

Black River Audubon Society

WINGTIPS

September 2012



Red-shouldered hawk photo by Dane Adams

Editors: Jack Smith, Harry Spencer, and Cathy Priebe

Photographer: John Koscinski

Webmistress: Arlene Lengyel

Mission Statement

The mission of the *Black River Audubon Society* 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.

Help Preserve Wildlife and Wildlife Habitats!

Charitable giving through planned gifts to the Black River Audubon Society helps make sure that the Society's mission to conserve habitats for wildlife and educate the public about birds continues to thrive. No gift is too small and every gift is welcome. All are deductible.

Black River Audubon Society sets aside all sizable bequests, endowments, and other planned gifts in various available trusts in which only the income generated is used for support of the organization or designated programs. Benefactors thus leave this world with a feeling that they made a gift that keeps on giving in perpetuity.

Program

Tuesday, September 4, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

Carlisle Reservation Visitor Center

Doug West

Professional Bird Photographer

Birds are People Too



Born and raised in Fremont, Ohio, Doug West has been a professional bird photographer since 2006. “My goal is to help people become better bird photographers no matter what kind of equipment is used.”

His presentation will include images of birds taken in Ohio, Florida, Texas, and New Mexico. He will share stories behind the photos and give tips on improving photographic skills.

Books published by West include *Birds of the National Aviary*, *Birds are People Too*, and *Birds are People 2*. His photos have appeared in nature publications and on calendars. The North American Nature Photographer Association recognized him for his contributions. Additional information is available at his web site www.thebirdphotographer.com.

Field Trip

September 15, 2012 (Saturday)

Sandy Ridge Reservation

9:00 a.m. Free, everyone welcome!

A Birder's Diary

By Carol Leininger

Fall is coming and that means festivals. Actually birders attend festivals fall and spring and any other season. Birding festivals may be big (over 1000 people) or they may be small (less than 100 people). They may be long (a full week plus both weekends) or they may be short (1-3 days).

A birding festival almost always involves field trips guided by local leaders with walking or transporting by buses, vans, and, car pooling to nearby sites; classes in which professional birders discuss topics of interest and show fantastic photos; and many vendors demonstrate new scopes and binocs. Attending a festival is a great way to learn the birding hot spots for a new area, see lots of new birds to add to a life list, and learn all kinds of new and interesting things.

As a starter, you might consider a local event before venturing further afield. The local Audubon chapters along Lake Erie sponsor the *Lake Erie Wing Watch*. The *Midwest Birding Symposium* is at Lakeside every other fall. The *Shreve Migration Sensation* occurs every spring. The *Biggest Week in American Birding* is hosted by the Black Swamp Bird Observatory at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and Magee Wildlife Area every May during peak migration. Often one of the field trips offered during the *Biggest Week* is a trip across the lake to Point Pelee in Canada. Other groups that offer field trips and programs nearby include: Lorain County Metro Parks (See *Arrowhead*), Black River Audubon (See *WINGTIPS*), Cleveland Museum of Natural History (see *Tracks*), and Ohio Ornithological Society (see *Cerulean*).

Now let me tell you about some of the fantastic birding trips I have been on across the USA and beyond. I have traveled with the National Audubon Society to such places as the Adirondack Mountains in New York State, the desert near Tucson, Arizona, the rain forest on the Olympic peninsula in Washington State, Trinidad and Tobago, and Hog Island in Maine. I have been to Peru with the Massachusetts Audubon. I have thoroughly enjoyed conferences, convention, and workshops sponsored by the American Birding Association in Mobile, Alabama, on the Texas coast, at Park City, Utah, Eugene, Oregon, Fort Myers, Florida, and Minot, North Dakota. The National Wildlife Federation offered a great trip to Alaska and the Pribilof Islands one year. Elder hostels (now called Road Scholar) offer birding trips with field and class activities to such places as Ocala, Florida and Chincoteague, Virginia. Also I enjoyed a trip to Churchill, Manitoba with a life-long-learning group from Berkeley, CA.

Classes, workshops, and field trips can be very informative. I have learned how to identify peeps by behavior, how radar and watching the moon during spring migration over the Gulf of Mexico can be used to count birds and predict arrivals; how to identify warblers from underneath by observing belly and under tail coverts; how to draw and keep accurate field notes and more about hawks, vireos, and hummingbirds. Now I realize the trials and tribulations of rehabilitation work.



Do not disregard the vendors! One can try all kinds of binoculars and scopes before buying. Groups and individuals sell their wares – from lens cleaners to stationary, from bird feeders to checklists; beautiful artwork and jewelry; and books, some autographed as you wait. You can obtain information about birding tours to exotic destinations and all kinds of field equipment.

