



## Christmas Bird Count 2008...Don't Miss Out!

By Nancy Howell

Dare I say it??? Winter ... there I said it, but more than just the winter season, it is time to start thinking about National Audubon's **Christmas Bird Count 2008!** For 109 years data has been collected by folks like you who have gone out in the field or watched your feeders and counted the birds. Long-term data like this can reveal population trends, or if a species is expanding its range ... or not. In effect YOU are the "citizen scientist" providing information that can help in protecting birds as well as other wildlife.

Mark your calendar because our area's **Christmas Bird Count** sponsored by Western Cuyahoga Audubon will take place on **Sunday, December 28.** As the compiler for the Lakewood point, which covers a large portion of the Lake Erie shoreline, south to the Strongsville border, east to the Tri-C West campus in Parma/Parma Hts. and west to just beyond the Lorain Co. line, I am looking to add new people and areas that have not been covered in the past (please see map and link to the Christmas bird count on the field trip portion of our website). Our seasoned counters have done a spectacular job and relish new people joining them.

The way the day works is that groups go out in the field, or individuals watch feeders (as long as they are in our count circle) in the morning, and count species and individual birds. We then gather at 1 PM at the Rocky River Nature Center to do an initial compilation of our lists and have a chili lunch (chili, beverages, dessert). Afterward, some may choose to hit final areas and find those elusive species. Don't forget owling time in the morning! A list of areas covered are in this article, but any neighborhood in our count circle, such as a cemetery, park or greenspace, are all fair game on that day! Could this year be the year that we reach 70 species? If you are new and would like to participate, wonderful! I can place you in your own area or have you join a group already going out. If you participated in the past, please let me know what people you will have in your group and area(s) you normally hit. To help National Audubon defray the cost of compiling the Christmas Bird Count data there is a

\$5.00 fee for which you will receive a compilation of area data from the count.

Below are a couple of areas I want to cover more thoroughly, so if you want to change areas or you know of someone that might be interested in walking or driving some areas, let me know.

Far western edge of count range – Jaycox Rd. in Avon (Lorain Co.) north to Walker Rd., east to Bradley Rd., south on Bradley to Center Ridge Rd./Mills Rd. There are several golf courses in that area and some cemeteries that can also be checked out.

Tri-C Western Campus, Nathan Hale Park (Parma Hts.), John Day Park (Parma). This is a chunk of contiguous properties bordered by Pleasant Valley Rd. (south), York Rd. (east), Meadowbrook Blvd. (north) and Parma Park Rd. (west)

Walking Big Creek Parkway from Stumpf Rd. south to Fowles Rd.

Any cemetery, park or greenspace in your neighborhood!

I can be reached by e-mail at: [rhowell@cmnh.org](mailto:rhowell@cmnh.org) or 216-231-4600 ext. 3225 or in the evening at my home number, 440-891-1710. Please recruit new folks, families and young folks, the more eyes, the better! Thank you for your participation.

### Inside this issue:

Field trips	page 2 & 3
Contact Information	Page 3
Programs	Page 4
Cliff Swallows	Page 5
Conservation News	Page 6
Election Information	Page 7
Member Application	Page 7

