

WINGTIPS



AMERICAN KESTREL photo by Dane Adams

MAY 2015

Editors
Jim Jablonski
Cathy Priebe
Harry Spencer

Program
Barbara Coleman
Evolution of Flying Flowers:
Lepidoptera: Fossils, Moths, and Butterflies
May 5, 2015, 7 p.m.
Carlisle Reservation Visitor Center



Barbara Coleman of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History will explain the evolution of what she terms “Flying Flowers” at our May Meeting. Ms. Coleman has conducted a ten-year survey of moths for her paper, “Moths of Kelley’s Island.” She is a docent at CMNH and is a volunteer in invertebrate zoology, conducting a Long-Term Butterfly Monitoring Database.

Ms. Coleman and her husband Bill support the Kelley’s Island Audubon Club and the Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society and are looking forward to meeting with the members of the Black

River Audubon Society.

In addition to presenting her program, Ms. Coleman will also have Butterfly and Moth booklets available from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources as well as seeds of butterfly plants.

Field Trips

Saturday, May 2, 2015, 9:00 a.m.

Magee Marsh

Meet at the west end of the boardwalk.

Saturday, June 27, 2015, 8:45 a.m.

Bobolinks & Butterflies Festival

Byers Woods, Ashland

County Road 1754, east of SR 60

(Guided walks, vendors, etc.)

Saturday, July 18, 2015, 8:30 a.m.

Black River Reservation/Steel Mill Trail

Meet Dick Lee at 31st Street parking lot

(Days Dam)

Saturday, August 15, 2015, 9:00 a.m.

Schoepfle Gardens

Birmingham, meet Tammy Martin at garden center

March 2015 Oberlin and Wellington Field Trip

By **Sally Fox**

Bird watchers go out in all kinds of nasty weather to view interesting and unusual birds, but such was not the case for the BRAS field trip to Oberlin in March. Eight of us met at the frozen Oberlin Reservoir. Obviously no ducks were there.

We decided to go to Caley Reservation to see the northern saw-whet owl that had been reported there the day before, but again no luck. We got a report that the Wellington Reservoir was also frozen so the group gave up. The weather was foggy, rainy and the birds were well hidden. Our short list for the day included northern cardinal, Canada goose, red-winged blackbird, eastern bluebird, killdeer, mourning dove, European starling, American robin and blue jay.



Black River Audubon Park Cleanup Volunteers Needed!

The Black River Audubon Society Park is a great addition to the city of Elyria. A beautiful green space, across from the former Murbach's store on East Bridge Street, it has access and views to the west branch of the Black River. The park was established with the help of Jack Smith, a co-founder of the Black River Audubon Society in 1958. The park will be operated by the Elyria Parks & Recreation Department and will be initially managed as a nature-oriented "passive" park.

Nordson Corporation volunteers as well as Black River Audubon and Western Reserve Land Conservancy members will participate in the 2015 cleanup of the park. Our job as volunteers will be to remove trash and debris, to take out invasive plant species, plant native plants for pollinators and to restore the new park back to its natural state. A naturalist will guide the cleanup activities and will answer questions about local plants and animals. All ages can participate so feel free to invite your friends and family. Details on the event are below.

When: Saturday, May 16, 2015, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm (Lorain County Pride Day)

Meet at: Black River Audubon Society Park, West Bridge Street, Elyria, Ohio

What is needed: Closed-toe shoes or boots for traveling in wooded areas, long sleeve shirts and pants, garden tools such as rakes, shovels, and handsaws.

What will be supplied: Gloves (feel free to bring your favorite garden or work gloves), garbage bags, water, bug spray, topsoil and mulch.

Directions: From intersection of I-90/Rt. 2 and Rt. 57 (Lorain Blvd) in Elyria. Take Rt. 57 south (Lorain Blvd) to Lake Avenue. Turn left (east) on Lake Ave. Continue as Lake Ave. turns into West Avenue. Turn right on Broad St. Continue onto West Bridge St. The Black River Audubon

Society Park is the property just before the bridge on the left hand (south) side of the road. Parking is across the street on the right. The property is marked with a sign installed by the City of Elyria.

A Birder's Diary: The Warblers Are Coming!

