



WETLAND *matters*

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

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Surveying the Flies of the Oxbow: A Progress Report

For two years, Steve Pelikan, Ph. D., has been surveying diptera, two-winged insects, at the Oxbow. He makes regular (usually weekly) trips during the growing season to sample flies at fixed sites on Oxbow Inc. land. The purpose of this study is to observe patterns, in space and time, in the diversity and abundance of flies in the Oxbow. Special attention is paid to species that are potential pests or disease vectors and to species that are characteristic of unique habitats or have distinctive life histories. The following is Steve's progress report.

Flies are a particularly appropriate group to study in a wetland because many flies have aquatic larvae and many more are associated with water, wetlands and moisture at some stage of their life. Preliminary evidence suggests that larvae of midges are, at times, the most abundant animal in the Oxbow's waters. They are undoubtedly a major constituent of the diet of migrating shorebirds.

The aim was to sample flies from most of the habitats on land Oxbow Inc. manages. In the first year of the study (2002), five sites were sampled. A sixth site was added in 2003. (The locations of the six study sites are shown on the map.) Some study sites were selected because they are typical of much of the land Oxbow manages, that is, adjacent to agricultural fields. The sites are Wood Duck Slough (WDS); the Corning property easement (COR); the Argosy mitigation site (ARG); the Oxbow Lake boundary among willows (WIL); the Ohio River bank (OHR); and the upland parking area (UPL).



Medical and Veterinary Considerations

The most abundant biting flies at the Oxbow are mosquitoes. Their populations are no higher on Oxbow Inc. land than in surrounding areas. Populations of some species capable of spreading disease are lower at the Oxbow than in most suburban Cincinnati sites investigated, although very high populations of some mosquito species follow periods of rain and flooding at the Oxbow.

Other species of biting flies occur at much lower densities and are not generally noticed by visitors. The relatively low level of pest fly species could be due, in part, to the healthy community of flies in the area, as many of these species prey on other insects.

Continued....

MORE...Surveying the Flies

Diversity and Abundance

Estimates of the population of adults of several species (Elachiptera (Chloropidae, the Grass Flies), Leptocera (Sphaeroceridae, the Small Dung Flies), found them numbering in the millions on several different dates. An estimate of the population of adults in the genus Dolichopus (Dolichopidae, the Long-legged Flies) in July 2003 found over 250,000 just at Wood Duck Slough. Peak catches in the traps occur in May and early June and again in September. This is consistent with the general understanding of dipterists that peak adult fly populations occur in late spring and, secondarily, in early fall. During these periods, a Malaise trap with 24 square feet of collecting area will catch several hundred flies in two hours.

Distinct Subregions of Oxbow Inc. Land

The sites with the greatest diversity of flies are the Ohio River bank and the Corning property easement. These sites also have the greatest diversity of plants. Sites adjacent to agricultural fields tend to have lower fly diversity. In part, this is probably because these sites are sunnier and therefore hotter and drier, making them less attractive to many species. Also, they have a reduced plant diversity and simpler vegetation structure. On the other hand, several species of flies that specialize in such habitats reach their

highest density at sites that include agricultural fields.

Many fly taxa occur at several, or even all, the study sites. A much smaller number of flies have been found at just one locale and of these, most were found at either the Ohio River bank or the Corning property easement. Presumably the distinct soils and unique plant communities on these sites account for the unusually high incidence of unique flies. It is also possible that the Ohio River provides a corridor along which flies disperse. This would account for a higher incidence of unique flies at that site and sites not far from the river.

So far (2002 and 2003) the study has produced about 1500 mounted specimens. Of these, about 90% have been identified to family, about 20% have been identified to genus, and about 4% have been identified to species (in many cases because their genus has only one species in it). Flies from 43 families have been identified from the Oxbow.

Thus ends this abridged progress report on the flies of the Oxbow. Steve has set five goals for his 2004 study, including to search explicitly for Xylophagid flies. While common at many wooded locations in the region, flies in this family have not been found at the Oxbow. "Is this just chance" Steve ponders, "or is there something about the Oxbow -- perhaps flooding of wooded areas during the season these flies breed -- that excludes these flies from the area?"



Rick Pope and Steve Pelikan did their best to spruce up our Oxbow last September. All the great volunteers collected 4.3 tons of trash excluding old tires which had to be disposed of separately.

Are you ready? Another Oxbow Clean-Up Set for March 27

We need your help. The last Oxbow clean-up -- September 13, 2003 -- was very successful but road conditions did not allow us into some parts of Oxbow Inc. land. We hope to move out all the trash this time-- Saturday, March 27 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Will you help? Boy Scouts, where are you?

Bring your old gloves, boots and maybe some sunblock just in case. We will furnish cool drinks. Meet at the new parking lot for further instructions. It's spring clean-up time at the Oxbow!

