



Ohio Young Birders Club

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 4
WINTER 2010



Hueston Woods Field Trip, October 5, 2009



OYBC Youth Advisory Panel Meeting, December 5, 2009



OYBC members waiting to board the *Holiday* for the Lake Erie Pelagic Sunday, November 15, 2009



OYBC Conference volunteers; Julie Shieldcastle, Debbie Sawvel, Robin Tener, Chris Lotenero, and Jeanine VanDerLaar manning the buffet lunch line.

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Ohio Young Birders Club (OYBC)

*"Encouraging, Educating, and
Empowering Tomorrow's
Conservation Leaders."*

Coordinators

Delores Cole
Kenn Kaufman
Kim Kaufman
John Sawvel

Youth Advisory Panel

Ethan Kistler
Bret McCarty
Lukas Padegimas
Ben Thornton
Brad Wilkinson
Sarah Winnicki

The OYBC is sponsored by

Black Swamp Bird Observatory

BSBO promotes sound
stewardship of avian resources in
the western basin of Lake Erie
through research and education.

Black Swamp Bird Observatory

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And be sure to visit the
Ohio Young Birders Network:
www.ohioyoungbirders.ning.com

What Attendees Said . . .

This year's annual conference was another smash success! Rather than have one person write a summary—sharing only one perspective—we decided to solicit comments from a variety of people who attended. We appreciate them taking the time to write these comments. Here are their thoughts:



Elliott Miller, age 14
Master of Ceremony



Sarah Winnicki, age 15
Presenter



Lukas Padegimas, age 16
Presenter



Malkolm Boothroyd, age 17
Keynote Speaker

"To sum up the OBYC conference in one word: *magnificent!* If you haven't attended one yet, put it on your bucket list now! Awe-inspiring talks by young birders, great food, friendly people, birding, and fun. Many thanks to all involved in putting this great event on." ~Laurie Boylan, OYBC adult supporter

"Seeing these young people get excited about birds and nature and listening to their programs gives me hope for the future of wildlife on this fragile planet." ~ Dave Lewis, OYBC adult supporter

"The OYBC annual conference gets better every year. I'm consistently blown away by the knowledge and research abilities of the speakers. The first generation of club members already is making its presence felt across the world, and I'm looking forward to following the successes of the talented current edition of OYBCers as they mature." ~Jim McCarty, Plain Dealer Outdoor Writer

"The Ohio Young Birders Conference on the 14th of November was great. All of the teenage speakers had very informative PowerPoint presentations that mostly focused on conservation of nature and saving energy. The turnout was great, with birders filling the whole room. I look forward to next year's conference." ~ Wyatt Miller, OYBC student member

"Impressive! The OYBC Conference presents a standard to which all youth-oriented programs should strive. The young speakers were all well spoken and passionate as well as informative. Behind the scenes, the BSBO staff and volunteers kept the day flowing. I can't wait for next year!" ~ Kevin Loughlin, Owner, Wildside Tours, Founder of the PA Young Birders Club

"Rob & Eric Ripma, my son Ceth, and I, were so glad to have made the trip to Lake Erie to represent the Indiana Young Birders Club at the OYBC Conference. The event was nothing short of absolutely awesome! Since we're in the beginning stages of our club's development, we wanted to see what the OYBC was all about. This conference instantly made us push our goals up a few notches! The presenters, volunteers, and the Kaufman's have definitely set the bar on what a Young Birders Club should be." ~Chad Williams, Founder of the Indiana Young Birders Club

"So professional! I'll never forget the ripple of energy in the room that day, and I can't wait to see where it takes all of us. It just makes you want to give more to support young birders. May these gifted young speakers never lose their candid public-speaking skills and may they continue to provide audiences with their heartfelt material." ~ Chris Lotenero, OYBC adult supporter

. . . About the 3rd Annual OYBC Conference

"As I looked out over the crowd of young people involved in the OYB Conference, I realized that these individuals are really "the stewards of tomorrow" when it comes to preserving and protecting our natural environment. They represent a generation that will use their influence and intelligence to make a real difference in their communities. Each presentation had an element that focused "beyond the birds" to the larger issues of environmental protection and the fragility of the ecosystem. This was extremely encouraging to me. I recalled my keen disappointment when I returned to a favorite birding spot in the Detroit area where I grew up, only to find it turned into a shopping mall, and hoped that the OYB members might recognize the power that they have now – and will have as adults – to make sure that their children will enjoy birding just as much as they do." ~ Robin Tener, Child Psychologist, Northwest Behavioral Health Ltd.

"When this year's conference ended, I felt so proud to be an adult supporter of the Ohio Young Birders Club. Of special note was the outstanding quality of the presentations by Malkolm Boothroyd, Lukas Padegimas and Sarah Winnicki. Sharing the day with birding buddies of all ages made the day extra special, too." ~Paula Lozano, OYBC Planning Committee member

"I was thrilled to be invited to Ohio this November, to speak at the Ohio Young Birder's Conference. I flew from my home in the Yukon to Cleveland, where Delores Cole and Lukas Padegimas welcomed me and drove me west. The weekend was packed with birding; I scanned hoards of Canada Geese in the hopes of picking out a Cackling Goose, I saw Sandhill Cranes flying overhead at dusk and watched a Great-horned Owl being mobbed by chickadees and crows.