There are wonderful tour groups for birders, such as Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours (VENT) and Field Guides. Touring trips are mainly field identifications only, and afford opportunities to add to personal life lists. They can be a bit strenuous.

All over the US are many small bird festivals advertised in bird magazines. I attended a festival in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, which was notable for interesting local hot spots for birds.

My attendance at such festivals resulted in visits to many birding sites previously unknown to me.

Officers 2012-2013

President: Debbie Mohr
 First VP: Martin Ackermann
 Second VP: John Ryan
 Secretary: Cathy Priebe
 Treasurer: Steve Chavez

Board Members, June 2012– May 2013

	Term expiration	Term
John Ryan	June 2013	Partial Term
Martin Ackermann	June 2013	First
Gary Hawke	June 2013	First
Terri Martincic	June 2013	First
Jim Marsey	June 2014	First
Courtney Brennan	June 2014	First
Steve Chavez	June 2014	Second
Harry Spencer	June 2014	First
Betty Lake	June 2015	First
Cathy Priebe	June 2015	Second
Diane Devereaux	June 2015	First
Debbie Mohr	June 2015	Second

Mississippi Flyway Action Network

By **Ray Stewart**, President, Ohio Wetlands Association

In an attempt to better understand and protect the American flyways followed by migrating birds across North America, National Audubon has established four action networks, one of which is the so-called Mississippi Flyway Action Network (MFAN). And last March I accepted National Audubon's invitation to attend the MFAN kickoff conference in New Orleans.

Participants came from all the states bordering the Mississippi River plus others such as Alabama and Ohio. They represented a vast swath of the central part of the United States over which a surge of birds migrates each year. One major branch of this flyway comes across Ohio, especially the western basin of Lake Erie. At the lake shore and in the remnant wetland of the Great Black Swamp, such as Magee Marsh, large numbers of birders converge yearly with hoards of migrating warblers and other species.

Although for many birds the flyway extends from South America to the Arctic, our focus begins with the Gulf Coast where many thousands of birds see the first land after a perilous journey across the Gulf of Mexico. The health of suitable habitat all along the flyway is critical, and a weak link in this long chain, anywhere, can reduce the success of these long-distance travelers. Bird mortality is fifteen times greater during migration than at other times of year. Suitable stopover sites are needed for birds to refuel and rest. Many of these stopovers are already identified as Important Bird Areas.

After the conference, our first mission was to advocate for Gulf Coast Restoration by supporting a piece of federal legislation called the Restore Act. We wrote letters to the editor, spoke at chapter meetings, called our elected officials, and applied continuous pressure on Congress.

We succeeded! In July the Transportation Bill passed with the Restore Act riding shotgun. The President signed it into law.

This Act states that 80% of the fines that British Petroleum pays as a result of the Gulf oil spill two years ago will be directed to the five Gulf Coast states that were impacted directly.

The yet-undetermined fines could exceed \$20 billion. We are thrilled that gulf coast restoration will proceed and the coastal marshes, delta, and swamps will continue to provide safe havens for migratory birds.

Propelled by our success we are discussing currently our next steps to build a better flyway. We are looking at important aspects of both the Farm Bill and some elements of the Water Resources Development Act that impact bird migration. We look for ways to make the biggest policy differences that protect and restore natural habitats and the birds that use them in their annual pilgrimages.

Black River Audubon Identifications Recorded on eBird as of Aug 1, 2012

	Life	Year
Total Species	280	186
Total Checklists	5030	368

Purple Martin Symposium, Lakeview Park, June 30

By **Harriet Alger**

Despite a threat of a storm and a much smaller than usual weekend crowd in the park, there were 40-50 people in each session of the Purple Martin Symposium on June 30 at Lakeview Park. Most of the participants stayed the entire day for the three speeches/workshops and a visit to the Lakeview martin colony, with three Lorain County Community College ecology students serving as excellent hosts.



John Tautin, executive director of the Purple Martin Conservation Association, outlined the history of martin colonies, the decline of the species as illustrated by state by state graphics, and the PMCA research/conservation program in Canada, the USA and Brazil. Andy Troyer shared his enthusiasm for martins and his success as a martin landlord with practical management advice. John Ryan mirrored the passion and the frustration and problems/successes of those who love martins and try to establish colonies on their property.

