

MINUTES OF WCAS STUDY GROUP MEETING

September 12, 2005

The Study Group of the Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society met at the Berea Library to begin planning for how we want to implement our goal of adopting the Rocky River Important Birding Area (IBA). In attendance were Claudia Anders, Kit Birch, Laurie Boylan, Dave Lewis, Nancy Howell, Mary Lou Hura, Terri Martincic, Dan Petit, Mary Anne Romito, and Diana Steel.

1. Kit Began the meeting by sharing information from the “Avian Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) Team Program” printout obtained from the www.audubon.org website. This is one of the Audubon Society’s Citizen Science collaborations with the birding public.
2. Dan Petit, skilled naturalist from the Cleveland Metroparks, led our group in formulating possible courses of action we could take by brainstorming the following questions:
 1. What species are in our Rocky River IBA?
 2. What is the density of each species?
 3. What is the quality of private land as compared to the Metroparks land?
 4. What is a given action going to mean for the biological diversity of the area?
 5. What is important to maintaining biodiversity and quality habitat?
 6. What are the current management practices of the Metroparks in our IBA?
3. Through this discussion, we came up with a possible goal for WCAS: “Establish bird counts in a way that would help the Cleveland Metroparks manage its natural resources within the Rocky River IBA.”
4. Dan told us he can set up random points along the Rocky River IBA and provide aerial coverage and maps, as well as provide some training on how to collect data. He warned us about producing “fuzzy data” caused by not doing accurate bird identification which would cause our results to be not very reliable.
5. After considering all the different types of monitoring we could do, it was decided that we would start small and attempt to answer this question: “What is the state of the forest breeding birds in the Rocky River IBA?” Dan could generate 50 points for us to monitor three times a month in June of 2006 and possibly late May and July also. We would do two or three points an hour and spend approximately 3 to 4 hours each time out. Each team would need at least one person to count and one to record. Approximately 10 teams would be needed.
6. We next decided that we would also like to answer the question: “What is the state of the wetland breeding birds in the Rocky River IBA?” As we are not sure how many volunteers we can get to do this survey, we will plan for only one visit in May or June of 2006. Hopefully, we will eventually be able to do more spring/summer visits to wetlands too.
7. We also talked about possibly doing a simple inventory type of monitoring during spring migration as a warm-up and training activity.