



Ohio Young Birders Club

VOLUME 7 | ISSUE 1

SPRING 2012

"Of all of the biding groups and functions in Ohio, I put the Ohio Young Birders Club at the top of the list. This is the COOLEST thing going on in Ohio birding!"
Greg Miller, The Big Year

OYBC Student Member Lukas Padegimas spent last summer working at a remote field camp in Cape Krusenstern National Monument.
see page 12 for the full story



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Ohio Young Birders Club
(OYBC)

*"Encouraging, Educating, and
Empowering Our Youth
Conservation Leaders."*

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Tim Daniel, OYBC Central
Ken Keffer, BSBO
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Kayla Parry
Kristina Polk
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The OYBC was founded by
Black Swamp
Bird Observatory

Teaming Research With Education
To Promote Bird Conservation

We are located at the entrance to
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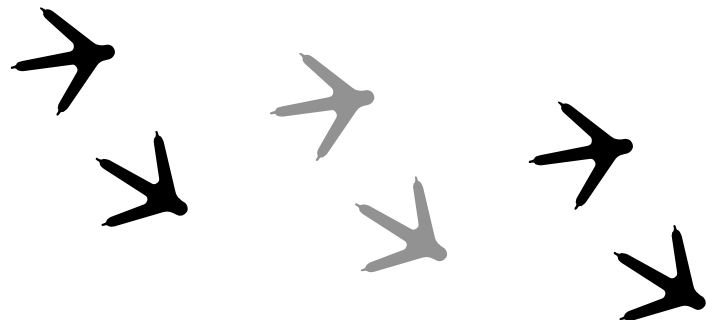
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Young Birders Network

We are very excited to announce that Black Swamp Bird Observatory and Cornell Lab of Ornithology have joined forces in creating a national network for young birders! The Young Birders Network (YBN) aims to provide resources and networking opportunities to students, as well as adults involved in supporting student birding activities. Though the network is primarily geared for ages 12-18, younger birders and college students alike may also find relevant resources.

The website will offer a comprehensive listing of clubs, opportunities, and other information relevant to young birders. You can find information about local clubs, summer jobs and events, college and career ideas, online discussion groups, and so much more.

Be sure to check out the next GOLDEN-WINGS for an official introduction and invitation to the network!



OYBC Scholarships Available

John F. Gallagher Memorial Scholarship Fund

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 fundraising events. Applicants must be current OYBC members between the ages of 12 and 18 to be eligible.

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

Recently I joined the team at Black Swamp Bird Observatory as the Education and Outreach Specialist, where I'm heavily involved with running the Ohio Young Birders Club, coordinating field trip leaders for the Biggest Week in American Birding, assisting with bird banding demonstrations and numerous other activities.

I always get asked the question, "How did you get started with birding?" and I wish I had an answer! While most birders had a spark bird that caught their interest or were introduced by another birder, neither was the case for me. When I was ten, I literally woke up one morning and decided to become a birder. After a couple years of sifting through my *Kaufman's Field Guide to North American Birds*, I was hooked. Being only ten, I didn't have the ability to travel all over to find new species. By the time I added my 50th bird to my life list (Yellow-bellied Sapsucker), I could already identify most of the birds in North America simply because I spent every day going page-by-page through my field guide.

After discovering that I wasn't the only birder in the world, I started joining the local Audubon bird walks every spring. I fondly remember my first migration when I'd hurry home after each walk to add the dozen or two lifers to my life list. I was finally seeing the real counterparts to the photos in my field guide. As the years passed, my obsession became an addiction. I was soon heavily involved with the nation-wide young birder scene attending American Birding Association (ABA) camps such as the Young Birder Tracks in Arizona and Maine, Young Birder Conference in Colorado, Camp Chiricahua (Victor Emanuel Nature Tours) in Arizona and competing in the World Series of Birding and Great Texas Birding Classic (team captain) on the ABA/Leica Tropicbirds team.

Shortly later, with help from Kim Kaufman and the Black Swamp Bird Observatory, and a few other Ohio young birders, I helped create the Ohio Young Birders Club (OYBC). The OYBC has become incredibly successful and the backbone for many other state young birder clubs that have sprung up since. It was great to be connected to other young birders in the state during a time when most of us believed we were the only birders under 50 years old!

Since then I've birded coast to coast, worked several field jobs in Ohio, Montana and Alaska and traveled abroad to Central and South America, Europe and Africa. For the past two years I've called Cape Town, South Africa home only occasionally returning to the states for field jobs and holidays. After leading tours in the United States, Canada and South Africa for various groups, companies and organizations, **I'm ready to bring that experience to Black Swamp Bird Observatory.**



Ethan Kistler in South Africa

GOLDEN-WINGS

Many thanks to all those who contributed to the newsletter. Special thanks to:

Clare Jusdanis
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Lukas Padegimas
Kristina Polk
Ethan and Liz Rising

GOLDEN-WINGS Editors:

Ken Keffer
Ethan Kistler
Kathy McDonald

The *GOLDEN-WINGS* editors are happy to receive for newsletter consideration your:

- Trip Reports
- Species Profiles
- Articles & Book Reports
- Sketches & Photos

The next deadline for newsletter submissions is June 1, 2012

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Cover Photo: Lukas Padegimas

YOUNG BIRDER PROFILE..KRISTINA POLK, AGE 16

GOLDEN-WINGS – What got you interested in birds, and in what year did you start birding?

Kristina Polk—**While most birders have a ‘spark bird’, I do not. A** lifelong wildlife lover and a passionate animal welfare activist, it was a gradually increased awareness of the world around me that brought me to pursue the identification of birds as a hobby. I remember taking walks around my neighborhood in the summers, seeing birds, but not truly seeing them for what and who they were. Through birding I have gained such appreciation and admiration for our avian neighbors. It is incredible to me that by simply taking the time to really watch the birds I encounter daily, amazing behaviors, quirks, and abilities become apparent. An entire new world was revealed to me when I cracked open a field guide and realized the diversity of the species in North America alone! Birding has truthfully become an obsession of mine and rightfully so. Birds are astounding beings and observation of such creatures results in a fierce passion towards them and a desire to protect their lives and habitats.