By Carol Leininger

It's that time again to concentrate on the butterflies of the bird world, better known as wood warblers. For most warbler species the preferred habitat is forests and dense brush. Their preferred food is insect larvae, but they also enjoy fruit, nectar, snails and worms. During spring migration in Ohio many warblers are here today and gone tomorrow so get out there and see them right now.



With so many different warblers to identify, it is necessary to check out many characteristics. I tend to use twelve features:

- 1) wing bars
- 2) tail spots
- 3) head patterns – stripes, eye lines, eye rings, cheeks
- 4) back – plain or streaked
- 5) rump
- 6) breast – stripes or spots
- 7) bill size
- 8) tertials, secondaries, primaries
- 9) tail coverts
- 10) songs
- 11) body size
- 12) behavior – tail wags, walks, or hops

There are several good guides to warblers. The *Peterson Field Guide* and *Warblers* by Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett are both good but the latter is a hefty book for the field. It does have lots of excellent information including drawings and photos of each warbler. The *Field Guide to Warblers* by Donald and Lillian Stokes does an excellent job on the under tail patterns and isochronal lines (those lines on the map that tell you when a bird will usually arrive at a particular location such as Ohio and Lake Erie). I like this book best.

Warblers of Ontario by Chris Earley is also a nice, compact book that fits in your pocket and shows the Point Pelee seasonal status of each warbler. Another recent book is the *Warbler Guide* by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle. This provides all you ever wanted to know about Warblers, including sonograms on song A, song B, and other calls made by the same bird. There are also some very nice laminate and foldup guides of warblers to carry in the field from Ohio Department of Wildlife, Sibley and the Ohio Ornithological Society. I find that each of the newer guides has added something new to attract the birder. Too bad a birder's pocket can only hold so much!

KENTUCKY WARBLER

Oporornis formosus

By **Cathy Priebe**

Many of us have had the wonderful opportunity of visiting Magee Marsh or Crane Creek during spring migration. We attempt to get there each year as there is really nothing like seeing warblers so up close and personal. I only have a few wood warblers that I have not yet seen and there is always hope that each year I will mark one off of the list.



KENTUCKY WARBLER photo by Dane Adams

After rounding the bend on the far side of the walk, searching for the elusive Canada warbler, we heard through the bird vine that a Kentucky warbler was sighted by a guide and his group. So we joined the frenzy and were lucky enough to spot the Kentucky hopping around in the thick understory off of the trail! I have not seen one since, but this bird does not make it easy.

Many say that you will probably hear a Kentucky before you see one. And even then you most likely will only hear it. This sly bird prefers to live and feed in dense vegetation and understory, rarely flying into trees to perch. Your best bet to see one may be near its nest, as it will fly near you to scold and protect its home.

Named because it is prevalent in Kentucky, this handsome bird is generally easy to ID if you are lucky enough to see it. The breeding male sports a black crown, yellow eyebrow (spectacles), black lores joined to black sideburns, yellow throat and is olive green on top and yellow below. The female is similar but has less black on its head. It is an overall stocky bird and is the size of a black and white warbler.

This bird does nest in southern and eastern Ohio. Building a bulky cup nest on the ground, the female will incubate four to five cream and brown spotted eggs for two weeks.

Some additional facts about the Kentucky warbler:

- * It has a distinctive, very loud call, chur-ree, chur-ree, similar to an ovenbird or Carolina wren, but consistently the same phrasing and monotone.
- * Resembles slightly a hooded warbler and common yellowthroat in different plumages.
- * Takes very short and calculated hops, without using its wings. Its posture resembles a runner at the beginning of a race, leaning forward with its tail cocked up.
- * Its numbers are down in areas where they were more common due to deer eating their understory.
- * Its sideburns have been compared to Elvis.

Although this elusive bird can be sporadically seen during spring, one good location to find them is Mohican State Forest where they nest.

References: *Birds of Ohio*, Jim McCormac; *Warblers of Ontario*, Chris G. Early; *Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion*, Pete Dunne; *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*, David Allen Sibley.

AMERICAN KESTREL

Falco sparverius

By **Jim Jablonski**

Although they might not realize it, everyone has seen kestrels. At least those of us who have driven country roads have seen the small falcons serving as sentries on telephone lines and fence posts, or patrolling over farm land, keeping an eye out for field mice, large insects or other agricultural pests.

