Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society Feb-April 2011



www.wcasohio.org

The Feathered Fi

Dike 14 to be Site of February 20 Event

by Tom Romito, WCAS President

Get set for a big birding event this winter! Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve, formerly known as Dike 14, will be the site of the 2011 Winter Photo Safari and Backyard Bird Count on Sunday, February 20 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Come experience Cleveland's only Nature Preserve with its amazing winter landscapes along the shore of Lake Erie. The best views of Cleveland's skyline and stunning views of Lake Erie will be yours! You can submit your best photograph of the Nature Preserve for display in March at the new Exploration Station at the Cleveland Lakefront State Park office. Group Photo Safaris will be held at 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual event held nationwide to engage bird watchers of all ages and skill levels in counting birds. By participating in the count at the Nature Preserve, you will be helping to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the United States. There will be a group bird hike at 1:30 p.m. and again at 2:30 p.m. You can also take self-guided hikes anytime between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

To begin the Winter Photo Safari and the Backyard Bird Count, meet at the Cleveland Lakefront State Park Office. To get there, take I-90/SR-2 and exit at Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. Turn to the north (towards the lake). After the stop sign, continue along the roadway as it curves to the right (toward Bratenahl) and goes up a slight hill. The driveway is on the left at the top of the hill. It is a split drive so when you turn left stay to the left. The park office building is a one-story building with the American flag out front. Enter the front doors of the building - the Exploration Station is housed in the right wing off



www.dike14.org

the lobby. There will be free hot chocolate for everyone!

The Winter Photo Safari and Backyard Bird Count will be sponsored by the Dike 14 Environmental Education Collaborative (EEC). Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society is one of 14 non-profit organizations in Cleveland that comprise the EEC. The goal of the EEC is to provide environmental education for students, teachers, families, neighbors and the greater community, and to promote the stewardship of the Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve as a unique place to connect people and nature on Cleveland's lakefront.



www.dike14.org

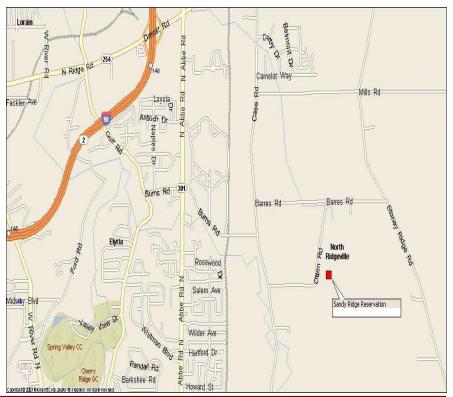
Inside this issue:					
Field trips	page 2 & 3				
Programs	Page 4				
Great Backyard Bird Count	Page 5				
Weeders In The Wild	Page 5				
Christmas Bird Count	Page 6				
Contact Us	Page 7				
Volunteer Opportunities	Page 7				
Rocky River IBA News	Page 7				

Field Trips

Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011...8:30 AM...Sandy Ridge Reservation

<u>Tim Fairweather</u> will be our leader on this field trip to **Sandy Ridge Reservation**, a Lorain Metropark. We will visit the meadow and woods areas, then the observation mound in search of raptors and other winter residents. Dress warmly!

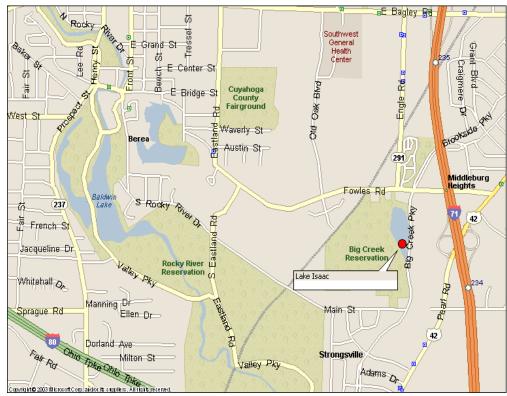
Directions: From the Greater Cleveland area, take I-90 to the Rt. 254 exit and turn left onto Rt. 254 and continue to Rt. 301, past Lorain Community College. Turn left onto Burns Rd, then right onto Case Rd., then left onto Otten Rd. Continue until you see the Sandy Ridge sign. **Or** take I-480 to Clague Rd. and turn right (north) on Clague. Continue to Center Ridge Rd., turn left (west) onto Center Ridge and go to Case Rd. Turn right on Case, then right onto Otten Rd. to Sandy Ridge Reservation.



