



July—August 2009

No. 138

# WETLAND *matters*

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

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## Birdathon 2009 Biggest of the New Era

...by Jon Seymour

Since Oxbow resumed leadership of the Greater Cincinnati Area Birdathon in 2006 we have been building participation. We had two goals for resuming leadership. The first was to build some group fun back into the birding community in Greater Cincinnati and the second was to raise money for Oxbow habitat and access improvement. Birdathon 2009 was the biggest in recent memory. There were 25 teams participating. Nineteen teams (with over 50 participants) made it to the Tally Party at the Winton Centre where pizza, veggies, beverages, and cookies were consumed with delight as stories were shared and birds were tallied. There were a lot of winners and absolutely no losers.

There were eleven local conservation organizations participating:

- Cincinnati Bird Club
- Cincinnati City Parks
- Cincinnati Nature Center
- Claremont County Park District
- Fernald Preserve
- Miami Valley Christian Academy
- Oxbow, Inc
- Queen City Young Birders Club
- Raptor, Inc.
- University of Cincinnati Biology Department
- Xavier University

As in past years, there were contests on many different levels. This year the excitement in the room centered around several teams made up of young people: elementary age children from the Miami Valley Christian Academy, high school kids in the Queen City Young Birders Club, and college age students from at least three universities. Their enthusiasm and skill really made all those with gray and graying hair in the room feel a lot less tired from their 24 hours of birding.

### Most Species in a Single Confined Location:

- Gary Stegner, Sue Walpole, Hook Swiger & John Homer (Fernald Team) - 99 species at the Fernald Preserve including a new species for the Fernald Preserve (Henslow's Sparrow).

- George Farnsworth, Mike Gaydos, Nina Bertaux-Skierik, Kaleel Skierik & Dan Schoeff (Xavier University Team) camped overnight and counted 90 species in the Miami White-water County Park. (winner of the *Most Species per Mile of Fossil Fuel Used* award).

### Most Species by a Team 18 Years of Age and Under:

- Brian Wulker & Gale Wulker (Queen City Young Birders Club) in the count area - 127 species.
- Tyler Ficker, Cassidy Ficker, Lukas Horeland, William Babb, Naomi Layne & Bill McGill (Miami Valley Christian Academy) in the count area - 81 species.

### Most Species by a Solitary Birder\*

- Jon Seymour - in the count area - 122 species.

### Most Species Photographed.

- Rene Layne (Miami Valley Christian Academy) - in the count area - 39 species.

### Most Species by an All Women's Team

- Sr. Marty Dermody, Sara Krailler & Katherine Miller - in the count area - 82 species.

### Most Species in a Single County

- Steve Bobonick & Dave Helm (Cincinnati Nature Center #1) - Hamilton County, OH - 111 species

### Most Species in the Birdathon Area

- Paul Wharton, Jay Stenger, Jack Stenger & Joe Bens (Beasts of Birdin') - 145 species.
- Jerry Lippert, Erich Baumgardner & Wayne Wauligman (Finneytown's Fabulous Flying Fortune Seekers) - 142 species.
- Dave Brinkman & Don Morse, Jr. (Dawn to Duck Patrol - Cincinnati Nature Center #2) - 115 species.
- John, Sarah & Evan Leon (Two in the Bush & Son) - 110 species.
- Steve Pelikan & Mike Busam - 107 species
- Ned Keller & Kathy McDonald - (Pushing in the Wind) (raising money for the Ohio Young Birders) - 105 species
- Chris & Suzanne Clingman (Clermont County Park System) - 103 species
- Mark & Don Koller (Cincinnati Parks) - 100 species.
- Mark Gilsdorf & Jeff Burgess (Pogue Mahone Team) - 95 species.
- Joe Kappa, Paul Krusling & John Ferner (Old Eagles) - 93 species.

(continued on page 2)

*Birdathon—continued from page 1*

- John & Barb Eckles, Dave and Vicki Tozier (Birds Elude Us) - 65 species.

These 19 reporting teams identified 195 species of birds in the Greater Cincinnati area during the 2009 Birdathon. That is just two short of last year's record of 197. More importantly 16 of the 19 teams reported at least one species that no other team reported and 25 species were seen by only one of the reporting teams. This really brings out the importance of having a lot of teams in the field with lots of eyes and ears to find the species present.

Just for fun I went to the World Series of Birding website to see how we compared. Of course I knew we would have fewer species. The world series is done centered around the world renowned birding site of Cape May, NJ. It is a series of refuges, and is on the Atlantic flyway and ocean species are plentiful. I was surprised by one thing I found. The WSB has also adopted a variety of competitive categories to encourage broad participation. Some examples of their categories are: most species in a single county, most species in a confined area, most species digitally photographed, most species without using fossil fuel, most species by elementary, middle school, and high school teams, and most species by a group of seniors (this years award went to the "Limping Limpkins" - love these birding group names!).