The small falcon's size and darker colors might hurt identification from a distance but at close range there is no mistaking the kestrel. Once known as the sparrow hawk for its tendency to seize smaller birds, the kestrel's vertical stripes on the side of its head are striking as are the blue and salmon coloration of its head and the blue and gray wings.



The orange and brown stripes along its back and the brown and white coloring of its front make the kestrel our most vibrantly colored falcon.

The small raptor's hunting patterns are also distinctive. It keeps an eye on the surrounding fields from its perch atop poles and posts, often pumping its tail in order to maintain balance. When it spots its prey, the kestrel will hover above by flapping its sickle-shaped wings into the wind before dropping and seizing the victim.

The kestrel is a cavity nester, making good use of natural cavities, woodpecker holes, nest boxes and even holes in cacti in southwestern desert areas. The nest is no particular bother once a hole is found. Neither parent feels a need to line it with any material. The three to seven pinkish eggs and eventual hatchlings seem to do fine in the spare nest. Males are good providers in doing all the hunting during the breeding period. Incubation lasts up to thirty-one days as does fledging. Generally there is just one brood but a second is possible.

Most range maps show the kestrel's yearlong territory to almost exactly match the borders of the U.S. except in the south where it spreads into Mexico and Central America. As with bluebirds, the kestrel's reliance on cavities for nesting is a problem. After the introduction of starlings to the U.S, the tiny falcon has been forced to battle that nasty invader for nesting spots. However, according to Kenn Kaufman's *Lives of North American Birds*, the kestrel's population seems to be healthy in most areas of the U.S., except the Northeast where its numbers seem to be declining. He points out that regularly checked and maintained nest boxes have seemed to help it recover in localized areas.

With help, the kestrel should be around for a long time to come. Now if I could only get them to patrol my backyard for voles and house sparrows!

References: *The Birder's Handbook*, Paul Ehrlich, David Dobkin and Darryle Wheye; *The Crossley Guide: Eastern Birds*, Richard Crossley; *Field Guide to Birds: Eastern Region*, Donald & Lillian Stokes; *Lives of North American Birds*, Kenn Kaufman.

Black River Audubon Kestrel Nesting Box Status Report

By Larry Wilson

Thanks to publicity generated by Cathy Priebe in various local newspapers, many volunteers have offered their services for monitoring and installing kestrel boxes. We have started a program to install boxes on telescoping aluminum poles to allow maintenance without the dangers and inconvenience of using ladders to reach the boxes. You never know what may wait in them, from angry kestrels, or other birds, to wasp nests and other more painful surprises. So far, we have boxes installed on aluminum poles in the following locations: Lorain County Community College, Caley Reservation, Wellington Reservoir, Charlemont Reservation, Sandy Ridge Meadow, High Meadows, the Colorado entrance to Steel Mill Trail, and private residences in New Russia Township and Camden Township.

We have additional boxes awaiting aluminum poles and site adjustment at: Burr Oak, Carlisle Visitors Center, Equestrian Center and Duck Pond, Grafton Soccer Complex, Indian Hollow Reservation, and two locations at Mill Hollow. Kestrels have been sighted at LCCC, the Steel Mill Trail entrance, and a private residence in New Russia Township. Hopefully, with patience and successful monitoring and maintenance, we will have some kestrel fledglings to report by the end of the summer!



Black River Audubon Park Cleanup 2013

Ecotour trip to Ecuador

By **Chuck Jakubchak**

The Wilderness Center in Wilmot, Ohio has scheduled an Ecotour trip to Ecuador, primarily focused on birdwatching, from November 3 through 12, 2015. I expect this trip to be a journey of a lifetime because we will see a multitude of avian species in diverse and amazing habitats and a variety of other wildlife. During a similar trip in 2011, participants recorded 274 avian species including 39 hummingbird species.



I have presented a couple of talks at Black River Audubon meetings, and as the leader of this Ecotour trip, I will enjoy having Black River Audubon members on the trip.

An information meeting will be held on June 20 at the Wilderness Center. For additional information contact me at jakubchak@yahoo.com or 440-238-1720.