Sunday, March 13, 2011...8:00 AM...Lake to Lake Trail

Join our trip leader Nancy
Howell for winter birds along
the Cleveland Metroparks
Lake to Lake Trail in Middleburg Hts. We will meet at Lake
Isaac, and also station some
vehicles at the end of the trail
for a quick ride back to the
start. The variety of habitats
should provide a good mix of
winter residents. *First day of
Daylight Savings Time!

Directions: Take I-71 south from Cleveland to the Pearl Rd. (Rt. 42) exit in Middleburg Hts.. Turn left (north) onto Pearl and continue to Fowles Rd. Turn left onto Fowles, go to Big Creek Pkwy. and turn left onto it. Continue to the parking lot for Lake Isaac which is on the right.



Page 2 www.wcasohio.org THE FEATHERED FLYER

Field Trips

Sunday, April 3, 2011...8 AM...Lake Erie Nature & Science Center

The Lake Erie Nature & Science Center is on the edge of the Huntington Reservation of Cleveland Metroparks. Join us as we bird the woods and fields by the Nature Center, and along Lake Erie at Huntington Beach. Target species are: early spring migrants, woodpecker, barred owl, screech owl, migrating water fowl and gulls along the lake.

Mary Anne Romito will be our leader, along with other LENSC staff. After the bird walk, we will enjoy meeting with some of the resident owls at LENSC.

From the West, via Interstate 90 East:

Exit 156, Crocker-Bassett Roads.

Turn left on Crocker Road, which becomes Bassett Rd at the railroad tracks.

Turn right on Wolf Road. Entrance will be .7 miles on the north (left) side of the road. From the East, via Interstate 90 West:

Exit 159, Columbia Road north.

Turn right on Columbia Road.

Turn left on Wolf Road. Entrance will be 1.9 miles on the right side of the road.

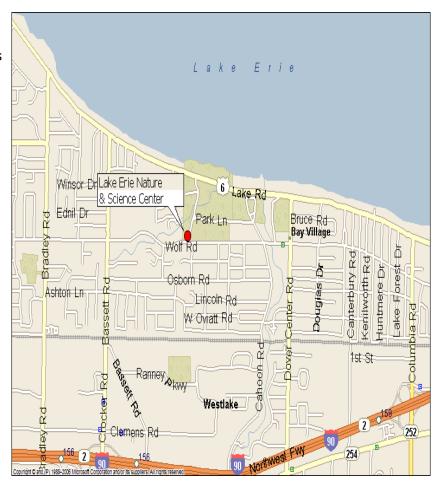
From the South, Interstate 480 East OR West:

Exit 3, Stearns Road.

From 480 Eastbound, turn left/ From 480 West bound, turn right onto Stearns.

Stearns will become Crocker Rd. After passing over I-90 at the railroad tracks, Crocker will become Bassett Road.

Turn right on Wolf Road. Entrance will be .7 miles on the left side of the road.



Spring Bird Walks

See the spring migrants during the Audubon spring bird walks. The walks will be held each **Sunday from April 10 to May 15, 2011, at 7:30 a.m.** A full list of walk locations can be found on our web site:

www.wcasohio.org/spring_bird_walks.htm

The following is a partial list of local walks: Lake Isaac in Middleburg Hts. Hinckley Reservation at bridge on State Rd. Huntington Beach off Lake Rd. in Bay Village

CanalWay Center in Cuyahoga Hts.
Rocky River Nature Center, North Olmsted
Station Rd. Bridge Trailhead, Brecksville
Hemlock Creek Picnic Area, Bedford

Welcome New Members

Colleen Croninger



WCAS will be receiving a payment of \$2583
from National Audubon Chapter Services in
January. This came to us because of
Tom Romito's efforts in submitting the WCAS
Chapter Annual Report. Thanks Tom!