Now the serious business of collecting all the pledges! We will report the results of the fundraising in the next issue. Make plans now to participate and pledge for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Birdathon on May 7-8, 2010. We hope to make it bigger and better than ever.



### Sweet Paradise

.....by Cathy Kelly

I am a long-time resident of Aurora and have biked the Dearborn Trail from Aurora to Argosy many times. My boyfriend Paul and I tried to figure out how we could continue our ride across the levee to Hardintown but couldn't find an easy access. We then drove to Hardintown and parked the car unloaded the bikes and continued our little adventure. What a wonderful surprise to see the sign explaining the beautiful sight before us. The Oxbow plaque gave us wonderful information about this hidden treasure. It is so nice to see nature at its finest nestled among the hustle and bustle of the busy day going on behind us.

The next day I was in that same hustle and bustle as I drove to work along US 50 early in the morning. As I neared the levee, I realized that traffic was stopping very quickly across several lanes. Mumbling to myself as to the cause, here comes a little family of Bobwhite, momma and about 8 tiny babies in a straight line scurrying so fast I could hardly see their feet, right across 6 lanes of traffic and then headed up the levee right where I had been standing in awe of the beautiful Oxbow the day before. All I could do was smile knowing what sweet paradise awaited them.

# Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

Bird (and other things) Walk - June 7, 2009  
by Wayne Wauligman

About 25 people showed up for the scheduled guided Oxbow Hike to the Shawnee Lookout floodplain. Meeting at the parking lot, I handed out a few nets and a pair of waders. Jacob Gemperle was the lucky one to keep his feet dry and mud free. We then walked the trail out to the Great Miami, looking down for reptiles and amphibians and listening up for birds.

The River cooperated by leaving us a long sandy beach without the hip deep mud. We found 7 singing Prothonotary Warblers and several Chats. One Chat followed us up river and then followed us back down, showing off for us the entire time. A singing Prothonotary posed for a posse of photographers. Willow Flycatcher, Bank, Rough-winged and Tree Swallows, Kingbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Baltimore Oriole, Summer Tanager, Louisiana Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Phoebe, Warbling Vireo, and Kingfisher were present and calling.

Jacob Gemperle turned up one Smooth Softshell Turtle along a sandy beach, providing a photographic moment for showing shell field marks. Allie Franke caught a hatchling Long-nosed Gar in her net. With the floodplain being a fish hatchery, Carp and Drum fry were everywhere. Several Cricket Frogs, Fowler's Toad larvae and metamorphs, Green Frog larvae and adults, Bullfrogs, Spring Peeper larvae and Streamside Salamander larvae were also found. A Red-eyed female Box Turtle was the star of several photographs. No Snapping Turtles or Northern Water Snakes could be found this time. Notable butterflies were Silvery Checkerspot, Question Mark, Tawny Emperor, Red-spotted Purple, Red Admiral, Summer Azure, Great Spangled Fritillary and a fresh Zebra Swallowtail.

Everyone was impressed by the amount and diversity of life in this floodplain habitat.

*(Oxbow tour guides often offer more than specific birding tours. Some do focus on just birds, others on just plants, some combine butterflies and birds, and guides like Wayne find the diversity of the wetlands life by exploring beaches, ponds, woodlands looking for the usually unseen denizens of the Oxbow.)*

## Oxbow Inc. PROGRAMS

*To get to the Oxbow, Inc. Office take Highway US 50 south from the #16 exit of I-275. Pass the Argosy exit and turn left at the second stop light onto Walnut St. 301 Walnut is on the right side at the second stop light at the corner of Walnut and Center Streets. Free parking is available on Walnut St., Center St., and in the parking lot behind the building.)*

**Tuesday, July 14, 2009, 7:30 p.m.**  
**301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg**  
**The Oxbow, Inc. Office**

Barry Dalton, Director of Ecological Outreach and Mitigation at Northern Kentucky University, will speak to us about Wetland Mitigation Banking and how it can be used to supplement wetland conservation efforts by non-profits and other conservation groups. The talk will touch on site selection, the state of the science, and mitigation process and hurdles. Barry has been involved with wetland mitigation projects for over 15 years and manages a bank in southern Ohio.

**Tuesday, August 11, 2009, 7:30 p.m.**  
**301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg**  
**The Oxbow, Inc. Office**

Paul Strasser, founder of the Red Wolf Sanctuary and Raptor Rehabilitation Center, will talk to us about their new facilities near Rising Sun, IN which include wetlands and prairies. The mission of the sanctuary focuses on the preservation and study of the wildlife that shared the historic range of the red wolf. They stress education and making people aware of the vital part each animal plays in the health of the total ecosystem.