Oxbow, Inc. Memorials

<i>Donor</i>	<i>In Memory of</i>
Kenneth & Shirley Durbin	Dale Durbin
Jeffery & Maureen Eller	Mark Esposito
Steve Pelikan & Anita Buck	Mark Esposito
Steve Pelikan & Anita Buck	Norma Flannery
Patricia Murphey	Allen Hurlburer
Steve Pelikan & Anita Buck	Frances Mercer
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Michael & Diane Bishop	Roger Schanzle
Arthur & Carol Dornbusch	Roger Schanzle
Robert Ehmet Hayes	Roger Schanzle
Barbara Schanzle	Roger Schanzle
Betty Lu & James Myers	Ruth Trosset
Stanley Trosset	Ruth Trosset
Deborah Wissman	Dr. Cheryl Devine's cat, Shades of Gray

Tributes

<i>Donor</i>	<i>In Honor of</i>
Mathew Pelikan & Lori Shaller	Edward & Faith Pelikan
Mathew Pelikan & Lori Shaller	Stephan Pelikan & Anita Buck
L. Patton Davis	Aaron Perlman

Oxbow Inc. has established Memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each Memorial established in the name of a friend or relative 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.

Tributes are also enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Some tributes are birthday remembrances, holiday greetings or friendship/gratitude acknowledgements. If so desired, "Happy Birthday" or the like can be inscribed in the Tribute notice.

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.

Oxbow Inc. Activities Schedule

Programs

Tuesday, March 9, 2004, 7:30 p.m.
EarthConnection, Mt. St. Joseph College

John Tallmadge will speak about "John Muir's High Sierra." All who recall John's recent talk on Henry David Thoreau will know they will learn more than they expected-- and with great pleasure.

To get to EarthConnection, drive south at the intersection of Delhi Pike and Neeb Road in Delhi, turn immediately left into a parking lot and immediately right to the upper parking lot.

Tuesday, April 13, 2004, 7:30 p.m.
Public Library, Lawrenceburg, Indiana

Gene Kritsky will be discussing his new book, *Periodical Cicadas: The Plague and the Puzzle*. The year, 2004, is the year of the big brood in the tristate area so come and be armed with information before the brood awakens. Gene lectures nationally (we're lucky to get him!) and his book is scheduled for publication the week of the 13th. With more luck, we may have some early copies.

The Lawrenceburg library is downtown at 123 High Street. Turn left going west off US 50 onto Walnut Street, then right on High Street.



Nature Walks

Sunday, March 14, 2004, 2:00 p.m.

Meet Paul Wharton at the new Oxbow Inc. entrance parking lot to search for ducks and other early migrants.

Saturday, April 24, 2004, 8:00 a.m.

Meet Ned Keller at the new parking lot and join in the search for early warbler migrants and other songbirds.

To get to the new parking lot, turn south from Rt. 50 at the Shell gas station in Greendale, drive back to the cement plant, turn right to the end of the road, then left and there it is.

Field Notes

by



Mercer



Gold Finches

It's time once again to put my field notes together. I find myself in Centerville, Ohio, at the home of Marilyn, Jim, and Sarah Simpson. (My daughter and her family.) My health will not allow me to live alone. I sure miss my field trips into the Oxbow area. In years gone by I've looked forward to weather like this. With the area flooded and with the extra cold weather up north to freeze the water holes and lakes, the ducks come on down this way. But this year I couldn't get out to check or to see them.

I have always liked the cold weather and the snow. This year I've sat here in a big easy chair and watched some nice snows come down. I really couldn't have it any better, sitting here in an easy chair with Sarah's little dog, Katie, on my lap much of the time. Jim has several bird feeders in the yard and I do get to watch lots of birds come and go. At times there are as many as 25 gold finches, many house sparrows, tree sparrows, several juncos, Carolina wren, downy, hairy, and red-bellied woodpeckers, flicker, white-breasted nuthatch, blue jay, Carolina chickadee, titmice, cardinals, and we do have a Cooper's hawk drop in from time to time. And it's fun to watch the gray squirrels try to find ways to get to the birdseed.

Jim goes out most Saturdays to check on the wildlife. Spring Valley, some gravel pits, the Little Miami, and Caesar's Creek are close. Jim comes in with some good reports. The one large gravel pit still has some open water. There has been a nice flock of ducks. I would guess 400 or 500 ducks, mostly mallards and blacks, a few pintail, gadwalls, ring-necked ducks, a coot. One morning he came home with a report of a flock of sandhill cranes. Then another trip he found a group of 11 tundra swans on the big gravel pit. Then he was nice enough to come home and take me out to see the swans. I didn't get out of the car, but had a nice look at the swans from the car. Marilyn has taken me out several times. We haven't seen the swans again. The ducks and geese are there, mostly mallards and blacks, and there are a couple hundred Canada geese around most of the time.