Programs

All WCAS programs are free and open to the public. Our monthly programs are held the first Tuesday of each month, September through May, at Rocky River Nature Center, 24000 Valley Parkway, North Olmsted, Ohio. For a map and directions see www.wcasohio.org.

Please note that our Feb. 1 meeting will NOT be at the Rocky River Nature Center...it will be at the Cleveland Zoo in the Reinberger Building next to the main entrance on the lower level.

Tuesday, February 1, 2011 at 7:30 PM

Attracting birds to one's home or apartment is more than just putting out food and water. Casey Tucker, founder and director of the American Avian Conservation Association, will share information about landscaping and planting for birds to provide better habitat. Learn how birds interact with plants, what attracts birds throughout the year, beneficial plants and plants that can actually be harmful. Join us for the program, "If You Plant It They Will Come: Native Plant Landscaping for Birds."





Tuesday, March 1, 2011 at 7:30 PM

A growing body of research indicates that urbanization has a profound influence on avian communities. <u>Jennifer Mizen</u> (Graduate Associate from OSU) will discuss what effects have been documented thus far and how human decisions may be driving the observed changes. She will also provide information on how individuals and communities can help birds in their communities. Join us for her program,

"The Influence of Human Decisions on Avian Communities."



Tuesday, April 5, 2011 at 7:30 PM

If you have ever seen or heard a loon, it seems they are addicting. Dr. Jay Mager from Ohio Northern University will present his program, "A Little Lecture for Those Who Love Loons." The program incorporates life history, behavior, and conservation and management of current loon populations in North America. You don't have to be loony to enjoy this program, just interested in preserving a bit of wildness.



Page 4 www.wcasohio.org THE FEATHERED FLYER

Citizen Science Events



"Be Part of Something BIG" is the theme of the Great Backyard Bird Count taking place February 18-21, 2011. Be citizen scientists right in your own backyard, neighborhood, park or schoolyard. Have fun while you are out counting birds, but remember the data you send in is also important to the future of the birds and the habitat in which they reside.

It is easy to get involved! During the four day event you may choose to go out one day or all four <u>for at least 15 minutes</u> and keep track of the highest number of individuals of each bird species <u>seen at one time</u>. The more time out in the field ... or watching your feeder ... the better!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is open to ALL ages and skill levels and participation is free. Report your sightings online at www.BirdCount.org and see what others in your area or around the country have reported. For more information as to how to participate, log onto: www.BirdCount.org and see how you can you can help the birds.



The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. Sponsors are Wild Birds Unlimited, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Cornell Information Technologies, and the National Science Foundation.

Weeders In The Wild...Porcelain Berry Snap...February 13, 12-2:00PM

Bring your sweetie and "snap" some porcelain berry vines! This **weed removal project** is open to volunteers who would like to participate. We will be manually pulling this invasive plant from the <u>Brookside Reservation Area</u> so that native plants can have a better chance to bloom come spring. This area is located in a butterfly monitoring transect, and native plants help support our important pollinators.

Bring gloves and dress for the weather. The event

will be cancelled in the case of extreme weather. To keep you cozy, complimentary HOT chocolate, HOT chili, and HOT dogs will be served thanks to members of Friends of Big Creek.

Please RSVP to Gayle Albers, Conservation Coordinator at <u>216-635-2526</u> or <u>gla@clevelandmetroparks.com</u> but it's OK to just show up also.

Want to be a WCAS Board Member?

