



May—June 2007

No. 125

# WETLAND *matters*

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

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**Need a speaker? Call 513-851-9835**

## **Don't Be Left Off the List of Birdathon Donors Send Your Donation or Pledge in Today**

*...by Jon Seymour*

Trying to top last year's tremendous success of raising nearly \$6000 for habitat improvement just got harder. We just recently learned that the Cincinnati Nature Center has pulled out of officially sponsoring a Birdathon team. Last year we received one half of the nearly \$2000 they raised. More than ever we need Oxbow members to step up and donate to the Birdathon and support the volunteer birders who will spend 24 hours in the field trying to spot species and raise money for Oxbow. As a result of the Cincinnati Nature Center's decision, the team I have been on for 15 years will now be Oxbow Team #5, led by Dave Brinkman and consisting of Dave, Bob Foppe, Don Morse and Bill Hull. My name is missing due to some necessary surgery that is scheduled just prior to Birdathon and as a result I will not be able to participate this year. Dave has assured me that the team will do better than ever and they are setting their sights on winning the most species seen title for the second time. I will be holding him to that but it will be hard missing the action and the camaraderie.

Oxbow, Inc. started the Cincinnati Area Birdathon to foster interest in birds, competition among birders, and to raise money for Oxbow, Inc. This is our biggest fund raiser and keeping it growing still remains our goal. Jay Stenger will once again lead our effort to organize a bigger and better Birdathon in 2007. The Birdathon is an opportunity for Oxbow, Inc. to stay at the top of every birder's list.

Donations to the Birdathon will be earmarked for projects involving bird habitat improvement and increased viewing access. This will be ongoing so donations can be used for small projects or build to fund larger projects. As in the past we will ask other organizations to sponsor teams and solicit donations. We have adopted the practice of splitting donations raised by sister organizations 50/50 between the sister organization and Oxbow, Inc.

**We need ALL Oxbow members to get behind the Birdathon and pledge money on a per species basis or make a fixed donation to support our teams and raise money for habitat restoration and access improvement.** Many members have found it easier just to send a

check in a fixed amount to support a favorite team or simply the winning team. Participate in whatever way is easiest for you but participate if you can. Fill out and send in the pledge form on page 3. Pledge your support of the 2007 Birdathon. You can pledge a lot or you can pledge a little. All money pledged to Oxbow teams goes to Oxbow, Inc.

### **Register Your Birdathon Team for 2007**

Please consider participating in the 2007 Oxbow Birdathon. To participate you do not have to be a birding expert, you do not have to spend all 24 hours in the field, and you do not have to go any farther than your kitchen window. You can count bird species. Take personal pledges. All participants are invited to come on down to the pizza party at the end of the count period and tell us what you saw. You will find a registration form on page 3. If you do not want to count species yourself, choose to support one of Oxbow's teams with your pledges. Fill in the pledge form on Page 3 and return it to the listed address. Help us improve the oxbow floodplain. **Those interested in participating or volunteering to be part of this birding celebration contact Jay Stenger at 513-522-8147 (email jaystenger@cinci.rr.com) or Jon Seymour at 513-851-9835 (email jlsjks@hotmail.com).**

## **Help Clean Up the Oxbow!**

Every year debris floats into the Oxbow with the floods or unthinking people dump trash in the Oxbow. We are planning two clean ups this year and would very much appreciate your help. If you have a truck or know anyone who has a truck to help shuttle trash from pick-up site to the dumpster please let Kani know at kaniau@yahoo.com or 513-948-8630.

**Ohio River Sweep on June 16, 2007  
Great Miami River Clean Up on July 14, 2007  
Both clean ups are from 9am to noon.**

**Oxbow Programs in Review –  
You should have been there!**

**Humans have been shaping the Oxbow Area  
for a long, long time**

Penny Borgman, the naturalist for Shawnee Lookout in the Hamilton County Park System led us through an understanding of the progression of habitation of the Oxbow area following the receding of the most recent glaciers from the area. The Indians that were here, when the first Europeans arrived and started recording their culture, were very different than the original settlers of the Oxbow area. Although we refer to them as Indians they were culturally different from the tribes the Europeans referred to as Shawnee, Miami, and Wyandot. Penny walked us through the various cultures that have occupied the area for 6-8000 years. Each culture is known and identified by the general nature of the artifacts they left behind and often named for the location at which those types of artifacts were first discovered. First came the Paleo with heavy spear points for hunting large game associated with the edge of the glacial ice sheet. They were followed by a culture we refer to as Archaic. Then the Woodland culture began to dominate and went through three cultural periods sequentially known as Adena, Hopewell, and Late Woodland. As these peoples progressed through the sequential cultures, tools became more sophisticated, hunting progressed to smaller game and the spears became smaller and they developed methods of launching the spears with ever increasing velocity. Pottery was developed and became increasingly more complicated. Agriculture, intra-continental trade, and permanent and semi-permanent settlements started. The woodland period passed and the Mississippian or Ft. Ancient culture became dominant. By the time the Europeans arrived these cultures had also passed and were replaced by the Tribes named above that knew these older cultures by their remnants, handed down stories, and religious practices. However most of the actual culture was lost and we only can deduce the culture from ancient artifacts we find. The Oxbow contains at least three cultural sites of these ancient settlers of the land. Of course, there are numerous sites that look down on the Oxbow from the bluffs above the floodplain. In the Oxbow you are in the middle of thousands of years of human history.

