

Black River Audubon Society

WINGTIPS

November 2008



John Koscinski

Editors: Jack Smith/Harry Spencer

Photographer: John Koscinski

Webmistress: Arlene Lengyel



Red-shouldered Hawk, John Koscinski



Red-tailed Hawk, John Koscinski

Program

Tuesday, November 11, 7 p.m.

(Note unusual date!)

Visitor Center, Carlisle Reservation

(Note change of location!)

Purple Martins

Larry Hunter

President, Portage Lakes Purple Martin Association

Larry Hunter is a small business owner from the Akron area. He is founder and currently the president of the Portage Lakes Purple Martin Association.

Field Trip

Saturday, November 22, 9 a.m.

Wellington Reservation and Upground Reservoir

Meet at Wellington Reservation parking lot.

Young Birders

Saturday November 8

See LCMP Arrowhead for details

Board Meetings

The Board has decided to hold monthly meetings somewhere in the Elyria area on the last Tuesday of the month. The September meeting was held at the home of Jack Smith, 304 West Ave., Elyria.

September 20th Field Trip

Sandy Ridge Reservation

By **Tammy Martin**

On a beautiful, sunny, fall Saturday, Josh Michalski (LCMP natural resources manager) led 15 BRAS members on a productive birding walk through the park. These members included Marty Ackermann, Wendy Akin, Nancy Anderson, Kenny Austin, William Bofinger, Jeanne Hrenko, Jim Jablonski, Mike and Sue Kapcoe, Dick Lee, Tammy Martin, Nancy Miller, Arlene Ryan, Harry Spencer, and Joann Wagner.

Collectively, the group tallied 56 species. The highlights included 11 fall warblers--Nashville, Yellow, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Pine, Palm, Bay-breasted, Common Yellowthroat, and Canada. A few still retained some of their spring/summer plumage, which helped with identification.

Of course, a variety of waterfowl made an appearance--Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron, and Great Egret; plus, a handful of shorebirds--Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Stilt Sandpiper. The latter was identified through its feeding behavior.

Several raptor species, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawk, soared by, or perched nearby. Other, dependable species for Sandy Ridge seen or heard included Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy



Spotting Warblers! Photo
by H. Spencer

Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, European Starling, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

All members departed satisfied following a successful outing and look forward to the next one!

Education Committee Report

September 28, 2008

Audubon Adventures

By **Dick Lee**

I attended the Pioneer Craftsman Days at Mill Hollow on September 11 and gave Audubon Adventures (AA) materials to all of the educators participating in the program. I signed up 4 teachers for 8 classroom kits and 5 home school educators for individual kits. The second day for this event was canceled due to the Avon Schools' notification that they weren't attending because of the rain.

I sent emails to all educators and naturalists who have participated in the AA program within the last 2 years. I received a number of responses from educators who are either no longer in the classroom or who teach different grade levels. I did receive enough responses to order 25 classroom kits and 6 individual kits.

Since that order was sent I have requests for more classroom kits. I am in contact with our camp scholarship recipient, Marianne Kaput from Avon Lake Schools, and the curriculum director of Avon Schools, Vicki Fisher. Both have a major input into what is taught in their respective elementary school's science classes. Mrs. Kaput intends to teach a unit on birds and is setting up feeding stations in each elementary school. Mrs. Fisher requested AA for all of Avon's 3rd and 5th grade classes, for a total of twenty six.

I ordered the kits online and saved \$235.95 by having them sent directly to me. I will deliver them to the schools in Avon, Lorain and LaGrange.

I met with Daniel Schneider, the Gifted and Talented Education teacher at Franklin Elementary in Elyria. In addition to signing him up for AA, I was able to provide him with a number of resources about birding. I put him in contact with Carol who presented a program to each of his two classes. He wants his students to participate in the Christmas Bird Count in their own neighborhood, so Carol will also teach them how to identify birds they are likely to see.