Everybody told me how this was the quiet season—how in May every tree would be saturated with stunning warblers and tanagers. To me November in Ohio was in no way quiet, especially when compared with November in the Yukon. In an average day I'd see four or five species; Bohemian Waxwings, Ravens, Magpies, a few Red Crossbills, plus maybe a Pine Grosbeak or a Boreal Chickadee. In a day birding in Ohio I'd see roughly ten times my daily total from back home!

I heard inspiring presentations about Piping Plovers and California Condors on the conference day, then got up to speak about Bird Year —the fossil-fuel-free Big Year my parents and I did. On my last full day in Ohio we took to the high seas of Lake Erie in search of gulls and jaegers. My highlight of the boat trip was my only lifer of the weekend —a Purple Sandpiper that scurried along a rocky breakwater. Kenn, Kim and I birded on Monday morning before I got on the plane and headed back north. I am in debt to all of the great Ohio birders who made me feel at home during my trip.



American Dipper
Photo by Malkolm Boothroyd

It's minus thirty in Whitehorse right now, the perfect weather for swimming! There is a stretch of open water below the dam on the Yukon River, inhabited by a few dippers, some Common Goldeneyes and a Common Merganser. I've spent the last few days stalking along the icy rocks along the river in the hopes of photographing these hardy birds. One day I spotted three chickadee species in the same tree; Boreal, Black-capped and Mountain. There are still lots of waxwings, a few Crossbills and one poor robin that is about one thousand miles too far north." ~Malkolm Boothroyd, 2009 OYBC Conference Keynote Speaker

GOLDEN-WINGS

Many thanks to all those who put time into this newsletter. Special thanks to:

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The **GOLDEN-WINGS** editor is happy to receive for newsletter consideration your:

Trip Reports

Species Profiles

Articles & Book Reports

Sketches & Photos

The next deadline for newsletter submissions is February 15, 2010

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GW: At what age did you start birding?

EM: *I started birding at age 10, with my mother and brother.*

GW: What or who sparked your interest in birds?

EM: *Larry Richardson and Henry Burton. My family was walking at Sandy Ridge Preservation when we ran into them while they were watching warblers.*

GW: Have you had birding mentors or heroes who helped you?

EM: *Everyone at BSBO has been very helpful, and, of course, Kim and Kenn Kaufman.*

GW: Do you have a favorite bird, and, if so, what is it and what makes it your favorite?

EM: *The American Kestrel is a small falcon, and it is my favorite, because it is such a nice looking bird, and it was one of the first birds I saw.*

GW: Where is your favorite place to bird?

EM: *Magee Marsh during warbler season.*

GW: What bird would you most like to see, and why?

EM: *The Kirtland's Warbler, because I have always wanted to see it. My brother has, and I haven't.*

GW: Do you have any other interests/hobbies?

EM: *Wildlife photography, fishing, hunting, and sports.*

GW: Are any of your friends or family members birders?

EM: *My mother and brother are birders, but my friends from school are not interested.*

GW: In your experience, what do most people your age think about birding? And if their view of birding isn't totally positive, what can we do to change that?

EM: *Besides members of the OYBC, most teenagers are not interested. Maybe if they saw how cool it was, they would be more interested.*

GW: Have you taken any birding trips out of state?

EM: *Yes. I've been to Illinois, New Hampshire, upper New York, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.*

GW: Have you attended any birding conventions or conferences, and if so, what were they?

EM: *Two OYBC conferences, Shreve Migration Sensation, and Paul Smith's conference in New York.*

GW: Besides the OYBC, what other organizations do you belong to?

EM: *The National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation.*

GW: Where do you go to school?

EM: *Avon High School*

GW: Do you plan to attend college, and if so, where?

EM: *I do plan on going to college, but I am not sure where yet.*

GW: Do you have a job somewhere?

EM: *Currently, no.*

GW: What is your dream job?

EM: *Most likely something involving the outdoors.*

GW: If your dream job isn't related to birding, do you think you will still be a birder once you have your dream job?

EM: *Of course.*

GW: Do you have a favorite book, and if so, what is it?

EM: *The Chocolate War*

GW: Do you have a favorite movie, and if so, what is it and why?

EM – *Yes; Taken, directed by Pierre Morel. It is my favorite, because it is filled with action and suspense.*

GW: What's your favorite place to eat?

EM: *Chipotle*

GW: What are your favorite Websites?

EM: *Facebook*

GW: Do you have any pets, and if so, what are they?

EM: *I have three dogs: Bob, Tracker, and Hunter*

GW: Do you volunteer anywhere?