The morning it was so cold, -10°, and a nice snow cover on the ground, Jim came home and reported a large number of snow buntings in the fields. He said he saw more than a hundred. I've never seen that many around the Oxbow. I have seen a flock of 25 or 30 snow buntings. A few years ago there was a large number of Lapland longspurs and horned larks in the snowy fields around the Oxbow. That is great to see and enjoy.

My favorite time of the year is coming up. I've always liked the northern migration of the waterfowl. Late winter and early spring is usually a great time of the year. Hope I can see you at the Oxbow.



by *Jon Seymour*

I attended the Indiana Land Protection Association meeting in Indianapolis during the first week in February. The topics of most interest to me were a presentation on methods of fund raising in the current economic climate and a round table discussion on how to grow membership. The most depressing fact I learned was that the best environmental organizations in the country have memberships that amount to only one-quarter of one percent of their base population. There are two things that are depressing about this number. One – we need to grow our membership five fold to match it. And two – so very few people in the general population actually are members of conservation organizations. Of course, we all know that the same people are members of several various conservation groups so this membership percentage is not additive nationwide but really represents the low level of active support of conservation.

Oxbow Inc. has been fortunate to have fantastic support from our members. We are a strong organization with a stable membership. Over the next few years we will be once again going out to the public showing them what we are doing at Oxbow Inc. We will also try to reestablish our educational efforts to reach young people in the area. Hopefully both of these activities and our improvements to the Oxbow area will result in increased memberships. Look for our participation in the September Nature Sampler Weekend that will be new in 2004. This weekend is being created on the model of the Fine Arts Sampler Weekend held each year in February. You should see more about this Nature Sampler Weekend in the newspapers as September approaches.



by Dave Styer

The Crystal Ball

For the past two months, I have been concentrating my gaze into my crystal ball so that I will be able to correctly tell you the next five bird species to show up in the Oxbow area. The following five species, with a few extra details thrown in, are the birds that will show up next.

The marsh wren has to be a primary candidate for addition to the Oxbow area list. These wrens nest in cattail marshes. They migrate in and out every year. They must pass through the Oxbow area annually. Why is it we never see these wrens, except in cattail marshes? There aren't enough cattails in the Oxbow area to hold a breeding pair but there must be spots worthy of a brief stopover during migration.

There have been several spring reports of eared grebes in the Oxbow area. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, when I used to check out these reports, I found horned grebes molting from winter to summer plumage. Even though I was never convinced about any of the eared grebe reports, it seems entirely reasonable for one to settle into the Oxbow area once in a while. There are certainly records of eared grebes in many of the ponds and reservoirs in the Greater Cincinnati area.

Next will be the Henslow's sparrow. Like the marsh wren, they must pass through the Oxbow area and they would likely be secretive. They might be hard to identify. Does the following sound familiar? "Oh, I just caught a glimpse of an interesting sparrow." The crystal ball told me that someone will see a Henslow's sparrow while looking for a dickcissel in the prairie area. That sounds reasonable: a dickcissel hasn't been reported in the Oxbow area since Milton Trautman saw one there on 27 May 1931. That's getting to be a long time ago.

Bell's vireo will show up next, doggone it! It will be singing its head off in a willow thicket on a fine June morning. I don't know how many times I've gone to the dense willow patches in the Oxbow area just to hear a Bell's vireo. This generally more western bird has often been at the wetlands of Miami-Whitewater Forest, just a few miles away. One was singing at Gilmore Ponds a few years ago. Steve Pelikan and I even encountered one along a yucky industrial road near the Great Miami River just south of Dayton. So, why not a Bell's vireo sighting along I-275 by Mercer Pond?

What next? I once thought I saw a northern goshawk near Lost Bridge, but, alas, it flew away before I could pin it down. The goshawk is a reasonable possibility. Steve Pelikan once thought he saw a Mississippi kite. Wow! It got away, too. However, the next bird will actually be the fish crow. A pair will fly up the Ohio River from western Kentucky, completely bypassing Louisville, and settling to nest in Shawnee Lookout Park.

The crystal ball told me that in October the first addition to my new property list in Moss Landing, California, would be the yellow-rumped warbler. I can understand why the crystal ball would think that. In the winter, yellow-rumped warblers are everywhere around here: in woods, fields, dunes, in cities, towns, and in the country. Now it's February, and I've added 16 species to my property list since the beginning of October, but I haven't seen a single yellow-rumped warbler here! I'm beginning to hold crystal ball gazing suspect.

One of the largest recent changes that has taken place in the Oxbow area is the number of Lincoln's sparrows that can be seen in the fall. Only two records of Lincoln's sparrows made it into *Birds of the Oxbow* (1993). Now these sparrows can be found regularly in the restored prairie in late September and the first half of October. Velda Miller, Steve Pelikan, and I saw approximately ten Lincoln's sparrows on 16 Oct 99.

