the big bluestem, as well as pine groves, more than 1,000 acres of marsh, a 360-acre greentree reservoir, an upground reservoir, and 125 ponds ranging from less than an acre to 50 acres in size.

We expect to find a range of avian species including owls, woodpeckers, raptors, waterfowl, game birds and song birds. A site map is available at

http://www.wcasohio.org/killdeer_plains_map.htm

Columbus birder and former AMV member Bill Heck will lead this outing.

The group will leave from the T.J.Maxx parking lot (on Locust Street across from McDonald's) at 10 a.m., and will stop for lunch. We'll explore Killdeer Plains beginning about 2 p.m., then look for owls after dusk.

The return trip to Oxford will be in the evening, with a stop for dinner on the way back. Individuals may wish to schedule overnight accommodations in the Killdeer Plains area in order to maximize time at the site.

Participants should bring binoculars if possible and may wish to pack snack food.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 10 AMV public program

Inquiry, Field Methods and Bird Count in Baja California Sur, Mexico

Andrea Ballinger, Department of Biology, Miami University

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

Andrea Ballinger is a Miami University graduate student who participated in the Project Dragonfly Earth Expeditions Global Field Program in June 2013.

A summer-term study-abroad course is a significant component of the Project Dragonfly Program. Graduate students participate in an inquiry-driven framework of learning to acquire field method techniques and knowledge of the ecological area.

The Field Methods portion of Ballinger's course in Baja California Sur, Mexico, included a bird count at Rancho San Gregorio, an isolated hotspot for desert ecological study.

She will present photos and stories from the bird count as well as other stories of inquiry.



Andrea Ballinger at the Fernald Preserve

Her coursework includes an inquiry action project at the Fernald Preserve in Harrison, Ohio and a community action lab on mapping and conservation decision making.

Before entering graduate school,

she worked with non-profits in Kauai, Hawaii on conservation projects as a program coordinator.

Her photo was taken at the Fernald Preserve by Rick Lisi, President of the Audubon Society of Ohio.

Chapter Meetings are held the second Mondays in the 2nd floor Community Room, LCNB building, 30 Park Place West at 7:30 p.m. in uptown Oxford. All meetings are open to the public.



FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2014 CALENDAR

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 23

Crooked Run Nature Preserve/ Chilo Lock 34 Park



Crooked Run Nature Preserve on the Ohio River is a state-dedicated nature preserve managed by the Clermont County Park District. We'll be met by Clermont County birder Kathi Hutton who will lead our visit.

The river and Crooked Run Creek estuary offer a great resting point for migrating waterfowl. The forest

and fields, with over a mile of hiking trails, provide 77 acres of excellent habitat for migrating birds and other wildlife.

The adjacent Chilo Lock 34 Park, located on the site of a former lock and dam, includes a 1.5-acre wetland. Maps of the parks can be found at www.parks.clermontcountyohio.gov/ChiloCrookedRunmap.pdf

If time allows, we'll travel a few miles downriver to continue our search for gulls and waterbirds at Mehdahl Dam, managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The trip will leave Oxford at 7 a.m. from the T.J.Maxx parking lot (on Locust Street across from McDonald's) and return to Oxford in the afternoon. Pack a lunch.

MONDAY MARCH 10 AMV public program

A BirdER's Migration

Leno Davis, Department of Biology, Miami University

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



Leno Davis

Ancilleno "Leno" Davis is a doctoral student in the Ecology Evolution and Environmental Biology program at Miami University and a Director-at-Large for the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds.

Originally from the Bahamas, Leno has worked with most of the major conservation organizations and on most major island groups in the Bahamas.

His presentation, "A BirdER's migration" will detail the circuitous route and serendipitous events that have brought him from the Bahamas to Ohio.

The presentation will use personal photos from 12 years of research and travel in Ohio, Michigan, The Bahamas, Grenada and Mexico.

Many of the photos will also be available for purchase, with proceeds going toward Caribbean bird conservation.

SATURDAY MARCH 15

Miami-Whitewater Forest Metropark



Miami-Whitewater Forest, at 4,345 acres, is the largest park within the Hamilton County Metropark system and one of the premier birding sites in our area.

The Shaker Trace Wetlands, with its bird blind and unimproved trails, is a good spot for many duck, shorebird and wader species.

In the wooded areas of the park, we will look for early passerine migrants. A downloadable park map is at greatparks.org/parks/miami-whitewater-forest

If time allows, we may also visit the nearby Fernald Preserve, operated by the U.S. Department of Energy. With its wetlands and ponds, grasslands and wooded areas, Fernald offers great opportunities for raptors, ducks, grassland species and migrants.

Hardy Eshbaugh will lead this outing. We'll meet at 7:30 a.m. at the T.J.Maxx parking lot (on Locust Street across from McDonald's) and return to Oxford in the afternoon. Pack a lunch and bring binoculars if possible.



