



# WETLAND *matters*

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

## Trumpeters to Head For Muscatatuck

The ink barely had time to dry on the pages of the last *WETLAND matters* before a telephone call brought news that the trumpeter swans would be bypassing the Oxbow to winter at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge.

Wayne Bezner-Kerr of the Trumpeter Swan Society, who will be leading the induced migration in an ultra-light plane, visited the Oxbow area to make a final evaluation. Too many hunters and overhead power lines eliminated the Oxbow as a suitable wintering site.

Although Oxbow, Inc., is disappointed in losing the swans, it does not disagree with the Society's decision. Muscatatuck is a National Wildlife Refuge under the aegis of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Its 1,500 acres of protected habitat and well-developed wetlands will be more than adequate to sustain the birds through the winter. The refuge is located on U.S. 50, just outside of Seymour, IN. Refuge manager Lee Herzberger has said that 90% of the refuge is open daily to the public and invited visitors to come and watch and listen to the wintering trumpeters. They are expected to arrive between October and November.

If the Society's restoration program proves to be successful and future generations of trumpeters establish a breeding colony at Muscatatuck, there is always the possibility that the off-spring may find their way to the Oxbow on their own.

If so, they will be welcome.

## The Oxbow Calendar

### Programs

**10 November (Tuesday) 1998, Cincinnati Zoo Education Building**

Dr. Meg Riestenberg will speak and answer question on "Carnivorous Plants." Why do they exist? How do they work? Don't miss this program,

**8 December (Tuesday) 1998, 7:30 p.m. at the Lawrenceburg Public Library, High St.**

Update on a survey of the plants of the Oxbow Denis Conover is working on. He will also speak about other things going on around the Oxbow.

### Field Trips

**7 November (Saturday) 1998, 8:00 a.m.**

Meet Darlena Graham (581-2227) at the parking lot of Gardens Alive!. She will lead a walk looking for the wildlife around the Oxbow.

**13 December (Sunday) 1998**

If you would like to take part in the Hamilton County Parks winter bird count, call 521-7275 for assignment.

## Trumpeters Find Home in Iowa

The Oct.--Nov. issue of the National Wildlife Federation magazine announced the hatching of three trumpeter swan cygnets on a farm pond in Dubuque County, IO. The hatches are a direct result of an Iowa Department of Natural Resources reintroduction program that has released more than 140 captive-bred trumpeters during the last five years. The three cygnets are the first documented hatchings of wild trumpeter swans born in Iowa in the last 115 years.

# Field Notes

by Morris Mercer

In early summer we thought a trip to the Oxbow really sounded good. Frances and I joined Marilyn, Jim, and Sarah and our trip began. One of our first stops was in South Dakota. We visited the Badlands, on to Mt. Rushmore, and yet another look at Crazy Horse. We enjoyed a few days at Custer and the wildlife around Custer State Park, SD.

The spring and early summer had been very wet in the area; the rolling hills were covered with tall green grass. The early morning and late evenings were beautiful. We saw the hills alive with buffalo enjoying grazing on the lush grass under a blue sky. We had to wonder if we weren't seeing much as it had looked a couple of hundred years ago.

After Custer we moved on across the Great Plains. The flat land was dry and hotter than blue blazes. But soon we began to climb on up into the Big Horn Mountains. What beauty, the high slopes were carpeted with millions of wildflowers. There were fast moving streams against a backdrop of snow covered peaks. It was cool, and one might say, "A sight for sore eyes." When we took a deep breath, we were on a "Rocky Mountain High."

Up here we were along the Big Horn River. Beyond the mountains was the Little Big Horn River, which brings to mind Crazy Horse, Custer and all that went on along the Little Big Horn. But we moved on west into Cody and on to Yellowstone.

Where would you start to tell about Yellowstone? I remember moving into Hayden Valley along the Yellowstone River. The morning was very cool with a light fog layered over the rolling hills, but the fog was heavy along the river. A herd of buffalo seemed to be enjoying the cool morning. Steam rose from their backs as they grazed. Once in a while a couple of young bulls put their heads together and pushed each other around. That morning it was just play, but soon in would be for real. Another picture that says Yellowstone to me was to see a large bull elk as he raised his head. There in the background were the snow-capped mountains. How majestic the elk looked there along the river.

