



WETLAND *matters*

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

Activities Schedule Programs

14 March (Tuesday) 2000, 7:30 p.m.,
Cincinnati Zoo Education Building. John
Klein will tell us about the White Tailed Deer
and their impact on the Hamilton County Parks.
He will also give us an update on the Goose Pond
at Shawnee Lookout.

11 April (Tuesday) 2000, 7:30 p.m.
We will meet in the Clifford Room at the College
of Mt. St. Joseph on the Ohio. The room we
usually use in the Lawrenceburg Public
Library will not be available. Al Winstel,
District Naturalist, Hamilton Co. Parks, will have
our program, "Reptile and Amphibian
Photography Methods, Equipment, Behavioral
Considerations."

Field Trips

11 March (Saturday) 2000, 9:00 a.m.
Meet Darlena Graham (581-2227) at Gardens
Alive for a late winter walk at the Oxbow.

19 March (Sunday) 2000, 9:00 a.m.
Meet Ned Keller (385-9080) at Gardens Alive for
a Sunday morning trip around the Oxbow.

27 April (Thursday) 2000, 7:00 p.m.
Meet Dave Styer (772-1287) at Gardens Alive for
our first evening walk around the Oxbow in the
new year.

Bye, Bye Birdathon!

1999 Last in 11-Year Series

Oxbow, Inc., will no longer sponsor an
annual Birdathon, President Norma Flannery
has announced. "Discontinuance of the
Birdathon will enable Oxbow, Inc., to
concentrate its energies on its principal
purpose, the acquisition of additional holdings
in the Oxbow area," she said.

Oxbow, Inc., initiated the Birdathon series
in 1989 and through it raised well over \$100,000
for its treasury and enabled other organizations
such as the Cincinnati Nature Center, RAPTOR,
Gilmore Ponds, Cincinnati Zoo, Northern
Kentucky Bird Club, and the Cincinnati Bird
Club also to raise funds through participating
teams.

Many individuals contributed to the
success of the Birdathon, notably Steve Pelikan
and Anita Buck, Ginny Wiseman and her
husband, the late Art Wiseman, Connie
McNamara and Greg Mendell, Paul Hellmann,
Ken Fulmer, and Carol Mundy. Fritz Haas
designed the Birdathon T-shirts that
participants received. The Hamilton County
Park District helped by providing room for the
tally and meal.

The Birdathon area included any county
of Kentucky, Indiana or Ohio, any part of which
overlapped a circle of radius 50 miles centered
at the Oxbow lake. In 1999 participants
identified 185 species of birds, though in 1998
204 species were found.

Field Notes .

by
Morris Mercer

Winter came to the Oxbow. When we got up this morning, the temperature was a cool five degrees below zero, and there was a nice snow cover on the ground.

Frances and I started the year 2000 visiting the Mercers in Texas. We had a great time and did get to enjoy seeing some of the wildlife there. We saw thousands of snow geese, lots of ducks, the Fulvous Whistling duck, and cinnamon teal. Many of the ducks were the kinds we see around here. In addition, there were the caracara, loggerhead shrikes, and, for Frances, a few "gators."

Dave Styer and Steve Pelikan had the Oxbow area on the Ohio River Christmas bird count. They came up with some surprises. They saw 15 common loons, a Lapland longspur, a tree swallow that had forgotten to go south, and a common redpoll. The redpoll was the first recorded in the Oxbow area. This brings the total number of species observed there to 280.

One clear, cool Saturday morning in January, Jim Simpson and I headed for the Oxbow. We were enjoying the beauty of the winter morning. There was a heavy fog, and the trees along the river were covered with frost. Every limb and twig was silver white. As the fog lifted, there was the beauty of the frost covered trees against the Colorado blue sky. Then came the morning breeze to blow the frost from the trees. At times, it seemed we were in a blinding snow storm, but after the storm there was the cloudless blue sky.