A Birder's Diary

By **Carol Leininger**



A few years after I had joined Black River Audubon Society, I felt I was ready for something more - so I signed up to go on a two week birding tour of Peru with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. I learned right away I was a novice amongst twelve serious birders. I survived, saw a lot of birds and learned a great deal about Peru. I should warn you though that some wildlife tours are for listeners only — those who follow the rule that once you see the bird and add it to your life list, it's time to concentrate on finding the next new bird. Some birders just enjoy all nature as they walk on a park trail, and still others just enjoy watching the behavior of birds at their backyard bird feeders. I enjoy all of the above.

Everyone always wants to know about your favorite bird or greatest birding experience. It happened in Peru. We traveled in an old school bus along the coast, turned inland a bit, and found a lagoon with a dead seal on the rocky beach. A big vulture was just about to dig in. We stopped the bus and got out to get a better view. I was in the middle of the bus, so some people were already out on the road and others were behind me inside the bus. As I stepped out of the bus I felt a huge dark shadow appear right over my head. I stopped, looked up, and froze. There was absolute silence as everyone else froze in place. About twelve feet above my head was the biggest bird I had ever seen. With its wings spread out it looked like it was about to dive right at me, but it veered off to the beach, chased off the vulture, and began to feast on the seal. Utter chaos ensued as everyone tried to get back on the bus for their forgotten cameras. A beautiful huge black bird with a white feathery necklace - an Andean Condor! I so often wish someone had been able to get a photo as it was diving at

us, but we were all too stunned. To this day I can still picture the bird above my head. This was definitely my greatest birding moment! We did see quite a few condors elsewhere on our trip, but they were all black specks in the sky high above the mountains.

I can now imagine what it would have been like if humans had lived during the Mesozoic Era - with giant pterosaurs flying about.

Black River Audubon Society 1958 – 2008

Address by **Jack Smith**

Commemoration, October 16, 2008

Edited by **Harriet Alger**



Jack Smith.
Photo by H. Spencer

On July 10, 1958 Harlie Stevick, Executive Director of the Elyria YMCA, sent a check for \$118, a signed *Branch Agreement*, and a proposed roster of thirty two members to the National Audubon Society. On July 15, 1958 he received the cosigned agreement from National Audubon granting branch status to the Elyria Audubon Society.

Many of the original members had served as guides for spring bird walks sponsored by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. In addition to Harlie, they included Jim Akers, Perry

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Norma Kraps. Photo by H. Spencer

Johnson, Dale Kellogg, Frank Phelps, Jack Smith, and Elizabeth Yoder. Harlie and Perry Johnson, who at that time was Boy's Director and Naturalist for the YMCA, had become very interested in bird watching, and they became convinced that having a local Audubon branch would be a valuable asset to the community.

Through their leadership, the original 32 members were obtained, and at the first meeting officers were elected: President: Harlie Stevick, Vice President: Elizabeth Yoder, Secretary: Elaine Dirrim, and Treasurer: Jack Smith. Committee Chairs were: Education: Perry Johnson, Field trips: Pierre Smith, Membership: Bob Morse, Program: Mrs. W. A. Sayles, Social: Mr. and Mrs. J. Mockler. A complete list of the 32 original members could not be found, but surviving chapter members and guests attending, in addition to me, are Jane Coven and Norma Kraps.

In 1970 the constitution was amended to change the name of the organization to Black River Audubon Society to indicate that the Society's boundaries, as outlined in the original charter, encompassed all of Lorain County, not just Elyria. In a more recent change, part of Medina County, which is in the Black River Watershed Area, was included in the Black River Audubon charter by National Audubon.

One year before the founding of the local Audubon group, the Lorain County Metropolitan Park District was created. For the past 50 years, a close cooperative relationship has existed between these two organizations. Many members of Black River Audubon are active volunteers, contributors to and supporters of the Park system. Metro Parks and Black River Audubon have sponsored joint projects year after year, including bird



Perry Johnson. Copy by H. Spencer of photo hanging at the Visitor Center, Carlisle Reservation.

hikes, educational programs and special events.

