



July—August 2011

No. 150

WETLAND *matters*

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BIG YEAR BIRDATHON

.....by Matt Stenger

"Birding huh? That seems kinda strange", were the exact words of the judgmental policeman from a small town in southwestern Tennessee. I had been pulled over (so I was told) because my tags had come back "unlisted". I suspect it had more to do with boredom and the fact that messin' with a Yankee seemed like a good way to spend a Thursday evening. Before it was all said and done my car was searched for, well... anything they could find to arrest me for and the two officers left, obviously disappointed that they didn't get to cuff this Yankee birdwatcher and haul me off to the big house for being, "kinda strange". I must admit that on some level we birders can be kinda strange. That cop didn't even know the half of it, like the time I drove to Florida, not for the beach, but to visit the Brevard County Landfill to look at gulls or the visits to countless sewage treatment plants around the country or the 24 hour birding marathon I'd participate in.

One morning last August I stepped barefoot onto the sandy earth of northern Michigan, the piney scent of the north woods overwhelming my senses. As the sun rose I slipped on my back pack and wandered off into the forest. For 10 days I sought to find some kind of noble truth in the counsel of the north woods. After returning home and thinking about what I'd learned, I did the only reasonable thing I could. I quit my job, gave away or sold nearly everything I owned and cashed in my retirement. "There" I dared myself, "you now have no choice but to make this happen". A few times I doubted whether or not the north woods was the very best counselor but having never been led astray by her I began planning, not in the traditional sense, I have no use or time for pouring over volumes of

(continued on page 2)

For Lack of a Green-winged Teal (BIRDATHON 2011)

.....by Jon Seymour

It was a major disappointment. No one saw a Green-winged Teal during the 2011 Birdathon. For that matter no one saw a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker or a Least Bittern. All three species have been seen rather regularly on previous Birdathons. They were never common but they had been tallied. The reason that this was so disappointing is with just one more species our composite tally from all the teams would have been 200 species. We were just one species shy of the coveted number with a composite total from our 21 reporting teams of 199 species. On the Birdathon all the teams can potentially add to the overall total. There were 15 species seen only by one team. Conversely there were only 27 species seen by every team. I must admit the last total surprised me a bit but then I recalled one Birdathon where the team I was on had already totaled over one hundred species and we still had not seen a crow.

This year we again had several young people—middle school, high school and college age—participate and they all did extremely well. We again had a wonderful variety of categories for participation which really brings out the competitive spirit. We are in the process of collecting the donations and pledges for the teams and it is NOT too late to send in a check in support of your favorite team. *(Make your check payable to Oxbow of Indiana, Inc., P.O. Box 4172, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025 and mark your envelop – Attention Birdathon.)* The combined results for all the teams are listed on page 9.

(continued on page 5)

NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE
Our Post Office Box
In Madeira is CLOSING
July 1, 2011

Please be certain to change the address on any legacy gifts, memorials, or standing donation directives to:

Oxbow, Inc.
P.O. Box 4172
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

Barge Port Update

To date the activity of forming a barge port in Lawrenceburg seems to remain within the Dearborn County Chamber of Commerce. We are aware that the Port Authority of Indiana has added Dearborn County to the trade free zone associated with the other Barge Ports in Indiana operated by the Authority. We are actively pursuing the situation and will keep members informed if the idea of a barge port in the Oxbow threatens to become policy. We will then ask you all to rally around to protect the Oxbow.

Big Year Birdathon (continued from Page 1)

birding magazines, field guides and ABA lists in order to create "the perfect plan". My Big Year would be more about the birds and the experience than about the numbers and the money. Just like any other day, I woke up on January 1st grabbed my binoculars and went birding with friends and fellow Birdathon teammates Jerry Lippert and Eric Baumgartner. That's it. The only difference is, this time, I never went home. Early on I had planned on working Birdathon into my big year but as time went on I seemed to be drifting farther and farther from home. January found me in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, turning up one rarity after another. In February I was in Florida then I headed to Tucson by way of Duluth. In March I found myself in the central valley of California. In the birds, more so than I could see it, I could feel the intensity level of the waterfowl increasing exponentially by the day until flocks of ducks were exploding out of wetlands and flooded fields in a flurry of feathers and flying off in ribbons that laced across the sky for miles. As much a spiritual event as a physical one I got swept away in the great North American migration. I recall at some point around the middle of April feeling bummed that I was not going to make it back to town to participate in Birdathon. How could I? I had to go where the birds went and they weren't going to Cincinnati. The end of April found me on a boat steaming for the Dry Tortugas in a mad dash to add a few sea birds and migrants before driving up the east coast then cutting across the great lakes to Magee Marsh.

I think 70 degrees is hot. 80 is very uncomfortable and the tropical heat of the Tortugas? I think a beating might have been closer to paradise for me. If it hadn't been for the incredible birding, scenery and people I might never wish to return. 3 days, 2 nights and 18 birds later I practically leapt off the boat. I hadn't showered or slept, short of a few cat naps, for three days. I was deliriously tired, grimy, smelly and just plain done! "We are going to Key West Airport to chase Antillean Nighthawk", came a voice, "Wanna come?" My body said no but a small flame flickered in my eyes, the tiredness went away, the chase was on. An hour later I had seen, and more importantly, heard, the nighthawk and was birding my way back to the hotel when my phone rang. "Bob Foppe", said the caller I.D. "Garganey at Fernald Preserve", said Bob. "I'll never make it back up there for that," I reasoned, although inside the fire was burning and I was considering making a run for it. This time though, my body won the battle. If it's still there in a week, I decided, maybe I'll see it then. After a long shower it felt so good to lay in a bed I think I may have shed a tear but I wasn't awake long enough to remember. The following day the Garganey was on my mind as I birded my way north. I made a few stops to look for Mangrove Cuckoo but had no luck. As the sun set I was still aimlessly wandering about trying to find a free place to park for the night. \$76.50 for a camp site was as close to a free place to park as I could find. The following day I landed in Key Largo and made one more attempt for Mangrove Cuckoo then rented a swanky hotel room, treated myself to a fine dinner and made it back to my room just in time to fall into a deep sleep. At some point in the middle of the night I awoke and made a decision. Tomorrow I would drive to Miami to get Spot-breasted Oriole then to Everglades for one last shot at Mangrove Cuckoo. The oriole was located in a suburb south of Miami and I was able to find it with little effort. By the time I crossed the street into another neighborhood to look for Red

