



Ohio Young Birders Club

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Lark Sparrow
by Samuel Weaver

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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

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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 **NEW**
Ohio Young Birders Network:
www.ohioyoungbirders.ning.com

College Life: The First Year by Auriel Van Der Laar

I've been home schooled most of my life, class of one, and happily so. I like to learn at my own pace and do my own thing. College has been a pretty big switch for me, going from a class of one to a class of many and from being around my family a lot to being 12 hours away and surrounded by my peers 24/7. It has also been some of the most fun, the hardest work, and the most stress I have ever gone through. But I have enjoyed it a ton, learned a lot, both in my major and out of it, and I am really excited to see what the next years will bring.



Jon and Auriel with Ted, the 800 - pound Black Bear at the National Bear Center in Ely, MN.



Burnt over Jack Pine stand where we had lab for a few weeks to look at secondary succession of forests and habitat mapping.

Michigan Technological University, or Michigan Tech as we call it, is a small school in Houghton, Michigan (the NW corner of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan). The school is mainly known for its engineering program. More than half the school is engineers. But it also has one of the top three forestry programs in the nation and one of the top wildlife programs as well. It's located in the middle of nowhere in the U.P., and when I visited last fall I fell in love with the place. I moved in during the last week of August, and I'll admit, I was a little nervous. I was excited, ready to go and meet new people, do new things, learn new thoughts, but I was also scared. Scared that my roommate wouldn't like me, scared that things would be too hard, too strange, too new, and I wouldn't be able to adapt.

So I moved in, and after a week of orientation, I loved Houghton. I was living in a learning community of all forestry and wildlife majors, and we did everything together, from eating to going down to the portage for walks to Wal-Mart runs. We were all instant friends. I was having lots of fun and felt well prepared for my classes. Then classes started and the work began. I learned that in *Vegetation of North America* I would be learning to identify over 150 different tree species by bud bark and leaf. Oh, did I mention I'd be learning common Latin and family names?

While this seemed overwhelming, the "second-years" in our hall assured us that we'd survive, and they helped us to study every week when we flipped out before our labs. I have never used so many flashcards in my life. My forest landscape class gave me new appreciation for forest habitats and for sustainable forestry, a concept that I had never really understood.

The department that I am a part of is one of the smallest at tech, fewer than 200 students in a university of 7,000, so you get to know your peers

College Life: The First Year (cont'd) ~

and professors really well. I started working for the school ornithologist within the first month, and, with his help, started MTU's first birding club, the Birdbums of Michigan Tech. I've met tons of amazing people. I traveled to Minnesota with the wildlife society and got licked by an 800-pound Black Bear. I attended a forester's conclave and saw a tobacco-spitting contest and survived my first, of what I have been told will be many, Houghton blizzard.

College is a lot of fun, but it is also a lot of work. Since I took college classes as part of my high school curriculum, I am ahead of the curve with general education classes (math, English, etc.) so I am taking the first and second year of my major classes at one time. This means three labs a week, all of them outside, which works out to spending 10 odd hours a week outdoors. The CS (computer science) majors think I am nuts for enjoying it, but I love it. We travel all over the Keweenaw Peninsula and down almost to Wisconsin some weeks. We've hiked mountains, explored gullies and trekked across fields. The work comes once the fun of lab is over and the reports start. I wrote over 40 lab reports this semester. My friend Sean is in an additional lab class, so he is at more than 55 reports. But this became easier as the semester progressed. I learned what was expected, what I didn't need to include, and what needed improvement. By the end of the term, I was turning out 10-page reports with charts and graphs in under two hours.

Living in a hall with 40 other people is often a challenge as we get on each other's nerves quite regularly, but we also band together when we need to, and we have become great friends. If you attend college, and you can afford a year in the dorms, I highly recommend it, because it forces you to break away from your parents a little (not that I don't love my parents, but I do have to learn to take care of myself eventually) and it helps you to form friendships and really connect with the student body. I have learned a lot sitting in the hallway till the wee hours of the morning, listening to others' stories and sharing some of my own. The key to enjoying college is to be flexible, lend a listening ear, and not judge people too quickly. Keep those things in mind, and no matter what your major, you will go far.

The coolest thing for me as the year comes to an end is looking towards this summer, when I'm going to be running my own research project and really understanding what I'm doing. Even though I'm only a year into my degree, I understand my field so much better. I feel like I can actually look at a piece of property for a species and be able to figure things out about their history. Next year, I'll be attending fall camp, a semester of fieldwork and application of what I've been learning, and I cannot wait. I love stuff that is hands-on; to do the work and see how it all operates, and fall camp is just that. I highly encourage any of you that love to work in the outdoors, either with forests or birds or marshes or mammals to look into a natural resource related degree. The people you work with are amazing, the opportunities diverse, and the ability to wake up in the morning and love what you do is priceless.

Auriel is one of the founding members of the Ohio Young Birders Club and a former Youth Advisory Panel member. She recently became an adult supporter of the OYBC. Her blog is located at <http://birdgirlmtu.blogspot.com>.