**Help the Environment and Help Oxbow, Too**

EnviroSmart is one of the leading inkjet & laser recycling companies in the world. They will donate \$1 - \$3 to Oxbow for every InkJet, Laser cartridge or cellphone that members turn in for recycling. You may bring cartridges to members meetings or, to obtain prepaid envelopes, please contact Oxbow member:

Wade A. Wolf  
Timberwolf Group Inc  
636 valley Trails Dr.  
Harrison OH 45030  
Email [wwolf@cinci.rr.com](mailto:wwolf@cinci.rr.com)  
Cell 513-238-2376

**Oxbow, Inc. Memorials**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>In Memory of</b>
Jeanne & Therese Bocklage	John "Boots" Steenken
Jeanne & Therese Bocklage	Bill Bocklage
Hilltop Elders Club	Gabriele Heinicke
Fred & Rosemary Kellerman	Barbara J. Lukas
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Bill & Do Kuhlman	Norma Flannery
Monfort Heights Garden Club	Joyce Hecker
Darlene Solomon	Barbara J. Lukas

Special thanks for generous donations to  
Oxbow go to:

Walt & Susan McBeath  
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth B. Bassett  
Andrew MacAoidh Jergens

*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 or anniversary remembrances, holiday greetings or 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, OH 45243-0391. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those who are to receive the acknowledgement.*

**Leave No Child Inside  
of Greater Cincinnati**

Presents an Evening with Richard Louv

Tuesday, June 19, 2007  
Information Fair 5:00 - 8:30 pm  
Panel Discussion @ 6:30 pm

Crossroads Community Church  
3500 Madison Rd. (at Ridge)  
Cincinnati, OH 45209

**Birdathon Pledge Form for Birdathon 2007  
(May 11-12, 2007)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My Pledge for Birdathon 2007 is:

Fixed Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check Enclosed

Bill me after the Birdathon

Per Species Pledge (Circle One, you will be billed after the Birdathon):

\$ 5.00      \$4.00      \$3.00      \$2.00

\$1.00      75¢      50¢      25¢

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My Pledge is to Support the following Oxbow, Inc. Team

\_\_\_\_\_ Highest Scoring Team

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #1 – Paul Wharton, Jay Stenger, Jack Stenger, and Joe Bens

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #2 – Jerry Lippert, Erich Baumgardner, Wayne Wauligman, Matt Stenger

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #3 – Sister Marty Dermody and a team to be named later

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #4 – Dave and Jane Styer (West Coast Big Day)

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #5 – Dave Brinkman, Bob Foppe, Don Morse, and Bill Hull

**Make checks payable to Oxbow, Inc. All donations to the Birdathon are tax deductible.**

Mail To: Jon Seymour  
854 Ligorio Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45218

**2007 Birdathon Registration Form**

Oxbow, Inc. wants to have lots of birdwatchers participate in the Birdathon. There are many ways to compete or participate as a competing or non-competing individual or team. You do not even have to leave your own house. However, if you choose to participate we would like you to enter (covers the cost of the party) and join the pizza party at 5 pm on Saturday, May 12 at Winton Centre in Winton Woods. Here are some of the categories of competition:

- Most Species by a Team (most overall species by a group)
- Most Species by an Individual (most overall species by an individual)
- Most Species in a Back Yard (most species observed from one yard)
- Most Species One State (most species by state, either Ohio, Indiana or Kentucky)
- Most Species One County (most species in any one county, e.g., Hamilton)
- Most Species In One Location (recorded in one defined area, e.g., The Oxbow)
- Most Species Non-Fossil Fuel (recorded without using any gasoline)
- Most Species Big Sit (recorded from one fixed 30 x 30 foot spot)
- Most Species Family (most species by a family, parent/guardian and at least one child)
- Most Species Under Age 20 (most species seen by a group 19 & under, 1 adult allowed)
- Most Funds Raised by a Team
- Most Funds Raised by an Individual
- Most Funds raised by Persons Under 20 Years Old

Remember the purpose of the Birdathon is to raise money for improving Oxbow habitat and Oxbow accessibility projects. **The way to do it is to have fun birding!**

I want to enter a team (or as an individual) in the Oxbow Birdathon. Please send an entry form to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Oxbow, Inc  
9761 Winton Rd  
Cincinnati, OH 45231**



usings

by Dave Styer

### The Northern Mockingbird: Fire and Ice

"Listen to the Mockingbird." The Northern Mockingbird is known in song because of its song. The variety and vigor of its song are great. The clincher, though, much to the pleasure and annoyance of people, is that it sings at night.