EM: *Not currently*

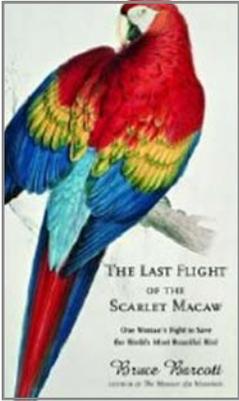
GW: Do you keep a life list, and, if so, how many birds are on it?

EM: *Yes; around 250 and growing.*

GW: Besides the monthly field trips and annual conference that we schedule, what else can the OYBC offer to their members?

EM: *I think that is good.*

Book Review: *The Last Flight of the Scarlet Macaw*



Bruce Barcott's *The Last Flight of the Scarlet Macaw* is a truly mesmerizing shocker. The book follows the battle of Sharon Matola in her efforts to save a Central American

subspecies of the Scarlet Macaw, as well as many other unusual animals in a Belizean river valley doomed by the construction of an inefficient and highly uneconomical dam. The Macal River Valley contained an extremely diverse wild area, with critical habitat for many different species, and possessed the highest number of Jaguars found in the world, but the incredibly corrupt government organizations of Belize did not see them as worth saving. Led by the minister of finance, Ralph Fonseca, the Belizean government attempted to build this dam while breaking numerous laws and receiving enormous kickbacks from this

business venture. In lieu of the government's promise of lower prices to the Belizean citizens, the prices are actually predicted to rise with the construction and the Belizean people only lose tax dollars, which would go to a Canadian energy company.

Matola's battle exposes many wrongs perpetrated by some governmental and international organizations. Despite all the infringements upon the law and the danger the dam created for the regular people of Belize (it is built on a fault line), many safeguards initially established to battle such abuses of power and ultimate corruption fail, one after another. Yet, in the end, hope remains for some of the last high courts to reverse Ralph Fonseca's plot.

The Last Flight of the Scarlet Macaw also shows the inability of most people to participate in actions against the corruption of government. This truly inspirational work calls to action people who want to create a

difference in the lives of their children and grandchildren. Although not all battles are winnable, some are. The ability to protect the wonders of the world comes from these very battles. As Barcott said of his lasting impression of life in general:

For a good portion of my life, I believed that benevolent action held sway in the world. This law maintained that if you did the right thing and worked hard, eventually things would work out; the world generally trended toward fairness, decency, and wisdom. But of course, the world doesn't work that way. This people who learn that lesson through crushing experience and still refuse to bow to it astound me. They go on fighting, again and again and again. These people aren't perfect. They aren't simple heroes. They are complex human beings. And we need them. Because without them the world would be lost.

Lukas Padegimas, age 16
Youth Advisory Panel

Your Organization Can Become an OYBC Sponsor Today!

Do your part to encourage our youth to learn more about birds and the natural world around them.

Support the Ohio Young Birders Club at one of the following levels:

- _____ \$1,000 – BALD EAGLE LEVEL
- _____ \$750 – PEREGRINE FALCON LEVEL
- _____ \$500 – RED-TAILED HAWK LEVEL
- _____ \$100 – AMERICAN KESTREL LEVEL

Visit www.ohioyoungbirders.org for a sponsorship form

Our Fall Birding Blitz began Friday, October 2, at Hueston Woods State Park in the southwest corner of the state. A few lucky campers arrived early at Group Camp B to set up for the weekend. Our site was located right by an inlet from Lake Acton. Others arrived after dark, thankful for their headlamps as tents were set up and sleeping bags unrolled.

It was so quiet that evening that *every single* Cub Scout camping several group sites away could be heard! And, going to bed early was not on the scouts' agenda. Finally, as sleep overtook the scouts, our campers were able to listen to nature. There seemed to be a ruckus that night; we could hear the geese and Great Blue Herons being roused and having to relocate. One of the possible explanations involved coyotes roaming around the lakeshore.

Night lists included:

Canadian Geese
Ducks
Great Blue Herons
Screech Owls
Barred Owl
Great Horned Owl

Early Saturday morning, we headed over to the Hueston Room at the marina for breakfast. It was really nice meeting our fellow campers, birders, and club members. We had over 45 participants on this field trip! The best part was finally meeting OYBC members from other parts of the state with whom we may have chatted or emailed.

Breakfast was great (Thanks Kathy and Ned), but we didn't hang around long—plenty to do!

Bird Banding—The location of our first big adventure was below Lake Acton's dam. Drs. Jill and Dave Russell, along with their cast of characters, set up banding nets before we arrived. The Russell's established the Avian Research and Education Institute back in 2004. AREI is a non-profit organization (501C3) dedicated to enhancing the preservation of avian populations. Their mission is to protect and conserve avian populations through research, education, and advocacy (<http://www.avianinstitute.com/>).

We were treated to a wonderful demonstration of bird banding. Dave and Jill explained that, depending upon weather, mist nets are opened shortly before sunrise and closed at midday most days, year-round. Birds captured in the nets are carefully removed on a frequent basis, placed in bags, and returned to a centrally located banding station. The group was able to watch the birds being removed from the mist nets and put into lingerie bags to keep them safe until banding. Because it was cool out that morning, the birds waiting to be banded were put in the warm car or put in the laps and coats of our banders.