GOLDEN-WINGS

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

Philip Chaon
Delores Cole
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Lukas Padegimas
John Sawvel
Sarah Winnicki
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Samuel Weaver
Brian Wulker

GOLDEN-WINGS Editor

Deborah Griffith

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 April 15, 2009

Email:

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Cover drawing: Lark Sparrow
by Samuel Weaver

Species Profile: California Condor by Sarah Winnicki ~

Not many North American birders can seriously say that they have not heard of California Condors.



Soaring California Condor
by Sarah Winnicki

The condor is a New World vulture, more closely related to storks than to other hawks. California Condors are birds of astronomical proportions, more easily misidentified as small planes than as other birds. With an amazing 110-inch wingspan and a body the size of a kid, these birds are some of the biggest in the world. In fact, the largest known flying bird in the history of this planet was a fossilized New World vulture found in Argentina.

The condor's plumage is not anything to marvel at, at least not when compared to a Painted Bunting. The bird is black, with large, square black wings that hide white under patches. The condor's head, like that of other vultures, is bare and featherless, so that any bacteria left over from their favorite meal—carcass—burns on the spot.

The head is orange, pink or yellow, depending on the bird's mood, and is often bunched with stored food. Around the bird's long neck is a necklace of downy black feathers. On its chest is a

bare pink spot (not shown in the Sibley's guide). They constantly pee on their legs to cool themselves down.

The California Condor is the rarest bird of prey in the world, with a population—captive and wild—of fewer than 400 birds. Vultures are often wrongly accused of killing the livestock they eat and have been persecuted for centuries.

All birds face habitat loss and destruction. Golden Eagles compete with the less aggressive condors for food and habitat, often with horrifying results. Power lines, hazards to all large birds, zap condors every year.



Condor habitat
By Sarah Winnicki

However, the largest threat to condors is lead shot. The lead is ingested through carrion killed by lead bullets, and the bird is poisoned, along with any potential eggs. By the time the 1970s rolled around, only 22 birds were still alive.

These 22 birds were taken into various sanctuaries in Utah, Arizona and California, where they were bred and puppet-raised to fear humans, power lines and other dangers. By the mid-1990s, the birds were slowly being re-

introduced into the southwest corner of their former habitat, which once stretched as far as Florida. However, the same dangers still threaten condors. More than 40% of the population has died, and many of the new releases don't make it. The program still has a long way to go.

The biggest threat to condors today is still lead shot. Why, you may ask, has lead shot, which can be dangerous for hunters as well as wildlife, and easily replaced with copper, been allowed in the United States? It was not until July 31, 2008, that lead shot was outlawed in condor territory. However, condors have been known to travel hundreds of miles within a few days, searching for food. How much good will the ban do them then?

And shooting a condor will only bring probation and a \$1,000 fine. Why not protect such an amazing bird that does nothing to harm us at all? Surely such a bird is a symbol of the Southwest. Look in your pocket right now. A California Condor soars on the California state quarter.

With only about 150 individuals in the wild, they are rarely seen. Truly, they are a dream, and my chances of seeing one seemed about as good as my chances of seeing an Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Young Birders Profile . . . Spotlight on Wyatt Miller, age 15 ~



GW - What year did you start birding?

WM - May 2007.

GW - What or who sparked your interest in birds?

WM - Larry Richardson and Henry Burton at

Sandy Ridge in North Ridgeville, Ohio.

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

WM - Larry Richardson, Henry Burton, and both the Kaufmans.

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

WM - I don't really have a favorite bird, but one of my favorites is the Greater Prairie Chicken, because they are so interesting to watch.

GW - Where is your favorite place to bird?

WM - It's probably Sandy Ridge, in North Ridgeville.

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

WM - I would really like to see a Great Gray Owl.

GW - Are you interested in any other natural science areas besides birds?

WM - I like all aspects of nature.

GW - Do you have any other interests/hobbies?

WM - I enjoy playing violin, swimming, playing football, fishing, hunting, traveling, and, of course, birding.

GW - Are any of your friends or family members birders? If not, how do you handle that?

WM - My whole family enjoys watching birds!

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?

WM - Most kids my age are into nature, but I don't think they are interested enough to get into something so in-depth as birding, which is a shame. I think that by educating them at a young age they will be more interested in birds and other aspects of nature later in life.

GW - How could we get more young people interested in nature?

WM - I think that by showing kids at a young age how exciting nature can be, we can help them appreciate nature much more when they become older.

GW - Do you think the Internet can help foster a community of young birders, and if so, how?

WM - Yes, I think young people spend lots of time on the computer, and I think birder blogs may be great for young people who are interested in birds.

GW - If you could go anyplace in the world to see a bird, where would you go and what bird would you look for?

WM - I would go to the Andes Mountains to see the Andes Condor because I have always wanted to see one.

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

WM - The People to People Organization. I have taken two trips with them, one to Washington D.C., and one to Europe.

GW - Where do you go to school?

WM - Avon High.

GW - Do you plan to go to college, and if so, have you thought of where?

WM - I know for sure that I want to be a Marine after I graduate, and I want to go to college after that, but I'm not really sure of where.

GW - What is your dream job?

WM - I'm not really sure, but I would love to be a professional fisherman.

GW - What kind of music do you like?

WM - Classic rock, heavy metal, country western, fiddling, bluegrass, and reggae.

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

WM - I like any Stephen King books, like Salem's Lot, because they are scary.