The Mockingbird is often thought of as a southerner. Anyone who has spent time in the Deep South has experienced an ardor greater to that in Ohio. I have wondered how some Mockingbirds could seem to perform all day and night without taking time to eat.

Mockingbirds are common enough in much of Ohio and even in New England north to New Hampshire, but that hasn't always been so. Bruce Peterjohn writes in *The Birds of Ohio*.

Mockingbirds have not always resided in the state. They initially appeared within Ohio during to Mid-1800s, mostly as widely scattered individuals. By the 1870s, they were established as rare residents in southern counties but were virtually unknown elsewhere.

There is an interesting early record of a Mockingbird in the Cincinnati area in 1827. The Englishman William Bullock, for whom Bullock's Oriole is named, was traveling through America and staying at "Elmwood" on or around Easter Sunday. He wrote.

The great variety of beautiful birds that are found here, much enliven the scene. The first night I passed in this elegant retreat, the mocking-bird, with its lucid, ever-varying notes, continued until dawn, kept me awake for some time with its melody; and in the morning, ere sunrise, the redbird or Virginian nightingale, was chanting his morning hymn, close to my bed-room window. It continued so long, that I suspected, what proved to be the case, its nest and young were concealed in the honeysuckle on which he was singing. Another variety of honeysuckle in front of the house, within ten-feet of the door, was the constant resort of the ruby-throated hummingbird birds, one of the smallest of that diminutive family, whose various evolutions performed with the quickness of light, the eye finds it difficult to follow. The beautiful blue jay is so common, as to be troublesome. The orange and black oriole, that makes the remarkable pendant nest, is here by no means scarce; its note is charming. Several varieties of woodpecker are seen close to the house, and the wild ducks were hourly on the horse-pond, whilse the farm-yard abound with wild pigeon, as tame as our domestic ones; and the quail nearly as large as our partridge, swarmed in the gardens, orchards, and pleasure grounds."

That sounds wonderful. Hmm, I believe I read that Bullock invested in real estate in the Cincinnati area. [Thanks to Stan Hedeem, who, some twenty years ago suggested I look through the 32 volume set *Early Western Travels*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, for early Cincinnati area bird records. Bullock's account is in Volume XIX.]

When I became a birder northeast of Philadelphia there were no Mockingbirds around. Eventually, I learned that they were spreading north, and on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1954 I saw one on the neighbor's fence. That was a special day! By the end of the decade Mockingbirds were common in the area.

Is the northern spread of the Mockingbird due strictly to our plantings? We plant bushes with berries, a favorite Mockingbird food. Is the northern spread due to global warming? Maybe both? Let's look at a longer time span than a century or two. Eighteen thousand years ago an ice sheet 1 or 2 miles thick covered much of Ohio. There must have been some kind of impressive warming to eliminate that ice.

If global warming continues unabated the Mockingbird's range may extend all the way to northern Canada. Of course, that might be at the expense of the loss of many northern bird species. Also, the east coast cities might be under water. Atlantic City? Change that to Atlantis. Cincinnati might find itself on the edge of a great desert.

Things could go the other way. Upon reading *After the Ice Age* by the Canadian ecologist E. C. Pielou, I see that she projects us to be in a small warming trend within a huge cooling trend. It appears another huge ice age is about to strike. I'm not keen about having most of Ohio, to say nothing of eastern Canada, covered by a sheet of ice 1 or 2 miles thick. If that were to happen, the Mockingbird would again be restricted to the Deep South.

Was Robert Frost thinking of such issues when he wrote *Fire and Ice*?

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

## Life with Gregory Pecker

.....by Linda Stroud

Just before Christmas in 2004 I smeared several pinecones with peanut butter and placed them where I could watch the nuthatches and chickadees picking at the delicacy. A day or two later I saw a much larger bird than I expected helping himself – the new guest was Northern Mockingbird. He became a daily fixture in the front as he could perch himself on nearby limbs and reach



the pinecone. He was unable to reach the pinecones in the backyard as there were no limbs nearby and he was too big to land on the pinecones. I scavenged at a nearby construction site and fashioned a peanut butter feeder he could use and soon the bird was a regular in the backyard, too. I also maintain a platform feeder, thistle feeder and birdbath (heated in winter) in the backyard, along with plantings chosen to provide food and cover for birds and other wildlife – viburnum, amalanichier, bayberry, holly and oaks, along with various native flowers providing seeds and nectar, particularly coneflowers, which the goldfinches love and trumpet vines for the hummingbirds as well as butterfly bushes.

As winter turned to spring I read a little about foods Mockingbirds prefer and tried samples of some that I could find at the grocery – raisins were welcomed, but coconut was rejected entirely as was fruit jam and bits of various fruits. During the nesting season smaller red grapes disappeared quickly while green grapes and purple grapes, as well as the large “globe” red grapes were left untouched. This first spring I discovered how very territorial Mockingbirds are – he tolerated no other birds at my feeder and spent his days perched where he could clearly see his empire, and chased other birds from the area. Cardinals seemed to be especially unwelcome and the Mockingbird would actually fly into them to bully them away.