-whiskered Bulbul I noticed that a police car kept popping up at intersections opposite of me. Apparently it could be considered suspicious to walk around a neighborhood with binoculars and a camera then get in your car and cruise around like some kind of thief casing the joint. I decided to cut my losses and I headed for Everglades National Park. I arrived after dark and got set up just in time to enjoy the light show of a thunderstorm off in the distance. By noon the following day I had managed to become a meal for many countless flies before giving up on the cuckoo. Now what? I pondered. I'm not sure how the decision even came about or why on earth I thought it would be a good idea given how hard I had pushed myself the last few days but 3 hours into the drive it suddenly dawned on me that my intent was to drive 22 hours straight through for a chance to see the Garganey. I made a stop that evening and called Jerry to talk tactics. He informed me that it was Birdathon weekend and if I was going to be in town I might as well join up with Finneytown's Fabulous, Flying, Fortune Seekers. "A great idea," I thought, but that would be contingent on my seeing the Garganey by 5:00pm Friday. At 2 a.m. I was falling asleep at the wheel. At one point I slapped myself across the face to stay awake, I'm pretty sure I left a handprint. That got the job done long enough for me to pull off at a truck stop. At 6 a.m., I woke up, brushed my teeth and was back on the road. Garganey was the word of the day - I was a road warrior on a mission. I pulled into Fernald at 2:00 p.m. I was cross-eyed, delirious and I'm pretty sure, dead asleep. "What do you mean the duck isn't here?" I mumbled deliriously to the gentleman on the deck at Lodge Pond, as though it was his fault. After much searching, I heard a Grasshopper Sparrow but the Garganey was nowhere to be seen. I felt sick, mostly on account of the fact I hadn't eaten since the granola bar in Southern Tennessee and I had only had 4 hours of sleep in the last 48 hours, but also because, by the looks of it, I had come 1,200 miles for a Grasshopper Sparrow. I joined a friend for dinner then went home and passed out. The following day I was up early trolling for the duck but it was not happening. Since the Garganey was not around I figured 24 hours of birding might fill that void nicely. By early afternoon I left Fernald to get ready for Birdathon. That night I kept my phone close in case I got "the call" but none came. Birdathon morning I got up and within half an hour I knew I wasn't going to make it far. I planned a nice long nap into my afternoon and got busy loading my car. By 10 I was barely functional and had decided to move the nap up by a couple of hours. Eyes burning with tiredness I was ready to crawl into bed when my phone rang, the only word I remember hearing was "GARGANEY" I was tripping over myself in a furious rush to get out of the house, "My keys! Where are my keys?" As I struggled to get my toes lined up straight in my flip flops I searched high and low, there! I dashed down the stairs, laden with optics. In one swift move my camera, binoculars, spotting scope and myself landed gently in the car. I was rolling before my door was shut. Going down High Street I noticed my speedometer went up to 120. I really wanted to test that. Arriving at Fernald, I got out of my car trying to keep my cool and not go sprinting up to the pond and scare the duck. I wonder if the other birders there could see the panic in my eyes as I approached. I just knew they were going to tell me, "the bird just flew, sorry you missed it" As it turned out I ogled at the duck for a good long time sharing the moment with other birders. I had earned this one the old fashioned way and I wanted to enjoy the moment.

(Continued on page 4)

Oxbow Inc. PROGRAMS



To get to the Oxbow, Inc. office take Highway US 50 south from the #16 exit off I-275. Pass the Hollywood Casino exit and turn left at the second stop light onto Walnut St. 301 Walnut is on the right side at the second stoplight at the corner of Walnut and Center Streets. Free parking is available on Walnut St., Center St., and in the parking lot behind the building.)

Tuesday, July 12, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

The Oxbow, Inc. Office, 301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg

Science is a global pursuit. Traveling the globe in pursuit of knowledge about our planet is one of the most thrilling aspects of paleontology and being a paleontologist. In January of 2010 **Dr. Brenda Hunda**, Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology, traveled to Vietnam with colleagues from other universities. Countries in Southeast Asia are now opening up to outside researchers and represent an untapped source of vital information about the history of life on Earth. Therefore, the primary goal of the research trip was exploration. While there was never any guarantee that the scientific team would find good rocks and fossils to work with, three weeks of traveling throughout the country revealed Cambrian and Ordovician-aged rocks (540 and 430 million years old, respectively) that were suitable for fossil collection. While the scientific results are not in yet, scientists gain greater insight into larger scale questions of how our planet, and life, evolved with each new research endeavor into remote and previously inaccessible regions of the world.

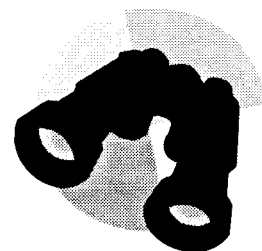
Tuesday, August 9, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

The Oxbow, Inc. Office, 301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg

Birds are wonderful things. They inspire, give joy and a window to the natural world that is accessible to nearly everyone. Their ability to appear anywhere gives an observer of birds a chance to witness something beautiful at anytime. Stop in for a discussion of birds and bird behaviors with **Dan Striley**, an everyday birdwatcher and citizen scientist. Dan will share his passion and love of these creatures and hopes that you will carry his excitement with you the next time you are out birding.

Oxbow Inc. FIELD TRIPS

To reach the upper Oxbow, Inc. parking lot near the cement plant, turn south from Rt. 50 at the Shell gas station in Greendale, drive back to the cement plant, turn right to the end of the road, then left. The lot is on your right.



Saturday, July 23, 2011 9:00 a.m.

Meet: In the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance just beyond the cement plant

Leader: Kathy McDonald, (513) 941-6497, kmc@one.net

Butterflies will be the focus of our July field trip. Our trip leader Kathy McDonald will take us on a leisurely two to three hour stroll around the Oxbow as she conducts a butterfly survey in the area. The butterfly survey will actually continue throughout the day, but Kathy has scheduled this walk as part of the overall event. While this "official" field trip will be relatively short and end before noon, the actual census will continue throughout the day. Kathy encourages anyone who wishes to stay longer to do so if they like. The goal of the survey will be to record the total species of butterflies seen as well the number of individuals.

Kathy's husband, veteran birder Ned Keller, will also be along on this trip so we can be sure the Oxbow's bird life will not be ignored. The flora of the Oxbow will also receive some attention as well, as both Kathy and Ned are involved with a number of botanical organizations. So come out and join Kathy and Ned for what should be a pleasant summer morning stroll in the Oxbow.

It will be the middle of summer so a little preparation will make your trip more enjoyable. Sunscreen, insect repellent and water could all prove useful. Be sure to contact Kathy if you have any questions.

Friday Evening, August 27, 2011 6:30 p.m.

Meet: In the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance just beyond the cement plant

Leader: Jay Stenger, (513) 522-8147, jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

Note that this is an evening field trip. The southward shorebird migration should be near peak in the Oxbow so finding those species will be the focus of this trip. Shorebirds (i.e. plovers and sandpipers, and the symbolic logo for Oxbow Inc.) are dependent on shallow water for feeding and "re-fueling" for their long journey south to their wintering grounds. Several different species can usually be found along the exposed shorelines, mudflats and sandbars of the Oxbow area at this season. The post breeding dispersal and southward migration of several species of herons and egrets also occurs at this time of the year. Large numbers of Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets and lesser numbers of Black-crowned Night-Herons and Green Herons are likely to be seen. Even a few rare species are possible at this time of the year.

A wide variety of other birds and wildlife should also be seen. The leader of this trip, veteran birder Jay Stenger, has birded the Oxbow area for over 30 years. Come out and join Jay on what should be a pleasant evening visit to the Oxbow area. Feel free to contact Jay if you have any questions.

