



OXBOW, inc

Save the Oxbow Society

Thanks to your support, Oxbow, Inc. is a growing organization. With the help of our 325 members, we are in the final stages of purchasing 27 acres of land in the Oxbow area. Our Preservation Committee is actively pursuing other land parcels to protect, through acquisition, easement given by the owner, or donation. We will only attempt to purchase land willingly sold or donated by the owner.

The Indiana and Ohio Departments of Natural Resources are advising our organization of the best methods for us to protect the Oxbow from industrial development. We wish to thank them for their help.

If we are to accomplish our goal of protection of this natural area, we need your help. Ask a friend to become a member. Another member will increase our funding capability and also increase our strength as a group.

We welcome everyone to our meetings. At the meetings you can learn more about the area through our speaker and learn about what Oxbow, Inc. is doing for protection of the land.

Again, thank you for your support. Judy Bramstedt, President

OXBOW EVENTS

Tuesday, July 14, 7:30 PM - Cincinnati Zoo Education Center. Dave Styer will talk about the birds of the Oxbow region. Dave has been studying this subject with interest for many years.
Tuesday, August 11, 7:30 PM - Greendale Cabin. Ed Guljas will speak about the reintroduction of the Bald Eagle.

The Speakers' Bureau wishes to thank Mr. George Laycock, nationally known wildlife writer and photographer, for his welcome addition of color transparencies to be used for Oxbow presentation.

Any civic organization, club or school group interested in scheduling a slide talk on the Oxbow preservation story for a fall or winter date, please contact Donna Wagner at 513-831-7606.

Why was a Golden Eagle at the Oxbow?

Saturday, 11 April 1987, late in the afternoon Joanne and I pulled under the highway (I-275) behind the old cemetery on U.S. 50. The weather had been stormy, and water covered a large part of the flood-plain. There is a rule (Styer's Law) that applies during any migratory period. When the water rises the birds arrive.

We saw Duncan and Lyla before we saw any birds, and Duncan was obviously pleased. He was watching a Franklin's Gull in breeding plumage. This was a "life" bird for Duncan. Indeed, this was only the third record in the bottoms of this prairie bird. Perhaps it was travelling with the similar Bonaparte's Gulls that were about to reach a peak of around 300 individuals. Perhaps the Franklin's Gull was simply blown east with the storm systems.

If the habitat had not been right, the gulls would not have stopped. When the water rises and subsides hundreds of small fish get caught and concentrated in the large puddles. This condition provides a feast for birds, such as gulls, that feed on small fish.

Adding to the birding excitement that afternoon was a variety of other waterbirds. Caspian Terns, large terns with bright red bills, were there. Double-crested Cormorants, relatives of pelicans, were there. Both of these species are also fish eaters. Sandpipers were there probing the mud for invertebrates. Coots and herons were there. There was a Common Loon and a Horned Grebe. Tree Swallows were skimming over the water catching flying insects. Although duck migration is usually almost over by April, there were a couple thousand Lesser Scaup. We were witnessing the peak of the scaup migration. Scaup don't usually eat many fish. What were they feeding on? It would be interesting to find out.

While we were there Jerry Johnson stopped by, and Lyla picked up her sister, Myra, so six of us enjoyed the birding that evening.

The large variety of birds present made it worthwhile to scan carefully with a spotting scope. While scanning the distant mud flats in the direction of the Shawnee Lookout boat ramp I saw a huge dark bird of prey. It was soon apparent that we were looking at an eagle, but there are two species possible. Immature Bald Eagles would look all black from a distance, and so would Golden Eagles. The Bald Eagle is a dedicated fish eater, and probably uses this area every year. The Golden Eagle is more of a highlander, relatively common in the West, and rare anywhere in the eastern United States. Only a handful of Golden Eagles have ever been seen in the Greater Cincinnati area, and none had ever been surely identified in the Oxbow area. In the faint glimmers of sunshine between clouds I could see a light sheen on the back of the head. That is supposed to be characteristic of a Golden Eagle, but we could hardly trust such a feature at such a distance.