I told people at work about the new bird and what a tyrant he was and how often I saw him. A clever co-worker named him “Gregory Pecker”, a takeoff on the star of the film “To Kill a Mockingbird”. There were times that spring that I felt like throwing a shoe at him – he sat in my Burr Oak, the closest tree to the house, right outside my bedroom window, and sang, loudly, all night long during the full moon. His songs and calls could be heard all over the neighborhood and were the object of a lot of comments from the neighbors, most of whom thought all the different songs and imitations he wove into his repertoire were interesting, but wished he would confine his singing to daylight hours. The first year we heard him imitate cats and car alarms, along with many birds imitations including seagulls and blue jays.

During one period of prolonged song, I placed a recorder near my open door and recorded 5 - 10 minutes of Gregory's song and then played them back to see his reaction. He seemed puzzled as to where his rival was and really appeared to be upset over a newcomer in his territory. Some birds have no sense of humor!

Finally, Gregory found a mate and brought her to my yard, apparently in an attempt to impress her with what a good provider he was. He also continued his aerial show – flying up in the air from a high perch and flashing his wings as he fell like a rock back down to his perch, this show being repeated over and over to impress his lady. Apparently his efforts were

successful as the pair soon busied themselves with making a nest in a spruce several yards away. I watched them coming and going as they took nesting materials to the site, fed their young and finally fledged them. All the time, he came to my feeder regularly for “his” grapes, a bath, and continued to chase other birds away.

One evening when I let my dogs out I watched as Gregory flapped and swooped at one of them repeatedly. I then found his second nest of the season was in that corner of my yard and he wasn't about to tolerate any interlopers, regardless of their size or species. My neighbors and I were very entertained by all his swooping and flapping, but I wondered what would happen when I had to mow the grass near his nest. To my surprise, he tolerated my mowing near his tree and didn't bother me a bit. I wondered if perhaps he associated me with his food appeared and if he had decided I could have unfettered access. My neighbor wasn't so lucky when she was her yard – Gregory swooped down and winged her, apparently as a warning.

One morning several weeks later I was washing windows in the front of the house and heard a loud “fweping” noise, but couldn't figure out where it was coming from – I didn't see anything in the landscaped area, but could still hear the persistent “fweping”. I looked out the sidelights near the front door and saw a tiny baby mockingbird that looked like a fuzzleball on toothpicks, standing on the doorsill looking into the house. Up on the gutter, watching everything, was Gregory. To this day I feel the proud father brought one of his kids around to show off to me.

Nest three that season was in the yard behind me, and while my dogs were still terrorized regularly, we all made it through fledging the young, with Gregory and wife visiting my feeders for grapes and bathing daily in the birdbath. They seem to have been devoted parents, spending their days foraging for food for their young.

By this time I had become very aware of Mockingbirds and was seeing and hearing them everywhere I went. One day I visited nurseries in Oxford, Ross and Fairfield and there was a Mockingbird at each. I saw them in Cincinnati and one visited regularly in the tree outside my office window. Co-workers began teasing me that I was being “stalked”.

Gregory disappeared in mid-August and no matter what food I put out, it seemed he had left the area. I wondered if he would return in December, and watched for him, but it seemed he was gone for good.

Just before Christmas I visited friends in another area of Butler County. They are bird enthusiasts and enjoyed hearing my stories of Gregory Pecker. They told me they had never seen a Mockingbird at their home, but were familiar with them from living in southern states. When we sat down for brunch, my friend Floyd sat facing me. I noticed he had a very strange look on his face. He told me to turn around and look out the window. In a small tree immediately outside the window sat a Mockingbird, looking into the house. Floyd could only tell me that he would never doubt any of my bird stories again.

I began putting out peanut butter again along with raisins and before long I had a Mockingbird at my feeder. I wondered if it was Gregory, and by spring I was convinced it was indeed the same bird. This Mockingbird used exactly the same perches, showed up for his raisins when his name was called and seemed to be very tolerant of my presence. His songs seemed to be different though, and more varied, as if he had learned some new things wherever he had been since August, one new sound



"Gregory Pecker" pauses to see where he might find the next meal for his second brood of young. See story on page 5. (photo by R. Ratliff)



Juno Pond (photo by Steve Pelikan)



Pandora Sphinx Moth Caterpillar (photo by Denis Conover)



View of Shawnee Lookout across Oxbow Pond taken from the overlook (photo by Meg Poehlmann)



A mockingbird working on the special feeder designed by Dr. Farnsworth. (photo by George Farnsworth)

