



# WETLAND *matters*

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

## Oxbow, Inc. Activities Schedule

### Programs

**Tuesday, September 10, 2002, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Clifford Room, Mt. St. Joseph College**

Bruce Koehler, "Commodore of the Mill Creek Yacht Club", will take us on a slide tour of the Mill Creek from north of General Electric to the Ohio River -- a trip with some distinguished boaters.

**Tuesday, October 8, 2002, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Public Library, Lawrenceburg, Indiana**

Erik and Maryetta Young will take us on a slide trip into the African Bush.

### Field Trips

**Tuesday, September 17, 2002, 6:30 p.m.**

Meet Darlena Graham at Gardens Alive for a late summer walk around the Oxbow -- a great time of the year for an evening walk. 859-581-2227.

**Sunday, October 6, 2002, 8:00 a.m.**

Meet Paul Wharton at Gardens Alive for an early morning check of wildlife activities around the Oxbow. Paul is well acquainted with the area and its inhabitants. 353-3403.

## ONE DOZEN ACRES ARE NEWEST OXBOW, INC. PURCHASE

Twelve more acres of Oxbow land now belong to Oxbow, Inc. of Indiana. These dozen acres were purchased June 24, 2002, from Nell Smith of Anacortes, Washington, and her niece, Phyllis Hust of Cincinnati, Ohio, and bring the total acreage of Oxbow, Inc. of Indiana land to 607. Add this to the 258 acres in conservation easements and know that Oxbow, Inc. at present controls 865 acres of the Oxbow for a staging area for migratory birds and waterfowl.

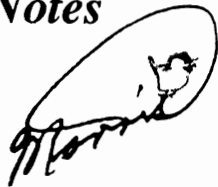
Mrs. Smith is a well remembered former Lawrenceburg school teacher. She left Indiana many years ago with her husband for Alaska. Later she moved to an island off the coast of Washington. Most recently she moved to the mainland, to Anacortes.

"Long distance negotiations consume a bit more time to complete a purchase," said a pleased Norma Flannery, Oxbow, Inc. President, "but piece by piece, owners near or far, and thanks to our loyal members and other generous benefactors, we are managing to put together a sizable, worthwhile wetlands which will forever be free of outside development."

In the last issue of *Wetland Matters*, the purchase of 70 acres from the City of Greendale was announced and the previous issue reported the purchase of a small parcel of six lots. Several other conservation groups own Oxbow land or have conservation easements for a total to date, including Oxbow, Inc. land, of 2160 protected acres.

# Field Notes

by



Mercer

It had been a hot July day. After supper, I told Frances I was going to make a trip to the Oxbow. I've enjoyed the wild flowers on the roadside-- the thistle and the corn flowers. The corn flower blue is such a pretty color. I was soon across the state line and turning off at U.S. 50 to the Oxbow. Here I took the dirt road around the outside bend of the Oxbow. The road was dry, dusty but showed evidence of a very wet spring. The road was rough and full of deep ruts.

In the shallow water between the Oxbow and the Greendale levee several great blue herons were fishing for their supper. In the Oxbow lake two double-crested cormorants rested on an old stump. Across in the willows were several great egrets and these all white egrets were so pretty in the green willows. I started on back toward Wood Duck Slough. The sun was still above the trees. The shadows were getting long. I moved on over along the railroad, then up along Jack Pot Pond. Again there were more great blues and a few ducks at the far end of the water hole.

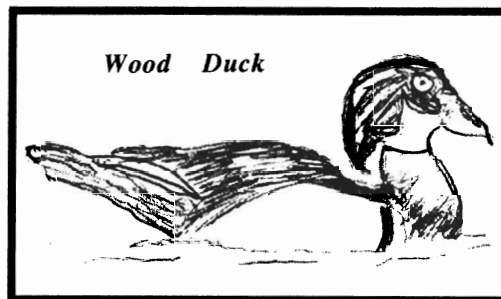
I noticed something brown in the edge of the corn beside the dirt road. With the help of the binoculars I could see that it was a deer. The corn was about head high and the deer soon disappeared into the corn. I was a little surprised when I saw the deer's head pop up above the corn. What a nice set of velvet antlers that deer wore like a crown. The antlers appeared a couple more times as that buck bounded up to see over the corn.

I moved on to the big bend of the Oxbow. There were even more great egrets in the willows and as I stood there a couple of black-crowned night herons came in to spend the night. I wanted to check Beaver Pond.

As I reached the field on the west side of Beaver Pond, I noticed a dozen Canada geese working in the field. When I



turned again toward Beaver Pond I saw three wood ducks going down into the field of soybeans. The soybeans were just about four inches high. Now I was where I could see the whole field and I could hardly believe my eyes. I counted sixty wood ducks before I lost count. Some ducks were going out while others were coming in. Most of the ducks were in eclipsed plumage. It was something to see all those woodies!