Oxbow Inc. Educational Grants

Oxbow Awards Educational Grants from the
Wiseman/Witte Educational Fund

.....by Jon Seymour

Four grants were awarded in the Spring 2011 funding cycle of the Art and Ginny Witte/Wiseman Educational Fund. The fund established by Ginny Wiseman/Witte in honor of her first husband Art Wiseman is designed to fund nature education for students in the Greater Cincinnati area at the high school level or below. The four grants are:

- \$380 to Audubon Miami Valley and the Avian Research and Education Institute to partially fund the Queen City Bird Festival. This represents the fourth consecutive year that Oxbow, Inc. has supported the Queen City Bird Festival that focuses on families and children. From its initial year at the College of Mount St. Joseph, the Festival has seemingly found a permanent home at the Hueston Woods State Park. Many of the supplies purchased in the first year of the grant – children's binoculars and bird books – are still in use. The Festival has grown each year and more and more families are bringing their children for a fun introduction to nature and birding.
- \$189 to The Seven Hills School grades 5-12 Science and Math classes. High School teacher, Linda Ford, coordinates students in the care and understanding of the natural environment on the grounds of the school. A specific one acre patch is intensively studied and managed. The grant provides supplies to allow the students to monitor the biodiversity of the study area on the school grounds. The collected data and information is then shared with the science and math classes at the school to teach real world problems and solutions with data from their own research on their own campus.
- \$855 to Sunman-Dearborn Intermediate School for Outdoor Lab improvements. The grant will provide educational signs for a 1.3 acre of transitional wetland habitat on the grounds of the school which is being developed as an outdoor laboratory for the students. The grant will also provide focused additional training for the teachers at Sunman-Dearborn Intermediate and at the High School, on how to best utilize the wetland area to enhance their study curriculum. The Dearborn County SWCD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (out of Muscatatuck NWR) are also partnering in this project which could affect about 700 students during any one year.
- \$1000 to Cincinnati Waldorf School to help with the construction of a natural play area for the ~200 children at the school as well as from the surrounding

neighborhood. The grant will fund a portion of the natural play area that will include a natural, unstructured wet play area. A small spring will flow into a protected marshy area allowing the children to play in the stream and experience the biodiversity of a wet marsh area. The grant will cover the cost of the stream building and materials. Some of the funding will go to a student project to create bird boxes for the area. Many of the other materials and construction costs are being donated by other local businesses and volunteers.

We are excited about this first round of grants and feel we are off to an excellent start. If you or your business would like to make a donation to the Art and Ginny (Witte) Wiseman Education Fund send your check to Oxbow, Inc., P.O. Box 4172, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025 and mark it Wiseman-Witte Education Fund. If you donate 80% of your donation will be made available for the next granting round while 20% will be invested to insure the long term health of the fund (unless you specify otherwise).



Big Year Birdathon (continued from Page 2)

That moment turned into many moments and before long, hours. Nearly 45 minutes late, I finally met up with Wayne and Eric. I never did manage to fit that nap in and now I was off to go birding for 24 hours.

I haven't made any concrete plans this year, save a few flights and boat trips, preferring to let the winds of migration carry me where they may, yet things always seem to work out. That a duck from Asia turned up in Ohio 20 minutes from home on Birdathon weekend, pushing me to return to Cincinnati in time for my favorite birding event proves this point. Finneytown's, Fabulous, Flying, Fortune Seekers did quite well with 143 species, 13 of which were year list birds for me but that's not the point. In many ways, the big year has become a game of money and numbers. When I was 11, my heart sank every time I looked at the portrait of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker in my Peterson Guide. Not because I longed to place a checkmark by its name on the list in the front of the book, but rather I was sad thinking of that one last Ivorybill out there drumming on a dead, hollow cypress tree all alone. But isn't that the beauty of the bird's spirit, that they keep on singing, even in the face of adversity? The spirit that drives me to push through the tiredness and hunger must be the same one. Birds are the purest example of what it is to be alive and I find grand inspiration in that, so much so that I gave up everything for a chance to be a part of it for a short time. So, Sir... If that makes me "kinda strange" Then go ahead and arrest me and I'll ride along peacefully with a song in my heart.



Oxbow, Inc. Honorariums & Memorials

Donor	In Memory of
Bonzai Society of Greater Cincinnati	Aaron Perlman
Robert & Dorothy Koutnik	Helen Lukas
Dave & Kani Meyer	Aaron Perlman
John & Velda Miller	Barbara Corning
Bob & Tina Schlegel	Dana Pfirman
Jon & Jackie Seymour	Aaron Perlman
Jon & Jackie Seymour	John Getzendanner
Dave & Vicki Tozier	Barb Eckles

Oxbow Inc. would like to thank the following donors for their generous gifts.

Larry and Jane Austing
Mr. and Mrs. George H. Perbix
Wayne Wauligman

Oxbow, Inc. has established Memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each Memorial established in the name of a friend or relative will be enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Each contribution to a Memorial will be acknowledged to the family or to those selected by the donor.

Tributes are also enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Some tributes are birthday or anniversary remembrances, holiday greetings or gratitude acknowledgements. If so desired, "Happy Birthday!" or the like can be inscribed in the tribute notice.

Contributions should be sent to: Oxbow, Inc., P. O. Box 4172, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those who are to receive the acknowledgement.

For Lack of a Green-winged Teal (continued from Page 1)

The individual team results are listed below:

Most Species in a Single Watershed

- Close-N-Counters (Cincinnati Nature Center) – Great Miami Watershed – Bill Creasy, Dave Helm & Steve Bobonick – 139 species
- Ladyhawks – (Oxbow, Inc.) Great Miami Watershed – Sr. Marty Dermody, Lois Shadix & Chris Moran – 107 Species *(also winners of the All Ladies Division – the only team in that class)*

Most Species by an Under Age 19 Team (one of the team is an adult guide)

- Birds of Pray #1 (Miami Valley Christian Academy) – Cassidy Ficker, Mathew Hildeman, Lauren Goodman, Megan Williams & Cooper Scanlor (Bill McGill – guide) – 95 species.
- The Cardinals – Hamilton Co. Park District Team – Madeleine Lippert (Jerry Lippert – Guide) – 80 species