Remember that opportunities abound in WCAS. How about considering these:

Data Entry/Spreadsheet Development Presentation/Teaching Outreach Contact Development Hospitality for Meetings Fundraising Planning
Arranging Field Trips
Leading Tours or Field Trips
Event Participation
Record Keeping

2010 Christmas Bird Count News

Lakewood (west side of Cleveland) Count Circle

With temperatures hovering in the mid to lower 20's and overcast skies one would think this would not be a bad winter day. It was the wind that made it tough, not only on the CBC participants, but on the birds as well. Twenty mile per hour winds with gusts to 30 made it mighty cold, especially along the lake. Several inches of snow on the ground since Thanksgiving and below normal temperatures in December really tightened up the winter and froze ponds, lakes and streams. The Lakewood Christmas Count species numbers were down a little from previous years, but the number and effort of participants was terrific. Sixtynine (69) species were sighted the day of the CBC and three (3) species during count week. Seventy (70) participants spent 59.50 hours out in the field and 13.75 hours watching feeders. Another .50 hours was spent owling.

Lake Erie was ice covered close to shore and the fierce winds made it not only cold but difficult to see through teary eyes. Waterfowl and gulls were not as concentrated nor as diverse as in the past. The teams along the Lake Erie shoreline did a fabulous job, no doubt about that. Big water ducks were low in diversity and in number. All three species of Mergansers were seen but in low numbers. Singles of Canvasback, Redhead, Surf Scoter and White-winged Scoter were nice finds. Common Goldeneye (169) was the largest number of big water ducks sighted. What was especially great was a single female Harlequin Duck. How it was seen and identified must be a story in itself Two Tundra Swans were also nice sightings.

Continuing with Lake Erie sightings, gull numbers were respectable, but some were much lower that usual. Ring-billed Gulls, while outnumbering other gulls, were way down in number. A single Boneparte's Gull and Iceland Gull were wonderful finds. Note that no Double-crested Cormorant, nor loons or grebes were found.

A species of dabblers (Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, and Northern Pintail) were found at a few inland sites. These were fortunate sightings since most inland ponds and lakes were frozen and even slower moving waters on streams and along larger rivers were icing up which left only faster flowing water and lakes with aerators. A single Great Blue Heron, and

Compiler: Nancy Howell

only a couple American Coot and Belted Kingfisher were seen again due to lack of open water. The number of Wild Turkey is increasing year by year.

Diurnal raptors were fairly visible with 13 Bald Eagles sighted. Three American Kestrels were found in different areas and a single Merlin was noted. Oops, where were the Peregrine Falcons? Too windy? While seen during count week, they were not seen on count day which is highly unusual. Two Great Horned Owls and two Barred Owls rounded out the nocturnal raptors.

Woodpecker numbers were down in general – again, the wind? Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen at a couple of sites. Nice.

In general the numbers of songbirds seemed a bit lower. Was it the continued snow cover, cold or wind? The feeder-friendly birds such as chickadee, titmouse and nuthatch numbers were good. Neither Red-breasted Nuthatch nor Brown Creeper was tallied. Carolina Wrens are surviving around feeders. Winter Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglets were nice touches. It is hard to imagine these tiny birds surviving the tough weather, is plenty of fruit around (honeysuckle, flowering crabapple, hawthorn and decorative pear) which attracted some of the fruit eaters, such as Eastern Bluebird, American Robin and European Starling (ugh). Oops, where were the Cedar Waxwings? Why not more Northern Mockingbirds? A single mocker was found which is the lowest number we have had in years. No Yellowrumped (Myrtle) Warblers were seen this year. Have they eaten all the poison ivy fruits already?

Sparrow sightings were fairly good. A single Eastern Towhee, Fox Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow were goodies. A single Chipping Sparrow was noted during count week. The blackbirds did not appear in numbers with the exception of Common Grackle which were noted by several teams. A single Brown-headed Cowbird was seen on count week. A single Common Redpoll and a few Pine Siskins rounded out the list nicely.