Double-crested cormorant numbers have continued to rise. Now it is common to see fifty to a hundred cormorants migrating through the Oxbow area. This is in keeping with a general trend: several hundred cormorants may be seen at Brookville Reservoir during migration.

Swainson's thrush and its relatives form a group of birds seen much more now than they were in the 1970s. Back then I used to go to Shawnee Lookout during the peak of migration and wonder why I couldn't find more Swainson's thrushes. In the past few years, I have encountered as many as one would expect of a forested park.

Many Oxbow, Inc. members may have been unaware of Lester Peyton's bird banding project in Shawnee Lookout. The forest and its migrants, such as the thrushes, were one of the reasons Lester chose the park. In a later issue, I hope to report more on his work, but the migrant thrushes have been an exciting part of his work. Swainson's thrushes have been one of the most frequently banded birds. Remarkably, on this past October 5th Lester and Jason Hovekamp banded what appears to be a Bicknell's thrush. Gray-cheeked thrushes migrate through the Cincinnati area. Bicknell's thrushes look like gray-cheeked, but have never been identified anywhere near Cincinnati. According to Lester, "all the wing calculations, tail measurements and overall features of the bird match Bicknell's thrush." This record would be such a rarity that Lester wants some expert opinion before he asserts strongly that they banded a Bicknell's thrush.

Until this incident I didn't even see Bicknell's thrush as a reasonable possibility for the Oxbow area list. Now it already may be the next species on the list. Along with the pure beauty of the birds, these surprises make birding and avian science exciting.



Marsh Wren

All Officers and Board Members Unanimously Re-elected

At the January 13, 2004, membership meeting at EarthConnection, Mt. St. Joseph College, all five members of the Board of Directors were re-elected unanimously for a three year term: Jerry Lippert, Morris Mercer, Dr. Aaron Perlman, Jon Seymour and Mark Westrich.

According to Oxbow, Inc. by-laws, officers are to be elected from the board members for a one year term of office at the Board of Directors meeting following the January membership meeting. On January 28, all the incumbents were re-elected unanimously:

President: Jon Seymour, 2nd term
Vice President: Kani Meyer, 2nd term
Recording Secretary: Dwight Poffenberger,
3rd term
Corresponding Secretary: Suzanne Skidmore,
14th term
Treasurer: Mark Westrich, 10th term

Possibilities of Property Purchases

by President Jon Seymour

In the past few months we have contacted some of the property owners that own property in the Oxbow flood plain. There are four principal owners holding about 600 acres with one owner, I-275 Enterprises, holding 450 of those acres. At this time we know of no property owner that is currently willing to sell his "bottoms" land to Oxbow Inc. However we will continue to talk to the owners on a periodic basis and discuss our interest in their property. Hopefully at some future date we can reach a mutually beneficial agreement with these remaining landowners.

In the meantime your support for maintenance and improvement of our current property is critical. I will keep you informed of any progress we have made toward continued land acquisition.



Have a melodious spring!

*Oxbow Inc. Heartily Thanks
The Lorika Fund
of
The Greater Cincinnati Foundation
for Its
Generous Annual Grant*

WE ARE DOING THINGS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY

by President Jon Seymour

I hope you noticed. Just about everyone received a personal membership renewal letter during this last year. The letter reminds everyone the purpose of the organization and lets the members know some of our accomplishments during the year. I change the letter each time I mail it out so that the information included in the letter is always up to date.

This allows me to pass information to the renewing members that sometimes is even ahead of the newsletter. I mail these out every two months, in between the *Wetland Matters* mailing, to the approximate 1/6 of the membership which is due for renewal each time. A major benefit of this mailing is that the first class mail is forwarded or returned with the forwarding address listed. I have been able to reconnect with several members who moved and simply forgot to tell us. Since *Wetland Matters* is bulk mailed it is not forwarded and not returned to the sender, so this benefit is very helpful.

In case you never noticed before, the label for the newsletter tells you when it is time to renew. If you renew early you will save Oxbow Inc. the postage required to send the renewal letter.

DID YOU KNOW ???

In James Lipton's *An Exaltation of Larks*, medieval huntsmen created descriptive names for groupings of birds and beasts they hunted, for example, a *gaggle* of geese. As years passed more terminology was invented. You're familiar with a *school* of fish and a *pride* of lions but how about these precise and even poetic names:

a charm of finches	a cast of hawks
a descent of woodpeckers	a parliament of owls
a host of sparrows	a tidings of magpies
a seige of herons	a murder of crows
a scold of jays	an ostentation of peacocks
a trumpet of swans	a shimmer of hummingbirds?

(All this noted in *The Verb 'To Bird'* by Peter Cashwell, 2003.)