The stated mission of the new local Audubon was essentially the same as that of the organization today, which you can find in every issue of our newsletter, *WINGTIPS: The mission of Black River Audubon is to promote conservation and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife through advocacy, education, stewardship, field trips and programs for the benefit of all people of today and tomorrow.* In trying to fulfill this mission, Black River Audubon Society projects and activities can be organized in three main categories: **conservation, education and advocacy.**

Conservation projects have included providing and protecting habitats for birds that are on threatened or endangered list, planting trees, Black River pollution studies, Christmas Bird Counts, and participation in two five-year Breeding Bird Surveys. These projects are funded by income from an endowment fund specifically established to support conservation activities.

Black River Audubon is an organization of volunteers. This is no better illustration than the **Bluebird Project** which began in 1977. Over the last 30 years in an attempt to counter the decline of these beautiful little birds, members of the Society have built, placed and monitored over 250 specially designed bluebird boxes in area parks and other suitable environments. This effort has contributed importantly in bringing the status of this species in Lorain County from rare to common. The boxes are currently monitored by eighteen volunteers under the leadership of Wayne and Nancy Shipman. Wood Duck nest boxes have also been placed at Findley State Park.

Another successful conservation effort has been the establishment of **two projects in partnership with Lorain County Community College on the LCCC campus.** Joe Strong, who often frequented the trails and fields at the College, was particularly interested in two areas of the campus: the northeast corner where Bobolinks and other grassland birds nested in a meadow and a small wooded area close by which was blessed with a diversity of wildflowers. He enlisted my interest and the two of us met with the President of the College, Dr. Roy Church, who granted permission for the establishment of prairie grassland in the meadow and a floral interpretive trail in the woods. The College maintenance department now suspends mowing operations in the meadow from April to October to protect the nesting birds. A grant proposal request was funded by the Stocker Foundation to provide for a display case at the edge of the meadow with pictures of the birds and meadow plants protected by this conservation project. The grant also funded the construction of a split rail fence along the interpretive trail through the wooded area with signs at each end and boxes with guides which describe and identify the plants and trees in the area. Joe Strong, Dorothy Hagerling, Wayne Shipman and Harriet Alger have the responsibility for the maintenance of the trail and meadow display case.

The first **Christmas Bird Count**, both a conservation and educational activity, was held almost 50 years ago on Dec. 29, 1958. An area 15 miles in diameter was covered by 12 participants who identified 3900 birds in 39 species. Since then at least one has been held every year, and two Christmas Bird Counts have been conducted recently, one in the Elyria/Lorain area and the other in Wellington and southern Lorain County. Last year, 40 participants identified 21,321 birds in 63 species in the Elyria/Lorain count and 10994 birds in 67 species in the Wellington count. CBC data is forwarded each year to the National Audubon Society which uses it to plot population trends. This popular yearly activity attracts both experienced and new birders, infecting many with an addiction to birding known as "the enthusiastic bug".

Education projects include monthly meeting and lecture programs, field trips for birders, the Audubon Adventures program for 3rd – 6th grade classrooms, scholarship awards to naturalists and teachers for summer ecology camps, and educational displays at special school and park events.

The Society's **9 monthly programs** a year feature outstanding speakers: naturalists, researchers, biologists and environmentalists. These meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, September through May, at 7 p.m. and are free and open to the general public as well as members. We have been fortunate in recent years to have had exceptionally interesting programs through the efforts of our last program chair, Carol Leininger, and current chair, Martin Ackermann. Membership chairs who welcome participants at meetings are Bernie Pluchinsky and Betty Lake. Making sure that refreshments are provided for a social hour is the responsibility of Jean Sorton and Jenny Austin.

No educational activity is more important than the **monthly field trips** to forests, meadowlands, wetlands, streams and lakes. Each year 12 or more wonderful places in Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania have been visited. How many of us remember weekends spent at Butternut Lodge or Ottawa National Wildlife

Refuge or great trips to Magee Marsh, Point Pelee, Hawk Mountain, Burr Oak State Park or Mohican State Park? Current field trip co-chairs are Ken Austin and Joann Wagner.