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This eagle spent most of its time standing on the mud flats, perhaps eating dead fish. Joanne and I waited until it flew, and we could clearly see the underwing pattern. It was that of a Golden Eagle. Meanwhile, Duncan, Lyla, and Myra drove to Shawnee Lookout to see if they could get another view. Although they never saw the eagle again they did see two Great Egrets. When I contacted Duncan (a trained ornithologist) again he said that he had independently decided by the general conformation of the bird that it was a Golden Eagle.

Why was a Golden Eagle at the Oxbow? Things were right for it that day, on its journey north. Why were things right for it? We soon run out of answers.

None-the-less, the water had risen and the birds were arriving. Within a week Morris found 6 elegant American Avocets, some 40 Black-crowned Night Herons dropped in one evening, an adult male Black Scoter was seen over by the Oxbow itself, and a Ruff was seen by Lost Bridge. These events are rare in this area, and most frequently occur after storms. Let's go birding some stormy evening.

NOTE

Help Oxbow, Inc. learn the nature of the Oxbow area. Oxbow, Inc. has a research committee. Bob Breitenstein (513-481-3120) is in charge, and he would like to hear from anyone who either has knowledge to share, or has some spare time to work with us.

Plants at the Oxbow...

In April, with encouragement from Oxbow, Inc., the Cincinnati Wild Flower Preservation Society (CWFPS) began a plant inventory in a portion of the Oxbow area. With special permission from the Hamilton County Park Board, the study is being conducted in the Uhlmansiek Sanctuary area of Shawnee Lookout Park. This area, covering over 200 acres, extends the length of the park, between the road and the Great Miami River.

The alluvial floodplain, which is submerged during periods of high water (including much of this April), includes agricultural fields, open unplanted areas, scrubby growth, and woodland. The steep wooded hillside below the road is not reached by ordinary flood levels. The entire area is moist and growth is lush.

Spring bloom on the hillside was particularly attractive, with spring beauties, dutchman's breeches, yellow corydalis, and extensive displays of Virginia bluebells followed by dwarf larkspur, appendaged waterleaf, Miami mist, and fern-leaved phacelia (Phacelia bipinnatifida).

The latter was a welcome surprise, since it appears on the Ohio list of threatened plants. Even the "weeds" presented masses of color, with purple ground ivy and dead nettle, green field pennycress, white chickweed and corn salad, and yellow cresses and ragwort. With the coming of hot weather, the appearance has changed rapidly with the growth of tall weeds such as poison hemlock and dock. Growth has developed more slowly on the recently submerged floodplain, with different groups of plants in the woodlands, in and around standing water, and edging the open fields and river banks. Here were found occasional plants of water speedwell (Veronica anagallis-aquatica), listed as potentially threatened in Ohio.

While beauty, diversity, and threatened status of plant life add to the interest of the survey for investigators, all of the plants of the Oxbow area contribute to providing a habitat that is clearly desirable for a large number and variety of birds. Among the many species nesting here are prothonotary warblers and rose-breasted grosbeaks. American redstarts and tree sparrows have also been reported to nest in this area.

The study method is based on identification of blooming plants in the various habitats. By mid-June, more than 200 species in 70 plant families had been tentatively identified. The project is providing an opportunity to learn more about methods of plant identification and to observe the wetland habitat and its seasonal changes. At the same time, the results, combined with inventories of all forms of life in the Oxbow area, with increased understanding of the ecological interactions that make this wetland habitat such a unique haven for such a large number and variety of birds.

Weekly visits will continue throughout the 1987 blooming season. Participants have included members of CWFPS and Oxbow, Inc. To volunteer, contact Ruth Trosset at 513-563-2471. Final results of the 1987 survey will be made available to Oxbow, Inc.

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OXBOW, INC.

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

Help us save this unique wetland. You can make your state a richer place in which to live by helping us preserve this precious resource.

Membership in Oxbow, Inc. is solicited and encouraged.

Individual	\$10	Organization/Club	\$25	Cornerstone	\$250
Family	\$15	Supporting	\$50	Sponsor	\$500
Contributing	\$25	Patron	\$100	Benefactor	\$1000

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