

Christmas Bird Count 2013

By Nancy Howell



www.wcasohio.org

The Feathered Flyer

Ho-Ho-Ho and a Merry Halloween to all! Oops, mixed up the holidays a bit but it is NOT too early to consider participating or downright signing up to participate in the Christmas Bird Count for the west side of Cleveland.

The Christmas Bird Count is a Citizen Science Project that has been ongoing for more than 100 years. The data collected goes to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's database. The information gives a glimpse of bird species that are around at the end of December. Some years, like 2012, there were many winter finches that had "irrupted" or moved southward into our area due to a lack of food up north. Other years the waterfowl and gulls are the highlight. Are the birds hanging around in the winter here because the weather has gotten milder? Food more prevalent? New species been found? So many questions that this gold mine of data could help to answer.

This year the Christmas Bird Count for WCAS will be held on SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2013. The portion of the west side that this count encompasses is centered in Lakewood. The circle takes in a lot of the lakefront, west, slightly into Lorain County around Avon Lake, Avon and North Ridgeville, then south to the northern border of Strongsville and east to Brooklyn and some of Parma Hts. The WCAS website, www.wcasohio.org/christmas_bird_count1.htm shows the count circle and a list of areas needing coverage. We can ALWAYS have people walk around their neighborhoods, small parks, cemeteries and any other place to count birds as long as it is within the circle.

Some groups or individuals may be out early in the morning, some a little later. Some individuals go out "owling" in the pre-dawn hours or later that evening. All species as well as individual birds are counted. Yes this does include House Sparrows, Rock Pigeons and European Starlings. Sorry no chickens — Kentucky-fried or not. Some groups and individuals walk in areas, others drive from spot to spot.

No matter what mode of transportation, it is great to get as much of our count circle covered as possible. Hey, there is even the opportunity to tally the birds at your feeder that day — but remember it HAS to be within our count circle. As a participant you may consider being out part of the day or all day.

The Christmas Bird Count is free, but if you would like to make a donation to National Audubon Society to help in compiling the information which will be available electronically only, you may do so at our "thank you" dinner.

We will tally the species and initial numbers at a **buffet dinner at 6:00 pm** (place TBA) for all participants. Please contact Nancy Howell at 440-891-1710 (home), 216-231-4600 ext. 3225 (work) or email at nhowell@cmnh.org for more information, to sign up for an area and for further information about the "thank you" dinner. Check out the WCAS website or the National Audubon website www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/.



Belted Kingfisher courtesy Mary Anne Romito.
Photo from Christmas Bird Count 2012

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FIELD TRIPS

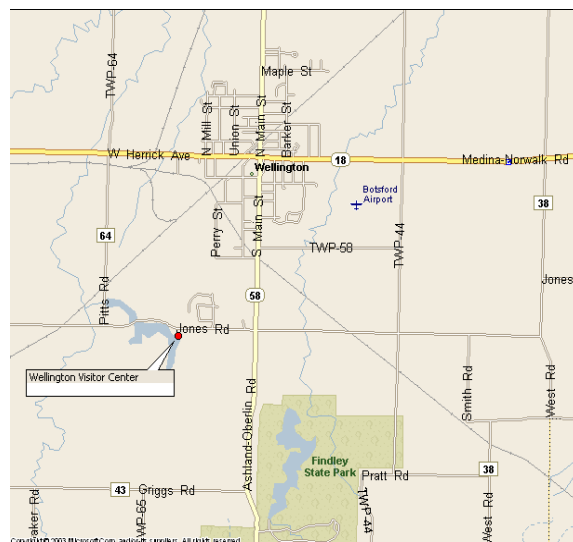
Sunday, November 17, 8:30 a.m. Wellington Reservoir (also see the last article on Page 3)

Trip Leader: Erik Bruder
Target Species: Migrating Waterfowl

Northeast Ohio reservoirs attract a great variety of migrating waterfowl in November. Wellington Reservoir is an ideal viewing spot. In past years we have seen Snow Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose and large flocks of Ruddy Duck.

We will meet at the Wellington Reservoir, at the top of the hill. Park in the lot at the base of the hill. Handicapped parking is available at the top of the hill, next to the reservoir with great views of the water and birds.