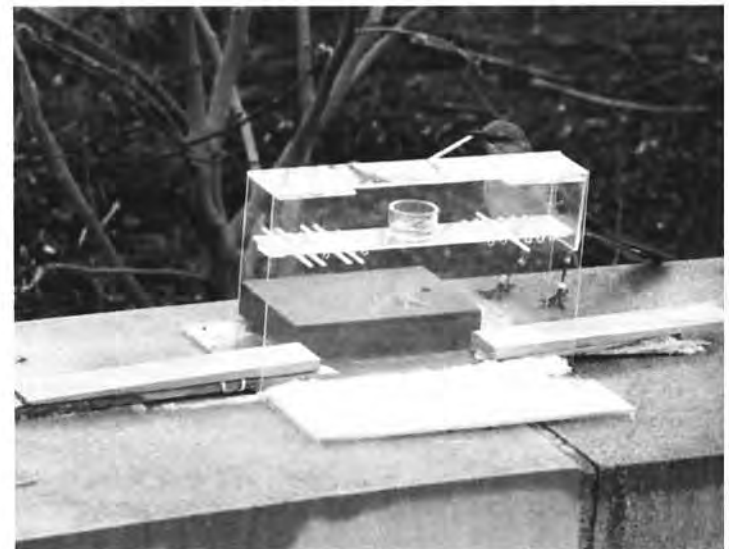


Photo of a bird removing one of the sticks from the feeder designed by Dr. George Farnsworth (story page 9). (photo by George Farnsworth)



Towards Juno Pond along Oxbow Lake from the overlook (photo by Meg Poehlmann)



From the overlook, looking toward Mercer Pond across Oxbow Lake (photo by Meg Poehlmann)



White-marked Tussock Moth Caterpillar (photo by Steve Pelikan)



Osprey Lake (photo by Meg Poehlmann)

## NATURE'S BLOG

A log of natural events, natural history and nature-based philosophy

by Robert Folzenlogen

[www.naturesblog.blogspot.com](http://www.naturesblog.blogspot.com)



# Get out and enjoy the Oxbow!



*Life with Gregory Pecker (continued from page 5)*

being a perfect imitation of a pinball machine. He also had a mate as we didn't have the prolonged singing and displays that year. Their first nest was in an evergreen shrub at the front corner of a garage across the street, something of an inconvenience for the residents. The four babies could be heard when the parents returned with food. Nest two was again in the spruces several yards away and nest three in the yard behind mine. And, of course, Gregory chased other birds from his feeder and birdbath, protecting his territory.

By this time, I had been trained to a well regimented feeding schedule. When I let my dogs out when I came home for lunch, I was expected to stock red grapes in the feeder. If I was not prompt, I could count on Gregory to be sitting on the pergola over my deck – staring into the house until I brought his grapes out.

One nice Saturday I noticed there was no activity at all at my feeder or at the birdbath – this usually means a hawk is in the area. Next thing I saw was a sharp shinned hawk landing on the shepherds crook that supports my suet feeder at the edge of the deck. The hawk stared at me as I sat in the kitchen. I couldn't believe it when I saw Gregory swooping in at the hawk – I thought for sure this would be the end of my gallant Mockingbird and I really did not want to see it happen right in front of me. Before I could move, Gregory slammed into the hawk and knocked him off balance. Before the hawk could recover, Gregory swooped at him again and the hawk scrambled to get a perch in some vines, with several of his wing feathers sticking straight out. Again Gregory was on him and feathers flew. The hawk took off over the yard, with Gregory in pursuit. As they flew over the houses behind me, several other birds joined in the chase and the hawk was banished. Before long, Gregory returned for some grapes and a bath. The feathers left on the deck all belonged to the hawk.

One evening in late summer there was a commotion in the Magnolia in the front yard – there were at least six Mockingbirds, two adults and four not-quite-full grown, stripping the berries from the fruits – apparently a feast before leaving town, as Gregory disappeared soon after.

This past December I watched to see if Gregory would return. He showed up on schedule and seemed to expect his foods to be waiting for him. I stocked up on raisins and peanut butter and he has been satisfied, coming several times a day. If his raisins aren't there, he stomps around in the feeder (a hanging platform) and kicks seeds out, apparently an expression of his displeasure.

Again I wondered if it could be the same bird – I don't know the lifespan of a Mockingbird and they all look alike. Several days after he reappeared, I noticed he would be somewhere in my front yard when I came home for lunch, and by the time I let the dogs out the back door, he would be in the back yard. When I take his raisins out, he is generally in the Burr Oak or in the feeder before I can get back to the deck. If I take raisins out at odd times and call his name, he flies in quickly. I am absolutely convinced that this is Gregory Pecker and that he is back for another season. This morning, I came home and decided to chip a little more ice off the drive before going in the house. I heard a most peculiar noise, repeated several times, and looked for kids in the area. All I could see was Gregory, perched in a tree in the front of the house. The new addition to his anthology of sounds? Lip smacking noises! Now I ask you – where does a nice Mockingbird go that he learns to imitate a pinball machine and smacking lips?



No obstacle is too extreme when Gregory has a hungry brood to feed!  
(photo by R. Ratliff)



A Northern Mockingbird is a common backyard visitor in the southern half of the United States and is very well habituated to humans. Courtesy of Wikipedia.



## How Smart is a Mockingbird?

.....by Dr. George Farnsworth

Living in Virginia, North Carolina and Texas before moving to Cincinnati, I have a long relationship with Northern Mockingbirds. I have always loved Mockingbirds, but recently I have acquired a deeper appreciation for their intellect. Mockingbirds are great! They are aggressive and bold. They stay on territories throughout the winter, and they have a distinct weakness for the nutritious goodness of mealworms. This makes Mockingbirds terrific subjects for psychology experiments. During the past few winters I have been testing their abilities to discriminate numbers of sticks on the campus of Xavier University.