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

WM - My favorite movie is No Country for Old Men, because it is very exciting and I like Westerns.

GW - What's your favorite place to eat or favorite type of food?

WM - My favorite food is mac and cheese. I like to go out to Hot Dog Heaven to eat.

GW - What are your favorite websites?

WM - I really don't spend much time on the Internet, but my favorite website is probably Field and Stream.

GW - Do you have any pets?

WM - I have three dogs: Tracker, a dachshund; Bob, a standard poodle; and Hunter, a chocolate lab.

GW - Do you volunteer anywhere?

WM - No.

GW - Are you involved in any birding or nature projects?

WM - No, but I would like to be in the future.

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

WM - I have 230 birds on my USA life list book.

GW - Has becoming a member of the OYBC changed birding for you? If so, can you describe or explain how?

WM - It has, because it has allowed me to meet many very nice people who are much better birders than I am. They have all helped me learn more about birds.

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

WM - I am very happy with my membership with the OYBC and don't know what else it could offer to members.

OYBC Chapter - Queen City Birder's Club - Field Trip January 17, 2009 by Brian Wulker

The "official" objective of this field trip was to find winter finches and grosbeaks, both of which species were unlikely. The "unofficial" goals included Merlin, Fox Sparrow, finches, and really anything we could get. We birded the cemetery for just over two hours, and it was pretty slow, and it also included some periods of heavy sleet.

Species list for Spring Grove Cemetery:

Canada Goose
Red-Shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Mourning Dove
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Blue Jay
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-Breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
Golden-Crowned Kinglet
American Robin
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Northern Cardinal
House Finch
American Goldfinch

After a thorough inspection of Spring Grove, our group decided to head over to another Cincinnati cemetery to look for Merlins. Old and New St. Joe's cemetery is usually a reliable spot for Merlins but not this time. Hardly a bird other than crows was seen in either of them.

With the lack of productivity, our fearless leaders Dave and Jill Russell suggested we try for a Rough-legged Hawk that had been reported near Germantown, Ohio. We struck out on the Rough-legged Hawk, but we picked up some new species for the day on our northward excursion.

Germantown Metro Park Species List:

Canada Goose
Red-Shouldered Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Mourning Dove
Red-Bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker

Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Blue Jay
Horned Lark
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-Breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
American Robin
Cedar Waxwing
Yellow-Rumped Warbler
American Tree Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-Throated Sparrow
Dark-Eyed Junco
Snow Bunting
Lapland Longspur
Northern Cardinal
House Finch
American Goldfinch

Overall, despite a low turnout people-wise, it was a great trip, and although the birds were quiet early on, I think we ended up with a species count in the low 40s. The only ironic thing about this field trip was that the main focus was winter finches, which everyone knew was unlikely. Well, two weeks later, on January 29, White-Winged Crossbills showed up at Spring Grove Cemetery, and persisted for several days. We had the right place, we were just too early.

Kroger Community Rewards Program

The Black Swamp Bird Observatory is registered with the Kroger Community Rewards Program and **we need your help!** We ask that you (and your family and friends) link your Kroger Plus cards to BSBO's Kroger Community Rewards account, number **83396**. All of the dollars you spend with Kroger throughout the year will help us be eligible for a quarterly contribution through this program.

Kroger is planning on contributing \$5,000,000 in 2009 to nonprofit organizations in the states it operates in, so please help us be a recipient of a quarterly contribution!

Instructions for linking your Kroger Plus shopper's card to the BSBO Account Number - 83396

For Kroger stores north of Columbus but not Springfield, Ohio

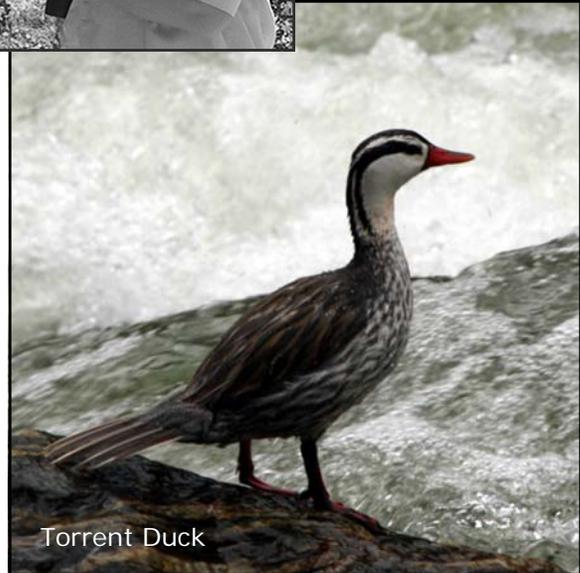
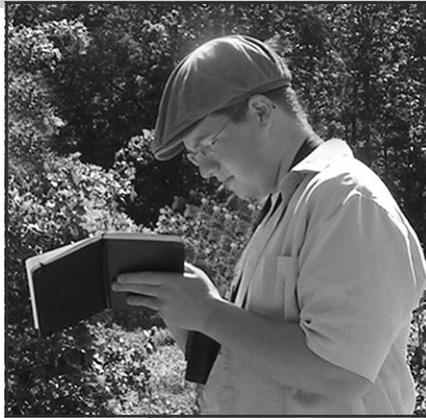
- Register online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com
- If you do not have an online account select SIGN In/Register and select **Sign Up Today**. Enter the zip code, click on your favorite store, enter your email address, create a password, and agree to the terms and conditions. You will then get a message to check your email inbox and click on the link within the body of the email to confirm your registration.
- Once you have an online account click on Sign in/Register and use your email address and password to log in and select **My Account**, then select **Go to Edit Community Rewards**.
- Enter your Kroger Plus card number and save changes. Confirm your account information and save changes.
- Enter BSBO's number - **83396** or our name, select organization from list and click on confirm.
- To verify you are enrolled correctly, you will see our organization's name on the right side of the information page.
- If you do not have a Kroger Plus Shopper's card, they are available at the customer service desk at any Kroger. Once you have a card you can link it to the BSBO account number using the instructions above.