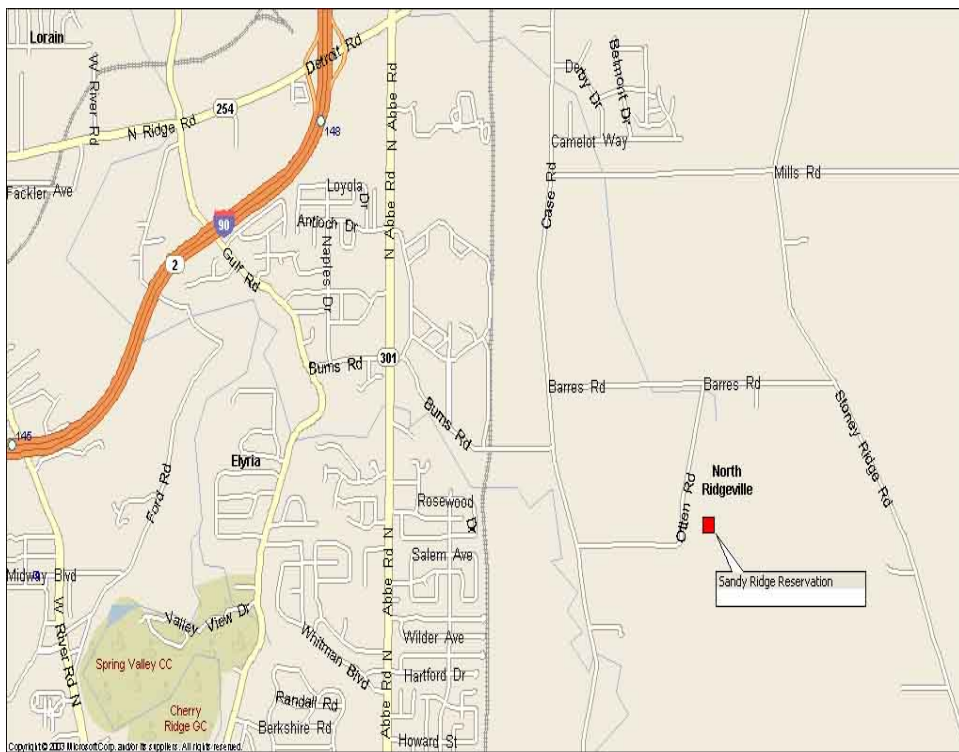
# Field Trips

## Sunday, November 9, 2008...8:30 AM...Sandy Ridge Reservation

Gary Gerrone will be our field trip leader to Sandy Ridge Reservation where we hope to see ducks and other water-fowl.

### Directions:

From the greater Cleveland area, take I-90 to the Rt. 254 exit, left on Rt. 254 to Rt. 301, right on Rt. 301 past Lorain Community College, left on Burns Rd., right on Case Rd., left on Otten Rd. to Sandy Ridge. Or take I-480 to Clague Road., turn right or north on Clague to Center Ridge Road (Rt. 20), turn left or west on Center Ridge to Case Rd., turn right on Case Rd., right on Otten Rd. to Sandy Ridge.



## Sunday, December 28, 2008...Christmas Bird Count

Check out this map of the Christmas Bird Count area to help you decide which areas to bird on count day. Please don't forget to bring a food item to our chili pot luck dinner at the **Rocky River Nature Center at 1:00**. Any side dishes and desserts are also appreciated.

Please address any questions you may have to:

**Nancy Howell, CBC Coordinator for Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society at [nhowell@cmnh.org](mailto:nhowell@cmnh.org) or 440-891-1710.**