Jill and Dave also explained the banding process step by step as the birds were banded. We learned that at the banding station, the birds are identified;

banded (marked with uniquely numbered USGS aluminum leg band) or reprocessed, if they were banded previously; and information about their age, sex, wing length, fat deposits, body mass, and other data are carefully recorded. Individual feathers are taken at this time for stable isotope and genetic studies. The whole process of collecting data for each captured bird takes less than a minute, after which the bird is released unharmed.

Our group also learned how to identify "hatch-year" versus "after-hatch-year" birds. We were able to locate fat on a bird and learned why fat is so important. We also learned which species do not like to cooperate with the banding process and a bit about Dragonflies (Common Green Darner) that were captured in the mist nets. Some of us helped to log the information collected, and we all learned why recaptures are so important. Finally, we were able to hold and photograph the amazing birds.

After banding, it was time for lunch back at the Hueston Room. The cheese coney was the best! Thanks, Cindy Beckman! Again, it was a treat to meet and get to know our fellow birders. We came from many places and are of different ages. Some of us are tried and true birders, whereas others are just learning. A few high school students, working on extra credit for an AP Environmental Science class,

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were also in attendance.

Birds of Prey — Next on our agenda was a tour of the Birds of Prey program at the park raptor center. We were treated to a behind-the-scenes visit with some beautiful and interesting creatures. Each resident has a story as to how they ended up at the center: some were hit by cars, some shot, and others found injured. There were vultures, hawks, owls, eagles, and Eddie. Yes, Eddie . . .



Eddie is a Turkey Vulture that has been at the center for years. He is unable to fly and is a very curious bird. It is obvious that Eddie is a favorite with his caretakers. He followed us around during the tour, making sure we all stayed where we needed to. Eddie even hung out while we watched the cougar, bobcat, and eagles being fed.

Bird Walk — After our tour, we had a small amount of time to bird the harbor/marina area. We went to the bird blind near the marina to check out waterfowl, where we set up scopes and shared binoculars. We were also able to sneak in a short walk and attempt to spot and identify sparrows and other songbirds. Dr. Dave Russell shared his knowledge of entomology when

the birds were hiding. He helped us identify several butterflies and a woolly bear, as well as beetles and dragonflies.

Sparrow Identification — Our 3 p.m. program was awesome! Dr. Dave Russell introduced us to sparrow identification techniques that work great in the field. We learned that sparrows come in many shapes and colors. Some are secretive and some are bold. There may be subtle or overstated differences in eye lines or eye rings, crowns, wing bars, coverts, throat, breast, or belly feathers. Winter plumage differs from breeding, or summer, plumage. Hatch-year birds differ from after-hatch-year birds and some sparrows are only seen during migration. Whew! Not to worry, the next morning we all got to try out those techniques at Miami Whitewater.

All that learning created quite an appetite. A feast of pizza, salad, and dessert followed. Thanks again to all those who took care of our needs—especially feeding the teenagers!

Birds of Taiwan — Dr. Herman Mays, Curator of Zoology at the Cincinnati Museum Center, which includes the Greier Collections and Research Center at the Cincinnati Museum Center.

Dr. Mays started his session by presenting an interesting slideshow about birds he researched and photographed in Taiwan. His photos are just beautiful! The birds are so different, and even more amazing were some of the names of species: Common Tailorbird, Red-whiskered Bulbul, and Chinese

Bulbuls. We learned that the White-browed Robin is considered a common bird in Taiwan, much like our American Robin is here. We also learned that few birds are common to both United States and Taiwan. Dr. Mays explained that the Northern Shoveler is an example of one such bird. Arctic ducks and shorebirds are species that can be found in both countries. Dr. Mays also facilitated a lively discussion regarding careers in ornithology and zoology. He shared his professional journey, education, and the hard work he completed to reach his current position. He invited Dr. Russell to share his journey, too.

Hands-on Bird Skinning — Dr. Mays continued his session with bird-skinning demonstrations and information about ornithology research taking place at the Cincinnati Museum Center. Helping with the demonstrations were Debra Hausrath and Loree Celebrezze. We gathered around three tables at which three different birds were processed. Each bird can take anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours to be processed. Dr. Mays explained that the skill of the person skinning usually determines the time.

As Debra and Loree skinned each bird, they talked about some of the new research taking place and different ways of skinning. We learned that the Cincinnati Museum Center is a participant in the Consortium for the Barcode of Life. Dr. May's Blog, <http://cincyevolution.blogspot.com/> can better explain the research than we can; DNA barcoding means

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sequencing a gene that is common to most of life. He explains that these sequences can be used alongside traditional characteristics as a mark of species identity. There are large barcode databases that allow for unknown specimens, including those that are hard to identify, to be compared against known sequences. This leads to species-level identification. The DNA barcoding can also provide data that may lead to unrecognized evolutionary lineages. Dr. Mays explained that this will prompt more detailed research projects on new species.