Audubon

as in *John James*

At the Oxbow

By *Mike Busam*

Cincinnati can be proud that it helped John James Audubon begin his quest to create life-sized paintings of all of North America's birds. If he hadn't been so miserable in Cincinnati, if his job at the Western Museum (now the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History) hadn't turned out to be a dud, if his wife hadn't found their living conditions in the city deplorable, if the family Audubon felt hadn't reached the end of their collective rope, which was made worse by the loss of two young daughters within two years of each other, Audubon might never have been driven to take the desperate measure of leaving his family for a lengthy and risky journey of discovery to New Orleans, and we might not have Audubon's masterpiece, *The Birds of America*.

To be fair, Audubon also received some of his first public acclaim for an exhibit of his bird drawings in Cincinnati, and this must have given him encouragement to begin the work necessary for his ambitious project. With nothing to lose and a string of personal and financial failures behind him, including a stint in debtor's prison, Audubon left Cincinnati for New Orleans via the Ohio and Mississippi rivers with his teenage assistant Joseph Mason on October 12, 1820.

In Audubon's *Mississippi River Journal*, which covers Audubon's experiences from October 1820 through December 1821, Audubon spends a considerable amount of time recording the birdlife he saw and studied--as well as shot and often ate--during his journey to New Orleans and the time he spent in Louisiana, where he tried to make a living as a teacher.

On October 14, 1820, on the third day of his journey, Audubon records a visit he made to an area near and dear to Oxbow members and supporters:

"After an early Breakfast We took to the Woods I say We because Joseph Mason, Capt Cummings & Myself I believe Are always together-

"I Shot a Fish Hawk Falco Aliætus [osprey] at the Mouth of the Big Miami River a handsome Male in good Plumage. he was wingd only and in attempting to Seize Joseph's hand, he ran One of his Claws through the Lower Mandible of his Bill and exhibited a very

Ludicrous object-these Birds Walk with great difficulty and Like all of The Falco and Strix Genus throw themselves on their backs to defend themselves.-

"We returned to our Boat with a Wild Turkey 7 Partridges [northern bobwhite quail] a Tall Tale Godwit [greater yellowlegs] and a Hermit Thrush which was too much torn to make a drawing of it this Was the first time I had Met with the Bird and felt particularly Mortified at its Situation-

"We passed the Small Town of Laurenceburgh-in Indiana, Petersburg in K.y , We Walked in the afternoon to Bellevue. . . . We killed 4 Small Grebes [horned grebes] at one Shot from a Flock of about 30 We approached them with ease to within about 40 Yards, they were chassing each other and quite Mery

"When the Destructive fire through the whole in consternation, the Many Wounded escaped by Diving, the rest flew off-this is the second time I have seen this kind, and they must be extremely rare, in this part of America-. . . We walked this day about 40 Miles saw one Deer Crossing the River"

This might be the first record of what we would call a field trip to the Oxbow area. And it's interesting to read that Audubon collected an osprey, as well as a life bird, a hermit thrush, on his visit to the Oxbow area. A few days later and further down the river, he managed to collect a hermit thrush that was in good enough shape to use as a drawing model.

The quotations from Audubon's *Mississippi River Journal* are taken from *John James Audubon: Writings & Drawings*, published by The Library of America in 1999. The composition, capitalization, spellings and punctuation are as they are in Audubon's journal and the bracketed contemporary names of the birds Audubon mentions in his journal are as listed in the notes by Christoph Irmscher, Editor of the *Library of America Audubon Collection*.



Audubon's "partridge" (bobwhite)



#100 And Going Strong! Part Three

By Jeanne Bocklage

The history of Oxbow Inc. is in its newsletter, *Wetland Matters*. A year ago when we published our 100th issue we began a look back at the early issues from #1 through #65 and found a young environmental organization that grew like magic despite hardships, thanks to hard-working officers and committee persons and a membership whose enthusiasm knew no bounds.

As we pick up this success story in Issue #66, July/August 1997, the Birdathon rated headlines as it should have since the Birdathon was the fund raiser for the organization. Birders signed on for the contest, drove miles, braved the bad weather, maybe went without sleep and scanned skies, lakes and meadows. One fellow even listed half a bird in his list of species found. Dave Dister reported 116 1/2 species because he saw a Brewster's Warbler, a cross between a Blue-winged and a Golden-winged Warbler and since he hadn't spotted a Golden-winged Warbler that day, he credited himself with 1/2 a bird. Steve Pelikan, editor at the time, noted that "The fact that Dave spotted this hybrid, which has never been common, indicates how careful he was being in his identifications."

In the following issue, as was its custom, Oxbow Inc. awarded a grant, this one to Dr. Denis Conover, biology professor at the University of Cincinnati, to survey plants on Oxbow Inc. land. As a result, he became a member of the Board of Directors and serves to this day.

Issue #69 initiated the name plate, *Wetland Matters*, with the mallard flying above the cattails and the marsh, which we print with pride on our front page.