The tree line along the west side of Beaver Pond is almost gone. The trees are either down or dead. The beaver have really been busy. I turned around to start back out when I noticed some movement down toward Wood Duck Slough. Two deer seemed to be just playing, but were fun to watch. On my way out I noticed the sun was ready to call it a day at the Oxbow. On the road in front of me I saw a half dozen horned larks. I do enjoy seeing them and hearing their calls but I hurried on to Lost Bridge and crossed the Great Miami on my way to Shawnee.

The western sky was beautiful. The wispy clouds had taken on so much color -- pink and gold and shades of red. The sky had been painted by the Master Painter. The air was a little cooler as twilight came to the river valley. A few birds sang their evening serenade while others had gone to roost. It was time for the flickering lights in the edge of the dark woods. The lightning bugs were busy silently flicking their lights on and off. It was time for me to head for home. What a beautiful summer evening!

About a week later, Jim Simpson and I made about the same trip to the Oxbow. We saw the great egrets, the great blues and the black-crowned night herons. We stopped at the big bend on the Oxbow. Jim pointed out something in the water. I thought he was pointing out a young duck but he said that wasn't it. Then I saw the beaver swimming with just his head above the water. The beaver was about 50 feet from us. The beaver seemed to almost stand up in the water. His head was high and he turned on the speed. Jim had to be on guard along here as there is a robust crop of poison ivy on the bank. I've never had any trouble with poison ivy. Jim did get to see the horned lark on our way out.

I've always liked early morning or late evening for looking for wildlife but the other day Frances and I were at Shawnee just after lunch and we saw something beside the road. We approached it very slowly, then to our surprise, it flew. We hadn't even guessed it was a bird but it was a great horned owl. I don't see that many owls in the middle of the day.

Autumn is moving in on us. How quickly the seasons come and go! I do like autumn. Hope to see you at the Oxbow.



Musings

by Dave Styer

## The Red-headed Woodpecker

One hundred years ago, the red-headed woodpecker was likely the most common woodpecker species in the Greater Cincinnati area. Now, it is the least common.

This brings to mind our propensity to value the uncommon and devalue the common. When it was common, it appears to have been thought of as a bit of a pest. Arthur Cleveland Bent's *Life Histories of North American Woodpeckers* gives several examples. Among them is a quotation of W. G. Smith of Colorado, taken from the writings of Bendire: "The red-headed woodpecker is a common summer resident in the lower foothills along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in this State, and I consider it a veritable butcher among our nuthatches and chickadees, driving every one away from its nesting sites, and woe to the bird that this villain can reach. It destroys both eggs and young, dragging the latter out of their nests and frequently leaving them dead at the entrance of their holes." There you are: familiarity breeds contempt.

Today, we would like to see more red-headed woodpeckers and we ask what has happened. For one thing, red-headed woodpeckers nest in dead wood and nowadays many people remove dead limbs from their trees. I looked up "dead wood" in the dictionary and found the following second definition: "a useless or burdensome person or thing." However, a wooded ecosystem is not complete without standing (and fallen) dead wood. Numerous species use it, regardless of our ideas. I expect that there is still enough standing dead wood to support a population of red-headed woodpeckers.

Red-headed woodpecker population declines occurred in Ohio and Kentucky when European starlings arrived. Starlings do want to kick out the woodpeckers and use the cavities as their own nesting sites. However, research by Danny J. Ingold in Ohio and Mississippi has shown that the red-headed woodpecker defends its cavities more aggressively and more successfully than any other of our woodpeckers. (See, for example, the *Wilson Bulletin*, Vol. 106, No. 2, June, 1994.)

All negative factors contribute when a species is in decline. It is possible that no one factor, alone, would have caused the notable decline in red-headed woodpeckers around Cincinnati. I, personally, am not ready to absolve the starlings of responsibility for the red-headed woodpecker decline. Half dozen starlings were continuously mobbing the last pair of these woodpeckers I saw trying to nest along the edge of the Oxbow. It didn't matter if the red-headed woodpeckers were highly

aggressive; they were simply overwhelmed by the large numbers of starlings. The next time I went to the Oxbow, there were no red-headed woodpeckers to be seen.

While learning about the decline of the red-headed woodpecker, I read something in the account by Kimberly G. Smith, James H. Wihgott and Paul G. Rodewald in *The Birds of North America* that made me say, "This makes perfectly good sense; why didn't I ever think of it?"