A special thanks to Tom Uhlman, who made and donated a bat box to Oxbow, Inc. We will be placing it in a location we hope will encourage bats to roost.



## Oxbow Inc. FIELD TRIPS

**Date & Time:** Sunday, July 5, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

**Where:** Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow.

**Leader:** Steve Pelikan, (513) 681-2574  
[pelikan@math.uc.edu](mailto:pelikan@math.uc.edu)

Join skilled naturalist and Oxbow board member Steve Pelikan for what will prove to be a very interesting visit to the Oxbow as we look for interesting plants and animals. Steve intends to visit several of the least known parts of the Oxbow, such as the Ohio River bank, Wood Duck Slough and some seldom visited woodlands in the Oxbow. Steve has a great knowledge of birds, plants, butterflies, insects and other wildlife and is the perfect guide for a general nature trip. Since this is the middle of summer, Steve suggests bringing sunscreen, insect repellent and water to make your visit more comfortable.

The date of this trip reminds me of Dave Styers old (tongue in cheek) adage, which is that the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday weekend signals the beginning of the fall shorebird (plover and sandpipers) migration in the Oxbow. Granted, it is a wee bit early, but the first of them do begin to show by then and over the years Dave would more often than not turn up a few.

**Date & Time:** Sunday, August 16, 2009, 8:00 a.m.

**Where:** Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow.

**Leader:** Paul Wharton, (513) 353-3403  
[pwharton@fuse.net](mailto:pwharton@fuse.net)

The southward shorebird migration should be near peak in the Oxbow on this date so finding them will be the focus of this trip. Shorebirds (i.e. plovers and sandpipers, and the symbolic logo for Oxbow Inc.) are dependent on shallow water for feeding and several different species can usually be found along the exposed shorelines and on the mudflats of the Oxbow at this season. The post breeding dispersal and southward migration of several species of herons and egrets also occurs at this time of the year. Large numbers of Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets and lesser numbers of Black-crowned Night-Herons and Green Herons are likely to be seen. Even rare species such as Little Blue Heron and Snowy and Cattle Egrets are possible at this time of the year.

A wide variety of other birds and wildlife should also be seen and the sharp eyes, ears and knowledge of trip leader Paul Wharton will give us the advantage. Come out and join Paul on what should be an interesting morning in the Oxbow. Feel free to contact Paul if you have any questions.



# Conservation Corner

.....by Jon Seymour

Conservation is more than just saving land – it is a business. Oxbow, Inc. is a land trust that holds land in the public trust by virtue of our status as a tax-exempt charitable organization. The result is that we are in the business of owning and (because we want to) improving land for wildlife.

Like any other business we are feeling the pressure of these difficult economic conditions and many are feeling more than just the pinch of the recession. This is a challenging time for all organizations that depend on the generosity of the public for their funding. Oxbow, Inc. does not have any State or Federal sources of funding and depends solely on the donations of members, friends, and like-minded organizations. We have historically four sources of income: interest from our investments, farm leases, Birdathon pledges, and member and friend donations.

We have been fortunate in the recession that our standard investments were in a very conservative money market fund and we did not suffer any loss of our principle, however, we have had no income from this money either over the past several months. The endowment fund is in stocks and bonds and took a hit during the last 9 months. Fortunately it was well distributed and invested and only declined about 25%, a large decline, but far less than many others have suffered. Our farm lease income has been steady. This is important since we try to run the organization within a budget dictated by our farm lease income. Special fund raisers, like the Birdathon, supply money for specific access and habitat improvement projects. These are very important and often are the most visible of our expenditures – like our road improvement project. Membership and member donations have declined slightly in the past year, after several years of slow growth, probably due to the crunch of the economy. Membership donations and gifts are used to protect and improve the Oxbow floodplain in direct line with our stated mission.

The loss of interest on the investments in the money market fund means that our funds are only being built by member donations at this time. Additional expenses we may encounter to purchase more land will have to be built back by member donations for at least the near future.

As a business we remain good citizens of the community. We pay rent to another charitable organization (the Knights of Columbus) for the office store front

where we hold our meetings, we pay taxes on the land we lease for farming, we hire local contractors to publish the newsletter, print brochures, haul in gravel, etc. We hire local Sheriff Deputies to patrol the Oxbow to keep it clean and safe. We hire local surveyors and lawyers to help us conclude land purchases. These are just a few of the ways in which Oxbow, Inc. contributes to the local economy.

