

MINUTES OF THE WCAS STUDY GROUP MEETING

The WCAS Study Group met on November 28, 2005 at the Book and Bean Coffee Shop in Berea. In attendance were eight members: Kit Birch, Liz Clingman, Nancy Howell, Mary Lou Hura, Terri Martincic, Dan Petit, Mary Anne Romito, and Diana Steel. The purpose of the meeting was to plan for the future monitoring of the Rocky River IBA, which WCAS has adopted.

1. Prior to Dan's arrival, the Chapter Supporter list was divided up between those present so that each member has approximately 16 people to call for volunteer recruitment purposes. It was agreed these calls would be started after the holidays.
2. Dan began the meeting by defining the purpose of point counts: To count all birds seen or heard within a prescribed *distance* from the observer during a prescribed *length of time* at a pre-determined *location*; recording of birds is called a *Survey*.
3. Dan distributed a handout defining all aspects of doing a random survey using point counts. He stated that using correct terms is essential for accurate data collection. Each location where a survey is conducted is called a *Point Count Station*, or simply *Station*. The person doing the survey is called the *Observer*; the other person present is called the *Recorder*. The length of each survey will be 10 minutes. Each volunteer needs to do three surveys of the same station between late May and early July. Dan will set up the 50 stations for us, so we will need ten survey teams. Temperature, wind speed and precipitation will need to be considered and recorded also.
4. Dan and his wife are able to train between 20 to 30 people at a time to do accurate surveys. He suggested we do two sessions of between one and a half, to two hours each, separated by at least a half hour break. He will provide a manual for all participants, instructional slides, outdoor practice, lecture and discussion. It was suggested that light refreshments be served at break time.
5. WCAS needs to decide what standard of proficiency we want to expect of our observers. To be really useful, a high proficiency of over 90% correct in bird call identification is probably best. Those less able will be needed as recorders.
6. Dan will provide most materials needed such as forms, maps, site descriptions, a draft list of birds most likely to be found in the Rocky River IBA, etc. WCAS may provide whatever else is needed such as clip boards. Mary Anne volunteered to contact ODNR to obtain free bird identification CDs.
7. It was decided that early April would be a good time to put on the training workshop. Kit will call RRNC to determine if Saturday, April 9, 2006 is available for our group's use.
8. While brainstorming ways to recruit volunteers for this project, Dan suggested we hold an event to generate interest and enthusiasm for making a difference in our own local birding treasure, the Rocky River IBA! We decided that a type of "kick off" party about 1 hour in length with light refreshments provided would be a fun way to do this. Kit will call the RRNC to see if March 1 is available for this purpose.
9. Other recruitment tools to be used: inform the Kirtland Bird Club and Ohio Bird List Serve, put article in WCAS Feathered Flyer, emails to Audubon members. More ideas are welcome.

10. The subject of alternative surveys was next discussed as a way to involve more people in less time intensive ways. Dan suggested that we could do one specie type surveys, such as with crows, cowbirds, or chimney swifts. This would involve a volunteer counting all sightings of the selected bird for a certain amount of time, at a place of their choosing within the Rocky River IBA, at least once a week. Another idea would be for volunteers to “adopt a wetland” within the RR IBA, and identify all birds seen there each time they visit all spring and summer. Since this is lower quality data, there would have to be a lot of people doing this to generate meaningful data. Dan could provide forms for these less rigid protocol surveys. He would also provide maps of RR IBA boundaries.

11. We will need a part-time coordinator to help put all the data generated together in a meaningful form, as well as keep tabs on volunteer activities and communication. The Coordinator Group is working on this. Dan suggested that we may be able to use a part-time person provided by the Metroparks for this spring as an interim solution. He stressed that we need this person for the 2006 season.

12. Dan also suggested that WCAS generate a “Memorandum of Understanding” between it and the Metroparks to officially be able to do this as a joint venture. WCAS may recruit Pat Poole to write this up.