Since 1990, Black River Audubon has worked with public and private school teachers in sponsoring the **Audubon Adventures series for children in 3rd through 6th grade classes**. This program is supported by the income from another endowment fund specifically dedicated to this project. Through the leadership of Dick Lee, a record number of 41 classes received Audubon Adventures kits, provided free of charge by this organization last year. Each kit has materials for 32 children. Also in the last two years, Black River Audubon has joined Lorain County Metro Parks in an effort to create a **Black River Young Birders Club** for 12 – 18 year olds, as an affiliate of the Ohio Young Birders Club which Kim and Kenn Kaufman sponsor at the Black Swamp Bird Observatory.

Through the **camp scholarship program**, a scholarship has been awarded each year to a local teacher or naturalist, primarily to Hog Island, Maine, or Connecticut. This program is also supported by the income from an endowment fund, created in December, 1986, for this project. Thanks to the recruiting efforts of Dick Lee and additional donations to supplement the endowment income, 3 scholarships were awarded to excellent candidates this year, instead of only one.

Advocacy efforts have concentrated on campaigns to protect important natural environments and resources, including King Woods in Lorain, Sheldon Marsh, the Western Lake Erie Basin Congressional Act, the Great Lakes Compact state legislation, the federal bill to clean up the Great Lakes, and advocacy for the protection and restoration of wetland areas. These activities have included attendance at community meeting and correspondence and meetings with local, state and national elected representatives including Marcy Kaptur and Betty Sutton. In these efforts we have joined activists from other environmental organizations including National Audubon, Audubon Ohio, and the Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

At the heart of all operations of Black River Audubon is our monthly publication, September through May, called “Wingtips” where news and notices of all programs, field trips, educational events and advocacy issues are published. For 25 years, from 1958 through 1983, Perry Johnson was the editor. For all that Perry did for this organization; we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. To other editors who followed a vote of thanks goes to Carol Leininger, Roberta Wendel, Ken Reed, Ritta Morgan, our current editor, Harry Spencer, who added color, and to John Koscinski, whose outstanding portraits of birds have graced the covers of Wingtips for the last two years. For our beautifully designed Web page, a recent additional area of communication, our thanks go to Dave Bragg and Arlene Lengyel.

Last but certainly not least, the financial stability of this organization, which allows for the range of the activities I have described, is due to the establishment over the years of four trusts: the Camp Scholarship Trust, the Conservation Trust, the Audubon Adventures Trust and the Gunther Pfeifer Trust. Dividend income from each of the first three is dedicated to the programs in the name (scholarships, conservation, and Audubon Adventures). Some years ago, the Pfeifer Trust Fund was established for bequests from the wills of individuals who wanted to make gifts that would keep on giving, now and forever. This trust fund is named for Gunther Pfeifer, who left a bequest of \$70,000 to support current operation and special projects related to the Society’s mission. Since its establishment, this trust has received another bequest and also other donations.

Black River Audubon has many outstanding programs planned for the years ahead, as well as expansion of existing programs that have clearly met a need, and all will require financing. In this year of our 50th anniversary, an appeal is going out to all of our friends, members, partners and others to make donations or to remember these trust funds in their wills. Any gift will be gratefully received and put to good use.

Black River Audubon Members at Various Events.