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

KP - Kimberly Kaufman is perhaps the greatest birdy woman ever, and it was meeting her that truly launched me into the birding world. I count her as a mentor, a hero, and a friend. Her husband Kenn is another birdy hero of mine, and the few times I have spent talking and birding with him have been some of my finest. He is just such an incredible person with such an incredible amount of knowledge, yet he remains so very grounded and helpful. I have learned so much from Kenn and his writings (especially from the Kaufman Field Guide to Advanced Birding) and I am so grateful to know him and Kim.

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

KP - **There are many reasons to choose a bird as one’s favorite.** Outstanding plumage, vocal ability, or exciting behavior can be incredibly alluring. There is nothing more astounding than the discovery of personality in the birds normally seen as mundane or common. The Chimney Swifts, Blue Jays, and Red-tailed Hawks top my list of favorite birds, not the flashy turacos or bee-eaters. Avian beauty is not only in fancy feathers but in the intricacy of individuality. To be able to identify a bird based simply on its way of carriage, its reaction to a certain event, or **just its curiosity...these are the ways in which I prefer to view birds.** Taking time to get to know the drably-colored birds most take for granted allows a window into a world unknown.

GW – Where is your favorite place to bird?

KP - By far the most satisfying mornings are the early spring days spent walking the trails of my own neighborhood, not knowing who I will encounter. Will it be the mysterious American Woodcock, like I so recently discovered for the first time in my vicinity? Or the nesting Yellow Warbler, her dedication to her nest apparent as she scabbled a hole in the tiny cup she built in the brush last summer? In winter, the juncos chime as they flit below the trees and the nuthatches chatter to themselves, high above me with certain flair. The summer afternoons spent in the company of Red-tailed Hawks who, over time, have come to allow their secrets to leak out through their reaching cries and sun-kissed feathers. It is my home where I enjoy birding the most, for it is home near which friends are made.

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

KP - The world is full of impossible questions, and this is perhaps the most impossible of them all. I do not think any person, living or dead, can possibly feel one bird out of the nearly 10,000 species we share this planet with is worth seeing over another. That said, I do have a deep affinity for thrushes, and am mystified by the journeys of the albatrosses and godwits. The



White-crowned Sparrow
by Kristina Polk

Ivory-billed Woodpecker wouldn’t be a bad bird either.

GW – So far what would you say is your greatest accomplishment in birding?

KP - My greatest accomplishment in birding is having gotten to know the birds around me and shared their lives with others. Simply being a birder is great in itself.

GW – Do you have any other interests/hobbies?

KP - Too many to name. Reading, writing, drawing, walking, eating, thinking, breathing, and living are all things I quite enjoy. I also am partial to listening to rainfall on my window at night and the soft caress of summer wind as it passes by my open window up to the sunlit clouds in the cerulean sky. I am a student of the world, and the world is a student of me. I suppose my greatest passion is the intertwined activity of teaching and learning, the endless cycle of giving and gaining knowledge.

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

KP - I have slowly begun to inspire sparks of interest in my family (for they are the ones who must drive me to and accompany me at all birding events!) and will constantly fill in my friends on my birding exploits, even if they think listening to **why seeing the year’s first bluebird isn’t any more exciting than doing math homework.** I do my best to get them to want to like **birds, though, and sometimes I’ll stoop to using humor.** Everyone appreciates a good bird pun, my friends especially if it involves a Blue-footed Booby. Hey, anything to get their attention, I suppose.

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?

KP - **Generally, people my age don’t know what birding is, and they could care less.** If we could get them to care even about just the birds that visit their yards, if we could show them the beauty and complexity flitting just outside their windows, it could open a door to self discovery, healing, and wonderment **for them. Birds fill places in the soul where the soul didn’t know it needed filling in.** I believe teens especially can benefit from the beautiful mystery of the world of birds.

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

KP - Get them outside and show them. Not just throw them into a park and say, look at the birds, but to really *teach* them. To *open their eyes to what’s around them. Help them gain appreciation for what is right in front of them.* Galileo once said,

YOUNG BIRDER PROFILE CONTINUED...

"You cannot teach anyone anything - you can only help them discover it within themselves." This is a truth very applicable to birding.

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

KP - I have been to Cape May, South Dakota, Florida, as well as **my frequent visits to my dad's house in Virginia.** My favorite birds seen on my travels are the White-throated Swift, Burrowing Owl, and Black-billed Magpie out west, Willet and **Tricolored Heron in Florida, Least Tern, Wilson's Storm Petrel,** and Piping Plover in Cape May, and the Black-crowned Night Heron in Virginia.

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

KP - **I'd simply point my finger on a map and say, "Let's go!"** There are birds, exotic and interesting, on all corners of the globe, yet I still have not laid my eyes upon an American **Avocet or a Henslow's Sparrow, and these are in America.** So it will be a while before I travel far and wide for birds as I love getting to know the ones living beside me here. If I had to choose a place to bird abroad, it would be the continent of **Africa, the state of Hawai'i, or both New Zealand and Australia.** I have always wanted to find a Red-billed Tropicbird and an **I'iwi. As for Africa, the penguins are pretty alluring.**

GW - Have you attended any birding conventions or conferences? Which ones?

