



# WETLAND *matters*

*Published bi-monthly for the Friends and Members of Oxbow, Inc.*

## **Programs**

**July 14 (Tuesday) 7:30 PM Oxbow meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo's Education Building** (Enter through the employee entrance on Erkenbrecker Ave.)

Jim Maxwell will present programs at both the July and August meetings. The program comes from Silver Hammer Workshops, a childrens environmental awareness group providing in-school and live public events. Jim's program is called "Environmental Awareness".

**August 11 (Tuesday) 7:30 PM Oxbow meeting at the Lawrenceburg Public Library** (From Cincinnati, take US 50 West and turn left on Walnut Street. Turn right on High Street. The Library is on the right side of High Street.)

Jim Maxwell will present the program "Environmental Awareness" and tell Oxbow members something about Silver Hammer Workshops' environmental awareness activities.

## **Field Trips**

**July 28 (Tuesday) 7:00 PM Oxbow field trip.** Jay Stenger will lead this walk around the Oxbow area. He'll be looking for shorebirds since their fall migration should be well under way. But when you're out with Jay, you can never tell what might turn up! Meet him at the Gardens Alive parking lot. If you have questions, call Jay at (513) 522-4245

**August 18 (Tuesday) 6:30 PM Oxbow field trip** Join Darlena Graham for an evening walk at the Oxbow. You should expect to see herons, egrets and swallows as well as shorebirds. Meet Darlena at the Gardens Alive parking lot. Questions? 581-2227

## **Presentations**

Morris Mercer, chair of the Speakers Committee, gives many presentations about Oxbow each month to area clubs and organizations. Recently he had a marathon session at Goodridge Elementary School in Hebron, Kentucky, in which he told some 750 students about the Oxbow and the importance of wetlands. Ms. Donna Conner, the chair person of the Earthsavers, (Goodridge's environmental organization) sent Oxbow a donation of over \$250 that was raised by the students in conjunction with an environmental course they studied during Earth Week. Oxbow is extremely grateful for the donation.

## **Thank You**

Many people and organizations contributed to running Birdathon '98 and Oxbow is grateful to them.

The Hamilton County Park District let Oxbow use of the facilities at the Winton Centre for the tally and dinner.

Fritz Haas designed the Birdathon '98 T-shirt. These were awarded to each participant. The illustration on these shirts \_ black on cream \_ shows a Cardinal and a Screech Owl standing on a pair of binoculars. Quickly identifying the individual birds as Mr. C. and Spook, birdathoners were delighted to realize that their shirts were a tribute to Art Wiseman.

Greg Mendel, Carol Mundy, Patti Niehoff, Mark Westrich, and Anita Buck ran the tally and dinner. They arranged for and transported food, handled participant's checklists, determined the winners, served the meal and cleaned up afterwards.

Anita Buck and Steve Pelikan registered the teams, ordered and transported the T-shirts, and mailed reports to people who pledged for Oxbow's teams.

Last, but certainly not least, THANK YOU to all the participants and organization sponsoring teams. Your work at raising pledges and efforts at bird finding is what really made Birdathon '98 a success.

## Field Notes

by Morris Mercer

### Memorial Day 1998

Over the years I've enjoyed many hours around the Oxbow. There are times that I wonder what keeps bringing me back. Each time I go I know it will be somewhat the same and yet very different. The setting and the wildlife are for ever changing. I see ducks and other birds. I wonder where they have spent the winter—maybe along the Gulf coast or in South America. I wonder where they will spend the summer—maybe Canada or above the arctic circle. As they fly out over the willows I thrill at seeing them wild and free. Freedom is a wonderful thing, but for man it comes at a price.

Today as we celebrate Memorial Day as I came in off the deck after putting up the flag, I thought about some of my boyhood friends. Boys that never had a chance to enjoy the freedom they fought and died for.

It was about the time we were coming out of high school that Hitler and his gang thought they should rule the world. The Japanese were sure if they took the U.S. they would soon rule Asia and the Pacific. With the attack on Pearl Harbor their plan was set in motion, but many people around the world said "over my dead body" and many gave their lives.