Chapter Officers 1958 – 2008

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Black River Audubon Leadership Through the Years

| Year | President | 1st Vice Pres. | 2nd Vice Pres. | Secretary | Treasurer |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1958 | Harlie Stevick | Elizabeth Yodor | | Elaine Dirrim | Jack Smith |
| 1959 | Harlie Stevick | Ray Hollabaugh | | Lucille Griffin | Lee Lyman |
| 1960 | Dale Kellogg | Ray Hollabaugh | | Jane Davies | Perry Johnson |
| 1961 | Perry Johnson | Ray Hollabaugh | | Hilda LeBold | Jane Davies |
| 1962 | Perry Johnson | Robert Morse | | Erwin Brecklbaum | Jane Davies |
| 1963 | Robert Morse | Andy Barber | | Vera Vining | Dale Kellogg |
| 1964 | Robert Morse | Andy Barber | | Vera Vining | Dale Kellogg |
| 1965 | Elizabeth Yoder | Corrine Dolbear | | Vera Vining | Dale Kellogg |
| 1966 | Andy Barber | Corrine Dolbear | | Vera Vining | Mel Wallace |
| 1967 | Mel Wallace | Zigmond Nagy | | Gladys Murray | Jere Simonson |
| 1968 | Zigmond Nagy | Perry Johnson | | Gladys Murray | Jere Simonson |
| 1969 | Dr. Owen Davies | Perry Johnson | | Doris Stelter | Lee Nagy |
| 1970 | Maxine Lance | F. Peter Michaelis | | Doris Stelter | Lee Nagy |
| 1970-71 | Maxine Lance | F. Peter Michaelis | | Doris Stelter | Lee Nagy |
| 1971-72 | Edwin Dowler | F. Peter Michaelis | | Anne Bittner | Lee Nagy |
| 1972-73 | Norma Kraps | Jonathan Kring | | Nancy Hawkins | Edwin Dowler |
| 1973-74 | Dr. Joe Strong | Mel Wallace | Dale Kellogg | Connie Jaite | Corrine Dolbear |
| 1974-75 | Jack Smith | Dale Kellogg | Mel Wallace | Connie Jaite | Corrine Dolbear |
| 1975-76 | Edwin Dowler | Clara Corogan | Mel Wallace | Helen Lautenschleger | Earl Lautenschleger |
| 1976-77 | Dr. Joe Strong | Clara Corogan | William Daniel | Helen Lautenschleger | Earl Lautenschleger |
| 1977-78 | Dr. Joe Strong | Allyn Modic | Marjorie Isaac | Helen Lautenschleger | Earl Lautenschleger |
| 1978-79 | Richard VanDeusen | Dr. Joe Strong | Allyn Modic | Clara Corogan | Catherine Hitchcock |
| 1979-80 | Richard VanDeusen | Norma Kraps | Lee Champney | Barbra Brososky | Catherine Hitchcock |
| 1980-81 | Richard Wallace | Jack Smith | Mark Brown | Barbra Brososky | Catherine Hitchcock |
| 1981-82 | Mark Brown | Richard Wallace | Marguerite Nuttall | Barbra Brososky | Richard Brososky |
| 1982-83 | Perry Johnson | Richard VanDeusen | Phyllis Schooley | Amelia Buta | Richard Brososky |