KP - Yes! My first was the Biggest Week in American Birding 2011, during which I held my first wild bird (Gray Catbird), met the Kaufmans, Ken Keffer, Kayla Parry, and some other amazing people whom I am now friends with. I saw eight new warblers, and pretty much fell in love with the birding community. Second, I attended the Midwest Birding Symposium and then the OYBC conference. In 2012 I attended the Amish **Birding Symposium. I can't speak highly enough of any of these events!**

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

KP - Yes, I do plan on attending college, but where is a complicated matter. I am still looking, and currently I am considering Washington State University, Humboldt State University, or Cornell University. All out-of-state, all expensive, but hey, a girl can dream (and my decent grades in school help **a little...!**)

GW - Do you have a job somewhere?

KP - Almost. I applied at a local vegan café and have not gotten a job yet, but the manager knows me and really wants me to work there so it is a matter of when a position becomes available.

GW - What is your dream job?

KP - My dream job is to be studying animals in the field, being paid to spend time with them and unravel their secrets to the best of my ability. Birds, of course, being my primary subject of interest, though I often yearn to study the Southern Resident Orca and White-tailed deer.

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?**

KP - Birds are a part of me, intricately woven into my being. I am nothing if without birds.

GW - What are your favorite web sites?

KP - These questions are too hard! Favorites are not easy to **choose, and that's why I don't have them. As far as websites** go, I do check Facebook nearly daily, and I watch a ton of bird,

yoga, whale, song, and vegan videos on YouTube. I follow many vegan blogs and keep tabs on all the causes and organizations I support (such as Farm Sanctuary, Black Swam Bird Observatory, and The Whale Museum) and, though I have not updated it in a while, I have an online art gallery on the wonderful DeviantART.com, an art community that is amazing **for sharing and commenting on other artist's works. I highly recommend signing up if you are an artist of any medium.**

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

KP - Sadly, my white-with-grey-angel wings-markings male gerbil Cinder passed away last May, but with me still are my fat tabby Madison and the crazy soft coated wheaten puppy Shelli. **Both of the girls live at my dad's house in Virginia, but I see them during summer and breaks from school when I visit.** Maddie has been shy and very sweet for much of her life with **us...that is, until, she became an outdoor cat. Now all she wants to do is get in trouble with the neighbor's dog and stalk birds.** These are not activities I approve of (especially the birds) and **though she's never killed a bird, I've suggested to my dad to keep her indoors. He hasn't obliged. At least Maddie isn't, how should I put it, *athletically built*, and proves more of a threat to the carpet than the birds.** Shelli is a crazy dog and shows no **signs of maturity even though she's over a year old. Her** nickname with me is Chewie, since she looks like Chewbacca when her hair grows out.

GW - Do you volunteer anywhere?

KP - **I'm a member of many different clubs at school that do** volunteer work, as well as the OYBC and then bird banding at Navarre. I am also a seasoned Metroparks volunteer with the Teen Corps.

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

KP - **Honestly, I keep telling myself I'll make a nice and shiny** updated life list but it never quite happens. I have a journal that has a checklist. I write down the date and place of when I **first see a species, but that's the extent of my listing.** Otherwise, the list exists in only my mind, with all the marvelous first encounters perched on the branches of my memories.

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

KP - Perhaps a way to connect with young birders in our immediate vicinities, for I am always looking for teens to bird with on the weekends without OYBC field trips! Maybe a network on Facebook or something, but also with posters at nature centers and wildlife refuges, to get the attention of non-OYBC members. Possibly, we could recruit new members too!

GW - Has becoming an OYBC Member changed birding for you?

KP - **Yes, and it is a long list of why's and how's. The short** answer is: it has opened my heart to friends, both avian and human. It has shown me acceptance and friendship and given me a wonderful, amazing community to join. I am so, so, so very grateful to live in Ohio and be a part, albeit a small part, of something so grand and world minded. Thank you to all involved for being so awesome!



Additional interview questions with Kristina can be found at www.ohioyoungbirders.org

SKYLINE CHILI BIRDING CHALLENGE, BY ETHAN RISING, AGE 10



Three young birders in the Cincinnati area are competing in the annual Skyline Chili Challenge birding competition. The Know It Owls team includes Tyler Ficker, age 14, Ethan Rising, age 10 and Jack McSwiggin, age 8. This regional competition has been around for about 16 years and is organized by Miami University Zoology Professor Dr. Dave Russell. A team consists of either two or three birders. Teams compete to see who can find the greatest number of bird species within the timeframe of the competition, January 1st to May 12th. At least two team members **must see a species of bird for it to count towards the team's total. The birding must happen** within a 75 mile radius of Oxford, Ohio, the town where Miami University is located. This radius includes places such as Muscatatuk National Wildlife Refuge, Grand Lake Saint Marys State Park, Fernald Preserve, and Caesar Creek State Park but any bird seen inside the radius is a fair sighting.

The Know It Owls are competing against 9 other teams. The team in the lead is Knot So Angry Birds, with 110 total species as of March 21st. In the words of one of the Knot So Angry Birds, **Mr. Bob, "It's hard to beat two retired guys!" The Know It Owls are staying competitive with 92 species, and 115 species that at least one member of the team has seen. Not bad for a team too young to drive!**

Some birding highlights for the Know It Owls include a Calliope Hummingbird which showed up in southeastern Indiana, Surf and White-winged Scoters that were seen at Caesar Creek, a Lesser Black-backed Gull, Long-tailed Duck and Greater White-fronted Goose. It can be quite a **race to get a species in for the team. Schedules don't always allow for the team to bird**

together. With the Greater White-fronted Goose for example, Ethan found the species first at Spring Grove Cemetery. However, it had flown by the time Jack had a chance to look for it. Jack and his mom now have a new appreciation for the expression *wild goose chase!* Tyler had a flyover Greater White-fronted Goose the following weekend at Spring Valley Wildlife Area (one of the locations we'll be visiting on OYBC Southwest Chapter field trips!). The next weekend Tyler heard of a goose sighting at a mall parking lot near Jack's house. Jack and his mom set out again, this time successfully finding the bird, just 10 feet from their car! As of the writing of this article this goose species is still evading Dr. Russell (I really think he appreciates that I'm mentioning this...NOT).