We know many birds, such as warblers, that migrate by night, and others, such as swallows, that migrate by day. What I read was this: "Some have suggested mainly diurnal migrations in fall and nocturnal migrations in spring" of red-headed woodpeckers. I could name several places where I have kept track of bird records and never saw a red-headed woodpecker until fall. Then I would see a few red-headed woodpeckers flying south, right at treetop level. Smith, et al. present other evidence. For example, red-headed woodpeckers are "consistently rare in fall in tower-kill studies."

The question arises why this should be so. An answer is readily available. In the fall, red-headed woodpeckers will stop if they come to a woods with a large crop of acorns or beechnuts, etc. and stay there for the winter. If they flew at night, they wouldn't be able to see what they flew over. In spring, the woodpeckers are flying to their breeding grounds and likely are not looking for a crop to sustain them for months, a crop that likely would have been depleted by that time. In spring it makes sense to fly at night when the air is calmer and hawks are asleep.



## Birdathon \$\$\$ Results

Not all pledges are in as *Wetland Matters* goes to press, but the results of Birdathon 2002 are impressive: over \$3300 collected to date for Oxbow, Inc.

The Birdathon is an annual fund-raising event not only for Oxbow, Inc. but for other local conservation groups. The Nature Conservancy reports that of the 9,700 species of birds in the world, about 4,500 breed in the Americas. One quarter of these species are at risk because of the depletion of habitats.

Many, many thanks to our Birdathoners who took to the field, to their many generous supporters and, of course, to all those species who showed up on cue.



## In the Mailbox...

### P & G Friends Are There Again

Dear Norma,

I retired from Procter & Gamble prior to this year's Birdathon but many of my past supporters indicated a desire to continue donating to my Birdathon efforts. I participated as part of the Cincinnati Nature Center Team #3 with Dave Brinkman and Don Morse as the other team members. We saw 129 species and tied for third place in this year's overall competition. Many thanks are due to my many active and retired P & G supporters. The enclosed checks total \$820.90.

Sincerely,  
Jon Seymour

### A Wedding Gift

To whom it may concern:

Please accept our contribution to Oxbow, Inc. as a wedding gift for Jane and David Styer. We could not think of anything Dave would like better than some additional help saving the Oxbow. We have known Dave for years, as a leader in the Cincinnati community, sharing his understanding and the beauty of the natural world with people of all ages and natural history experience. We enclose this gift, wishing Jane and Dave the best for many years to come.

Sincerely,  
Nancy, Lauren, Carter, Mary and  
Charlie Saunders



by Jon Seymour

Everywhere I went in the Oxbow during the first week of August we owned the land. Every place I chose to park my car we owned the land. Every place I set up my scope to watch the numerous blue herons, cormorants and common egrets, we owned the land. All the birds that I was watching through my spotting scope were resting, feeding and preening on land we owned. WHAT A WONDERFUL FEELING!!!

This has all been made possible by the constant and unflinching efforts of our President Norma Flannery using the dollars so generously donated to us by our loyal members and benefactors.

The newly dug ponds along the levee were showing some mudflats at the north end-- just like they had been designed to do. Shorebirds were already gathering and the migration should be hot and heavy at the end of August. A brand new osprey nest structure dominates the skyline along the northwest shore of Oxbow lake. This is thanks to the unceasing efforts of John Getzendanner. It looks great and is easily seen from the levee bike and hike path. The *For Rent* sign is out and hopefully next year we will get an adventurous pair. If we do, it will be the main attraction for hundreds of bird lovers in the area.

The Oxbow is such a diverse area. From the osprey nesting pole site you can look out and see on the opposite edge of the flood plain the Cinergy towers with their very successful peregrine falcon nest box. The Oxbow provides for the heron, the cormorant, the duck, the shorebird, the deer, the racoon, the osprey and the falcon. What marvelous diversity.

---

---

## Oxbow, Inc. Memorials and a Tribute

<u>Donor</u>	<u>In Memory of</u>
Michael J. Nolan	Herbert Campbell
Betty L. Myers	James T. McManaman
Ms. Augustina Schwartz	Clare Schuermann
Michael J. Nolan	Ruth Willoweit
Wayne R. Wauligman, D.D.S.	Carolyn Zesch

<u>Donor</u>	<u>Tribute in Honor of</u>
Nancy, Lauren, Carter, Mary & Charlie Saunders	Wedding of Jane & David Styer

Oxbow, Inc. has established memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each memorial established in the name of a 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., P O Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those to receive the acknowledgement.