It was in Yellowstone that the rest of our family found us. They had come from the deep South. It was along the Fire Hole River that we watched the three grandchildren playing in the river. Another morning the whole family and some close friends climbed into a rubber raft for a float trip on the Snake River. A jacket and the life jacket felt good in the early morning breeze. What a great way to spend a morning. Clear, fast, cold water under us while we floated along beside the Teton Mountains. Tall pines lined the bank, and many of the trees were resting places for bald eagles.

That evening we drove out along the river. We came around a bend and there was a sign--"Oxbow." After all that driving we had found the Oxbow. We had found it, but it just didn't look much like our Oxbow. There was high ground beyond this western Oxbow, but it wasn't Shawnee Lookout or the hills of Kentucky. This was the Snake River and the background the Teton Mountains. How beautiful it was, but it would be many days before I would be at the Oxbow near the mouth of the Great Miami River.

At our Oxbow late summer and early autumn have been very warm and extra dry. One evening I was on my way to the Oxbow. As I came up Lost Bridge, the valley was obscured by a heavy, reddish brown cloud. The cloud was dust from the harvesters in the soy bean fields on both sides of the road. It was so dry. When I turned back over the old railroad grade on my way to the Oxbow, I looked at the dead trees in Junior's junk yard. The trees were full of double-crested cormorants. Back at Beaver Pond were more cormorants, another 50 of them in the almost bare cottonwood trees along the west bank.

The banks of Beaver Pond were lined with great egrets, great blue herons, and I saw a little blue heron. There were a half dozen wood ducks relaxing along the north bank. Another 30 or more cormorants were fishing in the water. Over on the Oxbow lake were many more of the same species and many black-crowned night herons in the willows

I saw several black-bellied plovers around Jackpot Pond. I hope they come back this way in the spring. I enjoy seeing them now, but I really like that spring plumage.

One warm summer like evening I was at the Oxbow. The sun was low, the shadows were long, and all seemed at peace with the world. Two mourning doves came up from the dirt road

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## Oxbow Memorials

### In Memory of

Reebok Bono  
Gloria Burkart  
Ferd B. Critchell, Jr.  
Julie Godsey  
Caesar Gordon  
Polly Childe Haffner  
Mac Kortecamp  
Douglas M. Reading  
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Each memorial 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., P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391. Be sure to include the names and addresses of those to receive the acknowledgement.

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in front of me. Seemingly from out of nowhere, a bird was on them in a flash. For a moment the three birds were hidden from me by the tall Johnson grass at the edge of the cornfield. Out came one of the doves in a hurried flight. Then the Cooper's hawk with the other dove in its left talon appeared. The hawk and his supper were soon gone from sight into the tree line on the back of the Oxbow. It all happened so fast, I couldn't help but wish I had instant replay. What I remember most about the hawk was the flared, banded tail.

The real beauty of autumn should be coming up soon. And what great memories I have of Shawnee and the Oxbow in winter. Hope to see you there.



## Board Election Scheduled

Balloting to elect seven members of the Oxbow, Inc., Board of Trustees will take place at the December 8 Oxbow meeting at the Lawrenceburg Public Library. Up for reelection to the three-year terms of office are Bill Bocklage, Norma L. Flannery, John Getzendanner, Steve Pelikan, Jim Rettig, Sandy Schnur, and Sizzanne Skidmore. Persons wishing to make other nominations may do so by notifying Oxbow or by presenting the nominations from the floor at the meeting.

## A Note of Thanks

Thanks go to each of you for your generosity to Oxbow, Inc. We are waiting for land to become available for purchase, and thanks to you Oxbow, Inc., is in good position to buy land. We want to remind you that only large gifts receive a thank you letter as required by the IRS. We don't send thank you letters out to other donors because we are all volunteers and lack the manpower. Your Board wants you to know how much you are helping and how much your gifts, no matter what size, are truly appreciated. Thank you!



P.O. BOX 43391  
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**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 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.

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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*Wetland Matters, the newsletter for members of Oxbow, Inc., is published bimonthly.*

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