Most Species Photographed

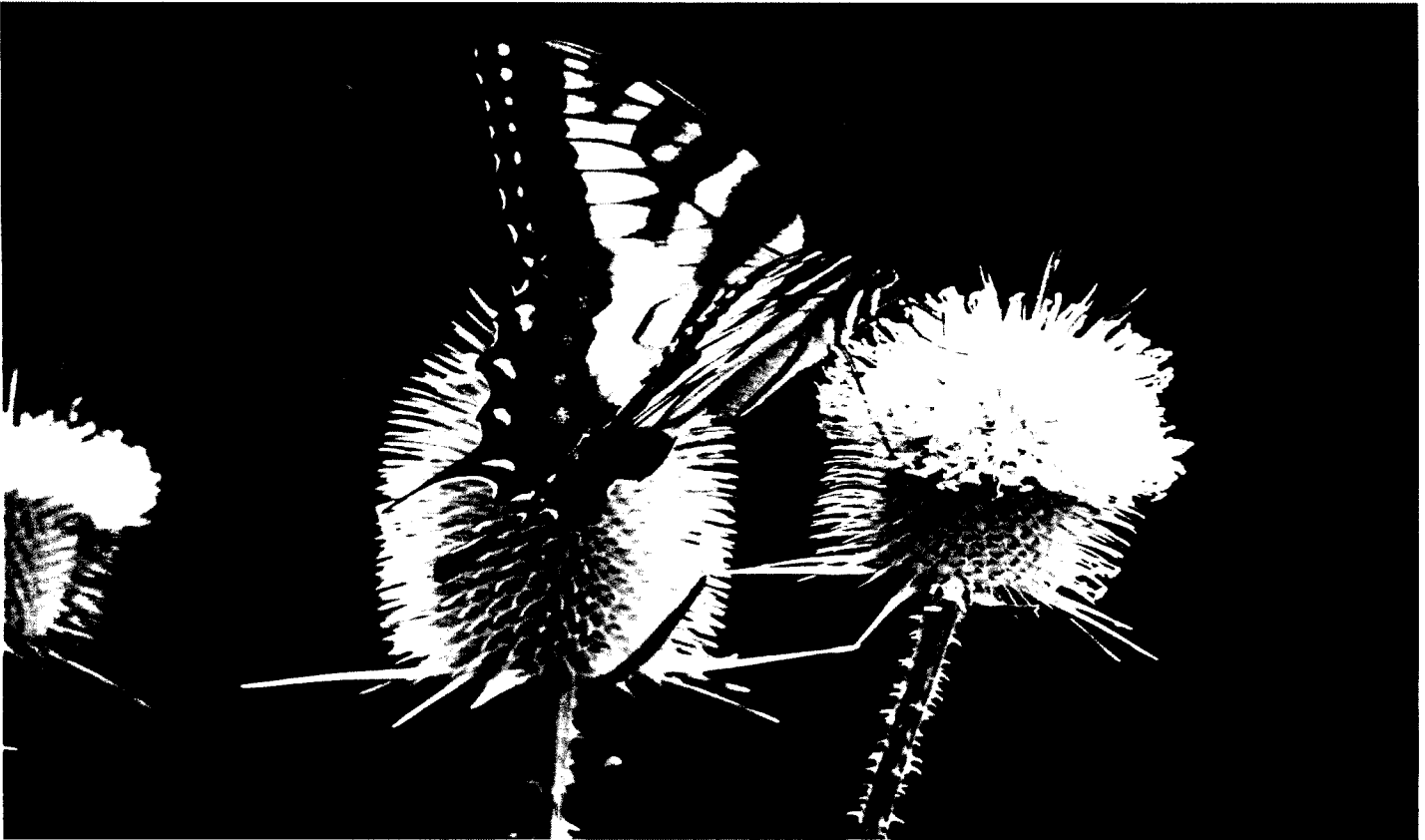
- Northern Ficker (Miami Valley Christian Academy) – Tyler Ficker (Renee McGill – Guide) – 79 species
- Birds of Pray #2 (Miami Valley Christian Academy) – Renee McGill – 77 species

The Solitary Vireo (Individual birders competing alone)

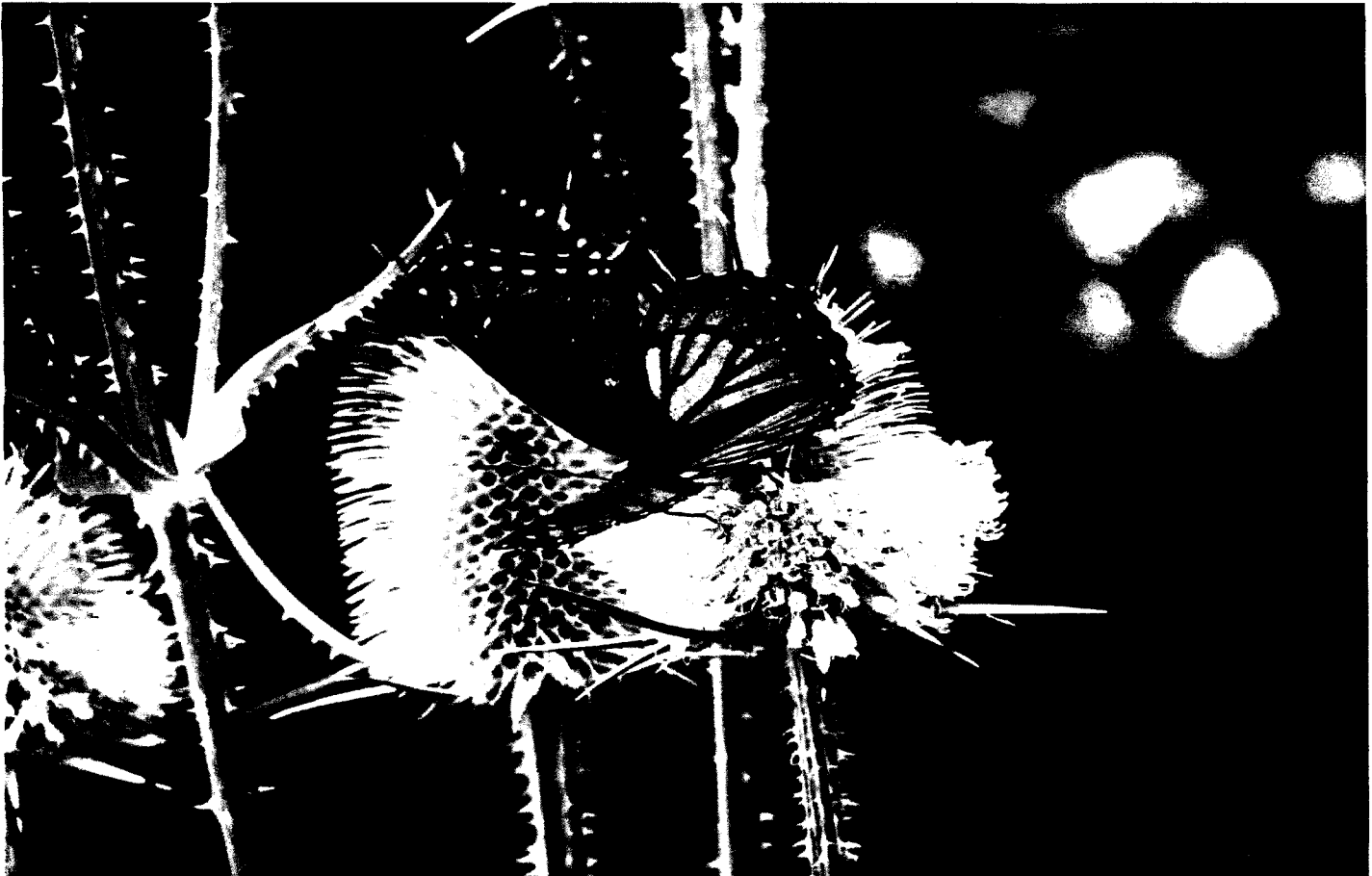
- Teacher! Teacher! Teacher! (Cincinnati Nature Center Team #2) David Brinkman – 138 species
- The Team with No Name (Ohio Nature Conservancy) – Ned Keller – 109 species
- Birds of Pray Too (Miami Valley Christian Academy) – Bill McGill – 104 species
- The Fernald Preserve Team (same as name) – Gary Stegner – 101 species *(Gary also won the Single Area Competition and the Least Use of Carbon Competition by doing all his birding on the Fernald Preserve) * Gary also served much of the day as the official spokesperson for the Gargany visiting Fernald at the time. I'm unsure how he was able to bird at all as he directed people to the location of the Gargany and a couple of bonus Moorhens all day.*
- Finneytown's Fabulous Flying Fortune Seeker – (Hamilton County Park District) – Jerry Lippert – 99 species