GRANTS

Grants will help ash trees, art & conservation work

Audubon Miami Valley has more than \$3,000 from grant to aid our work in 2014, thanks to work by Mark Gilmore and Hardy Eshbaugh.

In November, our application for an ash tree conservation project sent to Audubon Collaborative Funding 2014 was among those selected, funded for \$1,895.

Gilmore, a first-year AMV Board member, wrote the application, proposing a project to treat high-value and legacy ash trees against near-certain mortality from the exotic invasive insect Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

Treatment will be with the insecticide Emamectin benzoate (trade name "TREE-age"), shown by research to likely be more effective treating large-diameter trees than other insecticides and application methods, and effective for a two-year period.

The grant funds will allow the purchase of specialized pressurizable application equipment, and enough agent to treat 7 to 9 trees. Additional funds are being sought to allow treatment of more trees.

Big Woods targeted for treatment

The priority treatment area is a more than 200-acre tract of virgin timber known as the Big Woods, a beech-maple forest National Natural Landmark and Nature Preserve on the west side of Acton Lake, within the Hueston Woods State Park Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA).

Ash tree species are estimated to make up 10 percent of all Ohio trees, with white ash estimated to represent 19 percent of the tree population within the Big Woods.

AMV has an ongoing conservation action project in the Big Woods to eradicate understory invasives garlic mustard and honeysuckle. Preservation of legacy ash trees will further the Chapter's stewardship of this important habitat.

Insects move up to 12 miles per year

Emerald Ash Borers entered the United States most likely in wooden packing materials from Asia through the Port of Detroit sometime in the late 1990s. They have steadily propagated throughout 20 states, decimating native ash species.

On their own, the insects can move up to 12 miles per year. Human movement of infested firewood and nurs-

ery stock is presumed largely responsible for the enormous area of infestation.

EAB enters ash trees through the canopy, with larvae working down the tree, boring galleries in the tree's phloem, preventing the upward transpiration of hydration and soil nutrients.

EAB infestation is insidious, usually with no noticeable early exterior signs or symptoms of distress. Timing from infestation to point-of-no-return for treatment, then mortality, can be as little as two years.

Infected trees pose hazard

Ash trees killed this way quickly become brittle, making them serious public safety hazards and too dangerous to climb for removal by topping.

Pest pressure and tree mortality in the Oxford area appears to be ramping up toward what is described as the "exponential death phase," already experienced to our north.

Overall tree health and any level of distress are best assessed after leaf set in May, with a treatment window through late September. Treatment is best done when trees are actively transpiring so insecticide will move into the tree canopy. When possible, watering both before and after treatment is recommended to promote transpiration and uptake.

Enterprise grants \$1,500

Eshbaugh, an AMV past president, wrote the proposal to the Enterprise Holdings Foundation for funds to cover some of the expenses for our 2014 art event and our 2014 conservation program.

That proposal won \$1,500 from EHF. Enterprise Holdings is the parent company of Enterprise, Alamo and National car rentals. Its foundation has contributed "more than \$200 million to thousands of local non-profits focused on community improvement, education and environmental stewardship," according to its Web site.

It is also working with the Arbor Day Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service on the "50 Million Tree Pledge." The goal is to plant 50 million trees over 50 years, adding up to a gift of more than \$50 million.

—Mark Gilmore, AMV board member-at-large,
with information from Hardy Eshbaugh



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Audubon Miami Valley is
an incorporated,
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**We envision a world
where humankind
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2013-2014 OFFICERS

President, Gail Reynolds
greynolds@amvohio.org
513.524.6217

Vice President, Mickey Simonds
msimonds@amvohio.org

Treasurer, Neil Poppendeck
npoppendeck@amvohio.org

Secretary, Sarah Michael
smichael@amvohio.org

Members-at-large
Janet Ziegler
jziegler@amvohio.org
Libby Birch
lbirch@amvohio.org
Mark Gilmore
mgilmore@amvohio.org

2013-2014 APPOINTED
COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audit Committee, Larry Gersbach
lgersbach@amvohio.org

Citizen Science, open

Communications,
Mickey Simonds
Communications@amvohio.org

Conservation, Dick Munson
dmunson@amvohio.org

Development, Sarah Michael
smichael@amvohio.org

Education, Linda Williams
llwilliams@amvohio.org

Field Trips, Jim Michael
jmichael@amvohio.org

Finance, Neil Poppendeck
npoppendeck@amvohio.org

Hospitality, Barbara Eshbaugh
beshbaugh@amvohio.org

Membership, Liz Woedl
lwoedl@amvohio.org

Newsletter,
Judi Hetrick, John Blocher
jhetrick@amvohio.org

Programs, Hardy Eshbaugh
heshbaugh@amvohio.org

Special Projects, Marlene Hoffman
mfhoffman@amvohio.org

Web site, Liz Woedl
lwoedl@amvohio.org