What is the competition for? Winners get treated to Skyline Chili, a favorite regional food of Cincinnati, along with bragging rights. The competition is also about the fun of birding. Ethan has added 25 new species to his life list, now totaling 231 species. And for Jack, who is new to the hobby, after being inspired by a talk given by Greg Miller at the College of Mount Saint Joseph, just about everything is a lifer!

Perhaps the best thing about the competition is the friendships that have formed. It's been a very fun way to bird together.

--Ethan and Liz Rising

MIDWEST NATIVE PLANT CONFERENCE



Midwest Native Plant Conference
Bergamo Center, Dayton, Ohio

July 27, 28, & 29, 2012

- Learn from experts
- Visit with vendors
- Field trips
- Speakers
- Breakout Sessions

Keynote speakers:

Ian Adams, Gossamer Wings—The World of Dragonflies and Damselflies

Marielle Anzelone, Greening the Urban Environment Through Ecosystem Stewardship

David Wagner, Caterpillars of Eastern North America

Scholarships available for
young naturalists.

for more information go to www.midwestnativeplants.org

THE GUTS OF BIRDING, BY ALEXANDER MARTIN, AGE 17



Alexander Martin (right) at OSU Museum

The Snowy Owl is one of nature's most beautiful animals. The sight of one of these magnificent creatures soaring silently overhead is awe-inspiring; such is their grace and grandeur. In Ohio, however, the sight of a Snowy Owl is a rare thing indeed, for their primary food source and the temperatures they prefer exist much farther north in Canada. Snowy Owls feast mainly on lemmings, and every four years or so, the lemming population explodes, causing a correlated explosion in the owl population. Over-crowding occurs, and some of the young are forced to hunt for food farther south, where many perish. Such was the case with one of the Snowy Owls that was observed in Ohio this January. Though his story is sad, he gave OYBC members a chance to witness a facet of conservation less common than most. Read on if you will, but be warned: the words that follow are not for the faint-of-heart. If you'd rather read about something more pleasant, just turn the page.

To put it quite simply, OYBC's Central Ohio Chapter got to discover the guts of birding this January. When the Snowy Owl was spotted in Hardin County in early January, birders rushed to observe the animal. Unfortunately, this spectacle was

not long-lasting. A few weeks after he was first spotted, the owl was found dead and frozen in the snow. Soon after, he was packed up and sent to Dr. Jacqueline Augustine, a Biology professor at OSU's Lima campus, where she would prepare the bird to be laid to rest in the OSU Museum of Biological Diversity. This private archive houses more than 15,000 tetrapod specimens alone and is the second largest collection of tetrapods in North America. Normally, this archive is closed to the public*, but OYBC was fortunate enough to be able to organize a field trip to the museum to observe the Snowy Owl being skinned.

On Saturday afternoon, January 21st, about two dozen OYBC members, parents & advisors convened at the Museum, some having traveled from as far away as Michigan. After meeting and greeting new members Chloe and David, we spent time catching up with old friends that we hadn't seen since our last outing for the OYBC Conference in November. Finally, our host, Angelika Nelson, a curator of the museum, arrived to initiate our tour.

The first sight that met our eyes when we entered the Tetrapod archive was the dozens of mounted birds and animals that the curators had so generously set out for us. Included among them were a Kiwi, a Great Horned Owl, a Kookaburra, and the skull of an African Elephant. Dr. Augustine was stationed at a table off to one side, in front of a cabinet of various birds. The Snowy Owl lay limp on the table, next to a jar of ground corncobs and a collection of metal instruments.

We watched as Dr. Augustine prepared the bird for skinning. She pointed out the protruding breastbone and the lack of muscle that indicated that this owl had died of starvation. Making two incisions down the length of the breastbone, she cut through the skin (which is very thin and "skinny") and exposed the carcass underneath. Once this was done, she extracted the body, methodically turning inside out first the wings, then the head, removing the internal bone structures and leaving only the skin and feathers behind. To soak up any blood that escaped, she used ground corncobs and cotton.

It was surprising to see how compact and self-contained an owl's body is. All the internal organs are held in place inside the rib cage by layers of membrane and tissue. The carcass, which was roughly the size of a small chicken, was significantly smaller than one might expect from an owl as large (visibly) as the Snowy Owl, demonstrating just how much of their body is made of feathers.

The entire skinning process took about three hours to complete, so while Dr. Augustine worked on the owl, the OYBC members were free to browse the rest of the collection. Several Ohio State University grad students were also there to answer questions and engage the students in a few small activities. We saw how tiny hair-like feathers on the leading edge of an owl's wing disrupt the airflow that would normally whistle over the wing in flight, giving the owl the ability to swoop silently towards unsuspecting prey. A display of various preserved bird feet demonstrated how different birds have adapted their foot design to their environments—wading birds have long, spread talons to help them balance in shallow water, while waterfowl have webbed feet that are designed to propel them through the water. The foot of the snowy owl is, according to one grad student, built as a Muppet look-alike, although it is improbable that any of the Muppets have talons as sharp as those of the Snowy Owl.