Greatest Number of Species in the Birdathon Area

- Beasts of Birdin' (Oxbow, Inc.) – Paul Wharton, Joe Bens & Jay Stenger – 162 species
- Blue Ash Trash (Oxbow, Inc.) – Gale Wulker & Brian Wulker – 143 species
- Finneytown's Fabulous Flying Fortune Seekers (Oxbow Inc.) – Wayne Wauligman, Erich Baumgardner & Matt Stenger – 143 species
- Two in the Bush and a Son (Oxbow, Inc.) – John Leon, Sarah Leon & Evan Leon – 136 species
- C-Note and the Golden Sombreros (Oxbow, Inc.) – Steve Pelikan, Charlie Saunders & Bob Lacker – 133 species
- The Flying Monkeys (Cincinnati Bird Club) – Bill Hull & Bill Zimmerman – 130 species
- The Clermont County Parks Team (same as the name) – Chris Clingman and Suzanne Clingman – 124 species
- Xpert Birders (Not!) (Xavier University) – Tyler Infeld, DeAngelo Rankin, Katie Goetz, Brian Carlson, Nina Bertaux-Skeirik & George Farnsworth (mentor) – 118 species
- The First Timers (Oxbow, Inc.) – Dave Yelton & Jon Seymour – 104 species
- Birds Elude Us (Oxbow, Inc.) – John Eckles, Dave Tozier & Vicki Tozier – 73 species



Teasal is an invasive in our prairies because it tends to crowd out native species. We actively work on controlling the patches of teasal we find. That does not make it an unattractive plant to butterflies and numerous other insects. This Eastern Tiger Swallowtail finds the teasal worth a prolonged stop and prolong stops lead to great photo opportunities. *(photo by Jon Seymour)*



Another butterfly that utilizes teasal is the Viceroy. It is a Monarch look-a-like that is often overlooked as "just another Monarch". It is smaller than the Monarch but the give away is the narrow band of black that parallels the shape of the edge of the back wing. The Monarch does NOT have this line. *(photo by Jon Seymour)*



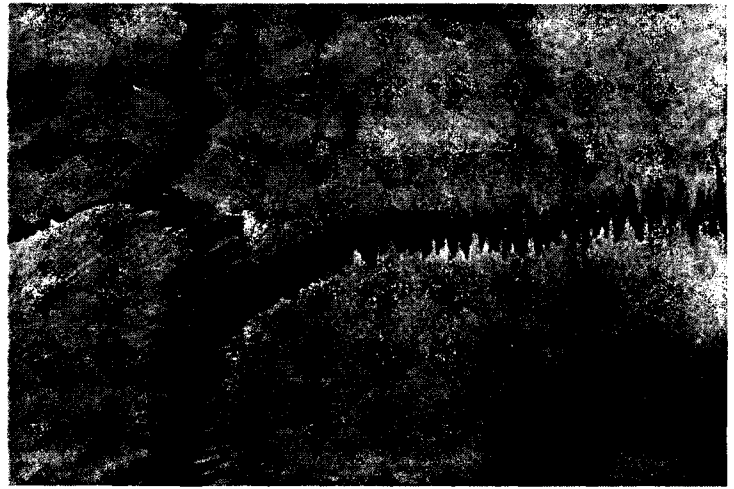
Matt Stenger, Erich Baumgardner and Wayne Wauligman pose outside the Oxbow office in Lawrenceburg just prior to the start of the Tally party. Matt not only completed the Birdathon but also added to his total for the Big Year he is doing. Though Matt already had over 400 species on his Big Year species list he was able to add more than 10 additional species during the Birdathon. Good Luck Matt on your Big Year—be ready to give us a full report when you return. *(Photo by Wayne Wauligman)*



The Callery Pear (the ornamental pear tree that has many names and is sold in nurseries) has become a real pest of an invasive species particularly in our wetland prairies. Scouts and volunteers associated with the scouts are working to eliminate these hard trees that can turn into bushes and then forests. Chris McNally attacks a Callery pear. *(Photo by Ed Gemperly)*



John Getzendanner was a devoted director of Oxbow, Inc. for many years handling our hunting, fishing, and security issues. His recent death, due to a fall while walking, was a tragedy for his family and his Oxbow family. He will be missed by many, especially by those that care for the Oxbow. *(photo provided by John Getzendanner II)*



Jack Behringer is the winner of the Photo ID Contest. This photo of the bleached and desiccated back of a snapping turtle shell show the interlacing sutures that bind the portions of the shell together. They are nearly identical to the bone suture structure that bind the bones of the skulls of mammals together. *(Photo by Tom Uhlman)*



A young visitor to the Queen City Bird Festival peers through the Bird Scope at the Oxbow, Inc. Booth. Birds that appeared plainly in the scope often were difficult to see with the unaided eye. The contrast often amazed the youngsters. These type of "ah ha" moments are the kind that can encourage a child to become more interested in nature. *(Photo by Sarah Michael)*



Nick McNally stands triumphant at the demise of a Callery Pear. Scouts will be working in the prairies this year to eliminate as many of the offending trees as possible. The "escapees" are fertile F1 hybrids of different varieties of Callery Pear. *(Photo by Ed Gemperly)*



A Day for the birds - May 14, 2011

*by Sarah Michael, Chair
Queen City Bird Festival*

May 14, was truly "a day for the birds" at the 4th Annual Queen City Bird Festival at the Hueston Woods Nature Center. Audubon Miami Valley, along with the help of over 60 volunteers including Hueston Woods State Park staff, brought an estimated 500 participants to the festival to learn about our fine feathered friends. 178 of those attending were children!

Young festival goers learned about the adaptation of birds to their habitat through such activities as "Fill the Bill" and "Bird Feet are Neat". They made paper bag birds, bird masks, pinecone bird feeders and played "bird bingo", observed birds, watched bird banding, and learned to use binoculars on short bird walks- phew! Most importantly they had fun and learned, in spite of the gray day and drizzle. Completion of five such activities earned them a Junior Birder Badge, a program sponsored by International Migratory Bird Day.

Volunteers and vendors staffed booths to offer bird art, bird feeders and related items, and informational and educational materials. Larry Sherman offered his beautifully finished gourds; Oxford Museum Association, Fernald, Oxbow Inc, Five Rivers Metro Park, Audubon Miami Valley had displays featuring their organizations. Dick Munson hosted the annual Audubon Plant Sale with hundreds of native plants grown at the Miami University's Hamilton Campus Conservatory.

Throughout the day invited speakers talked about birds. The keynote speaker, Doug Feist from the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, brought 5 exotic birds: Mozart - an African Gray Hornbill, Elsie - a Cattle Egret, Goblin- a White-faced Owl, Cleo - a Ross's Turaco, and Charlie - a Black-footed Penguin who stole the show while walking among the audience members in the crowded room. Adults and children equally delighted in Oxford's own Fred Shaw's Native American creation story and animal stories.