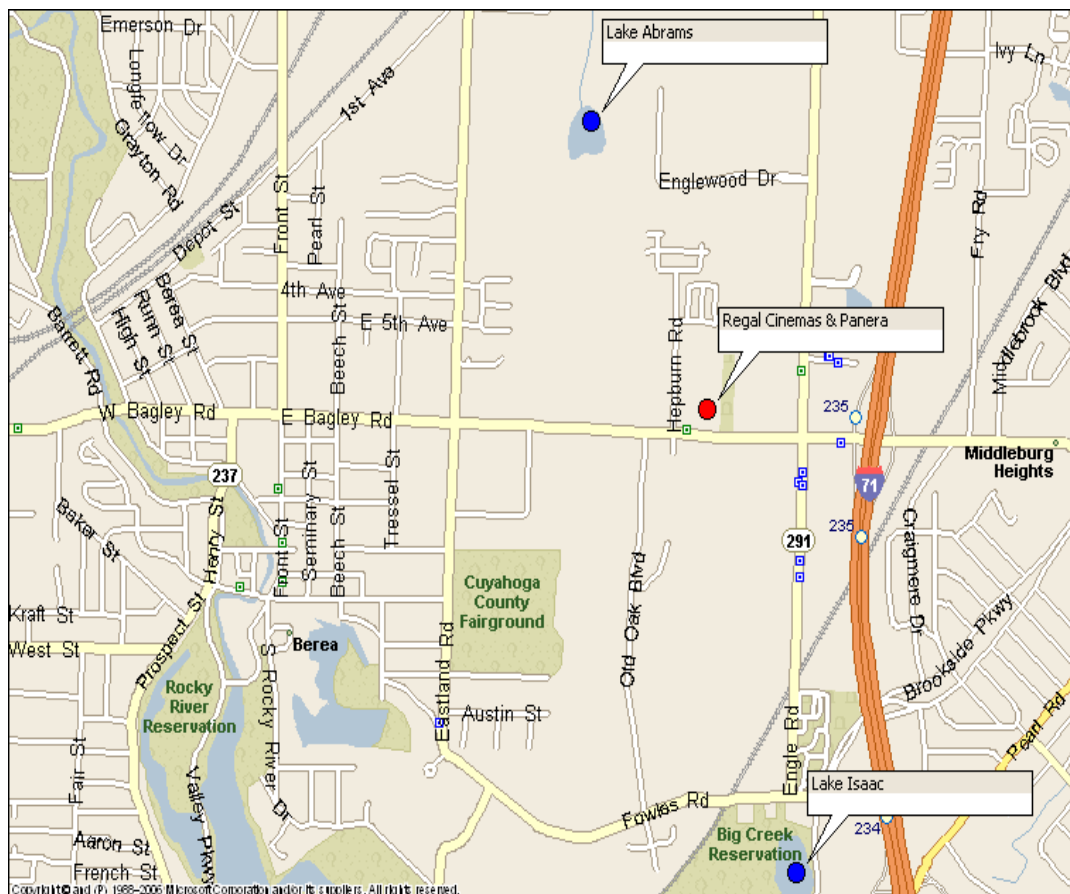
# Field Trips

## Sunday, January 11, 2009...9:00 AM...Lake Abrams to Lake Isaac Trail

Terri Martincic and Wendy Weirich will lead this field trip to look for water fowl and winter residents as we check out this new trail.

### Directions:

We will meet near Lake Abram, in the shopping mall parking lot by the corner of Bagley Road and Hepburn Road. Take I-71 to the Bagley Road Exit 235. Go toward Berea. You will pass Engle Road. Shopping center on right has the Road House, Panera, Regal Cinemas, etc. Turn right at Hepburn Road. Park in shopping center lot beyond Regal Cinema. Trail entrance is across Hepburn from movie theater.



## Contact Us

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### WCAS Chapter Newsletter

Published 4 times per year in January, April, July and October by the Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society  
[www.wcasohio.org](http://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.

### President

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Kathleen Tiburzi

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## Programs

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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](http://www.wcasohio.org).

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### Tuesday, November 4, 2008 at 7:30 PM

Ohio has produced a number of influential ornithologists. Early on, doctors and lawyers, who had a passion for collecting, began the trend. Others followed with research and detailed records. Dwight Chasar will educate us on the men and women who helped build our knowledge of Ohio's birds, and how bird species have fared over the years in his program, "*Birds and the Men and Women Who Loved Them.*"



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### Tuesday, December 2 at 6:30 PM...Potluck Dinner



Join us for our WCAS's annual festive pot luck dinner at which guests bring a side dish, salad or dessert, with the meat and beverages provided by WCAS. We will have a silent auction during dinner, so bring new or gently used items to donate for this fun fundraiser (nature themed items especially appreciated.)

### Tuesday, December 2 at 7:30 PM

The Western Reserve Land Conservancy is dedicated to preserving natural areas and working landscapes, as well as working with landowners, communities and many influential parties. Western Cuyahoga Audubon has assisted WRLC with bird surveys on lands the conservancy is working to set

aside. The presentation "**Conservation in the Western Reserve**" will provide information about the Conservancy, how partnerships with the Conservancy benefit the land, wildlife and people, and how you might become involved.

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### Tuesday, January 6, 2009 at 7:30 PM

Julie West has been banding birds around Shaker Lakes since 2001 as part of her research for Black Swamp Bird Observatory. Julie's project looks at the spring and fall migratory routes of passerines in northeast Ohio. Why band birds anyhow? Do birds really use different habitats on migration?

Julie will discuss her data, the importance of the green space around Shaker Lakes and the top 10 species banded in her presentation, "**Ringing, Recaptures and Recoveries—Bird Banding Highlights from the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.**"



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## Citizen Science

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### Cliff Swallows Nesting in 2008 in the Rocky River Valley

By Mary Anne Romito

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This spring, my husband Tom and I were training for the 31-mile Ultrawalk to raise funds for the Rocky River Important Bird Area survey. During one of our training sessions, I noticed Northern Rough-winged Swallows flying into a cliff along Valley Parkway just south of the Emerald Necklace Marina in Lakewood. Subsequently, I started paying attention to swallows because Terri Martincic, the regional Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas coordinator, urged me to Atlas along Rocky River's Main Stem and East Branch.