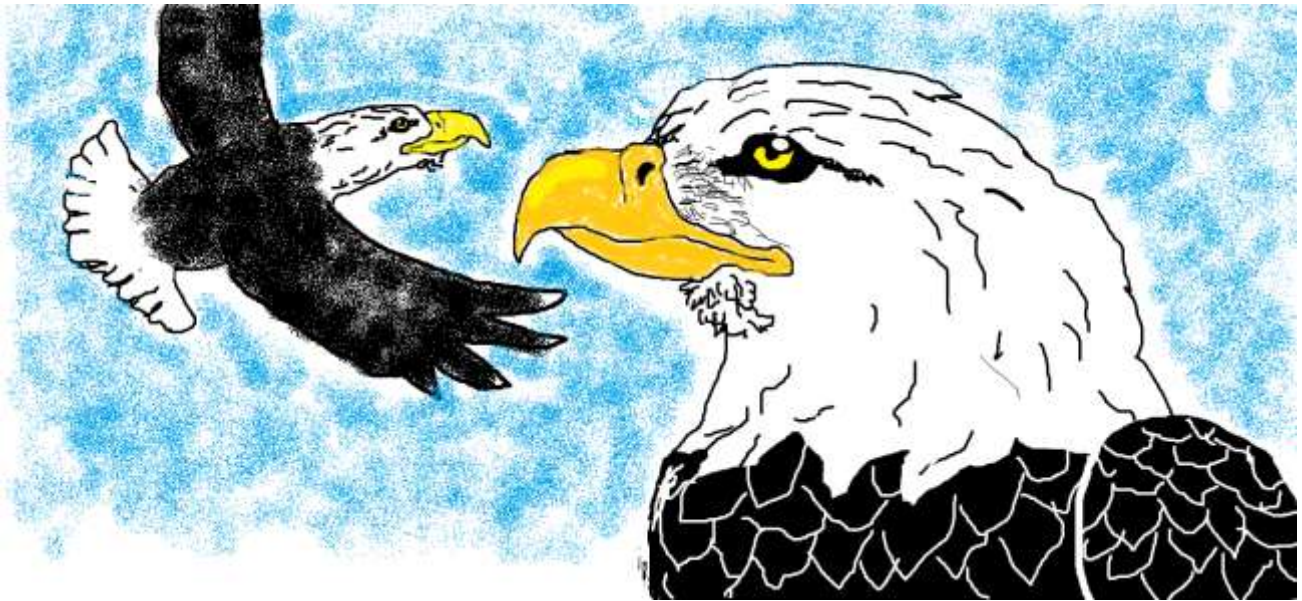


Extinct Carolina Parakeet

Some students also explored the dustier parts of the museum's collection. These specimens included the head of a polar bear, an armadillo that looks quite like a pinecone, and a myriad of snakes, lizards, and salamanders all preserved in formaldehyde.

All of these objects, some over a hundred years old, are very important to scientists. Studies making connections between various ecological and biological factors that change over time rely on these records of the past to draw their conclusions. Retired professor or entomology Dave Horn, aka "Moth Man," re-enforced this importance, showing us how often times the information that is associated with a specimen is as important as the specimen itself. He illustrated this with a personal account of how he had once contributed to a research project using data he had collected and recorded more than half a century ago in his 5th grade field notebook. His message to OYBCers: you're never too young to make a contribution to science, as long as you're diligent and keep proper notes.

Our visit to the museum highlighted an important fact. As birders, we often like to associate ourselves with the beauty of our sport. We look for the brilliant colors and the quirky attitudes of our aviary friends. But at heart, we're all simply conservationists by a different name, and our goal is to promote the conservation of the natural world that we love and cherish. It perhaps hard for some to stomach, the task of collecting, skinning, and archiving that world is as much a part of the process of conservation as any other. The opportunity to discover the very core of that process was an educational eye-opener that OYBC members will not soon forget. *Museum Notice: The OSU Museum of Biological Diversity holds an annual Open House. This year it will be on February 11th, for all who are interested in attending. (<https://mbd.osu.edu/>)



Bald Eagles
Emily Teel, age 12

BIGGEST WEEK IN AMERICAN BIRDING



*Experience the Warbler
Capital of the World
May 4-14, 2012*

*Birds & Blooms Family Bird Walk
May 6, 2012, 2 PM—4 PM*

Meet at Ottawa NWR Visitor's Center Parking Lot

*OYBC Field Trip
International Migratory Bird Day,
May 12, 2012, 9 AM—4 PM*

Meet at the west end of the Magee Marsh WA Boardwalk

"Only if I knew how and why a Golden-crowned Kinglet survives a Maine or an Alaskan winter would I understand the story of winter survival. Like other animals of the north, its life is played out on the anvil of ice and under the hammer of deprivation. For those that endure until spring, existence is reduced to its elegant essentials. The kinglet is thus iconic not only of winter, but also of adaptability under adverse conditions. This bird symbolizes astounding and ingenious strategies that animals have evolved for coping in the winter world. It is emblematic of the winter world that I will here explore, since its diminutive size and its presumed diet of insects, when insects are hidden in hibernation, combined to produce an unsolved mystery. For me, it was the kinglet that led me further and further into the winter world of the north woods, and into this book, spurring me on to find the miraculous"

Winter World, by Bernd Heinrich

I recently finished *Winter World* by nature writer Bernd Heinrich. This book is about "the ingenuity of animal survival" and beautifully illustrates many of the incredible ways living things survive the brutal New England winter. He writes of how hornets build their nests to achieve maximum warmth throughout the more than five months of below-freezing weather near his cabin in the Maine woods. How do the hornets do it? He tells us how the tiny, hyperactive Golden-crowned Kinglet maintains its body temperature each winter day. What on earth does it eat, and where is its "invisible" food hiding? How does it survive the below-zero temperatures each night, and where might it sleep? He explains how Wood Frogs hibernate in the leaf litter from fall into spring. How do they keep themselves from freezing to death? Would they respond to a sudden increase in temperature in the middle of their hibernation? Plants also have incredible ways of surviving the winter months. Heinrich answers questions such as: how do tree roots survive the freeze and thaw of the ground time and again? Why do plants put out buds in fall, and how do they protect them from the cold and ice?