Thanks to ALL who made this day a success! It was a great way to introduce the young and young at heart to birding. And it was a great way for those already converted to share their passion for "our feathered friends". (*The Queen City Bird Festival was the awarded recipient of one of our 2011 Art and Ginny (Witte) Wiseman education grants to support nature education at the Festival.*)

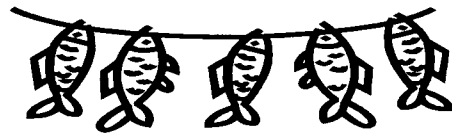
Oxbow, Inc. Loses our Vice President, John Getzendanner *by Jon Seymour*

In an unexpected freak accident, the Oxbow lost one of its most enthusiastic devotees. John Getzendanner was our Indiana Agent, our hunting manager and our security liaison. He probably spent more hours actually in the Oxbow than any of the other Board Members or the general members. We will find such devotion hard to replace. Already I miss seeing John get out of his car on the dusty Oxbow roads and walk up the road wearing sandals, toward where he had spotted me, and to where I was wearing hiking boots to protect my feet. It was a symbol for John. The Oxbow was just an extension of his living room and he fully intended to feel completely comfortable in it.

As a long time resident of Hidden Valley Lake, John was known and respected by many local residents. He went out of his way to contact people about Oxbow and brought in many new members simply by chatting and talking them into joining. If there was a question about it, John would have them get in the car and he would drive them all over the Oxbow until, when weak from exhaustion, he would have them sign up as members. That is not the exact way it happened but it sure seemed like it to the casual observer.

John was also a staunch representative of the fishing and hunting community of the Oxbow. While admittedly most Board members come to their interest in the Oxbow by being a birder, botanist, herpetologist or something similar (either professional or amateur), John grew to love the Oxbow from his experiences fishing, hunting, and trapping. Of the hundreds of fishermen that ply the Oxbow Lakes I think John knew most of them.

We will miss you, John, but I can still feel you watching the Oxbow.



Hunting Changes

Due to the sudden death of Oxbow, Inc. Hunting Manager, John Getzendanner, we are extending the deadline for applications to hunt by one month. If you held up your application due to uncertainty of where to send your application please send it to the Oxbow address at P.O. Box 4172, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025. If you have any questions please call Jon Seymour at 513-851-9835. Thank you for your patience while we bring our hunting permit process back "on line".

17	CBAAA	Swainson's Thrush	
	BBCCD	Hermit Thrush	
18	BAAAA	Wood Thrush	
21	AAAAA	American Robin	
21	CBAAA	Gray Catbird	
21	BBBSB	Northern Mockingbird	
18	AABSB	Brown Thrasher	
21	AAAAA	European Starling	
1	EEEE	American Pipit	
12	DDCCB	Cedar Waxwing	
15	BBBSB	Blue-winged Warbler	
4	DDDD	Golden-winged Warbler	
16	DBAAA	Tennessee Warbler	
	DDDD	Orange-crowned Warbler	
11	CBABC	Nashville Warbler	
19	CCCCC	Northern Parula	
20	BAAAA	Yellow Warbler	
8		CBBS	Chestnut-sided Warbler
11		CCBB	Magnolia Warbler
13		CBBC	Cape May Warbler
6		DDCC	Black-throated Blue Warbler
21	AAAAA	Yellow-rumped Warbler	
10	BAAB	Black-throated Green Warbler	
5		CCBBB	Blackburnian Warbler
13		BBBSB	Yellow-throated Warbler
1		CCCCC	Pine Warbler
13		CCCCC	Prairie Warbler
13		BBBBS	Palm Warbler
9		DCBB	Bay-breasted Warbler
11		DCBB	Blackpoll Warbler
14		CBBSB	Cerulean Warbler
16		CBBSB	Black-and-white Warbler
14		EDCBB	American Redstart
11		DDCCC	Prothonotary Warbler
5		DDDDD	Worm-eating Warbler
13		CBEAB	Ovenbird
8		DDCCC	Northern Waterthrush
10		BBCCC	Louisiana Waterthrush
13		DCBBB	Kentucky Warbler
	EE	Connecticut Warbler	
2		CCC	Mourning Warbler
17	BBAAA	Common Yellowthroat	
13		CBBSB	Hooded Warbler
3		EDCC	Wilson's Warbler
2		DDC	Canada Warbler
15	EDCBB	Yellow-breasted Chat	
18	EUBBS	Summer Tanager	
16	GBAAA	Scarlet Tanager	
17	AAAAA	Eastern Towhee	
0		American Tree Sparrow	

19	BBBSB	Chipping Sparrow
19	AAAAA	Field Sparrow
1	EEEEE	Vesper Sparrow
11	CCCCC	Savannah Sparrow
10	EDDDD	Grasshopper Sparrow
2	EEEEE	Henslow's Sparrow
	D	Fox Sparrow
21	AAAAA	Song Sparrow
2	EDDD	Lincoln's Sparrow
7	BBCC	Swamp Sparrow
16	AAABC	White-throated Sparrow
14	CCBBC	White-crowned Sparrow
	CCCD	Dark-eyed Junco
21	AAAAA	Northern Cardinal
18	DBBSB	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
4	EDDD	Blue Grosbeak
19	DBAAA	Indigo Bunting
8	EDD	Dickcissel
12	ECCD	Bobolink
21	AAAAA	Red-winged Blackbird
21	BBBSB	Eastern Meadowlark
	CCDE	Rusty Blackbird
	E	Brewer's Blackbird
20	AAAAA	Common Grackle
20	AAAAA	Brown-headed Cowbird
16	CBBSB	Orchard Oriole
20	DBAAA	Baltimore Oriole
	DDDE	Purple Finch
20	AAAAA	House Finch
	DDDDD	Pine Siskin
21	AAAAA	American Goldfinch
	EEE	Evening Grosbeak
21	AAAAA	House Sparrow

17 Garganey
1 Ruffed Grouse
2 Lark Sparrow
1 Greater Scaup

Number before the species name
indicates the number of teams
reporting the species

CinCheck

Cincinnati Birding Checklist
cincinnatibirds.com

Date: May 7, 2011

Birders: 21 Teams Reported

Location:

Entire Birdathon area

Notes:

Total Species All Teams
Entire Birdathon Area

199

15 Species Reported by
only one team

27 Species Reported by
every team

	EEEE	Snow Goose	
20	AAAAA	Canada Goose	
17	DD	Mute Swan	
19	ABBBB	Wood Duck	
2	DDDD	Gadwall	
1	BCDDE	American Wigeon	
	CCDEE	American Black Duck	
21	AAAAA	Mallard	
20	ABCCC	Blue-winged Teal	
9	BCDDD	Northern Shoveler	
	DD	Northern Pintail	
	BCD	Green-winged Teal	
	E	Canvasback	
	EE	Ruddy Duck	
13	BCDDD	Ring-necked Duck	
10	BCDDE	Lesser Scaup	
	CEEE	Bufflehead	
7		CCDDD	Hooded Merganser
14		BCDDDE	Red-breasted Merganser
13		CCDDD	Ruddy Duck
13		EEEEE	Ring-necked Pheasant
12		CCCCC	Wild Turkey
1		CCCCC	Northern Bobwhite
1		CCDDD	Common Loon
16		BBCCDE	Red-billed Grebe
	CEE	Horned Grebe	
15		BCCCC	Double-crested Cormorant
6		CCDDD	American Bittern
	DDDD	Least Bittern	
21	BBBSB	Great Blue Heron	
12		CCDDD	Great Egret
1	EEE	Snowy Egret	
	EEEC	Little Blue Heron	
	EEEEE	Cattle Egret	
14		CBBSB	Green Heron
	CCCC	Black-crowned Night-Heron	
	EEEEE	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	
19		DDDDD	Black Vulture
21	AAAAA	Turkey Vulture	
6		BCDDD	Osprey
2		DDDD	Bald Eagle
2		DDDEE	Northern Harrier
2		CCDEE	Sharp-shinned Hawk
13		CCCCC	Copper's Hawk
10		CCCCC	Red-shouldered Hawk
5		CCCCC	Broad-winged Hawk
21	BBBSB	Red-tailed Hawk	
13	BBBSB	American Kestrel	
	EEE	Merlin	
9	DDDDD	Peregrine Falcon	