From Cleveland & the east: Take I-480 west. Continue west as it becomes Rte. 10 then Rte. 20. Go past the Oberlin exit. Turn left on SR 58, south toward Wellington. Follow SR58 south to Jones Road/CR 5 just south of the City of Wellington. Turn right onto Jones Road, heading west. The reservoir will be on the right. If you get to the Wellington Visitor Center (535 Jones Rd.) on the left, you have gone too far. Restrooms are at the Wellington Visitor Center.



Sunday, December 29 Western Cuyahoga Audubon 114th Christmas Bird Count for the West Side of Cleveland

Our count is part of a three week, nationwide effort to monitor trends in bird populations. We cover a fifteen-mile diameter circle centered in Lakewood. If you wish to participate in the count, contact Nancy Howell at 216-231-4600 extension 3225 (work), 440-891-1710 (home) or email nhowell@cmnh.org.

You may also monitor you own feeders at home if your home is within the count circle. Contact Nancy Howell if you have questions about the count circle.

Join in, have fun, see some birds, bring some friends and help with a Citizen Science Project. Please contact Nancy Howell at 440-891-1710 (home) or 236-231-4600 ext. 3225 (work) for more information and to sign up for an area.

The Christmas Bird Count is part of the Citizen Science projects of Audubon. With online delivery, a new interactive web presence will be able to include photos, summaries and features as they are completed.

There is no fee to participate. To see results from previous years and for more information about Christmas Bird Counts, including results of all the counts done in North and South America visit www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/.

A Thank You buffet dinner for all participants will be provided at the end of the count. The time will be 6:00 p.m., the place to be announced. **Watch your email and our web site (www.wcasohio.org) for more details as we get closer to the date!**

PROGRAMS

All WCAS programs are free & 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 & directions see www.wcasohio.org.

Tuesday, November 5, 7:30 PM

Who-Who-Who's in Ohio?

Owls have long evoked curiosity in people, due to their secretive and often nocturnal habits, fierce predatory behavior, and interesting appearance. Many people might be surprised by how common owls are; it just takes a bit of knowledge and searching to find them. In this program, Naturalist Ken Gober intro-



Barred Owl, courtesy Google

duces us to the owls of Ohio. Where should one look for owls? What are they feeding on? What do they sound like? He will answer some of these questions and help demystify these secretive nighttime birds of prey in his program, ***Who-Who-Who's in Ohio?***



Great Horned Owl, courtesy Google

Tuesday, December 3
Special Time —6:30 PM

Adventures in Bird Photography from Coast to Coast **Potluck and Silent Auction**

Tuesday, December 3 at 6:30 p.m. Enjoy the company of fellow Audubon members at the WCAS potluck dinner and silent auction. We begin early for the dinner and auction. The program starts at 7:30.

For the potluck, bring a tasty dish to share. WCAS provides soft drinks, shade grown coffee, ham and turkey.

For the silent auction, you are invited to bring your gently used or new nature-themed items. Bring a few bucks at the same time, and take home some treasures for yourself or for holiday gifts. Proceeds benefit WCAS.



Indigo Bunting - Bruce DiVaccaro

At 7:30, join photographer and woodcarver, Bruce DiVaccaro, for his presentation of bird photographs taken over the last ten years in the program, ***"Adventures in Bird Photography From Coast to Coast"***. New Jersey to California and Wyoming to Texas, Bruce has assembled a vast collection of beautiful images. Bruce will discuss what qualities he looks for and tries to incorporate into his bird photography as well as how some of the photographs were created.



Bruce DiVaccaro

Wildlife Photography
4606 Linda Lane
Sheffield Village, OH 44054
brucediv@centurylink.net

PROGRAMS cont'd



Joy M. Kiser

Tuesday, January 7, 7:30 PM

Few people are aware of a young Ohio woman, who, as an amateur naturalist and artist, created a volume of stunning artwork, *Illustrations of the Nests and Eggs of the Birds of Ohio*. Genevieve's book has been described as "one of the most beautiful books ever created in America" but few Americans have had the opportunity to see it. The story of Genevieve Jones, her life and her work, will be shared by author, Joy Kiser, in the program, **"America's Other Audubon"**. In addition, Joy will let us know how she discovered Genevieve's work.