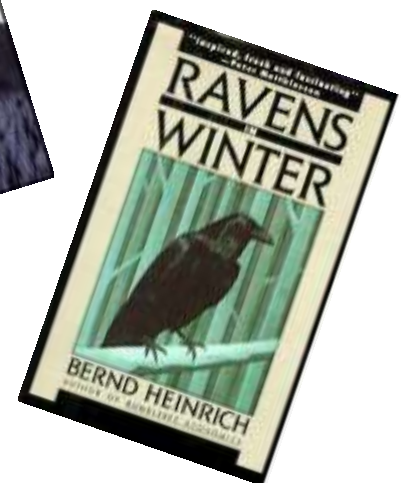
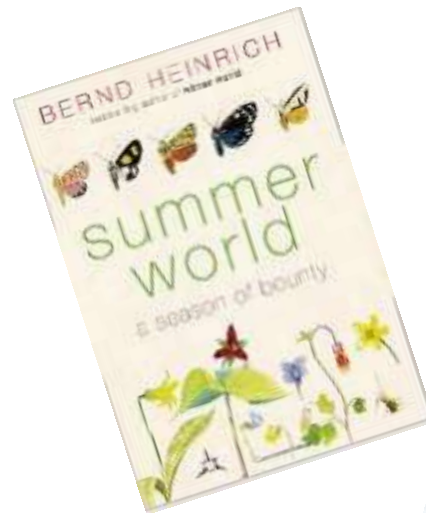
He takes these questions and devises beautifully executed ingenious experiments to find the answers. He explains the complicated ideas associated with such questions very simply and elegantly. As the New York Times puts it, "Heinrich has a rare ability to embed dense scientific explications within graceful, light-footed nature writing." Edward O. Wilson says, "Heinrich is a scientist and author of the first rank, champion ultramarathoner, woodsman of skills seldom seen in modern times, and... a nature writer of uncommon talent."

Another book of Heinrich's is *Summer World*. I am not through it yet, but I know that it is written in the same style as *Winter World*, and focuses on the behavior of many animals in the warmer months of the year. I look forward to reading this book and many others about his studies.

Heinrich is also the author of two excellent books about ravens, entitled *Mind of the Raven* and *Ravens in Winter*. Both books shed light on the incredible mind of the Common Raven. Heinrich brings to light several unprecedented behaviors shown by these unique birds that literally show their intelligence to be on the level of most primates. These books focus particularly on the feeding, nesting, and survival instincts of ravens and their learning abilities.

I highly recommend any of these books. They are extremely informative, easy to understand, and answer many important questions about the natural world around us.

Nathan Martineau is a 16 year old birder from East Lansing, Michigan. He is a keen birder and is especially interested in gulls and shorebirds. His family joined OYBC in the summer of 2011, and he has rarely missed a trip since. Nathan is interested in pursuing a career in ornithology.



Interested in contributing artwork to or being interviewed by GOLDEN-WINGS? Contact the Ohio Young Birders Club at info@ohioyoungbirders.org

WORLDS AWAY BY KRISTINA POLK, AGE 16

Dusty skins and tired penmanship do not conjure particularly inviting images, though they are quite beautiful when given the chance. Cold, muffled steps move down corridors and through bright rooms filled with jars and boxes and cases. The belly of the museum is brimming with quiet fascination; a new discovery behind each door and wall.

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History hosted the Ohio Young Birders Club on a snowy late January morning, giving members an incredible look at the wonders of the collections housed past public entry. Led by the knowledgeable Andy Jones, Director of Science and Curator of Ornithology, the group was first shown the skin of a recently deceased Common Loon. Her left wing pinned separately from her cotton-stuffed body, the bird managed grace and mystery even in death. She was surrounded by the skins and wings of a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a chickadee. Andy explained the reasoning behind the relatively recent practice of separating the birds and wings: when the skin dries, it becomes stiff and immobile. A researcher would have no way of looking under the wing if the bird was preserved with its wings folded. In order to provide a more extensively useful specimen, one wing is removed and pinned separately.

Additionally, small tissue and organ samples are preserved for select birds. This loon was represented in one of the many freezers by tiny sections of her heart and muscle, potential resources for future ornithological breakthroughs. Skins, however, are the most common way of preserving birds and Andy showed off a female Ruddy Duck, a male Hooded Merganser, and an Eastern Screech Owl. Finally, a most unusual bird was presented: a "gynandromorph", or a half-male, half-female individual. True to its bi-gender designation down to the reproductive organs, this Northern Cardinal was strikingly bilateral in its appearance.



Gynandromorph Northern Cardinal (photo by author)

Next, Andy moved the group to a larger room, where boxes lay stacked, concealing endless elements of bird, reptile, and amphibian skeletons. Andy chose to exhibit a Sandhill Crane skeleton, paying special attention to the keel. Sandhill Cranes, he taught, have a special adaptation in their breastbone to project their unmistakable trumpeting song as far as possible. Their tracheas pass through the keel in an immaculate curve, causing the entire bone to reverberate with their song and add strength to the sound.

After the lesson on cranes, Andy led the birders to

perhaps the most exciting portion of the museum: the vast collection of approximately 30,000 bird specimens from all corners of the globe. Upon the opening of one of the many white, uniform metal drawers, an explosion of life burst forth. Colourful and exotic birds of all shapes, sizes, and taxonomical placements met the eyes of the eager visitors, astounding in their diversity. A row of brilliantly orange and black Andean



Andy Jones & Barn Owl (photo by author)

Cock-of-the-Rock lay alongside charismatic manakins of all sorts, including Club-winged and Red-capped. Cotingas such as the striking blue Lovely Cotinga and his cryptic brown female counterpart were in the same drawer. A puzzling creature with a curiously set wattle was an intriguing sight: the White Bellbird. In order to preserve the vulnerable skin of the long wattle, a stick had been inserted and so the wattle dried in a stiff, upright position, rising from the face of the Bellbird like a fantastical unicorn horn.