We crossed Lost Bridge and found many ring-billed gulls in the air. Several great blue herons stood in the shallow water along the Great Miami River. A nice flock of Canada

geese were feeding in the corn stubble field next to the new gravel pit. Our next stop was at State Line Pond, which was about half frozen over. There were 75 to 100 gadwalls enjoying a morning swim. We moved up to Hidden Valley where we found little ice, but a nice flock of waterfowl, Mallards, blacks, ruddy ducks, coots, buffleheads, ring-necked ducks and Canada geese. The real show was a flock of hooded mergansers. The boys were showing off for the girls. There was trick and fancy swimming, lots of head movement, and hood flipping. What handsome birds!

Our next stop was Oxbow Lake, and it was about half frozen over. A nice flock of ducks seemed to be enjoying the Oxbow. Many were on the ice, while others worked the open water. The pintails were classy, and we saw several blacks and gadwalls, but the large number were the mallards. On our way home we were keeping an eye out for horned larks. On the road between E'town and Lost Bridge we saw a flock of larks flying over the field. We pulled over to see if they might land, and to our surprise they landed on the road in front of us. It had been a nice winter morning.

Thursday, 20 January 2000, and it was time for the Oxbow night walk at Shawnee. The snow had started about 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evening, and it was about noon on Thursday before it stopped. We had a fine snow cover, but I wasn't sure we could get in the park. When people called to ask about the walk, I told them I was afraid we would have to cancel.

John Klein stopped for me about 6:45, and we went to see if anyone showed for the walk. We found the roads open all the way to Miami Fort Trail. We saw several deer out enjoying the winter night, and when we arrived at the clubhouse, we found about a dozen folks ready to take a winter hike.

This was a winter night that you could only dream about. The snow clouds had all blown away, leaving an endless dark blue sky. High above the bare trees on the snow covered hills was a full moon to light our trail. With the temperature in the teens, the snow was dry, and

from beneath our boots came the great sound of crunching snow, the sound that's music to my ears.

John agreed to lead the hike up over the Miami Fort Trail. I didn't make the walk as I wasn't sure I could make it over the hill and back. John said the only tracks in the new snow were those left by the deer. The trail overlooks the valley of the Great Miami River on over toward the Oxbow. The wooded hillsides were a study in moonlight and shadows. We had picked the perfect night for a walk at Shawnee.

The snowy winter night wasn't over. I arrived home, and after some time by the fire, Frances and I were busy watching the eclipse. The shadow started about 10:00 p.m. and the full eclipse was about 11:00 p.m. But what a beautiful night over the Valley of the Ohio. As I looked out over the valley, I couldn't but think of a line from *Danny Boy*, "O-- come ye back when the valley's white and hushed with snow." It was a beautiful night, and it reminded me of the reason I like winter so much.

Now winter is almost over, but we are coming to another great season around the Oxbow--late winter and spring, the migration of the birds from their winter homes to their nesting grounds. I think this is the best time of the year to see waterfowl around the Oxbow. If we get the water at the right time, it can be spectacular. The rivers almost always flood at this time of the year. What it will be this year? It will be fun to check it out. See you at the Oxbow.

Oxbow, Inc., Receives Grant From Marshall Tucker Fund

Oxbow, Inc., is grateful to Ms. E. Marshall Tucker for a generous grant from the Marxhall Tucker Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. Such grants enable Oxbow, Inc., to fund research projects in the Oxbow area.

OXBOW MEMORIALS

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Donor	In Tribute to
Stan and Debbie Boehmer	Happy Holidays-- Norma Flannery

Volunteers Needed for Park Cleanup

The Forest Park Environmental Awareness Program and the Hamilton County Park District are co-sponsoring the 13th Annual Winton Woods Cleanup Saturday, April 15, from 9:00 a.m. to noon (rain or shine).

Volunteers of all ages are needed to help remove the accumulated trash and debris that threaten the scenic beauty of Winton Woods and the health of the wildlife that live there. Those interested in participating should call 595-5263. All volunteers will meet at Kestrel Point picnic shelter, located beside the Ranger Station, at 8:45 a.m. on Saturday, April 15.

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		

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