Tom Eaton was a kid that lived a few houses down the street. He was an easy going kid. I remember that Tom had lost a permanent front tooth. The dentist fixed him up with a tooth he could take out or put in as he wished. When we were playing football or basketball in the alley, Tom would call time out and we would all search for his tooth. When Tom went off to war he became a B-17 pilot. Death caught up with him when his plane was shot down over Germany.

Cliff McKee was the kid next door. His room was on the side of the house next to ours. My brother and I had our room upstairs. When we got a telegraph set it was easy to run the wires over to Cliff's. The windows were real handy too. When we got our dots and dashes mixed up we could raise the window and yell "What did you say?" Cliff went into the army and he died in the snow at the Battle of the Bulge.

Bill O'Haver was one of our ice-skating buddies. We were always trying the ice before it was strong enough to hold us. We had a saying, "Solid as a rock said he as he stood in the water up to his knee". Death came to Bill in June. He was a glider pilot and was killed at Normandy.

My brother Noel Mercer—we shared a room all of his life until I joined the Marines. As soon as he graduated from high school he joined the Marines and our room was empty. Death came to Noel in May, when the blackberries were in bloom back home. He was killed serving with the 2nd Marine Division in the Pacific. When I try to picture him it isn't as a Marine on the beach at Tarawa, wearing a steel helmet with a flame thrower on his back. I picture him barefoot, shirt tail out, with his fishing pole in hand.

We used to write to each other, "keep your head down." Someday the war would be over and we would go home. Then everything would be as it used to be. I was in the South Pacific when word came he had been killed. I knew our dreams would never come true and Noel would never ever go home.

Our cousin Harold Lumbert went off to war and he too joined the Marines. Harold wasn't killed but became the worst disfigured man from Iwo Jima. The poet Carl Sandburg went to his home to interview Harold as "The Man Without a Face." Harold died several years later, but was never free of pain.

There were many more from our little town and from the cities, from the country. It seemed at the time that every other home had a banner in the window with one or more stars on it. There was a star for each member of the family gone off to war. Before the war ended so many of these stars were gold: gold stars for the ones that had been killed in service of their country.

On this Memorial Day I think of my boyhood friends. can close my eyes and picture the high ground and the river valley where we had such a good time; the grape vine swinging out over the river, all the wild places. That was a long time ago and many of the places are gone. It seems that if there is a wild place of beauty some developer moves in and builds houses, a shopping center, or both.

I'm thankful Oxbow owns as much of the flood plain as it does and hope more can be acquired. It has taken a lot of people working together to get where we are now. I feel we must keep some of the wild places, not only for the wildlife that lives there, but for ourselves. There is so much more to life than a fast dollar.



## **Oxbow Memorials**

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Oxbow, Inc. has established Memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each Memorial, established in the name of a friend or loved one, 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. Contributions should be sent to Oxbow, Inc., PO Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391. Be sure to enclose the names and address of those to receive the acknowledgment.

## **Oxbow's BIRDATHON '98** **Held May 8 and 9**

Participation was up a little this year, with about 75 birders from the Tri-state area participating, including several new teams and first-time participants. Birders had to work especially hard this year since spring migration was delayed by north winds for most of April and early May. While most bird species were present, they were in here smaller numbers than typical of early May and thus much harder to find. The checklist is a composite, showing all the species reported by birdathon participants.

Here's how Oxbow's three teams did:

Team #1 - Karl Maslowski's team, "The Geriatric Gents and a Junior" included George Laycock, Jerry Meyer, and Jay Sheppard. They found 119 species and birded primarily in Adams County.

Team #2 - "The Fire and Brimstone Birder's Guild" took first place and won the Golden Starling award by finding 160 species of birds. Team members Jay Stenger, Joe Bens and Paul Wharton birded primarily in Indiana and Ohio. They started the Birdathon at a skypool near Bath Indiana where they counted some 15 species of shorebirds \_ birds most teams never saw.

These birds gave them the edge, but they managed to find almost every other bird species in the area for their list as well.

Team #3 - "The No-See-'Ums" David Styer, Charlie Saunders, Steve Pelikan, and Tom Wiebold, found 141 species. They found a Bald Eagle and a King Rail at Miami Whitewater Forest and had good views of colorful warblers in Burnet Woods and Shawnee Lookout Park. Between finding birds Tom, a professional botanist, helped the other team members with sedge identification, so they'll be prepared if Birdathon is ever replaced by Plant-a-thon.