Peering over the shoulders of the birders as they examined the beautiful birds were two of the rarest and most talked about of them all: the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and the Imperial Woodpecker. Giants among their relatives, these woodpeckers possessed stunning ivory bills and magnificent crests. The mere presence of their skins was enough to send ripples of exhilaration and wonderment through the group. Legendary in status, the Ivory-bill is central in an ongoing debate over its existence, while the extinction of the Imperial remains generally unchallenged. The uncertain fate of these remarkable birds degrades not their mystique, and perhaps only lends might to their charm.

Giant African Hornbills and breathtaking quetzals were displayed next, along with a variety of amazing hummingbird species. The Giant Hummingbird is **the world's largest, while the Swordbill is the only bird** whose bill length is greater than the body length. A Chimney Swift was shown as well, its long, tapered wings crossed over its back, framing needle-sharp tail tips built for stability as it nests on vertical surfaces.

Parrots and parakeets followed, as well as an impressive Kakapo. A large, flightless, nocturnal and highly endangered parrot endemic to New Zealand, the Kakapo nests in indentations in the ground, which will be used by

generations of birds to come. Andy taught the group the differences between parrots and parakeets: parrots have short, generally squared tails, while parakeets sport long, angled tails. Lastly, a Barn Owl was displayed, the soft edges of her flight feathers amazing in their adaption to silent flight.

It was then time for young birder Lukas Padegimas to give a short presentation in the entomology department. His enthusiasm for the creatures was palpable as he spoke. He shared stories of his Alaskan travels and the insects encountered and even the few he collected and brought back as specimens. These specimens now bear his name under their pins and are possible new species.

After Lukas' talk, Andy returned to his daily work as curator and the birders headed to the café for lunch. They were free to explore the remaining halls of the museum and socialize.

A chance to talk and spend time with fellow young birders is always welcomed among the teens and what better place to do so than among such a rich collection of artifacts and animals. All who visited had an outstanding time and learned so very **much about some of the world's most intriguing species.**

Through the well-preserved array of bird skins, many of which have uncertain origins due to their age, the young birders and their adult companions had the chance to be educated in ways not possible without such preservation of specimens. Museum collections are truly a vital resource in the preservation of and education about our

avian neighbors.

About the author: Kristina Polk is a 16 year old birder from North Ridgeville, Ohio. A lifelong nature lover, she began birding in 2010. She has come quite far in her birding abilities since then--her first 'mystery bird' was the common Grey Catbird! Ironically so, for the first banded bird she ever held was a Catbird. (Fun fact: Adorned with an "I brake for birds" plate border, her car, the color of a catbird, is named Kitty in honor of this



Andean Cock-of-the-Rock study skins (photo by the author)

awesome bird.) Banding is a skill she is slowly learning and she volunteers at the Navarre Marsh banding station at Ottawa NWR. Her other hobbies are photography, sketching, reading, and writing, through all of which she channels her intense love for birds. She takes near daily walks around her neighborhood in search for birds and the local deer, many of whom she has catalogued with photographs. She has been vegetarian for four years and vegan for

one and a half, and passionate about the welfare of our planet and its inhabitants. Her favorite birds are the graceful Chimney Swift, the charismatic Blue Jay, the fiery Red-tailed Hawk, the patient Great Blue Heron, and all gulls. Her 'must see' birds are the Blue-crowned Motmot and Red-billed Tropicbird.

American Birding Association
The Eyrie Young Birder Blog
<http://birding.typepad.com/youngbirders/>
02/06/2012

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- _____ \$100 – AMERICAN KESTREL LEVEL

visit www.ohioyoungbirders.org for a sponsorship form
or contact BSBO at 419-898-4070



Lukas Padegimas with a whale bone in the Alaskan Arctic

On July 4, 2011 I stepped out a floatplane and onto flat gravel ground for the first time in many weeks. Euphoria swept through me as I entered the world of civilization with its gravel roads, hot showers, cell phones, electric lighting, and materialistic people. Sure, Kotzebue is a poor excuse for a town as we know it, more of a village where early 1990s ghetto style is still at the prime of its popularity. Where half the people hunt and gather for a living. Where scientific expeditions fly in and set out into the mountains. Where silver coinage is freely used to acquire those precious \$16 small bags of chips. After spending more than six weeks in the tundra of tussock grass and swamp, this felt like total civilization. The respect one gains for the twenty first century is grand after such an experience.

The experience itself was "a day to remember", after all, having passed miles beyond the edge of the Arctic Circle, the sun would continue to shine above our heads for the duration of this field study. Besides gathering information for a long-term study on why nesting arctic shorebirds are declining in numbers, our crew saw numerous adventures. From heading back to the ice age and witnessing the movement of over one hundred Musk Oxen coming down from the mountains, to rafting to an island in time to see the devastation a local fox brought to countless Glaucous Gull chicks on South Island, the fight for survival is grand. To eat or be eaten. To protect your nest with your life or to flee.

Our field camp stationed itself at Cape Kruzenstern National Monument, a place that is unconquerable by civilization for its extreme climatic conditions and inaccessibility. It is a place that has only been slightly studied, a great deal remains to still be discovered. The feeling of stepping on a piece of land where nobody else stood cannot be matched in many places on Earth.

Our group carried out intensive searches of plots to study the breeding populations of Semi-palmated Sandpipers, Western Sandpipers, Dunlin, and Red-necked Phalarope. Unlike the Buff-breasted Sandpipers breeding in other parts of the arctic, these species have not suffered major declines. However, a point of no return is all too easily passed. Our research focused on gathering climate data, food resource data, and breeding success rates. Together with twelve other field camps, we were part of the Arctic Shorebird Network whose goal is to pinpoint the limiting factors to population growth of these remarkable birds and the effect that climate change will have on them all. The effects of climate change are already quite vividly visible in the arctic. The weather becomes more unpredictable every year with greater temperature swings and precipitation levels, premature thawing, and rising water levels.