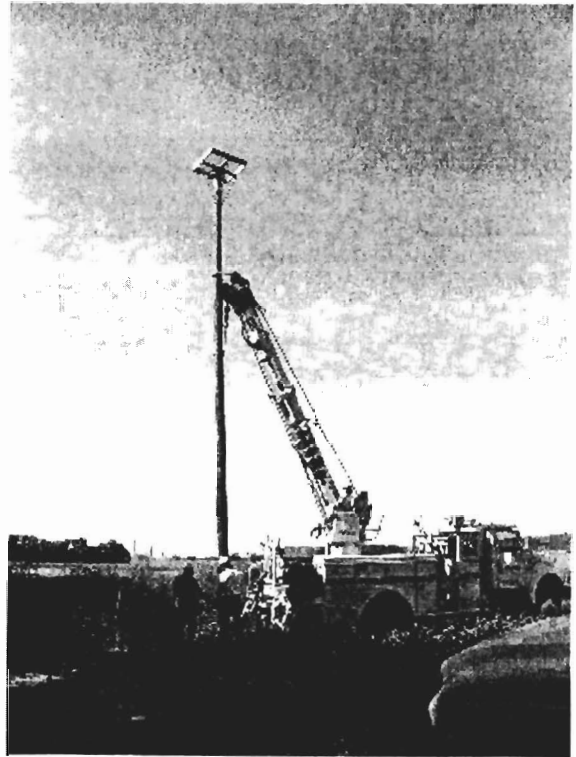
# Osprey Nest Is Up!....Way, Way Up!

*Text & Photos by Steve Pelikan*

Orchestrated by Oxbow, Inc. board member John Getzendanner, an osprey nesting platform was installed next to the borrow pit on land recently purchased from Greendale. John assembled the 4 by 4 foot platform from donated materials; as a final touch, John added several sticks to the platform just before the pole was planted ---"to give the ospreys the right idea".

Ospreys suffered severe population declines in the 1950's and 60's. Accumulation of DDT in their bodies interfered with calcium metabolism and resulted in ospreys laying extremely fragile eggs. Since the mid 1970's, ospreys have been staging a comeback. This summer there are at least two osprey nests along the Whitewater River. The Oxbow, with a good supply of fish and proximity to the rivers should be an appealing place for ospreys to nest. We'll keep a lookout for them at the Oxbow next April when they migrate north to their breeding grounds.

Many thanks to Cinergy for providing the pole and the crew to do the hard work. As most birders know, Cinergy has actively encouraged peregrine nesting on their Miami Fort site. We hope the osprey platform will be as successful as the peregrine nesting program.



*The pole as installation was being completed. The platform overlooks the borrow pit on Oxbow, Inc.'s recent purchase from Greendale.*

## *Did You Know....???*

?

Of the monies received by Oxbow, Inc., 98.75% goes towards land purchases in the Oxbow area. Only 1.25% is used for operating expenses. All officials are volunteers, including the talented people who do our monthly programs and lead our Oxbow hikes. There is no office to maintain. Oxbow, Inc. officers are proud of these figures.

?

You may recall Ted Turner, creator of CNN, for his bluntness, but you have to admire his conservation efforts. According to the August, 2002, issue of *Scientific American*, the non-profit Turner Foundation gave away \$50 million in 2000, much more than any other philanthropist, to research and conservation organizations including The Wildlife Conservation Society and The Nature Conservancy. "Only the federal government," says the magazine, "spends more on wildlife-related sciences."

Turner is also the largest private landowner in the U.S., controlling two million acres in ten states. In 1997, the billionaire created the Turner Endangered Species Fund to restore wildlife on his properties and adjacent public lands. Among the two dozen species being managed are the red-cockaded woodpecker, Rio Grande cutthroat trout and Mexican wolf.

?

The latest Endangered Species list names the American bald eagle as "threatened in Hamilton County, Ohio." The bald eagle has been spotted several times this year at the Oxbow. Guess we're just lucky!



*John Getzendanner, hatless, and the crew from Cinergy attach the osprey platform to the top of a 35-foot pole.*

## **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.**  
P.O. Box 43391  
Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391  
513-471-8001

## **Corporation Officers**

President, Norma L. Flannery	(513) 471-8001
Vice President, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Corresponding Secretary, Suzanne Skidmore	(513) 561-5718
Treasurer, Mark Westrich	(812) 637-2175
Ohio Agent, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Indiana Agent, John Getzendanner	(812) 537-5728

## **Committee Chairpersons**

Conservation, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Easement Inspection, Richard Pope	(812) 637-1365
Land Management, Dr. Denis Conover	(513) 641-3651
Preservation, Norma L. Flannery	(513) 471-8001
Programs, Morris Mercer	(513) 941-2534
Research, Dr. Steve Pelikan	(513) 681-2574
Speakers Bureau, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Newsletter, Jeanne Bocklage	(513) 922-2445

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

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
Permit No. 7271

  
**513-471-8001**



**Need a Speaker?  
Give Us a Call!**

P.O. BOX 43391  
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