While walking with Tom, Stan Searles (Curator of Birds and Aquatics at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo) and several other walkers doing the Ultra Walk on May 24, I noticed Cliff Swallows flying under a traffic bridge on the Valley Parkway just south of the marina. Then, on June 23, I talked to Penny O'Connor, who said she found nesting Cliff Swallows on South Mastick Bridge near Rocky River Nature Center.

To summarize these observations, I found a total of 24 Cliff Swallow nests, 17 of which I am confident contained chicks. In addition, I found 14 Barn Swallow nests, all of which contained chicks. I found the Cliff Swallow nests on six different bridges. Five of these bridges contained only Cliff Swallow nests. The sixth bridge, the Cedar Point bridge, contained both Cliff Swallow nests and Barn Swallow nests. Cleveland Metroparks Naturalist Tim Krynak had this to say about these observations: "That is great news about the cliff swallows. To my knowledge and our recent Cleveland Metroparks Checklists (2004 edition) this is the first documented nesting cliff swallows in Cleveland Metroparks! Great find!"

To place my observations in historical context, I searched the Cleveland Bird Calendar archives (80 percent of which are now on line at [www.clevelandbirdcalendar.com](http://www.clevelandbirdcalendar.com)). The last mention of Cliff Swallows was in May of 1963, when Perry Peskin and Elliot Tramer observed an unsuccessful nest at Squire Valleevue Farm in Hunting Valley. Prior to that in 1934, 1926, 1927, and 1912, there were only mentions during migration. A.B. Williams noted in his seminal 1950 book *Birds of the Cleveland Region* that Cliff Swallows were abundant in Ohio in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but declined during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, probably due to competition with House Sparrows for nest sites, "combined with a shortage of suitable nesting locations on buildings." C.S. Robbins noted in 1986 that Cliff Swallows began to nest under bridges and on dams of large reservoirs. The adults foraged over the lakes as well as adjacent upland fields. This increased adaptability in the choice of nest sites allowed their populations to expand within Ohio and throughout eastern North America.



My findings confirmed the behavior of Cliff Swallows noted in the first Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas in 1985. Most notably, Cliff Swallows may begin nest construction during late April, although these activities are most prominent during May. Most nests with eggs have been reported during June, with the earliest clutches laid in the second half of May and late nesting attempts produce clutches in July. Nests with young have been reported as early as June 15-16 and fledglings by early July. Most young swallows fledge between July 15 and August 5 while late nests may produce fledglings during the second half of August. Further, many colonies are segregated from other swallows, although a few pairs nest with colonies of Barn Swallows.

Of special interest is that all of the Cliff Swallow nests that I observed were located on the undersides of concrete bridges. The superstructures of these bridges (everything below the deck or roadway) were covered with a coarse texture that made it suitable for the swallows to make their nests adhere to the concrete. According to Steven Knowles, architect for the Cleveland Metroparks, these bridges were all constructed in the late 1950s. Most of them were improved in 1997, but only road surfaces were augmented, not the superstructures.

Since nobody reported nesting Cliff Swallows in the Rocky River Valley before, it is possible that the birds never nested there until now. It will be interesting to see if these birds continue their colonies for very long, for the first OBBA noted that few colonies remained in existence for more than two to three years. This will be the focus of future surveys which I plan to conduct.

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# Conservation News

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## Support Issue #2—The Clean Ohio Fund

Issue #2 is a “proposed constitutional amendment to authorize the state to issue bonds to continue the Clean Ohio program for environmental revitalization and conservation”. This will give the state government the ability to conserve natural areas, open spaces and farmlands by acquiring land or interests in land, and provide money for state and local park and recreation facilities that enhance the public use and enjoyment of land, water, forest and other natural resource management projects. (1)

**The Clean Ohio Fund received overwhelming voter support in 2000, and now voters are asked to renew their support of the program by authorizing up to \$200 million in state bonds.** It has fueled 700 projects in 86 of Ohio’s 88 counties, and has resulted in over 14,750 new jobs and nearly \$2.6 billion in private investment. 173 abandoned and polluted industrial sites were cleaned up, as well as 26,000 acres of natural areas 20,000 acres of

prime farmland and 216 miles of recreational trails provided for by the Clean Ohio Fund.