The Museum Center would be a great field trip all by itself. We learned that the Ornithology Collection comprises over 20,000 study skins, 2,000 fluid-preserved specimens, 1,000 skeletons, 5,500 frozen tissue samples, 2,000 eggs and 3,300 teaching specimens and mounts. About 1,700 species are represented.



Campfire Activities — Next, we went back to the campground for some night adventures. Waiting for us: a nice big bonfire with Lester Peyton, bat netting with Jeff Brown, and an owl walk with Susan Williams.

Lester Peyton was our bonfire

guy. Lester is also a bird bander, monarch butterfly tagger, and volunteer educator. We chatted and swapped many birding stories. The kids loved the fire! Adults relaxed around it. It was hard to tear ourselves away for the bat banding and owl walk.

In the meantime, Jeff Brown had set up two bat banding mist nets. The net in the water measured 20 feet high by 60 feet wide. The second net was on land and measured 30 feet high by 42 feet wide. The nets are stacked on a pulley system, which makes it easier to set up and take down in the field. Jeff explained that at this time of year we were targeting red bats and hoary bats that were migrating. Due to weather conditions (a bit windy and a little too cold), we were not successful.

Up until this year, there was not a lot of bat banding in Ohio. Every state has its own banding requirements. One would expect to capture Big Brown bats, Little Brown Bats, Northern Bats, Red bats, and Eastern Pipistrelle. Hoary and Silver Hairs can be around, too. If you have the appropriate habitat, you might see an Indiana bat, which is endangered.

Bats are nocturnal; eat insects; and roost in caves, tunnels, crevices, hollow trees, and buildings. They can range in size from the tiny bumble-bee bat to a vulture-sized bat. Their diet consists primarily of insects. Some bats eat nectar and fruits. The vampire bats drink the blood of other animals. Some bats in the tropics eat frogs and fish.

We learned that bats are probably

most known for echolocation, which is their incredible ability to navigate in total darkness using sonar. As they fly, they give off various supersonic sounds that reflect off objects and are then picked up by the supersensitive ears of the bat.

Bats roost hanging head-down by their hind feet. They have special valves in their circulatory system to keep blood from rushing to their heads as they hang upside down. Their hand is formed into a wing with a double membrane of skin stretched between the fingers, side of the body, and hind legs. Bats do bite; it is not wise to handle bats without proper training and immunization. Jeff is a senior biologist at Stantec Consulting and has been doing bat banding and research for 15 years. Thanks, Jeff!

Owl Walk — Susan Williams, Director of Education, Raptor, Inc. We learned that **Raptor, Inc.** is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of birds of prey through rehabilitation, education, and conservation. Raptor's goals are two-fold: education of the public on the importance of raptors and the preservation of their native habitat and rehabilitation and return of injured raptors to their natural environment (<http://www.raptorinc.org/>).

Susan took our group down the camp road to a quiet area. We stood silently, without our lights, and waited. We could hear dogs, campers at a Halloween party a mile away, music, and a few cars. It is hard to imagine what was

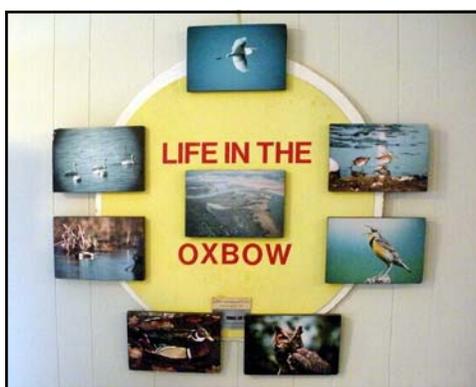
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really out there. But, after playing a few owl vocalizations, we were treated to several fly-bys. One was a gray morph screech owl. You almost couldn't hear them, but instead felt them as they flew by. It was amazing—right over our heads! We did manage to locate them with our flashlights. They seemed as curious about us as we were about them. What a terrific end to a fantastic day! Thank you, Susan!

Bird Banding — Sunday morning found us at Shaker Trace Wetlands at the crack of dawn. Dave and Jill Russell and volunteers were already there with mist nets set up. The nets they use are 12 meters long by 2.6 meters high, placed singly or in a series in different vegetation zones and along habitat edges, mostly where the adjacent vegetation is not much higher than the nets themselves. The locations for most of the mist nets change little over the years to maintain statistical relevance. We offer a special thanks to Julie and Emily for their tremendous efforts handling and banding birds. Dave reported that they *doubled* their previous all-time high for birds banded in a morning at Shaker Trace! In a

little more than four hours they banded 274 and recaptured 12 previously banded, for a total of 286 birds! Of that total, 173 were American Goldfinches that hit the nets after about 10:30. They banded 57 Song Sparrows, 19 Savannah Sparrows, 7 Swamp Sparrows, 2 Lincoln's Sparrows, and an American Woodcock, among the 12 species for the day. We also caught our first Palm Warbler of the year. Interesting birds seen and heard but not banded included a Peregrine Falcon blasting over at dawn, a singing Henslow's Sparrow, and a couple Sedge Wrens.