Phil Chaon's Ecuador Update, March 25, 2009 ~

Some Highlights towards the end were:

About 1200 species of birds total

- * Waved Albatross
- * Pacific Royal Flycatcher (with crest spread)
- * Orange-throated Tanager
- * Esmeraldas Woodstar
- * Black-breasted Puffleg
- * Torrent Duck
- * Crescent-faced Antpitta
- * Nocturnal Curassow
- * Crested Owl
- * Scarlet and White Tanager
- * Banded Ground-Cuckoo
- * Fiery Topaz
- * Ornate Hawk-Eagle
- * Purple-throated
- * Plum-throated and Spangled Cotingas
- * Puffbirds and Motmots and pretty much everything.
- * Having Jocotoco Antpitta find me before I found it.
- * Squirrel Monkeys and Hammerhead Sharks
- * Amazon Tree Boa
- * Catching Swallow-tailed Nightjar
- * Birding with my good friend Kai Reed
- * Ceviche and Beach Time in Rio Ayampe
- * Visiting Cordillera Del Condor
- * Stealing and eating all the pineapples from the guard station in Rio Bombuscaro
- * Plus all the good stuff from before was still good.



Torrent Duck



Amazon Tree Boa

Lowlights:

- * 5 weeks in a row at Bellavista without seeing the sun once.
- * Armed Robbery
- * RAIN
- * Learning our tent was not waterproof after setting it up in a downpour at Guacamayos Ridge.
- * Getting lost at Cordillera Del Condor and catching and eating an Agouti
- * Surviving 3 days on nothing but Avocado
- * MUD
- * The 3 mile death march in 105 degree heat on Isla de

la Plata (there is no shade on the whole island)

- * The amount of deforestation
- * The lack of oxygen at 15,000 ft (though Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe were a good bonus)
- * Going the entire 6 months in Ecuador without seeing
- * Andean Condor
- * Army Ant attacks
- * Near-death encounter with Bushmaster
- * RICE
- * Bush Tanagers
- * 400+ hours of bus travel
- * Oh, and Rain.

Weirdlights:

- * Someone decided to abandon their 6 month old baby in my lap while I was sleeping on the bus. They picked the baby up about 7 hours later and gave me 50 cents.
- * Having 3 Ecuadorians insist on having their picture taken with me because they thought I was Elton John (WHAT?!?)
- * Shaving with a candle because I didn't have a razor but needed to get rid of the beard (The Amazon is too hot and full of ants for beards).

OYBC Field Trips & Events ~

We ask that you please call and register for all field trips so we can notify you of any change of plans and meeting locations. We may decide to chase a rare bird and we don't want you to miss it! To register call 419 898-4070 and leave a message with a contact number. Thank you.

Warblers, Osprey, and an Overnight at McCoy Nature Center

Columbus, Ohio area

Saturday, April 18, 2009 - 9 a.m. to Sunday, April 19, 2009 – 3 p.m.

Sponsors: Preservation Parks of Delaware County & Columbus Audubon

Meet at the cemetery office on the right near the entrance.

This trip includes a morning bird walk led by Columbus Audubon members at Green Lawn Cemetery to look for early migrants and an afternoon of watching the courtship ritual of the resident Ospreys at Hogback Preserve. We will camp out Saturday night at the McCoy Nature Center at Hogback Preserve and bird the preserve Sunday morning before departing for home. Dinner and breakfast included. Come prepared with information from your research about Osprey.

Transportation: The BSBO Birding bus will leave from the Observatory at 6:30 a.m. or travel on your own.

Reservations: Absolutely required – 419-898-4070.

Fee: \$15 with transportation on the BSBO bus or \$7 without.

Directions to Green Lawn Cemetery: From I-71 take Exit 105, turn right onto Greenlawn Ave. Head West directly into the Cemetery and meet at the office near the entrance.

Notes: Bring Lunch for Saturday, a sleeping bag, and money for lunch on the way home on Sunday.

Dayton Audubon Society invites OYBC to Spring Valley Wildlife Area

Saturday, May 9 - 8, 2009 - International Migratory Bird Day at 8:30 a.m. - noon

Come see what all the excitement is about! This could be a great day for seeing many species of warblers and vireos, including the brightly-colored Prothonotary Warbler that nests near the bike path. Baltimore Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, and many many more of nature's brightest will make their presence known as they establish territories, attract mates, or just fill up on insects on their way north.