I began at my house in January 2004. I attracted a mockingbird to my porch with mealworms and trained it to pull matchsticks out of inverted test tubes. Once it learned to pull sticks, I tested to see if it were smart enough to tell the difference between two sticks and three sticks. I gave it a choice of two tubes, each with the same number of mealworms but with either two sticks or three sticks. A smart bird should realize it is easier to pull two sticks to get the mealworms from Tube A than to pull three sticks from Tube B. This bird, however, did not demonstrate such an understanding; it just came and pulled sticks seemingly randomly. But it usually got to eat worms from both tubes. (photo page 6)

Undeterred, my students and I started another and more ambitious experiment the next year. This time I designed a feeding apparatus that only held one portion of mealworms that could be accessed in either of two ways. The worms were on a platform suspended by sticks (pieces of bamboo skewers, this time) on each side of the feeder. Pulling out all the sticks on either side caused the platform to tip, releasing the treats. A smart mockingbird should choose the side of the feeder with fewer sticks. I tested five different mockingbirds on campus with two sticks on one side and five sticks on the other. Sure enough, all the birds were smart enough for this! However, when I tested them with three sticks on one side and four sticks on the other, none of the birds demonstrated sufficient understanding. Each mockingbird made many mistakes.

I wondered if the failure to discriminate was in part due to a lack of motivation. Sometimes college students similarly lack the proper motivation. After all, the birds got the worms even when they made a mistake. The only "penalty" for making a mistake was it had to pull one extra stick. So my students and I decided increase the penalty by making a new feeder that only released worms from the side with three sticks. Even if the bird pulled out all four sticks from the wrong side, no worms came out. We tried this out on three mockingbirds. Only one of the birds demonstrated the smarts to prefer the side with three sticks. Even this bird only marginally preferred the easier side. I think most of us can relate; sometimes it can be hard to tell the difference between three and four.

I was also able to train Carolina Wrens to pull sticks from a feeder. But they made research difficult because they tended to work as a pair, each pulling sticks and jumping around. Mockingbirds made better research subjects because they always came individually. In fact, even on territories with a male and a female, only one bird ever participated in the experiments, always the male. It appeared the females were far more timid and fearful of the feeding apparatus.

My research lab (now called the MOXIE lab) will continue to test mockingbird intelligence. Visit our website to see videos of the experiments and keep up with the latest developments ([staff.xu.edu/~Farnsworth/](http://staff.xu.edu/~Farnsworth/)).

# Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

March 17, 2007 by Jon Seymour

The phone rings and it is Steve Maslowski wanting to know if we are still meeting at the Oxbow. (I have to back up a bit and say that Steve and I had planned to go with George Laycock on the annual St. Patrick's Day hunt for the Green-winged Teal. George is the last surviving member of the original threesome that devised this unique form of entertainment. Karl Maslowski and Morris Mercer have passed on to the constant field trip in the sky. George had called me the day before to cancel and told me he had informed Steve. I assumed that it also meant that Steve was no longer going. Wrong assumption! In answer to Steve's question, I said I was still planning on going to the Oxbow but just not on the same time schedule. We quickly agreed on a time to meet at the Oxbow parking area. Twenty minutes after the appointed hour I arrive and Steve has been waiting even longer since he was early. Steve is talking to a couple of people and I join them. They look familiar but I just cannot place them. It doesn't help my weak mind that they are bundled in knit caps and scarves. They seem to know us and we smile and have a cordial conversation. They head off lugging some heavy camera equipment and Steve asks me, "Who are they?" Of course I reply, "I thought you knew them."

The river is at 38 feet Cincinnati and rising. The causeway is just going underwater and we have difficulty finding a spot to view the open water that is not obscured by trees. Steve does not have a scope so he enjoys viewing the ducks through mine. There are not many ducks in view but after a few minutes I find 3 Green-winged Teal sliding in and out of the flooded trees on the northeast side of Juno Pond. (Turns out they will be the ONLY Green-winged Teal we will see today.) We talk and look at some more ducks when we notice two deer trotting down the Oxbow Lake road toward us. They are heading for the base of the hill below the parking area and then they will have to make a choice. Either go up the hill to the trailer park or come out the causeway at us. Steve and I watch and stand still as they choose the causeway. They are both on the causeway when the lead deer sees us and stops. There is nothing else to do but retreat. He stands and examines us for a moment to see if we are real and then turns back the way they came taking the other deer with it.