Members of the audience were attentive and engaged participants. Questions were excellent and covered the many diverse aspects of attracting and maintaining martin colonies. Some people had martins and wanted information and help with management. Some had been unable to attract martins with houses and/or gourds and wanted to know possible reasons why. Some wanted to start a martin colony and needed advice about environment and equipment. Each of the speakers gave comprehensive answers that were direct and responsive in a friendly upbeat atmosphere.

Audubon Adventures

Audubon Adventures is a National Audubon program for children and their teachers in Grades 3-6. Its goal is to develop in young people an appreciation, awareness, and understanding of the natural world – birds, other wildlife, and all living things including the habitats, systems, and interplay of forces that affect living things, and the connections between people and nature.

Black River Audubon provides Audubon Adventure kits at no cost to educators, including home schoolers. Correlations between the subjects and the Ohio State Standards will be furnished sometime after kit delivery. Primarily because of the aggressive and effective efforts of Dick Lee, Education Committee Chair, Black River Audubon last year was among the nation's top chapters in number of distributed Audubon Adventure kits.

The theme for the 2012-2013 school year is **Sharing Our Earth**. The specific topics include; *Share Our Shores*, *Caring for Our Planet-be a friend to Birds*, *World of the Forest*, and *Grasslands, A Prairies Tale*.

Dick plans to start his distribution campaign by meeting with fourth grade teachers who bring their classes to the Lorain County Metro Parks' Pioneer Experience usually held during the second week after Labor Day at the Vermilion River Reservation. He will give each teacher attending a 'goodie bag' of materials, including many Black River Audubon items: brochures, program-hike schedules, and Wingtips. Other items are, Healthy Yards posters, Audubon Adventure information sheet and samples, an ODNR booklet about nest-building, and a CD recording of calls of common birds of Ohio.

By email, Dick will follow up these initial contacts for the purpose of informing teachers about the current theme and topics. He also will contact all educators who participated in the Audubon Adventures during the previous two years. He plans to visit curriculum directors of the larger school systems and give them samples so that they can determine in which grades the topics best compliment the curriculum.

Financial Summary:
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

EXPENSES (TO THE NEAREST DOLLAR)

WINGTIPS	5907
SCHOLARSHIP	995
MONTHLY PROGRAMS	731
CONSERVATION	3021
CALENDARS	265
INSURANCE	2482
AUDUBON ADVENTURES	3888
POSTAGE	1207
OUTSTANDING SPEAKERS	250
WEBSITE	108
OFFICE SUPPLIES	200
MISCELANEOUS	385
TOTAL	19439

INCOME (TO THE NEAREST DOLLAR)

AUDUBON ADVENTURES TRUST	608
CONSERVATION TRUST	697
SCHOLARSHIP TRUST	1090
PFEIFFER TRUST	4858
NATIONAL AUDUBON	1416
CALENDAR SALES	365
LOCAL MEMBERSHIP DUES	665
DONATIONS (GENERAL FUND)	10600
BILL WAGNER MEMORIAL	890
TOTAL	21188

First page bird: Red-shouldered Hawk

Scientific name: *Buteo lineatus*

Distinctive call: kee-yer...kee-yer...kee-yer... kee-yer.....

Size: Slightly smaller than red-tailed hawk

Distinctive marks: reddish shoulder patches, reddish under parts, banded tail.

Habitat: Often woodlands

Eastern range: Southeastern US to Great Lakes

Lorain County eBird identifications: Year around, reported on 8% of checklists. (18% of checklists reported red-tailed hawk.)

Below bird: Bald Eagle

Scientific name: *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

Size: Much larger than red-tailed hawk

Distinctive marks: white head and white tails of adults of five or more years age; immature brownish with varying patches of white

Habitat: near water

Eastern range: most of Eastern US

Lorain County eBird identifications: Year around, reported on 9% of checklists. (18% of checklists reported red-tailed hawk.)



Bald eagle photo by Bill Keaton

Jack Smith



Jack Smith died August 10 after a battle against cancer. He was a founding member, multiple-termed officer and Board member of Black River Audubon Society and served for many years as editor or coeditor of WINGTIPS. Always civic minded, he served the community in many ways including membership on many boards and committees. Recently he donated to the City of Elyria river-side land for use as a park, named, at his suggestion, Black River Audubon Park. As a widely educated naturalist, he was consulted often by those of us less knowledgeable in nature's ways. He was an active beekeeper, a retired businessman and stock broker, mushroom expert, gifted gardener, and always a gentle friend. As his last editorial act for WINGTIPS, he both suggested the concept and approved the wording of the appeal titled *Help Preserve Wildlife and Wildlife Habitats!* printed above.

Jack Smith was a Renaissance Man.

Harry Spencer