Leaders: Jim & Cindy Beckman

Sponsoring Organization: Dayton Audubon Society

Meeting Location: Springville Wildlife Area

Target Species: Barn, Tree, and Northern Rough-winged swallows swooping over the lake as kingfishers, herons, and maybe even an Osprey search for their aquatic prey.

Inquiries: Cindy or Jim Beckman at 937-862-4505 or oz1221@sbcglobal.net.

Directions: Meet at the lower parking lot at Spring Valley Wildlife Area, located near the Greene/Warren County line. (DeLorme page 65 D7) Take SR-42 south from Spring Valley. Turn east (left) on Roxanna-New Burlington Road. After about one mile, turn right onto Pence-Jones Road and follow it until it dead-ends on Collett (no sign). Turn right and follow the road through some curves and down a hill to the lower parking lot. No restrooms are available at Spring Valley Wildlife Area.

OOS Annual Conference & Banquet

Saturday, May 16, 2009

5th Annual Ohio Ornithological Society's, Scholarship Rate Offered to Young Birders

Young birders please join the Ohio Ornithological Society at their 2009 conference and annual banquet, and experience some of the best birding in the Midwest, at some of Ohio's premier natural areas. This Saturday-only conference will feature three nationally known speakers, and a full evening banquet. Click [here](#) for conference information and a registration form.

Featured Speakers: Kim Kaufman, from Black Swamp Bird Observatory; Jim Berry, from Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History; and Jim McCormac, from Ohio Ornithological Society.

Visit www.ohiobirds.org for more information.

OYBC Field Trips & Events (cont'd)

Magee Marsh Boardwalk – Looking for Warblers

Saturday, May 23 - 8 a.m. - noon

Oak Harbor, Ohio

Sponsor: Toledo Naturalists' Association

Leader: Toledo Naturalists' Association

Where else would we want to be in May? The Toledo Naturalists' Association will head us down the boardwalk in search of warblers and vireos. We will bird the northwestern area of Ohio searching out migrants. Meet at the Observatory and we will carpool from there.

Transportation: On your own

Reservations: Absolutely required – 419-898-4070. Free.

Directions: BSBO is located at 13551 W. State Route 2, Oak Harbor, Ohio 43449

Notes: Bring your lunch if you plan to stay the day.

Dayton Audubon Society invites OYBC to Spring Valley Wildlife Area

Saturday, June 13, 2009, 8 a.m. - noon

As the northern migrants leave the area, we will search for nesting birds. At this time last year, in just 100 yards of habitat along the bike path, there were numerous nesting birds.

Leaders: Jim & Cindy Beckman

Sponsoring Organization: Dayton Audubon Society

Meeting Location: Springville Wildlife Area

Target Species: Nesting Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Pewee, Prothonotary Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Orchard Oriole, Northern Flicker, and Downy, Red-headed, Red-bellied, and Pileated woodpeckers. Who knows what we'll find this year!

Inquiries: Cindy or Jim Beckman at 937-862-4505 or oz1221@sbcglobal.net.

Directions: See May 9th.

Breeding Bird Atlasing Service Project in Belmont County (Moundbuilder Country) and Campout at Barkcamp State Park

Friday, June 19 to Sunday, June 21, 2009

We will be surveying a block in southeast Ohio and camping out at Barkcamp. Saturday breakfast lunch and dinner provided.

Sponsor: Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas Project

Leader: John Sawvel

Transportation: The BSBO birding bus will leave from the Observatory at 5:00 p.m. on Friday night, or else transportation on your own.

Directions: Barkcamp State Park is located at 65330 Barkcamp Road in Belmont, OH 43718.

Take I-77 south to I-70 east to SR-149. The park is west of Wheeling, West Virginia.

Notes: Bring your tent and sleeping bag.

Reservations: Absolutely required – 419-898-4070. **Fee: \$20**

Prairie Rose Farm Campout in Marysville, Ohio

Friday, July 24, 2009 - 7 p.m. to Sunday, July 26, 2009 - 1 p.m.

We're invited for a return visit to the Prairie Rose Farm, a private nature preserve near Marysville, Ohio, for an overnight campout! Last year's trip was chosen by many young birders as their favorite field trip EVER!

Where: Meeting location is the Kroger, at 1095 W. Fifth St., Marysville OH 43040.

Sponsor: Tim & Donna Daniel

We'll have an up-close and personal encounter with a huge colony of bats, set up black lights and bait to attract moths, go on a nature scavenger hunt, seine in the creek, look for reptiles and amphibians, and learn more about the animals that live on the farm. The farm hosts a staggering diversity of life and you will NOT want to miss this trip!

What to Bring: Tent, sleeping bag, field guides & snacks.

Cost: The fee is \$5. **Reservations required:** Call BSBO at 419 898-4070

The Golden-Wings Photo Quiz by Kenn Kaufman ~



We shouldn't assume that every swimming bird is going to be a duck. But on the bird in this photo, the bill shape is all wrong for a grebe, coot, loon, etc., and somewhat wrong for a goose or swan, but just right for the average duck, so that's a safe starting point.