1	DDDDD	Virginia Rail
10	CCCCC	Sora
11	DDDDD	Common Moorhen
19	ABCCC	American Coot
1	EEEE	Sandhill Crane
1	DDCCC	Black-bellied Plover
1	DEEE	American Golden-Plover
13	DDCCC	Semipalmated Plover
21	AAAAA	Killdeer
1	EEE	American Avocet
21	CBBSB	Spotted Sandpiper
20	CBCCC	Solitary Sandpiper
17	BBCCD	Greater Yellowlegs
16	EEEE	Willet
18	BBCCC	Lesser Yellowlegs
1	EEEEE	Upland Sandpiper
1	EE	Ruddy Turnstone
9	DDC	Semipalmated Sandpiper
15	DDCCC	Least Sandpiper
2	DD	White-rumped Sandpiper
14	CCCCC	Pectoral Sandpiper
2	DDDDD	Dunlin
1	DD	Stilt Sandpiper
4	DDDD	Short-billed Dowitcher
2	EE	Long-billed Dowitcher
6	CCDD	Wilson's Snipe
8	CCCCC	American Woodcock
1	EEE	Wilson's Phalarope
1	BDDEE	Bonaparte's Gull
16	BCCCC	Ring-billed Gull
6	CCCCC	Herring Gull
5	CCDDE	Caspian Tern
1	DD	Black Tern
2	DDDEE	Common Tern
2	DDDDD	Forster's Tern
21	AAAAA	Rock Pigeon
4	AAAAA	Mourning Dove
2	DDDD	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
2	DDDD	Black-billed Cuckoo
2	EEEEE	Barn Owl
5	CCCCC	Eastern Screech-Owl
6	CCCCC	Great Horned Owl
9	CCCCC	Barred Owl
8	EDCC	Common Nighthawk
1	EEEEE	Chuck-will's-widow
1	DDDD	Whip-poor-will
21	BAAAA	Chimney Swift
15	EDCCB	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
14	BBBSB	Belted Kingfisher
4	DDCCC	Red-headed Woodpecker

20	AAAAA	Red-bellied Woodpecker
	BCDE	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
21	AAAAA	Downy Woodpecker
14	BBBSB	Hairy Woodpecker
18	AAAAA	Northern Flicker
18	BBBSB	Pileated Woodpecker
2	DD	Olive-sided Flycatcher
11	CCAA	Eastern Wood-Pewee
	EE	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
18	ECBB	Acadian Flycatcher
	E	Alder Flycatcher
10	DDCB	Willow Flycatcher
3	CCBCC	Least Flycatcher
18	BBCCC	Eastern Phoebe
17	DBAAA	Great Crested Flycatcher
19	CBBSB	Eastern Kingbird
	EEEEE	Loggerhead Shrike
14	BBBSB	White-eyed Vireo
	EE	Belt's Vireo
19	CBBSB	Yellow-throated Vireo
6	CBBCD	Blue-headed Vireo
17	CBBSB	Warbling Vireo
3	EDCCC	Philadelphia Vireo
18	CBAAA	Red-eyed Vireo
21	AAAAA	Blue Jay
21	AAAAA	American Crow
8	CCCCC	Horned Lark
14	CCCB	Purple Martin
21	BBBSB	Tree Swallow
21	BBBSB	Northern Rough-winged Swallow
20	CCCCC	Bank Swallow
18	DDDDD	Cliff Swallow
19	BBBSB	Barn Swallow
21	AAAAA	Carolina Chickadee
21	AAAAA	Tufted Titmouse
3	DDDDD	Red-breasted Nuthatch
20	BBBSB	White-breasted Nuthatch
	DD	Brown Creeper
17	AAAAA	Carolina Wren
	EEEEE	Bewick's Wren
14	BAAAA	House Wren
	DEE	Winter Wren
2	EEEE	Sedge Wren
4	DDDDD	Marsh Wren
1	DD	Golden-crowned Kinglet
5	AABCC	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
20	BBBSB	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
16	BBBSB	Eastern Bluebird
7	EDCC	Veery
6	DDCC	Gray-cheeked Thrush



usings

by Dave Styer

The Belted Kingfisher

The Belted Kingfisher can be found in small numbers wherever there is water with fish. I thoroughly enjoy watching them flying by, giving their loud rattle, diving into the water and coming up with a small fish, and perching and raising their crests. I find their crests wild and nifty, if not neat. (If you want neat, look at Hooded Merganser crests.) To me, this all evokes personality. My wife would say that "there's a bird with attitude!" In Forbush's classic *Birds of Massachusetts* (1927) I find his descriptive term "grotesque" surprising. Do some people now think that the Belted Kingfisher is grotesque, or is this a human attitude left over from a century ago?

I can't resist repeating something I wrote about in *The Birds of the Oxbow*. In the late 1970s Jim Davis was a graduate student at U.C., and he decided to study Belted Kingfishers for his Master's Thesis topic. He had read that these birds were aggressive toward their own kind so "he set up a stuffed museum skin along the Great Miami River to see if he could get living birds to respond. Before Jim could even get hidden a kingfisher came up and knocked the head off the study skin!" Yes, that's a bird with attitude! Belted Kingfishers nest along the Great Miami River in holes they dig into high banks. The holes may be 3 to 7 feet deep. Jim found that no two pairs would nest within sight of each other. This aggressiveness explains why you often see 1 or 2 kingfishers in a location, but never 10 individuals. The best time to see several at once is just after the young have fledged, but before they have dispersed.

In the Belted Kingfisher the female is more colorful than the male. As well as the gray band across her chest, as the male has, she has a red/rufous band. It is unusual in birds for a female to be more colorful than a male, and that often indicates sex-role reversal. For instance, female phalaropes are more colorful than males. They court the males, mate, lay the eggs and leave the rest to the males. However, from all I can read the sex roles of Belted Kingfishers are not reversed. The male chooses a territory; the female chooses a mate; they dig the nest hole together; and the female does most of the egg incubation. Mallards are very usual in this



respect. The male is brightly colored, and the female is cryptically patterned. This seems rational, because it makes the female difficult to see when she is on the nest. Perhaps it is unimportant for Belted Kingfishers, because their nest is in a dark tunnel. If it doesn't work against kingfishers, why shouldn't a female have brighter plumage than a male? Human females often wear red lipstick. Except, perhaps, in science fiction, that doesn't make them more likely to be preyed upon.