Oxbow Trip — Jon Seymour visited Shaker Trace and led a small group to the Oxbow floodplain near Lawrenceburg, Indiana. Jon is the President of Oxbow, Inc., which is a conservation group preserving the Oxbow. Before heading to the

wetland, we visited Oxbow, Inc.'s comfortable office and meeting room, located in a small downtown Lawrenceburg building. At the Oxbow floodplain, Jon explained the history of the Oxbow wetland and the formation of the group to preserve it. The oxbow-shaped lake formed in 1847 when a major flood caused the Great Miami River to change its course. Development plans in the mid-1980s caused concerned citizens to form Oxbow, Inc. to save the wetland.

During our tour of this interesting geographical area, we made multiple stops to view birds, insects, and plants. We learned that native ragweed grows 12 to 20 feet high, but because it's a native plant, it does not cause allergic reactions. You can learn more about Oxbow by visiting the group's Website at <http://oxbowinc.org/>.

We really want to thank all our volunteers and Raptor, Inc., Oxbow, Inc., Audubon of Ohio, AREI, and Cincinnati Bird Club for sponsoring this awesome event. We could not have done it without all of you.

Brian Wulker, age 18

DON'T FORGET!

To send us your sketches, articles, poetry, and photographs
for publishing in the next Gold-Wings issue!

Mail to: BSBO, 13551, W. State Route 2, Oak Harbor, Ohio 43449
or email to info@ohioyoungbirders.org

Sandpiper

*A Notation of Feelings of a Day
Spent at Point Pelee, Canada*

Skipping 'cross the sand
Looking naught for man,
Dancing to a wild beat
To human eyes unseen,
With beak like ancient pipe,
Hid within the bright beach-light,
Sandpiper
Sandpiper
What do you see in the shell-strewn sand?
A piece of awing Earth
That humans have missed?
But you yourself have a way
Of compelling wonderment.
Sandpiper
Sandpiper
Thanks for the reminder
Of a glorious Nature
Which we admire...
And,
To which,
We surrender.

By Kathleen Seeley

Photo of a Western Sandpiper taken by
Kathleen Seeley at Point Pelee, Canada
on September 20, 2009



STATES WITH YOUNG BIRDER CLUBS . . . WOW!



Ohio Young Birder Club
New York Young Birders Club
PA Young Birders Club
Tucson Young Birders Club
Indiana Young Birders
Delaware Dunlins Young Birders Club
Central Texas Young Birders Club
Idaho Young Birders Club
Oklahoma Young Birders Club
Illinois Young Birders Club
Wake Audubon Young Naturalist Club
Alabama Young Birders Club
Georgia Young Birders Club
Vermont Young Birders Club
Audubon Young Birders Club (Naples, Florida)

DIARY OF A YOUNG BIRDER

A portion of this article originally appeared in the October issue of the ABA's newsletter, *Winging It*. It appears here in its entirety.

I've been a birdwatcher for as long as I can remember. My mother liked birds, so there was never a time that we didn't have at least one stocked bird feeder outside our kitchen windows. It wasn't until recently that I have become a "birder."

I started reading the "Aerial View," a birding article that appears in my local newspaper, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*. It describes fantastic birding outings, lists upcoming events, and summarizes all of the neat sightings in the area. In the fall of 2006, when I was 12-years-old, I started to notice new events lead by the Ohio Young Birders Club. One such event was a gull walk planned for January 2007. The day that I expressed interest, my mom called the OYBC. They gave me directions and asked only that, if I came, that I bring a \$5 membership fee and warm clothes.

The directions lead me on a roundabout trip to East 72nd street, an Erie Shoreway street that houses an electric company that pumps hot water into the lake. Dead fish floated on the surface as thousands of gulls circled our heads. It was well below zero, with a steady wind kicking mist into my face, accompanied by the eye-watering smell of thousands upon thousands of decaying fish. A small group of huddled birders sat in full blast of the wind off the lake, spotting scopes sitting on the edge of the disgusting breakwall. They welcomed me as enthusiastically as they could through their Eskimo-style mufflers and hats as I wobbled around in a full snow suit.

"What'd you have?" I asked the complete strangers, not knowing that this would soon become sort of a catchphrase for me.

"Oh, trying to get a Common Merganser among all the Red-breasteds," someone answered.

"Red-breasted Merganser?" I asked. I had never seen one. They nodded and let me peek in through the scope. Sure enough, there it was. I was ecstatic. It went on like that for an entire day; the birders would spot a relatively common bird that I had never seen and let me see it, while I almost squealed with delight.

Somewhere in that day I fell in step with another young birder. He was older than me, but about as enthusiastic. He was telling another birder about how many birds were on his "life list." He had somewhere around 200, I guess. I had never even heard of a life list, so he



Sarah and her father, Tim, with the other OYBC members at E 72 St., Cleveland, Ohio on the January, 2008 OYBC field trip.

explained it to me.