Issue #70 noted the death of Art Wiseman who graciously shared his knowledge of nature with birders, young and old. He and his wife, Jinny, were never content with just watching birds but did banding, sensusing and skinning for the Cincinnati Natural History Museum. Many a young nature lover whetted his/her appetite for science by joining Art's bird-skinning class.

My husband, Bill, became Mattie's editor in July/August 1998 and continued until his death in March, 2001. I remember well how excited he was that Trumpeter Swans from the north might winter at the Oxbow. The Trumpeter Swan Society of Aurora, Ontario, planned to carry out an experimental induced migration, leading nine yearling birds by ultra-light plane (because the captive-raised birds did not have parents to lead them) to some warmer wintering grounds. In the end, Muscatatuck, a National Wildlife Refuge near Seymour, Indiana, under the aegis of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with its 1,500 acres of protected habitat/wetlands was chosen to sustain the birds. We were left hoping the off-spring of these Trumpeters would someday find their way to the Oxbow on their own.

Issue #73 stated: "In Dr. David Styer's book, *Birds of the Oxbow* (1993), he reports the swan as being a rare visitor and adds, 'There is one recent record of a trumpeter swan in the Oxbow area. This bird showed up in the Ohio fields just down river from Lost Bridge in January, 1982. When sighted, it was assumed to be a Tundra Swan and would have gone into the record as a Tundra had it not been shot on, or just prior to, February 27. The skin, sternum, etc., reside in the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History. This swan likely came from the Great Lakes area where swans are now being raised.'"



Sketch of the Trumpeters migrating by Bill Bocklage.

January 1999 saw the Board of Directors take action against unauthorized use of the Oxbow by dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles and the like. A locked gate was installed after *No Trespassing* signs which had been installed were destroyed almost as fast as they went up, sometimes by gunfire. Off-duty deputy sheriffs were hired to patrol the property intermittently.

An amusing quiz from the Birdathon committee appeared in the March/April 1999 issue. (This is probably worth repeating.) Then, just six issues later, the headline read "Bye, Bye, Birdathon!" An eleven year series came to an end after raising over \$100,000 for Oxbow Inc. and enabling other organizations such as the Cincinnati Nature Center, Raptor, Gilmore Ponds, the Cincinnati Zoo and the Northern Kentucky Bird Club to join in the fun and raise money for their organizations. President Norma Flannery 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."

However. The Cincinnati Nature Center, according to

Issue #83, picked up the ball and ran, as the saying goes, and sponsored the Birdathon. There were no souvenir T-shirts, no free food or prizes but there was -- and still is -- a Birdathon.

Although Birdathon news filled many pages in these issues through # 84, other important news broke:

* On December 8, 1999, Oxbow Inc. purchased 32 acres of Oxbow land owned by Earl and Phyllis Mullins and six days later, an eight-acre lake owned by Ralph and Mary Clark. "Both of these purchases were made possible by a grant from the estate of the late William Rowell Chase, former P&G executive and long-time Oxbow Inc. benefactor," said the newsletter.

* An end of the year (1999) report revealed that "Donations to the Land Trust Fund for the year totaled over \$955,000 sending Oxbow Inc. into the new millennium well situated for ongoing land purchases... Stock came from George and Margarite Nassaur, Dr. Aaron Perlman, Edward M. Thayer and Charles Noe... Estate bequests were made by William Rowell Chase and Harold G. Esterman. Grants were made by the William P. Anderson Foundation and the Bassett Family Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation."

* Four new fish species were collected at the Oxbow by David Riestenberg of Mount Saint Joseph College, including the very rare Shortnose Gar and the Mosquitofish, the latter establishing the only known natural population in the tristate area.

* Denis Conover completed his two-year study of Oxbow plants and found 422 species in 81 plant families. He also found widespread trespassing, some with dangerous possibilities. "In one case, a hunter attached a note to Conover's windshield threatening bodily harm to him and in another, Conover came close to getting shot accidentally by target shooters," *Wetland Matters* reported.

* Richard Pope, who farms land for Oxbow Inc. (then and now) reported a bumper crop despite a drought. "The reason for the success he said, was the fact that the water table is close to the surface and water percolates up to furnish sufficient moisture for the soybean and corn plantings." Rick, an Oxbow Inc. Board Member (then and now), also reported on weeds and animals that threaten crops but said he used a virtual "no till" procedure that leaves winter food for birds and other wildlife.

* Dave Styer's first column appeared in May/June 2000 (#83) and featured black vultures. Morris Mercer's columns continued to appear. His first was printed in Issue #16 in 1989. Aren't we readers fortunate to have had both these naturalists sending in their informative columns issue after issue to this day?

Aren't we fortunate to have such a wetlands gem and such dedicated people protecting it, studying it, supporting it financially?

To be continued.