## Birdathon '98 Results

Over 60 people organized into some 20 teams took part in Birdathon '98. Below the teams are listed by the award for which they competed, along with the total species reported and the team members. (Some registration forms were incomplete and complete lists of team members unavailable \_ if we've left out your name, please let us know and we'll print a correction.)

### Golden Starling (Most birds by a team in the entire Birdathon area)

- 1) Fire and Brimstone Birder's Guild - Oxbow 160 (Joe Bens, Jay Stenger, Paul Wharton)
- 2) Close-N-Counters II - Cincinnati Nature Center 147 (Steve Bobonick, Bill Creasey, Dave Helm, Bob Kemp)
- 3) No See Ums -Oxbow 141 (Steve Pelikan, Charlie Saunders, David Styer, Tom Wiebold)
- 4) Bluegrass Buteos - Northern Kentucky Bird Club 135 (Joe Caminiti, Kathy Caminiti, Lee McNeeley, Brainard Palmer-Ball Jr., Tommy Stephens)
- 5) He-man Bird Counters Club -Gilmore Ponds 122 (Lester Peyton)
- 6) Gear Falcons -Cincinnati Zoo 119 (Doug Feist, Dave Jenike, Dan Marsh, Matt Miller, Stan Rullman)
- 7) Yeah, I got that -Raptor, Inc. 112 (Jeff hayes, Brian Steege)
- 8) Close-N-Counters 1 -Cincinnati Nature Center 108 (Linda Franklin, Ann Geise, Dotti Posillico, David Tennant, Dennis Timberlake)

### Solitary Vireo (most birds in entire Birdathon area by an individual)

- 1) Ned Keller 135;
- 2) Solitary Sandpiper - John Seymour 122;
- 3) Sr. Marty Dermody 114;
- 4) Solitary Warbler - Dave Dister 114;

### One County Award (Most birds by a team in a single county of the Birdathon area)

- 1) Finneytowns' Fabulous Flying Fortune-seekers 124 - Hamilton County - Erich Baumgardner, Jerry Lippert, Wayne Wauligman;

### Fearsome Fledgling Award (most birds in entire birdathon area by a team high school or younger)

- 1) Bona fide Birders 118 (Daniel Deaton, Nathan Deaton, Lauren Saunders)

### Greenbacked Heron Award (most pledges raised by an individual)

- 1) Jon Seyour (\$7.70 per bird plus over \$100 in cash)

### Noncompeting

Birdus Eludes Us (Barb Eckels, John Eckels, Dave Tozier, Vicki Tozier)

Jim Black

Baba Fett (Holly Daltabuit, José Daltabuit, Casey Tucker)

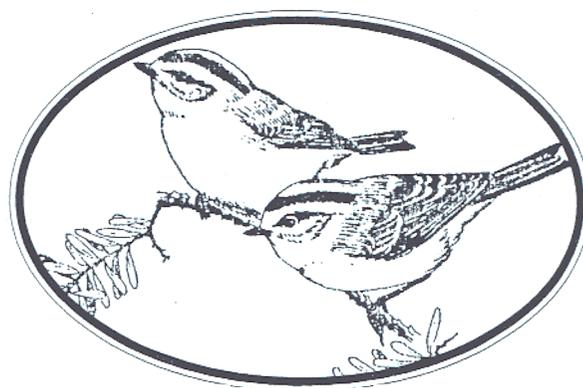
Common Loons (Jerry Carter, Bill Stanley, Lily Stanley, Phoebe Stanley, Tammie Stanley)

Geriatric Gents and a Junior (George Laycock, Karl Maslowski, Jerry Meyer, Jay Sheppard)

Laughery Creek Lookouts (Connie McNamee, Velda Miller)

The Old Crows (Darlene Sadler, George Sadler)

Two in the Bush (John Leon, Sarah Leon)





## **Oxbow, 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 known 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 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.

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

Mail to: **Oxbow, Inc.**  
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Give Us a Call!

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