Somewhere I read that Belted Kingfishers have excellent vision. No kidding. The kingfisher sits on a limb or flies above the water and looks down into the water. If it sees a small fish, it plunges down headfirst and grabs the fish in its bill. It's hard for me to imagine the kingfisher doing this without great vision. In fact, I believe that my personal experience makes it extra hard for me to understand how the kingfisher succeeds. In very clear, still waters I can see fish swimming around under water. However, I remember being at ponds in Spring Grove Cemetery with Barry Wakeman's Junior Zoologists, in the early 1970s, and Dave Russell would say "look at the fish swimming around!" I'd look down and see the reflected sky. Once, on Monterey Bay, Don Roberson said "look at the giant sunfish!" I looked down and saw the reflected sky. I have always attributed this to my red-green color blindness. I see red, but not as well as a person with normal color vision. Perhaps that's why I see reflected sky more easily than red or orange fish under water. Does the Belted Kingfisher have vision especially adapted to seeing through the water's surface? If there is such a thing as special vision for the purpose I would guess so, but I have only found one piece of information about the Belted Kingfisher's color vision. The kingfisher shares with some other birds that have been tested the ability to see well all colors humans see plus some "light" frequencies in the ultraviolet range. I hesitate to write "ultraviolet light," because, for humans, it is not light at all. For these birds it is light. From the Belted Kingfishers point of view it would appear that all humans are slightly color blind. I would like to know if the increased visual ability that Belted Kingfishers have aids them in looking down and seeing fish under water.

Member Communications Committee:

Jennifer Borneman
Joanne Earls
Lynda Mason
Velda Miller
Jackie Seymour
Pat Shanklin
Suzanne Skidmore
Barb Varland
Jim Wilgenbusch

Great Miami River Clean Up

Beneath a threatening, leaden sky ten stalwart volunteers showed up to help clean up the recently flooded Oxbow area. My husband Dave and I showed up early as Dave Lutz of Green Acres Canoe Rentals was to deliver canoes for the clean up. Well, Dave had already dropped them off and was waiting for us when we drove up. We chatted and then he left. Dave and I then started pulling flowering garlic mustard and managed four very full bags before people started to arrive for the clean up. I have been spraying the garlic mustard in the fall and will hit this year's rosettes again before they have a chance to flower next spring. Chris Powell and his daughters Raleigh and Alex arrived with a trailer so I set them to the dirty task of picking up tires then taking them to the Dearborn County Recycling Center. Chris reported that they dropped off 56 tires! A BIG THANKS to them for all that work! Also, a huge thanks to the Recycling Center which donates the cost to them of taking these tires. Greg and Linda Stryker and Crystal Palmer hit the edge of the woods where it meets the farmer's field and pulled out a lot of construction waste, Styrofoam and other debris, piling it along the road for pick up. Dave and I combed along the lake road but were stopped by the flooded first swale. There was a lot of plastic sheeting caught high in the trees which we pulled down as well as the usual plastic, bottles and cans among the poison ivy. John Klein took a canoe onto the lake and retrieved some trash before coming in and using his truck to pick up bags and debris we had left along the road. Wes Wiemann teamed with John and was a big help. By then it was 10:30 so I sent everyone to the casino end of the Oxbow while I waited for the canoes to be picked up. A very big thanks to Dave and Sharon Lutz for their generous donation of canoes! On the other end of the Oxbow we were able to get into the Conservancy woods easily as the flood had suppressed the growth of vegetation and it was clear and open. After gathering a truck load of trash we hauled it back to the dumpster, and with a big thanks to everyone called it a day. The very large dumpster which is donated by Rumpke to Oxbow every year was about a third full and the Oxbow that much cleaner!

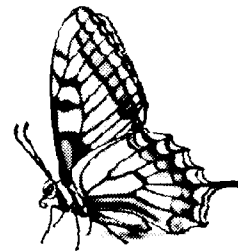
Photo Contest

In our last issue we published a mystery photo by Tom Uhlman. As in the past we asked the members to send in their best judgment of what was the subject of the picture. Well we did it again. No one actually correctly identified the photo. However, there was an answer that was close enough that we accepted it as reasonable and selected a winner from those submitting the "close" answer. The close answer we accepted was "skull sutures", the joints that connect the various bones of the skull together. The actual answer is "shell sutures" from the weather-bleached shell of a snapping turtle. Congratulations to Jack Berninger who was selected from the "close to correct" answers as the winner. Jack will receive an 8X10 print of an Oxbow moment. Thanks for your entries.

Save the Date for GREAT OUTDOOR WEEKEND!

September 24-25 will be the date of the next Great Outdoor Weekend. Start planning now to set aside the weekend and pack it full of exciting, entertaining and educational events. The Great Outdoor Weekend is an initiative of Green Umbrella, the local organization that encourages cooperation in groups supporting sustainability and livability in the area surrounding the city of Cincinnati. As in past years, there are more than 40 providers presenting more than 70 programs designed for the whole family. It is more important than ever to get the children outdoors and let them experience the challenge of learning from the world around us. So plan to take children and grandchildren, and you will find joy in bringing the kids to the Great Outdoors.

We know some kids are rather large and of undetermined age. We are certain they are also in danger of having fun.



Oxbow Butterfly Census 2011

Saturday, July 23, 2011 9:00 a.m.

Meet: In the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance just beyond the cement plant

Contact: Kathy McDonald, (513) 941-6497, kmc@one.net

A butterfly survey will be conducted in the Oxbow on Saturday, July 23. It will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until 3:00 p.m. Anyone interested in butterflies is encouraged to participate, regardless of his /her experience. The idea is to record all of the species of butterflies and the total number of butterflies found in the Oxbow during the day. Kathy McDonald, the organizer and compiler for this event, hopes that this will be the first of what will become an annual Oxbow event.

Depending on the number of participants, groups will be formed and given different sections of the Oxbow area to survey. Each group will keep track of the butterfly species and numbers they find. At the end of the day, a grand tally of all of the group's findings will be taken.

A little preparation will make your day more enjoyable. Sunscreen, insect repellent and water could all prove useful. We will break for lunch at mid-day. Your participation is appreciated and encouraged, even if for just a few hours. Contact Kathy McDonald for further information about this event.

Oxbow, Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.

A nonprofit organization formed by conservation groups and concerned citizens of Ohio and Indiana for the purpose of preserving and protecting a wetlands ecosystem know locally as the Oxbow, Hardintown, or Horseshoe Bottoms, from industrial development and to preserve the floodplain at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers for use as a staging area for the seasonal migrations of waterfowl. This agricultural area is rich in geological, archaeological, and anthropological history.

Help us save this unique wetland ecosystem. Make your state a richer place in which to live by helping us preserve this precious resource. **Membership in Oxbow, Inc. is encouraged and solicited.**

Prothonotary Warbler	\$ 15	Wood Duck	\$ 25
Great Blue Heron	\$ 50	Green-winged Teal	\$100
Great Egret	\$250	Osprey	\$500
Bald Eagle	\$1000		
Charm of Goldfinches (Group Level) \$25			

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Need a Speaker?
Give Us a Call!

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Protecting Wetlands
Founded 1985