A HUGE THANK YOU to all 70 participants in the 2010 Christmas Bird Count. If you were outdoors, watched feeders, tooled around in your car remember all of your hard work is deeply appreciated and it shows in the results. The following are the participants:

Jan Auburn, Ken and Lois Ballas, Mary Bartos, Boumphrey, Nancy Brewer, Erik Bruder, Diane Busch, Mogyordy, Bill Deininger, Mark Eberling, Maria and Lisa Giba, Ted Gilliland, Joanne and Terry Gorges, Heflich, Jan Holkenborg, Don and Nancy Howell, Kluskens, Claire Kovacs, Jeff and Marian Kraus, Howard Besser, Dennis and Kit Birch, Sarah Lee and Mary Cavano, Daniel Cica, Sally Deems-Chuck Finchum, Bob Finkelstein, Jerry Friedman, Dave Graskemper, Betty Green, Paul Grubach, Jim Mary Lou Hura, Larry Keeger, Ethan Kistler, Claire JoAnn Kubicki, Ray Kutnar, Dave LeGallee, Paula

Lozano, Terri Martincic, Jim McCarty, Lucy McKernan, Marie Monago, Gary Neuman, Marianne Nolan, Penny O'Connor, Steven Ollay, Michael Pasek, Earl and Martha Peck, Chris Pierce, Larry Richardson, MaryAnne and Tom Romito, Larry Rosche, Jeremiah Roth, Scott and Christine Rush, Inga Schmidt, Andrea and Robert Segedi, Judy Semroc, Paul Sherwood, Page Stephens, Kathleen Tiburzi and Julie West.

Page 6 www.wcasohio.org THE FEATHERED FLYER

Volunteer Opportunities

WCAS Fourth Annual UltraWalk and UltraBird is coming! May 26,27 & 28, 2011

Mark your calendars and plan to be where the action is on these dates. A fun fund-raiser for a great cause.....promoting and protecting the Rocky River Important Bird Area.

Our five year RR IBA Forest Breeding Bird Survey is over, but WCAS is still involved in this area. Look for details on our website and in our next newsletter.

Buzzard Sunday March 20, 2011 VOLLUNTEERS NEEDED

WCAS would like to have a display table set up at Hinckley Township's annual Buzzard Sunday event held at Hinckley Elementary School. This is a very popular event and would allow us to reach out to the general public with our message of protecting the Rocky River Important Bird Area, as well as educating people on the joys of birding and habitat preservation. Materials and handouts will be provided. Contact Liz Clingman at: 440-799-1881 o r eclingman@sbcglobal.net

North Coast Nature Festival Saturday April 16

Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society would like to have a display at this year's North Coast Nature Festival held at Rocky River Nature Center. We need volunteers to staff our table in shifts from 9:30 to 1:30 or 1:30 to 5:00 on Saturday. This is a great opportunity to meet prospective new members as well as introduce our organization and projects to the general public. Please contact Liz Clingman at: 440-799-1881 or eclingman@sbcglobal.net

Rocky River Important Bird Area News: "Berea Will See Three Dams Removed In Waterways"

Excerpts from article by Joanne B. DuMound; Sun News; January 6, 2011

Three water barriers within Berea city limits will be removed in the Baldwin Creek area to allow better fish passage and enhance the in-stream habitat. Partners in the low-head dam removal project include the Rocky River Watershed Council, Cleveland Metroparks, the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District, and the city. Baldwin Creek begins in North Royalton and flows west through Parma, Middleburg Heights, Strongsville and

Berea before entering the East Branch of the Rocky River. A 2001 study said two dams on the creek may be preventing recolonization from the East Branch of darters and other fish species which are an important biological component of waterways. This will be funded by Ohio EPA programs.

A public information meeting about this project is set for Feb.1, 7:30 pm at the Berea Library.

Contact Us

WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Visit our website www.wcasohio.org



WCAS Chapter Newsletter

Published 4 times per year in January, April, July and October by the Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society

www.wcasohio.org is the official Chapter Web Site.

WCAS Board Meetings held at 6:30 pm prior to each program at Rocky River Nature Center. General public and WCAS members welcome.

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Terri Martincic
Stan Searles
Scott Rush



Chapter Supporter Application

Why wait! Join WCAS as a chapter supporter.

Chapte	er Membership	o year: Sep	tember	1 through A	ugust 31	
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Page 8