Chapter Officers 1958 – 2008

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Black River Audubon

Leadership Through the Years

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1983-84 | Mel Wallace | Jack Smith | Carol Andrzejewski | Kathy French | Richard VanDeusen |
| 1984-85 | Norma Kraps | Richard Wallace | Carol Leininger | Kathy French | Richard VanDeusen |
| 1985-86 | Carol Leininger | Ken Reed | Norma Kraps | Wendy Akins | Dr. Joe Strong |
| 1986-87 | Ken Reed | Dale Kellogg | Charles Markham | Norma Kraps | Perry Johnson |
| 1987-88 | Jack Smith | Dale Kellogg | Bob MacGillis | Dale Kellogg | Perry Johnson |
| 1988-89 | Ken Reed | Bob MacGillis | Greg Mead | Helen Ketcham | Perry Johnson |
| 1989-90 | Bob MacGillis | Dale Kellogg | | Helen Ketcham | Joe Strong |
| 1990-91 | Ken Reed | Jim Bednarik | Dale Kellogg | Carol Leininger | Bob MacGillis |
| 1991-92 | Robert Johnston | Carol Leininger | Vincent Yambovich | Helen Ketcham | Bob MacGillis |
| 1992-93 | Ken Reed | Carol Leininger | Bob Johnston | Helen Ketcham | Perry Johnson |
| 1993-94 | Ken Reed | Jack Smith | Roberta Wendel | Bob MacGillis | Perry Johnson |
| 1994-95 | Carol Leininger | Ken Reed | Jim Bednarik | Joann Wagner | Perry Johnson |
| 1995-96 | Roberta Wendel | Wendy Akin | Carol Leininger | Joann Wagner | Joe Strong |
| 1996-97 | Roberta Wendel | Ken Reed | Dave Malloy | Wendy Akin | Joe Strong |
| 1997-98 | Roberta Wendel | Wendy Akin | Bob MacGillis | Dave Malloy | Bob MacGillis |
| 1998-99 | Jack Smith | Bob MacGillis | Eric Bruder | Sophia Morton | Joe Strong |
| 1999-2000 | Ken Reed | Dave Bragg | Kathy Justy | Sophia Morton | Joe Strong |
| 2000-2001 | Dave Bragg | Dane Adams | John Dunn | Ken Reed | Joe Strong |
| 2001-2002 | Dane Adams | Dick Lee | Carol Portman | Arlene Ryan | Dale Cary |
| 2002-2003 | Jack Smith | Sid Comings | Dick Lee | Arlene Ryan | Dale Cary |
| 2003-2004 | Dave Bragg | Sid Comings | Dick Lee | Arlene Ryan | Dale Cary |
| 2004-2005 | Sid Comings | Harry Spencer | Jack Smith | Jenny Austin | Joe Strong |
| 2005-2006 | Harry Spencer | Jack Smith | Bernie Pluchinsky | Arlene Ryan | Joe Strong |
| 2006-2007 | Harriet Alger | Jack Smith | Bernie Pluchinsky | Arlene Ryan | Joe Strong |
| 2007-2008 | Harriet Alger | Jack Smith | Bernie Pluchinsky | Arlene Ryan | Joe Strong |
| 2008-2009 | Harriet Alger | Jack Smith | Wayne Shipman | Arlene Ryan | Joe Strong |

Scholarship Recipients and Camps Attended

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Black Rive Audubon Society Scholarship Recipients

| Year Camp | Name | |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1988 Ecology | Ken Reed | Rockies Field |
| 1989 Institute | Rose Marie Diederick | NAS Expedition |
| 1990 Workshop | Dan Walther | NAS Educators |
| 1992 Waters MN | Grant Thompson | Boundary |
| 1993 Workshop | Stacy Cooley | Raptor |
| 1993 peninsula | Carol Leininger..... | Olympic |
| 1995 Workshop | Richard Lee | NAS Educators |
| 1995 Workshop | Randy Ives | NAS Educators |
| 1996 Ecology | Maribeth Higgins | Rockies Field |
| 1996 Ecology | Dave Malloy | Rockies Field |
| 1997 Ecology | Jeanne Bystricky | Maine Field |
| 1999 Ornithology | Kathy Justy | Maine Field |
| 1999 Ornithology | Ritta Morgan | Maine Field |

Scholarship Recipients and Camps Attended

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 2000 Ornithology | Paul Salutte..... | Maine Field |
| 2002 Ornithology | Lydia Mohr | Maine Field |
| 2003 Workshop | Ray Stewart | ME Educators |
| 2003 Workshop | Cheryl Burkhardt | ME Educators |
| 2005 Workshop | Sheila Lewicki | ME Educators |
| 2005 History | Dan Bertch | Maine Natural |
| 2006 Workshop | Jessica Slominski | ME Educators |
| 2006 Workshop | Rob Glatz | ME Educators |
| 2007 Workshop | Jannah Tucker | ME Educators |
| 2008 Ornithology | David Krasovic | Maine Field |
| 2008 Workshop | Lindsay Miller | ME Educators |
| 2008 Workshop | Marianne Kaput | ME Educators |