Some ducks are just as easy to identify in black and white as they are in color. For example, think about the male Bufflehead, or Common Goldeneye, or Ring-necked Duck; they're pretty much black and white in real life, with strong patterns. But the bird in this photo looks like shades of gray here, and it will take a closer look.

Does the plain appearance of this bird mean that it's a female? Not necessarily. If you think about the female Mallard as an example, she has big dark scallops and spots on the feathers on her sides and back. The pattern on this bird's sides - - very fine wavy bars, or vermiculations - - is something that we see mostly on male ducks of various kinds. But what kind of male duck would be as plain as this?

Maybe it's time to step back and review all the pattern that we can see on this bird. Its head is very plain, lacking even the darker eyeline that we see on many female ducks. Its body seems mostly plain - - or very finely marked, so that it would look plain from a distance - - somewhat darker on the chest and paler on the sides. The only real contrast is the much paler area on the rear part of the wings, and the blackish area around the base of the tail.

That latter point provides a good clue. Seen from far away, the male Gadwall looks like a plain grayish duck with a black back end. That's a good match for what we see here, considering that all those fine bars and vermiculations on this duck wouldn't be visible from a distance.

For confirmation of this, we can look at the shape of the head and bill, which are almost always good field marks for ducks. This bird has a sort of squarish head, with a high, steep forehead, so that the highest point of the head is above or in front of the eye. The bill is also relatively long and flat, and it looks solidly dark, which is also good for Gadwall. And that's what this bird is. Gadwall is a fairly common migrant on marshy ponds throughout Ohio, with only a few staying through the summer or winter.

Now, here's another mystery bird.

What is it, and why?



~ Artist's Gallery ~

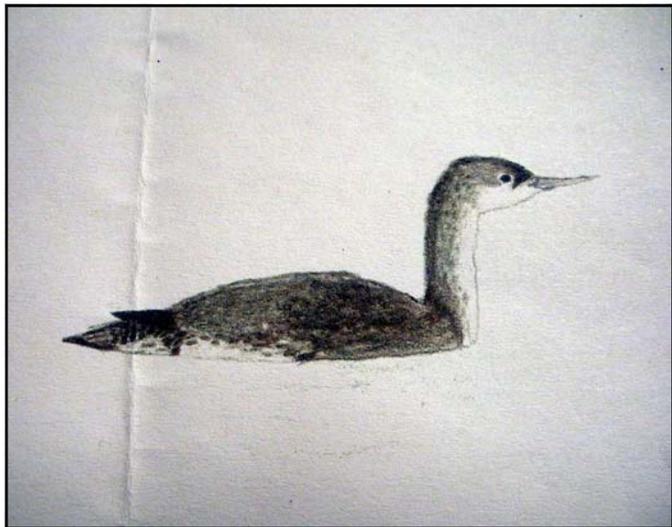
Featuring drawings from Samuel Weaver's sketchbook



Black-crowned Night Heron



Dickcissel



Red-throated Loon



First winter Franklin's Gull

A Trip with the Kirtland Bird Club to East 72nd Street ~ by Lukas Padegimas

January 24, 2009, was a frigid day to be out birding. The temperature fell to 10 degrees, from a high of 45 F the day before. The wind-chill made it feel like 0 F. However, a nice number of people from the Kirtland Bird Club and seven Ohio Young Birders bravely battled the cold to be in attendance for this outing. East 72nd Street is notorious for freezing people faster than any other place in Ohio.

For the first time in more than eight years, Lake Erie was frozen near the shore. This was supposed to bring in a lot of gulls by the power plant and close to shore for good viewing, but the wind forced most of the ducks and gulls far out into an open water area beyond the large stretch of ice.

Upon arriving, Paula Lozano and I saw a several flocks of gulls circling way out. A raptor must have been scaring them up. It turned out to be a beautiful adult Bald Eagle flying over the lake and then back over the plant. The eagle flew by several times before finally disappearing. Unlike in Northwest Ohio, Bald Eagles are not common around Cleveland, so this one was quite an unusual sight.

Most of the gulls and waterfowl were too far out to identify with the scope. Several male and female Canvasbacks were close to shore. A small group of Lesser Scaup surrounded them, and one Ring-necked Duck was also mixed in.

Far out on the ice was a flock of at least 75 Canada Geese. Several Buffleheads arrived at the small amount of open water in front of us. Our group generally didn't move from our location because there was no open water farther down. Unlike the last gull walk, only a few gulls were around this time. Even when the lake

is covered in ice, tons of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls usually fly by the power plant, with a nice number of Bonaparte's Gulls mixed in. On this day, only three Bonaparte's Gulls were seen, and only a few of the Herrings and Ringed-bills remained.

A nice surprise for everyone in attendance was a beautiful second year Glaucous Gull that sat close to shore on the ice. Everyone had great looks. One Great Blacked-backed Gull flew by. Near the end of the ice, one could see thousands of Ring-billed Gulls and a lot of scaup, Canada Geese, and Canvasbacks. However, open water was too far away to pick out anything unusual.

two flocks of Redheads moved in close to shore. One never gets tired of looking at Canvasbacks and Redheads.

During the group's watch, two Common Mergansers were also seen. After seeing nothing new for a while, part of the group went to the Eastlake Power Plant while Sarah, some other Kirtland Bird Club members, and I went to Burke Lake Front Airport to search for the two Snowy Owls that had been spotted there during the winter.