If there are two things I love, they are birds and competition. Whether it's racing the clock or compiling the biggest book report, I'm in. Something about this whole life list thing really struck a chord with me. A few months after this outing I had compiled my meager life list, acquired a better pair of binoculars, and started really "birding" on my own.

The Ohio Young Birders Club is an organization stemming off of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory. Kids 12 to 18

can participate in the club, and older birdwatchers can join as adult supporting members. A youth advisory panel of (you guessed it) youth advisors meets a few times a year to make the important decisions for the club. Once a month, we try to meet to go on various trips across the state and sometimes beyond. We participate in banding, BioBlitzes, CBCs, PFWes, scientific taxidermy and all-out kamikaze-style birding. Every year we host an OYBC Conference lead by young birders. The OYBC publishes a newsletter four times a year. We even have a blog site, <http://ohioyoungbirdersclub.ning.com/> (see if you can spot yours truly) and a website, <http://ohioyoungbirdersclub.com/>. Somehow, I was (willingly) stuck into this entire production after a freezing bird walk that a normal person would never have attended, let alone re-attended.

From there, I went to my first BioBlitz at the organic Crown Point farm in Bath, Ohio. For anyone who doesn't know, a BioBlitz is a 24-hour non-stop list-everything-you-see-in-the-name-of-science-but-really-have-fun deal. Birds, plants, amphibians, types of mosquitoes: you name it, we identified it. Highlights of the day included trekking through waste-high grass to find a mucky little pond where I was handed a live dragonfly (you should have seen them laughing when it bit me ... something about, "You haven't lived until you've gotten bit by a dragonfly."); meeting the "Snake Lady" featured on *Dirty Jobs* (on Discovery

Channel) for working with Lake Erie Water Snakes; and finding a five-legged toad, for which I claim credit.

The next year I went on another Gull Walk. You'd think that I'd remember what I had been through the year before, but obviously I didn't ... I think that's called selective amnesia.

The summer after that, I attended my second BioBlitz. This time we waded around a new trail-less park in central Ohio, studying the biodiversity and

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looking for new ways to secure more bog land. Highlights included wading through a bog in tennis shoes, finding a huge field full of butterfly bush, seeing various tree frogs, and eating a ton of snacks. By then I had started to get acquainted with a couple of young birders. We exchanged phone numbers, leading to 3-hour-plus long distance conversations.

About two months after the Ashland BioBlitz, one such birder called me and asked if I was going on the upcoming trip to Kelley's Island, one of the small islands in Lake Erie. It was a three-day trip; we stayed in a cabin on the edge of the island and spent the days exploring the glacial grooves and warbler-infested forests.

After my dad and I had taken the ferry



Pat Hayes, President of Kelleys Island Audubon, with Sarah Winnicki and Lukas Padegimas at the Glacial Grooves, Kelleys Island, Ohio.

across, we spent an extra half-hour looking for the well-hidden cabin. Upon finding it, I hesitantly stepped out of my van, looking for a registration desk or something of the sort. Instead, I heard my name called and I turned to see Kim Kaufman walking toward me, a paint can on her arm.

"Sarah, do you think you could help me? We're tarring the trees on the property to attract moths so that we can identify them. This is made out of bananas, brown sugar and alcohol." So much for a registration desk. I knew I could see eye to eye with someone who didn't spray to kill moths, but tarred trees to attract them.

We stayed in a bunk that overlooked the open lake to the north. The beach was

pure slippery stone, a big flat shelf protruding over the lake until it drops off into the water. Fossils the size of my hand adorned the stone, and leeches (which I named and kept as pets in a tank for the weekend) slipped in and out of the shallow pools. When I got there, the sun was setting over the lake, and we set up a fire as we identified the slugs and the moths on our trees. Later that night, we set off for an owl walk, and Kenn Kaufman called in an Eastern Screech Owl (a lifer for me) in five minutes. It sat in the tree and stared at us.

The next morning, we left on a warbler excursion in the pouring rain. After a few hours, one set of glacial grooves and about ten lifers (for me, anyway) we gave up fighting the skies and went back to the cabin. The grownups watched an interesting (cough) documentary on warbler migration while the young birders located the Roger Tory Peterson Birding Game. If you haven't experienced the RTPBG, you're missing a lot in life. With sponsors, habitats, mind-bending bird questions and a wordless field guide, it is the perfect game for birders who have spent the entire day in the rain. After a while, we got way too worked up in the competition of the thing and decided to hit the beach for our own snake wrangling. After an hour of lying on the wet stone, we had three Lake Erie Water Snakes (a target species for the trip) under a rock that was too big to lift, even when we got all of the adults outside. We were thinking of ways to get the snakes out when one of our young birders yelled that he had gotten one under a rock. Three feet long and starting to molt, the thing was as angry as, well, a disturbed LE Water Snake (if you've met them, you know what I mean). He had it by its tail and just as one of the other members said "You know, they have (insert fancy chemical name here) in their saliva that will keep your blood from clotting" he went to grab it by the head and the snake nailed him in the hand with two rows of jagged, serrated teeth. As blood dripped to the ground he said, "awesome!" Before dinner, we had to wrap his hand in gauze to stop the bleeding, but halfway through our meal he walked in with a little snake in each hand. Apparently, they were climbing the bushes to eat the moths under our lights. By the end of the night, everyone had held at least one and I was only bitten twice. We left after a few hours of birding the next day, leaving behind one of the best weekends of my life.