Directors Decide to Publish Newspaper Notices

In order to acquaint the general public about Oxbow Inc. and its purposes and to help stop the abuse of the Oxbow Inc. land holdings, the Board of Directors is currently running notices in the *Dearborn Co. Register* (Indiana) and its sister newspaper, *The Journal-Press*. Abuse comes in various forms such as dumping, illegal hunting and riding all terrain vehicles and the like through Oxbow Inc. property. Following is the context of the newspaper notices.

Oxbow Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. ("Oxbow") are the owners of property located in the area commonly known as Horseshoe Bottoms, Lawrenceburg Township, Dearborn County, Indiana. Most of Oxbow's land is located between I-275, the I-275 to U.S. 50 exit ramp, the CSX tracks, and the levee along U.S. 50 and the Argosy entrance road. Oxbow also owns land immediately west of I-275 between the CSX tracks and the Ohio River, as well as land east of I-275 between the CSX tracks, the Ohio River, and the state line.

Oxbow Inc. land is a wildlife sanctuary. Hunting, trapping, discharge of firearms, and the shooting of arrows is prohibited except in certain designated areas and only with the express written permission of Oxbow.

ATV's may not be operated on Oxbow property at any time. Operating other motorized vehicles (except for the purpose of approved farming and land management operations) off clearly established roads or on a road in any manner contributing to the need to repair the road is prohibited. Those who do operate a motor vehicle on Oxbow property do so at their own risk, and are advised that the dirt roads may be impassable when wet. Under no circumstances will Oxbow be responsible for damage to a vehicle or injury to its occupants.

Motorized boating is prohibited. Bank fishing with appropriate license is allowed and is monitored by the conservation officer. Camping and overnight parking are prohibited.

Removing, destroying or disturbing wildlife, plants, or farm crops without express written consent of Oxbow is prohibited.

Oxbow property is regularly patrolled by law enforcement officers who have been instructed to prosecute all violators. Activities such as bird watching, hiking, and other activities not expressly prohibited by these rules or state law may be done at one's own risk. Oxbow is not responsible for any injuries occurring on the property for those wishing to visit. Those in doubt of the lawfulness of their activity on Oxbow property are encouraged to first contact Oxbow, 854 Ligorio Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45218.

Of Bits and Peeps...

Join Us on Earth Day

Saturday, April 17, is Earth Day at Sawyer Park from 1:00 p.m. until dark and Oxbow, Inc. will be there. Will you? Stop by our booth, say hello and pick up some literature. And, yes, all your friends are welcome.

Aransas and the Whoopers

Jon Seymour took a group of Oxbow Inc. members on a trip to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge near Corpus Christi, Texas, February 10 at the Lawrenceburg library via slides from his trips there. They were searching for those majestic white five-footers with the red face --whooping cranes.

Jon explained that the International Crane Foundation in Wisconsin began focusing on the whooping crane three years ago and has been guiding yearlings, hatched by men in "whooping crane suits", by light aircraft from Wisconsin to Florida in an endeavor to establish new flocks. The Aransas birds are wild flocks from Canada.

"The whooping cranes probably will never be extremely numerous because they need large habitats and man has kept busy killing them off," Jon said. "In 1938, there were 14 known birds in the wild worldwide, in 1970, 50 and today, 180, so the recovery is going well." Today the whooping crane's chief enemy is the bobcat. The best time to find these silky snow white creatures in Aransas is from November through March.

Since the whoopers at Aransas feel protected, the 40-foot boat John cruised on could get close. Besides the cranes, Jon showed off alligators, armadillos, wild pigs and "very bold" turkeys. Best of all, he 'left 'em laughing' with slides of black-faced laughing gulls flying, it seemed, right in your face.



Jon Speaks at Madeira Women's Club

Oxbow Inc. President Jon Seymour will address the Madeira Women's Club April 14, 11:30 a.m. at the Municipal Building's Community Room. Jon will acquaint the members with the history and beauty of the Oxbow as well as the wildlife which make their home there.