The nesting arctic birds are one hardy lot. The question remains, will they survive far into the future, or are they doomed to fail? Hopefully the knowledge we gathered allows for some to be saved from following the path of the Great Auk and Dodo?

Lukas was the recipient of Ohio Young Birders Club and a Kirtland's Bird Club scholarships to help him participate in this field experience. He presented on his trip at the annual OYBC Conference and at a KBC meeting.

OYBC Meets Author Richard Crossley, by Dakota Outcalt, Age 14



Traveling to Columbus during rush hour was a challenge, but we made it to the Audubon Center just in time to eat pizza and listen to author Richard Crossley speak. There were only about 30 people there to start off with because Mr. Crossley was doing a separate for just the young birders. After that a lot more people started to show up for the main talk.

He spoke to the young birders about how he started birding, where he was from, and how lucky we are to have such a great young birders club. And we really are lucky. The Ohio Young Birders Club is very active, and it brings young birders together.

For the main talk, Mr. Crossley spoke about his birding life and career. He is a great story teller and the whole audience was captivated. His accent was cool too! He is originally from Europe but now lives in New Jersey.

He talked about the ups and downs he experienced while birding and some of the things he turned down to be a birder. Did you know he was once offered professional training in soccer and lacrosse when he was 14 but said no?

Mr. Crossley is a very passionate birder. His ID guide is different from most. He shows the birds as you would see them. Flying, perching, landing, males and females of different ages.

The night was a lot of fun despite coming home late on a school night.

Dakota Outcalt, age 14 writes for Birdfreak, his family's blog about birding and conservation. This story first appeared at www.birdfreak.com. There is also a review of the Crossley ID Guide on the Birdfreak webpage. Richard Crossley spoke to the Ohio Young Birders Club and the Columbus Audubon on February 27, 2012.



OYBC STUDENT ARTWORK



Grey Crowned Crane
Clare Jusdanis, age 13

OHIO YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB UPCOMING EVENTS

*Additional field trip information at www.ohioyoungbirders.org.
To register for any of these events, or for more information, please
contact the BSBO at 419-898-4070.*

Spring Fling

Saturday, April 21

8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

8:00 AM – 10:30 AM The OSU Ornithology Club will lead our bird walk at the OSU Wetlands.

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM Head to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. We'll enjoy our sack lunches while Jackie and Tom Bain provide us with a lesson on warbler identification.

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM Blendon Woods Metro Park, led by park naturalist Bruce Simpson. This park offers several diverse habitats and Bruce will take us to spots that have been particularly "hot" recently. Bruce is full of incredible knowledge and boundless energy.

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM We'll move on to Hoover Nature Preserve, viewing nesting Osprey and Bald Eagles. And hopefully, we'll see some early Prothonotary Warblers back at their nesting sites.

Email OYBC Advisor Gerry jbrevoor@columbus.rr.com to RSVP

Southwest Ohio Hot Spots

Saturday, April 21

8:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

Meet at 8:00 AM at the Caesar's Creek Visitor's

Center. We will go first to Spring Valley to look for Virginia Rails and Marsh Wrens, swing by Hisey State Park to look for resident Long Eared Owls and then head back to Caesar's Creek for as many spots as time permits. Pack your own snacks!

Email OYBC Advisor Liz lizrising1@gmail.com to RSVP

International Migratory Bird Day

Saturday, May 12

9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

We'll celebrate IMBD by birding along the southwest Lake Erie shore at Magee Marsh WA, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, and Metzger Marsh WA.

Meeting Location: Near the warbler deck at the west entrance of the Magee Marsh boardwalk. Look for Tom Bartlett on a ladder conducting his Big Sit fundraiser.

We'll watch BSBO Bird Banding Demonstration for about an hour, and then begin birding the Magee Marsh boardwalk. If you don't want to arrive early for the banding demo, then meet us at the west entrance of the boardwalk at 10:00 a.m.

Target Species: Warblers, other neo-tropical songbirds, and shorebirds.



Birding by Kayak

Saturday, June 9

8:30 a.m.—2 p.m.

Come paddle and bird at Twin Lakes in Powell, OH! The group will receive instruction before launching to paddle for 2-2 1/2 hours. Activities include checking nest boxes set up for Prothonotary Warblers.

Those with time should pack a lunch and sturdy walking shoes for a picnic and then checking nest boxes for Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and Purple Martins.

Cost: \$20 per student. Please bring cash or check payable to TAASC to the event.

Do YOU have an great idea for an
OYBC field trip? If so, we'd love to

hear about it! Contact

Ken Keffer - kenkeffer@bsbo.org

Ethan Kistler - ethankistler@bsbo.org

John Sawvel - johnsawvel@bsbo.org

or call BSBO at (419) 898-4070
to share your ideas for field trips,
content for the newsletter, or any
other thoughts, concerns, or great
ideas you have for the OYBC.

Thanks!

*Carpooling from northwest Ohio
is usually an option. Contact BSBO
if interested and for details on what time
the BSBO Bird Bus leaves for each field trip.*

WELCOME TO ALL OF THE NEW OYBC MEMBERS & ADULT SUPPORTERS

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Ava Conway
Chloe Degitz
Fiona Scott Farley
Elizabeth Hendricks
Lexus Lopez
Delaney Marsalek
Brett Mullholand
Laura Polcyn
Isaac Roberts
Emily Teel
Tom Wilson

ADULT MEMBERS

Brenda Hendricks
Polly Sawvel
Beulah Shanks
Nancy Stinnett
Mark Stinnett
Helen Wilson

Encourage your friends
& family to become
OYBC members!

Is your membership current?
Many Ohio Young Birders Club
Memberships are up for
renewal for 2012.

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- Connect with young birders from around the world
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- Share your photos, artwork, poems, stories, and more!

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