From there, I went on every trip each month. I went to Funk Bottoms Marsh, where I met Greg Miller and found a drowned Barn Owl, for the OYBC Conference and the Museum of Biological Diversity at Ohio State University, where we toured the museum's stored specimens and then produced a quail study skin of our own (which is in my bedroom to this day). That included halting the operation for half an hour as we tried to identify the exoskeleton of a long-dead bug in my pistachio. That night we slept over at a nature preserve where we played the RTPBG and talked about our recent birding adventures. The next January, I went on yet another Gull Walk, where I froze my pants off yet again.

Our most recent trip was supposed to be a weeklong excursion to watch the ospreys' courtship at Hogback Nature Preserve in central Ohio. As my mom dropped me off at a friend's house where my ride was located, they informed me the trip had been canceled. Instead, we stayed at one of our advisor's cottages near Magee Marsh and the Black Swamp Bird Observatory. We picked up ice cream that night and the BSBO bus the next morning for a 333-mile excursion across the state of Ohio tracing the rarities that had been winging in as April closed. Highlights included a Western Meadowlark, a Smith's Longspur, two barn fires, a bright blue roof, five fighter jets, and 85 species of birds.

Birding, for me at least, is a way of life. It is something that never, ever stops. Inside the classroom, in the car, or in the field, I never stop looking for birds. My "local" friends think I'm nuts (the ones I have left, anyway), but I've made countless new "birding friends," or people just like me. They say that a way to make friends is to join a group that you enjoy. Mission accomplished.

The OYBC has shown me that I can love being who I want to be. I have never had more fun in my entire life. The knowledge acquired from my amazing mentors and friends is priceless. The Ohio Young Birders Club is truly an amazing opportunity and a model for clubs around the world.

Sarah Winnicki, age 15
Youth Advisory Panel

OHIO JUNIOR DUCK STAMP CALLING YOUNG ARTISTS!

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is now accepting entries for the 2010 Ohio Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Entries must be postmarked by March 15, 2010. The entry form and information on contest rules and regulations are included inside this issue of *Golden-Wings*.

To have a contest program mailed to you please contact the Ohio Junior Duck Stamp State Coordinator, Rebecca Hinkle at 419 898-0014 or Rebecca_hinkle@fws.gov

Design requirements to think about:

- The physical size of submitted artwork must be 9" × 12".
- Entries must be less than ¼" thick.
- Image layout must be horizontal.
- Image must be a live portrayal of a native North American duck, swan, or goose (refer to eligible species list on page 8 in the 2010 Program Guidelines booklet).
- Entries should not be matted.
- There should be no border around the image.
- A loose, detachable cover sheet may be laid over the art face to protect it during shipping. Spray chalk and pastel entries with a fixative to eliminate possible scuffing and smudging during transfer of artwork.
- Signatures are not allowed on the front of the artwork. Should this entry win, a signature may interfere with the final stamp design.

OYBC SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

John F. Gallagher Memorial Scholarship Fund

OYBC Scholarship Information

Ohio Young Birders Club scholarships are available to help young people who are interested in birds to attend summer camps, workshops, classes, training programs, conventions, and other bird-related activities. Funds for these scholarships come from our partners, private donations, and proceeds from special fund raising events. Applicants must be between the ages of 12 - 18.

Visit www.ohioyoungbirders.org/scholarships.htm for an application form or call BSBO at 419 898-4070 and we will mail you one.

NEW OYBC MEMBERS & ADULT SUPPORTERS

Stephen Endres
Susan Evanoff
Colleen Kammer
Donna Killoran

Deb Neidert
Susan M. Seeley
Dean E. Sheldon, Jr.
Jane & Dick Ward

OYBC YOUTH ADVISORY PANEL (YAP) UPDATE

Wyatt Miller, Ben Thornton, Lukas Padegimas, and Sarah Winnicki and supporting adults met on December 5, 2009 at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. Topics discussed included review and discussion of the 2010 OYBC budget, location and date of the 4th Annual OYBC Conference, involvement of OYBC Sponsors, and agreement on participating in the Shreve Migration Sensation by giving a program on beginning birding to families and new young birders.

The group also reviewed the 2010 field trip schedule and discussed ways to find new young birders. The next meeting is scheduled on, Saturday, January 9, 2010 at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History after the Winter Gull Field Trip. At this meeting OYBC's Shreve program details will be worked on.

Thank you Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge for hosting the YAP meeting.

WANTED!

WRITERS, POETS, ARTISTS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

Please send your articles and pictures & drawings to:

Black Swamp Bird Observatory
13551 W State Route 2
Oak Harbor, Ohio 43449

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Mail to: Black Swamp Bird Observatory, 13551 W. State Route 2, Oak Harbor, Ohio 43449