CREW Babies Warm Winter Night

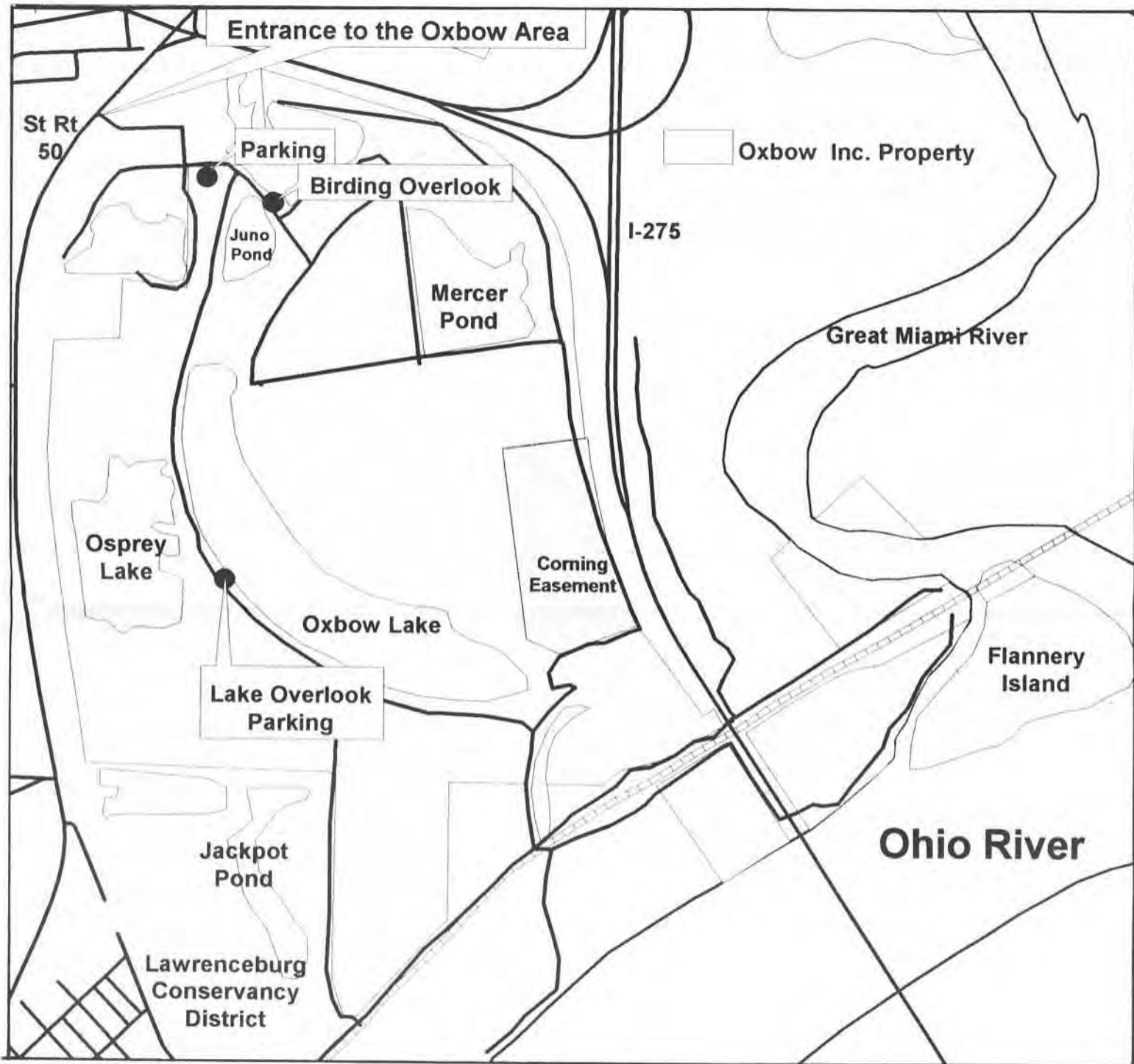
At our January 13 general meeting, Sue Metheny, a volunteer from the Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife (CREW) of the Cincinnati Zoo Botanical Gardens, showed slides about and discussed CREW's work.

The primary factor underlying most species' endangered status is loss and degradation of habitat. However, once a species has been decimated, it is even more vulnerable to extinction owing to a lack of genetic diversity in the wild but particularly in captivity. If a habitat is saved and stabilized, descendants of animals now captive may be able to repopulate their native lands. CREW's purpose is to understand the reproductive processes of various endangered animals and plants and devise practical methods for maintaining genetic diversity, such as collecting genetic material in the wild; preserving frozen semen, eggs, embryos, and plant tissues; in vitro fertilization and implantation; and culturing of plant tissue.

Although CREW works with many plants and animals, Sue's discussion detailed work on rhinoceros, particularly the extremely endangered Sumatran rhino; and wild cats, particularly cheetahs. In counterpoint to the slides of technical processes featuring lots of pipettes and people wearing shoulder-length latex gloves we saw many wonderful slides of animals, including baby animals born through CREW's efforts, that drew oohs and aahs from us all.

...Anita Buck

OXBOW-INC-LAND



Tuck this map of Oxbow-Inc-Land into your birdbook or wallet and have it ready for your next visit to the Oxbow. Thanks to mapmaker Kani Meyer you will be able to find your way around. The entrance on Rt. 50 is beside the Shell gas station in Greendale. Drive back to the cement plant, turn right to the end of the road. Park in our new parking lot and walk around or follow the black lines (the roads) on the map if walking is too much for you. Enjoy your day!

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
513-851-9835

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Vice President, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Corresponding Secretary, Suzanne Skidmore	(513) 561-5718
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<i>Wetland Matters, the newsletter for members of Oxbow, Inc., is published bimonthly.</i>	

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

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