Genevieve Estelle Jones

VOLUNTEER SECTION

Science Fair Judging

For the past few years Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society has made special awards at the Northeastern Ohio Science and Engineering Fair (NEOSEF). Our focus is birds and conservation, with emphasis on local watersheds. NEOSEF involves 600 or more top science students in grades 7-12 from a 7-county area. Judging is on Tuesday, March 11, 2014 at Cleveland State University. Judges need to be available from 1 -6 p.m. on that day. If you have some science background and would like to volunteer as a WCAS science fair judge, contact Penny O'Connor 216-676-4859 pjo@earthlink.net.

Volunteer Thank You!

One way that volunteers can help WCAS is to represent the chapter at various events. Thanks go to Nancy Beheim, Penny O'Connor and Diane Sigler who spent a day at the NASA Glenn Research Center Sustainability Fair.

Metroparks Monthly Morning with the Birds at Rocky River Nature Center

Want to learn more about birds in the Rocky River Valley? Attend Rocky River Nature Center's Monthly Morning with the Birds. See the WCAS calendar at www.wcasohio.org or check the Emerald Necklace www.clevelandmetroparks.com/Main/NewslettersPublicationsArchives.aspx

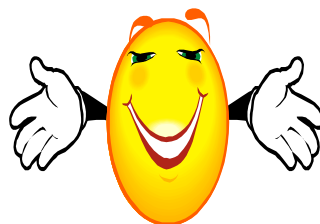
- November 9, 9-11 a.m.
- December 14, 9-11 a.m.
- January 11, 9-11 a.m.

Enjoy a walk with Naturalist Ken Gober along wetlands & through forest. Rocky River Nature Center is located at 24000 Valley Parkway in Rocky River Reservation, north of Cedar Point Road in North Olmsted.

Welcome New Members

Thank you to all of our chapter members who have recently renewed for the 2013-2014 year. We would also like to thank these NEW Western Cuyahoga Chapter members for joining us and, as always, we encourage all of our chapter members to attend programs, field trips and become involved! As a quick reminder to those who have not yet renewed, the application is on the back of this newsletter and on the WCAS website.

- ⇒ Nancy Bartholomew
- ⇒ Douglas Day
- ⇒ Christine England
- ⇒ Robert and Barbara Glover
- ⇒ Sandra James
- ⇒ Steven McClure



- ⇒ Tamyra Mouginis
- ⇒ Louise Strumbel
- ⇒ Judy and Walt VanTilburg
- ⇒ Bev Walborn
- ⇒ Gay Whieldon
- ⇒ George A. Wolf

Remembering Martha: The Last of a Species

By Nora Ebie, WCAS Vice President

The Passenger Pigeon, once probably the most numerous bird on the planet, made its home in the limitless forests that once covered eastern and central North America. Their flocks were so dense that they would darken the sky for hours as they passed overhead. Estimated populations from the 19th century ranged from 1 to 4 billion birds. The Passenger Pigeon once comprised up to 40% of the total number of birds in North America. This may be the only species for which the exact time of extinction is known.

The last nesting birds were reported in the Great Lakes region in the 1890's. The last reported individuals in the wild were shot in Pike County, Ohio on March 24, 1900. Overhunting, the clearing of forests for agriculture, and perhaps other factors doomed the species. Their decline was well under way by the 1850's.

The last known Passenger Pigeon was named after George Washington's wife, Martha. While the history of Martha is unclear, it is generally accepted that she was hatched in 1885 and became the only known surviving Passenger Pigeon at the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914, after her two male companions died earlier that year. Martha died of old age on September 1, 1914. She was found lifeless on her cage's floor.

Who could have ever imagined that, within a few decades, the once most numerous bird on Earth would be forever gone?

Martha has become a symbol of the threat of extinction. As we approach her 100-year anniversary of her death – the extinction of a species – Western Cuyahoga Audubon is proud to be joining with the Kirtland Bird Club and Greater Audubon Society of Cleveland to remember the event in a **friend-raising** program to be held this coming March.

We will be showing the documentary film **"The Lost Bird Project."** This film is a documentary about the stories of five birds driven to extinction in modern times and sculptor Todd McGrain's project to memorialize them. The film follows the road-trip that McGrain and his brother-in-law, Andy, take as they search for the locations where the birds were last seen in the wild and negotiate for permission to install McGrain's large bronze sculptures there.