Steve and I start walking back to our car when the couple we met earlier returns from their walk down the Oxbow Lake road. They tell us that they initially scared the deer our way. At this second meeting I decide to ask them who they are and they are Bob and Chan Mattingly. Of course I am embarrassed, but my only excuse is the knit hat pulled tight around Chan's head. I simply did not recognize her. Bob is a professional photographer as is Steve so we return to the cars where Bob shares some of his photos with Steve. I break out the Lorna Doone cookies, the traditional treat reserved for seeing the Green-winged Teal and we all share the cookies while admiring Bob's photos of fishing Bald Eagles. I think Karl and Morris would be pleased and maybe next year George and Jim Simpson, Morris's son-in-law who was busy at school this year, will be able to join again in the quest for the Green-winged Teal.

## OXBOW INC. FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 7:30 AM**

### **Warblers and Shorebirds**

Meet Jay Stenger and Jack Stenger, father and son birders, at the Shawnee Lookout lower boat ramp parking lot. This should be a very good warbler & shorebird trip, both of which should be at the peak of their spring migration.

To reach the Shawnee Lookout lower boat ramp parking lot, take Lawrenceburg Road south into Shawnee Lookout Park, and at the first Park intersection, take a right turn down the hill, and the parking lot will be on the right. For more information, call Jack or Jay at 522-4245.

**Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 7:00 PM**

### **See What We Find Hike**

Steve Pelikan, Oxbow Board Member, will take you for a walk in the Oxbow to see what there is to find. The walk will appeal to all folks with a natural history interest, as we'll be looking for birds and any other interesting things we encounter such as insects, plants, and the unexpected. Meet at the Oxbow, Inc. parking lot near the cement plant. For more information, call Steve at 681-2574 (H).

## **Oxbow, Inc. 2006 Treasurer's Report**

Oxbow, Inc. added another column to the cash account this year, finishing the year with over \$1 million in ready cash. Oxbow experienced a positive cash flow of \$87,561.24 in income. This figure does not include donations totaling \$51,000 in restricted funds, including \$500 for land purchase, \$500 for education and \$50,000 for habitat improvement. These are restricted funds and will be carried on the books as Equity until spent. With interest rates increasing, Oxbow brought in nearly twice the interest on investments as last year, plus a State Grant of \$14,000 for mitigation of work performed on Route 48 in Lawrenceburg.

Expenses were held to \$30,838.98, or about \$11,000 less than last year. This was due in part to tax expenses leveling out due to changes in the tax collection procedures in Dearborn County two years ago, plus the fact that the status of land owned in Hamilton County has been converted to tax-free status. Legal expenses were also down this year due to the fact that no land purchases took place. A change in format of the newsletter resulted in increased printing costs, but from what I'm hearing from the membership it was money well spent.

Although it may appear that very little took place in the past year, many great plans are underway, and the next year should see numerous improvements take place in the Oxbow. Oxbow, Inc. is a 100% volunteer organization—no salaries, expense accounts or offices are paid for by the organization—and is beholden to the generous support of the membership and the public. The IRS tax returns Forms 990 for Oxbow, Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. may be inspected on [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Dues	\$27,048.50	\$26,722.00
Land Acquisition		
Donations	\$3,295.00	\$8,806.63
Interest	\$40,376.09	\$21,772.82
Dividend on Equity	\$5.19	\$7.35
Memorials	\$2,860.00	\$5,465.00
Birdathon	\$6,129.58	\$3,203.25
Crop Income	\$21,718.00	\$26,623.00
Merchandise	\$78.00	\$196.00
LCD	\$500.00	\$500.00
Donated Securities	\$712.00	\$1,519.54
Realized Gain on Equity		-\$98.07
State Grants	\$14,600.00	
Advertising Revenue		\$150.00
Program Donations	\$150.00	\$240.00
Miscellaneous	\$945.86	\$1,612.14
Total Income	\$118,418.22	\$96,719.66
(Less) Cost of Good Sold	(\$18.00)	
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$118,400.22</b>	<b>\$96,719.66</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Postage & Phone	\$1,776.21	\$2,261.45
Office Supplies	\$801.02	\$322.03
Printing	\$6,624.80	\$4,388.30
Taxes	\$4,966.86	\$8,177.91
Insurance	\$3,600.00	\$0.00
Fund Raising	\$0.00	\$0.00
Security	\$6,500.00	\$8,600.00
Legal	\$3,783.29	\$8,729.18
Membership Dues	\$325.00	\$0.00
Board Development	\$299.00	\$0.00
Rent	\$957.52	\$0.00
Advertising	\$370.00	\$0.00
Land Maintenance	\$392.13	\$9,278.52
Miscellaneous	\$443.15	\$41,757.39
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$30,838.98</b>	<b>\$54,962.27</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$87,561.24</b>	<b>\$41,757.39</b>
	<b>Assets &amp; Net Worth</b>	
Cash & Investments	\$1,046,281.70	\$909,614.46
Inventory	\$1,182.00	\$0.00
Land	\$1,526,907.66	\$1,526,907.66
Easements Owned	\$231,963.28	\$231,963.28
(Less) Debt	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Net Worth</b>	<b>\$2,806,334.64</b>	<b>\$2,668,485.40</b>

## OXBOW, INC. PROGRAMS

**Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 7:30 PM**

**Earth Connection, College of Mount St. Joseph  
Climbing Denali**

Bill Hopple, Executive Director of the Cincinnati Nature Center, will speak tonight on the story of his expedition to the top of North America. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Bill stood on top of Denali, also known as Mt. McKinley, which stands 20,320 feet, the tallest peak in North America. Bill's climb was the culmination of three years of training to celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday (mid-life crisis). Bill will provide us with all of the interesting details, as well as the insights gained during this incredible climb, along with 150 pictures during this 45-minute presentation. For more information, email [bhopple@cincynature.org](mailto:bhopple@cincynature.org), or call Bill at 965-4246 (office phone). To get to Earth Connection in Delhi, go south on Neeb Road past the Delhi Road traffic light, turn up the second drive on the left.

**Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 7:30 PM**

**Lawrenceburg Public Library, Lawrenceburg, IN  
Animals—Wild and Domestic**

Al Winstel, a Naturalist for 30 years with the Hamilton County Park District and currently Hub Naturalist at Sharon Woods, will be our speaker tonight. What is the difference between a free range chicken and a Greater Prairie Chicken? How far removed is your domestic cat from its wild ancestor? These are the kinds of questions Al will explore tonight as he presents an interesting program on how animals become domesticated, the differences between wild and domestic animals, and which wild animals are currently in the process of being domesticated. For more information, call Al at 563-4513. The Lawrenceburg Public Library is downtown at 123 High Street. Going west on US 50, turn left onto Walnut St, then right onto High St. The Library is on your right.

### **Hunting Permit Applications due July 1, 2007**

Oxbow, Inc. members who wish to apply for permits to hunt on Oxbow, Inc. land must submit their application by July 1, 2007 to: Oxbow, Inc., C/o John Getzendanner, 21007 Crestview Ct., Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

Your application must include a copy of your valid Indiana hunting license and a completed memorandum of understanding printed below. Cut out the memorandum. Complete the form and mail it with a copy of your license and a self addressed stamped envelop to John. Once accepted you will receive a permission slip to hunt on Oxbow land designated for hunting, east of I-275. Members must have dues paid current to the time of application. Any violation of the memorandum of understanding will result in immediate revocation of hunting privileges.

#### **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

*(A hunting permission slip with a confirmatory stamp and authorized signature will be returned to you upon acceptance of your application.)*

#### *Application and Memorandum of Understanding*

**I am a member in good standing of Oxbow, Inc.** and request permission to hunt on Oxbow, Inc. property east of I-275 as will be shown on the map affixed to the permission slip that must be carried while hunting on Oxbow property.

**I agree: to hunt subject to the following Oxbow, Inc. rules:**

- I will practice good hunting ethics at all times.
- Others may rightfully visit the area and my activity has no priority over that of others.
- During my use of Oxbow, Inc. property I will not litter, remove or damage Oxbow, Inc. property, or cause any habitat destruction.
- I will not leave any structures on the property (ie. hunting stands, duck blinds, etc.).
- I will carry a valid permission slip at all times while hunting on Oxbow, Inc. land.
- I will obey all applicable laws

**I understand that hunting privilege will be revoked if any of the above regulations are violated. I understand that I enter Oxbow, Inc. property entirely at my own risk and hold Oxbow, Inc. free of liability for any hazards, known or unknown to it. I HAVE INCLUDED A COPY OF MY VALID INDIANA HUNTING PERMIT.**

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Return Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Oxbow, Inc., c/o John Getzendanner, 21007 Crestview Ct., Lawrenceburg, IN 47025, Phone: 812-537-5728  
(Hunting permission is granted for one year (July 1 to June 30 of the following year) only and must be reapplied for yearly.)

**HUNTING PERMISSION REQUESTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY JULY 1, 2007**

## 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 know 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.**

Prothonotary Warbler	\$ 15	Wood Duck	\$ 25
Great Blue Heron	\$ 50	Green-winged Teal	\$100
Great Egret	\$250	Osprey	\$500
Bald Eagle	\$1000		
Charm of Goldfinches (Group Level)	\$25		

Mail to: **Oxbow, Inc.**  
P. O. Box 43391  
Cincinnati OH 45243-0391  
513-851-9835

## Corporation Officers

President, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Vice President, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Corresponding Secretary, Dennis Mason	(513) 385-3607
Treasurer, Jim Poehlmann	(513) 931-4072
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, Mike Kluesener	(812) 623-7800
Land Management, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Programs, Jerry Lippert	(513) 522-6567
Research, Dr. Steve Pelikan	(513) 681-2574
Speakers Bureau, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
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Newsletter Email: <a href="mailto:meggster@fuse.net">meggster@fuse.net</a>	

Member Communications: Joanne Earls, Kathleen Corneil, Lynda Mason, Velda Miller, Pat Shanklin, Sarah Shell, Suzanne Skidmore, Barb Varland, Jim Wilgenbusch

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

513-851-9835

Need a Speaker?  
Give Us a Call!

[www.oxbowinc.org](http://www.oxbowinc.org)  
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243  
P.O. BOX 43391

**OXBOW, Inc.**  
founded 1989  
PROTECTING WETLANDS

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