Of particular interest to the Cleveland area, the *Cleveland Metroparks* acquired 33 acres of forest in Mayfield Village with aid from the Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program. The property will be added to the North Chagrin Reservation and includes the headwaters of Foster’s Run and Beecher’s Brook, tributaries of the Chagrin River.

**Remember that this program does NOT require any increase in taxes and will enable state and local governments to be eligible for matching federal funds as well as other public and private funds.**

Sources:  
(1) Proposed Constitutional Amendment Ballot  
(2) Ohio Environmental Council

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## Great Lakes Compact Is Now Law

The Great Lakes Compact, the landmark International agreement that will protect Great Lakes water, passed both houses of Congress and has been signed into law by the president. The Compact will prevent mass export to water-thirsty states in the Southwest, as well as foreign nations around the globe. It also will keep Lake Erie basin water from over use by industry right

here in Ohio.

The Great Lakes contain over 20% of the world’s surface fresh water, however, scientists estimate that only 1% is naturally replenished by rain, snow melt and groundwater. The Compact will help protect this one time gift of the glaciers.

Source: **Audubon Ohio** email newsletter

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## Great Lakes Legacy Act Funding Extended for Two Years

The Senate and House compromised on a two year extension of Great Lakes Legacy Act funding it at the current level of \$50 million a year for sediment remediation projects. The House version originally called for a five year extension at triple this amount of funding. However, the compromise was necessary as Senators from outside the Great Lakes basin were threatening not to pass the bill.

In the last five years, the act successfully remediate and de-listed a number of “Areas of Concern”. The program is vital to the Great Lakes region as the poisons in the Areas of Concern make their way into the Great Lakes, then into our drinking water, our fish and wildlife. The Ashtabula River project clean up was significantly funded by this legislation.

Source: **Audubon Ohio** email newsletter

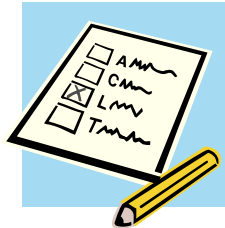
## Election Year Information

### How Does Your Congressman/woman rank on Conservation Issues?

In order to make informed decisions as to what candidates best reflect your conservation priorities, you may want to do some research of your own.

Take a look at the League of Conservation Voters website at: <http://www.lcv.org>. All you have to do is enter your zip code to see who your representatives are. Then you can click on "Scorecard" to see their environmental conservation score for the current session. You may also click on their name for detailed information on specific issues.

Remember that a quick visit to your local library can make the internet available to you...just ask the librarian for help if you need it. You may also do a search using the League of Conservation Voters as subject.



#### Want to contact your state and federal elected officials?

Your state representative can be found at: [www.house.state.oh.us/](http://www.house.state.oh.us/)

Your state senator can be found at: [www.senate.state.oh.us/](http://www.senate.state.oh.us/)

Your federal representative is found at: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) ; 202-224-3121

Your federal senators can be found at: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) ; 202-224-3121

The Ohio Environmental Council has also produced a handy directory of state and federal elected officials with pertinent information. You may view a copy at <http://www.theoec.org> and click on "Resources" or call them at 1-614-487-7506.

## Chapter Supporter Application

**Why wait? Join WCAS as a chapter supporter now!**

Chapter Membership year: September 1 through August 31 (adjustment made for mid-year)

Chapter Dues give you our newsletter, a nametag and a window cling.

<b>Check one:</b>	<b>1 or 2 people</b>	<b>Family</b>
<b>Dues</b>	\$20	\$35

Additional Donation ( <b>Check one</b> )	\$5	\$10	\$20	Other	Total enclosed
				\$ _____	\$ _____

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**Make your check payable to WCAS. Mail to Nancy Howell, treasurer, 19340 Fowles Rd., Middleburg Hts. Ohio, 44130**



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## WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

### VOTE NOVEMBER 4

There are many conservation issues such as global warming, preserving bird habitat, cleaning up the Great Lakes and our local water sheds, etc. that need to be addressed as soon as possible. Remember to vote for **conservation-minded candidates** if you care about these and similar issues.

*\* Remember that shade-grown coffee is now being sold at our monthly meetings.\*  
Good for bird habitat, good tasting and good for WCAS fundraising!*