The juvenile Snowy Owl had stayed at the airport since November, and an adult arrived in mid-January. Despite searching for the owls at several different locations, we didn't see either of them.



East 72nd Street field trip Lineup by Paula Lozano

The airport was covered in snow, making it hard to see the owls. Surprisingly, only one raptor was spotted during our search: an American Kestrel. Then we decided to bird from inside the airport, which prompted one person in our group to say, "Out from the Antarctica and into the tropics." Birding from inside the airport made it a little easier to concentrate, but the owls must have been hunkering

down somewhere.

After the search, most of our group went to the Eastlake Power Plant, which had some more birds, including Iceland Gulls and a White-winged Scoter. Overall, the birding was a little slow, but the Bald Eagle and the beautiful Glaucous Gull up close were great treats that made this trip memorable.

Since no other birds were coming in, Sarah Winnicki and I decided to see if we could find more ducks next to the rocks that were out of view of the other birders. We were rewarded with a beautiful Red-breasted Merganser. It was strange that only one merganser was around, because this area is usually filled with hundreds. The lack of birds close to shore made this trip unusual.

As the sun rose higher, activity along the lake increased. Several Canvasbacks took off and were replaced by more Canvasbacks. Also,

California Condor Saga By Sarah Winnicki ~

The date was August 3, 2008. I woke up that day on a squishy old bed in a scary little motel in the town of Williams, Arizona. Williams is set on Route 66, a few minute's drive to the Kaibab Plateau (known for its famous squirrels that seemingly prove Darwin is a genius) and a 45-minute drive to the Grand Canyon.

The little town features a couple museums, neat little window shops, a log cabin church, and nightly cowboy reenactments that happen all year on the main street: Route 66. (I was kidnapped and shot by cowboys here, but that's another story.) It is a cute little town in the desert, in a valley a little bit sheltered from the heat.

Outside of my window I watched the Western Bluebirds, Ash-throated Flycatchers and Lazuli Buntings in an abandoned farm field. Then I packed my backpack with my handy dandy bird book, my pencil, my journal, a water bottle, some snacks, and my Grand Canyon Field Guide (trust me, that got a little heavy after the second mile in 100-degree weather).

We packed up and drove off to the Grand Canyon, and I re-read my field guide as we went. By now I was an expert at the whole Canyon thing. I re-read that book constantly all summer. The birds there were neat western birds, but nothing extraordinary. When I had first opened my field guide, I was disappointed to find that there were no condors listed at all in the entire book. They covered every bathroom in the whole park and every single possible kind of fly, but they could not note the one thing I'd had a secret burning passion to see. I hadn't mentioned it out loud or even admitted it to myself. I wanted a condor. I told myself I couldn't get my hopes up, but my heart was crushed when I had first opened that guide. Not a word.

We arrived at the Canyon, in the National Park. We got out on the South Rim trail, the biggest tourist destination in any park in the United States. By the way, that means it's

crowded. I raced out, stopping myself right beside the fence-free, two-mile drop. It is amazing. There is no way I can describe it.

More than 188 square miles of virtually undisturbed and terribly dangerous wild land supporting countless ecosystems, from lodgepole pine forests to sweltering deserts. The Colorado River, more than a mile across in some parts, looks smaller than a creek. The few pathways that claim tourists every year are not visible from the top, though they are home to lookout stations and cabins. At least 600 people have died at the Grand Canyon since 1820. They have drowned, fallen, and dehydrated in the bowl, on the river, or on the rims. In fact, a week after I went, a tourist fell to his death from the point on which I stood. It's an amazing, unconquered place that I could not have imagined in my wildest dreams.



Grand Canyon by Sarah Winnicki

I looked out off the point, and my eyes suddenly caught upon a dark bird soaring level with the rim. It was large, and gray. I raised my bins. There were no real field marks, and it was too far away to see anything but a white under-wing. I marked it down as an immature "baldy." It flew around the curve. Suddenly, my height-scared, white-faced brother was there. "Sarah," he said, "come here, there is a weird vulture over here with an orange head." Orange head. Orange head! My brother started to hobble away on weak knees, happily oblivious to the fact

that my heart had just exploded and my knees now rivaled his.

But I could run, and I sprinted after him, around the curve. As the sweat evaporated off of me in the killer heat, I saw it. About the size of my brother, bright pink head, perched on an outcrop 2 feet wide, 100 feet long, hanging over the canyon. I didn't even need my bins. It was a California Condor.

Just as I handed the bins to my brother, the raptor floated lazily by. It was closer, and I recognized the "fingers" on the wings. An immature. That made two condors. As we watched, two young tourists decided they were going to mess with death and walk out to the bird—an inch away from a drop that could hold more than three World Trade Centers. They walked out to within four feet of my bird. It didn't move. They took a few pictures, and nonchalantly walked back. I watched some more. My dad had to pull me away.

The Rim Trail is adorned with many birds. White-throated Swifts, Western Bluebirds, Pygmy Nuthatches, solitaires, scrub-jays and Ravens sat on the shrubs that hung over the cliff face. I tripped on a cactus trying to identify some quick little Mountain Chickadees in a tree. Bald and Golden eagles, Prairie Falcons and Turkey Vultures soared below us. That is one of the cool things about the canyon. All birds of prey have to be identified from above.