John Ruthven's latest painting -- "Martha, The Last Passenger Pigeon"
Courtesy www.cincinnati.com

Additionally, we will have Harvey Webster, of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, introduce the film by speaking about the life of the Passenger Pigeon. After the film, we will end on the note of looking into what our groups and others do to help prevent extinctions. We will have representatives from local conservation efforts, as well as those outside the US, speak about their experiences and their current initiatives in conservation here and abroad.

This combined event will be free and open to members and non-members. I would like you to think about which of these dates you would like for the event: **Thur. 3/6 7:00 – 9:30 pm; Sat. 3/8 5:30 – 8:00 pm; Sun. 3/9 3:00 – 5:30 pm.**

I would also like you, our wonderful and appreciated WCAS membership, to ask 3 to 5 of your family, friends, colleagues, or neighbors to this very special event, because . . .

Forgetting is another kind of extinction.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON JOHN RUTHVEN'S LATEST PAINTING AND/OR TO SEE IT IN COLOR, GO TO <http://tinyurl.com/mpfxmjt>

WCAS endorses Issue 80 - Our Parks are Worth It!

The following is an excerpt from an open letter by Catherine Timko, Executive Director of the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center: "We ask ... anyone who appreciates the beautiful park system...to vote yes on Issue 80. The levy provides approximately 62% of operating funds for all aspects of Cleveland Metroparks. Its successful passage ensures continuation of our region's parks, trails, Zoo, picnic areas and conservation efforts for generations to come."



Helping our Raptors

Ohio's raptors were once made scarce by purposeful killing and by pesticides. Now we commonly see Red-tailed Hawks as we travel our highways. Cooper's Hawks have adapted to suburban environments. Peregrine Falcons patrol our cities in search of pigeons. Bald Eagles are now nesting in Ohio by the hundreds when in the past there were only a few pairs in the entire state. Yet, raptors face many human-induced threats. You can help them.

In July, Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society visited the Medina Raptor Center. Director Laura Jordan shared some ways to keep these birds safe and healthy.

1. Leave dead trees standing if they are not dangerous. They provide nesting and roosting sites for owls and other raptors.
2. Avoid using pesticides and poisons in your yard. These poisons make their way up the food chain to top-level predators like raptors, causing nest failures, injury and death.
3. Don't throw food in ditches by the road. It attracts rodents, luring raptors into the path of vehicles.
4. Hunters, please switch to steel, brass or plastic ammunition. Leftover lead shot is a significant hazard to waterfowl and raptors.
5. If you fish, dispose of fishing line properly. It can tangle birds, injuring or starving them.
6. Keep cats indoors. They are efficient killers of all kinds of birds.

Carbon Offset Project Update

Modeled after the Carbon Offset Bird Project launched at the 2011 Midwest Birding Symposium, Western Cuyahoga Audubon has begun a project to offset the carbon impact of some of the driving done during our field trips. The process involves participants voluntarily contributing toward the fund based on mileage & the size of vehicle driven. The WCAS website has more information & a handy form to calculate the amount you wish to donate. Click on Field Trip then Carbon Offset Project. Money generated will go toward habitat preservation & restoration in the Rocky River Important Bird Area or other area within the range of the Western Cuyahoga Chapter. Consider contributing to the Carbon Offset Project when you take a birding trip. The birds say, "Thank you".



Cardinal courtesy Google

Total collected to date - \$695.26

Contact Us

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WCAS Chapter Newsletter

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Official Chapter Web Site

www.wcasohio.org

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WCAS Board Meetings are open to all members. Consult the WCAS calendar or contact any board member for dates

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WESTERN CUYAHOGA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter Supporter Application

Don't wait! Join WCAS now as a chapter supporter.

Chapter Membership year: September 1 through August 31

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

Please select your option:

☐ 1 or 2 people \$20 ☐ Family \$35 ☐ Organization \$55

ADDITIONAL DONATION (Check one)

☐ \$5.00 ☐ \$10.00 ☐ \$20.00 ☐ Other \$_____ **Total Donation: \$_____**

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Make check payable to WCAS.

Mail to Nancy Howell, Treasurer 19340 Fowles Rd., Middleburg Hts. Ohio, 44130