Along the trail, we came upon one of the countless museum/gift shops along the multiple-mile hike. I learned a little bit more on geology, asked the Ranger about falcons, and then hiked over to the gift shop. There, on a shelf, sat a stuffed condor. \$15. Above my budget, but I wanted it. What more could commemorate this day? I left empty-handed.

Along the trail we met a man with a big receiver, picking up beeps from Condors all over Arizona. He let us

(Continued on page 15)

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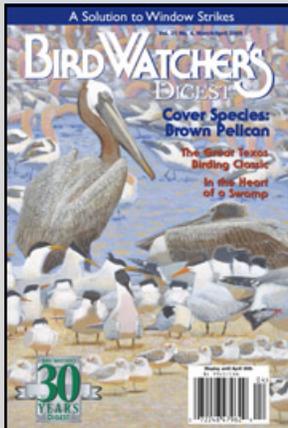
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California Condor Saga By Sarah Winnicki ~

(Continued from page 13)

try, and pointed us down the road where, supposedly, two miles down into the canyon, set a dead cow. Condors are roosting there, he said. We walked on.

All the while, I looked into gift shops for my condor. However, none of these had the one I wanted. By halfway through the day, I knew that my time was starting to run out. "Oh, well," I told myself, "you're too old for a toy anyway." But I still kept looking.

We ate lunch on the rim, watching random tourists scurrying by, acting stupid by the rim, and standing in awe of the wonder of it all. When we were done, we looked over once again. Here was the dead cow area, and below us were all sorts of ridges and roosts, but nothing was there. Instead, a little yellow-looking squirrel scurried. I yelled for my dad to get a picture. The lady next to me, who I noticed for the first time had binoculars looped around her neck, rounded on me.

"Squirrel?" she shrieked, "who cares about a squirrel when there's a condor right there?" I was taken aback by her rude tone, but awed all the same by the idea of another condor. There it was, a small immature, totally overlooked by me. We showed the lady the picture of our first condor—she was impressed, and waddled off to see if she could find it too. That was three.

My sister had read the story *Brighty of the Grand Canyon*, a story of a little burro that had cleared the way for Bright Angel Trail, so we set off to walk a little bit of it. Right at the trailhead was a museum, complete with a gift shop. There, on the shelf, was my condor . . . I bought it and stuffed it in my bag.

The only thing I disliked about it was the band on its wing—the number 19. I told myself I'd try to cut it off, so that it would represent any condor. Then I read the swing tag. It said, at the end of an explanation about California Condors, "Condor

119, which wore the tag number '19', was one of the most beloved Californian Condors in Grand Canyon National Park. Condor 119 and her mate 122 parented the second condor to fledge in the Grand Canyon backcountry." I decided to leave the number on for now.

We set off down the trail to find the cave paintings that the cashier had told us about. We found them. They were hidden because of vandalism. The trail is a three-day trail, so we walked about a half of a mile in and went back up. We walked a little bit more of the Rim Trail, and set off for our rental. However, from the transport bus, we saw a dark shape in the tree. We got out at the next stop, and I raised my bins. Yep, a pink head. It was a California Condor in a tree.



California Condor by Sarah Winnicki

I asked a ranger about the bird. He told me that it probably was a condor because there was a dead elk under the tree. We walked over. Sure enough, there was another brilliant adult in the tree, preening itself above a dead elk that was easily located by its stench. It dropped huge black feathers on us as we wandered around under it for the perfect view. That was when I saw its tag: number 22, the mate to number 19, the bird that my toy portrayed. I was so excited, and I expected the real 19, short for 119, to arrive at any minute. After observing the magnificent bird for a few more minutes, we moved on, back to (imagine that!) another gift shop/museum.

I bought two postcards there, one of 119, and one of 122, but I couldn't find a picture of them together. I read the tag on my toy again. It was all in past tense. I got an ominous feeling. I had become attached to the two birds in a few hours, and so I asked the ranger in the museum where 119 was. Of course, she broke the news that the bird had died on the nest due to lead poisoning in December 2006.

Number 119's first egg, she told me, was the first egg laid in the wild after the birds were released, but was crushed the next day. She said the first fledgling had died of starvation. She pointed to the stuffed carcass hanging on the wall. 122 was all alone, shunned by the rest of the birds in the area, and no longer the dominant male. I was crushed, knowing that the birds I had come to love in the last few minutes were just numbers on a piece of paper. Just statistics.

Far from putting a damper on my first (and so far only) condor experience, the knowledge of 119's fate lit me on fire. I vowed then and there to work for conservation harder than ever, and I now, months later, have found links to websites that get me onto condor blogs, and get me to reports from the day my beloved 119 was born in San Diego until now, as more condors fight for life in their native land.

Now, when I'm in the field, I generally have a stuffed condor on my windshield— Number 19, to stand for what still needs to be done, even in parks, to help everything and everyone. My condor saga was delightful and has reinforced the need to make a difference, whether it is through donations, Christmas bird counts, bird banding or just sharing the birding with others, so that in the years to come, the birds will still be here.



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