Because we are a business the Board of Oxbow, Inc. is doing more to train themselves to run a conservation business and not just be a corporation that buys and holds land. Board Members are attending training sessions held by the national Land Trust Alliance, we are updating our accounting system, and expanding our educational program to impact more levels of society. This is a continuing process and over the next few years we will continue to update our systems and expand our understanding of the role the Board has in running this unique type of business where the customers are animals and plants.

## Birdathon is for Young Birders Also

.....by Bill McGill

Miami Valley Christian Academy, of Newtown, Ohio, began a birding club this year to complement the bird watching class that began last year in Rene' Layne's fourth grade class. The guest speaker for each Monday for eight weeks was long time bird watcher Mr. Bill McGill (lovingly called Mr. Bill). While leading the class that ended with a three hour birdathon at Shawnee State Forest, and with positive response from the fourth graders, the idea was planted to begin a bird club.

Ten children (third through fifth grades) joined last September. Tyler and Cassidy Ficker, Lukas and Sarah Moreland, Jenna and Leah Breuer, William Babb, Street Croci, Brad Hall, and Naomi Layne meet each month to learn more about birds or to take bird hikes. They have been to the Oxbow area, Rowe Woods, Spring Valley, Caesar Creek as well as participated in the Christmas Bird Count. The students have learned important ideas and facts of how the Oxbow was a vital staging area for migratory birds and how a group of bird watchers were working to save it. Many practice sessions and scouting of birds were done in the weeks before the Oxbow Birdathon to get the club ready for the challenge.

The most important activity however was how the children were able to sell bird feeders painted in their school colors, bird seed, homemade bird seed cakes, and handmade bird note cards (using watercolors donated from a local artist). Club members sold to friends, family and neighbors. They were able to sell close to \$400.00, of which half went to support their future Bird Club activities and the other half was donated to Oxbow Inc. as the clubs pledge.

Our team came in SECOND in the 19 and under category. Yes, there were only two teams competing in that category. Congratulations to the Ohio Young Birders Club, but wait until next year!!

The students loved their first experience in the Oxbow Birdathon. They look forward to competing again next year.

Great Miami River Sweep 2009  
 .....by Kani Meyer

The low rumble of thunder and soft patter of rain wakened me just before the alarm was to go off. Not a good awakening on the morning of an Oxbow clean up. Weatherman Tim Hedrick had said it would rain until about 7 a.m. then partial clearing until around noon. I would much rather turn over and drift back into sleep but I had sent that email out the evening before to the people who registered for the clean up saying that it would be on so Dave and I dragged ourselves out of bed and we were on the road, heading for the Oxbow by 8am. By then the rain had stopped. Hints of blue sky slashed through the thick grey-black clouds here and there and things were looking up. In the Oxbow, while we waited to see if any brave folks would dare to join us, we worked on weeding around the entrance sign. I was gratified to see that the columbine and phlox planted by the scouts who had constructed the planter around the sign were blooming as was the celandine poppy (not that alien lesser celandine) that I had planted there last year. Also up were the sensitive ferns and spiderworts. The spicebush also was doing well.

Just as we finished, Matt McAdams drove up so we walked back to the parking lot. Surprisingly a total of eight other people kept the faith and the clean up was on! Sandy Stehlin, veteran river cleaner upper, kept to the banks and water's edge while Janet and Dan Schneider, who came clear across town from Fairfax, walked the roads. There was still a good bit of water covering the far end of the causeway and we left the stretch beyond for Dr. Mike Miller who came prepared with wading boots. Dave Meyer and Matt man-handled a love seat out of the woods to the road and Chris Powell and Mark Warger cleared wood beams, a crushed barrel and tires out of the nearby field. Around 10:30 it was again looking threatening so Chad Fledmann, Matt and Mark picked up all the stuff we had piled along the roads. It still wasn't raining so we did a little more before calling it a day. A beaver paralleled us in the water along the causeway, disappearing into the old culvert under the road.

Although we filled about 20 bags and had a few larger 4 X 4s and odd pieces of wood here and there, for the most part my impression was that there really wasn't a lot of trash washed into the Oxbow this year. Maybe it was because there hasn't been a lot of flooding and people don't dump the way they used to in that area. The fact that we only found 2 tires was amazing to me!

Oxbow owes a BIG THANKS to all the people mentioned above and to Rumpke for donating the dumpster. It is people and businesses like these that keep places like the Oxbow looking and feeling like wild places and not dumps! (See photos of some of our volunteers in the photo spread!)

## Oxbow, Inc. Memorials & Honorariums

### Donor

Walter & Susan McBeath

### In Memory of

Martha Peters



*Oxbow, Inc. would like to thank:*

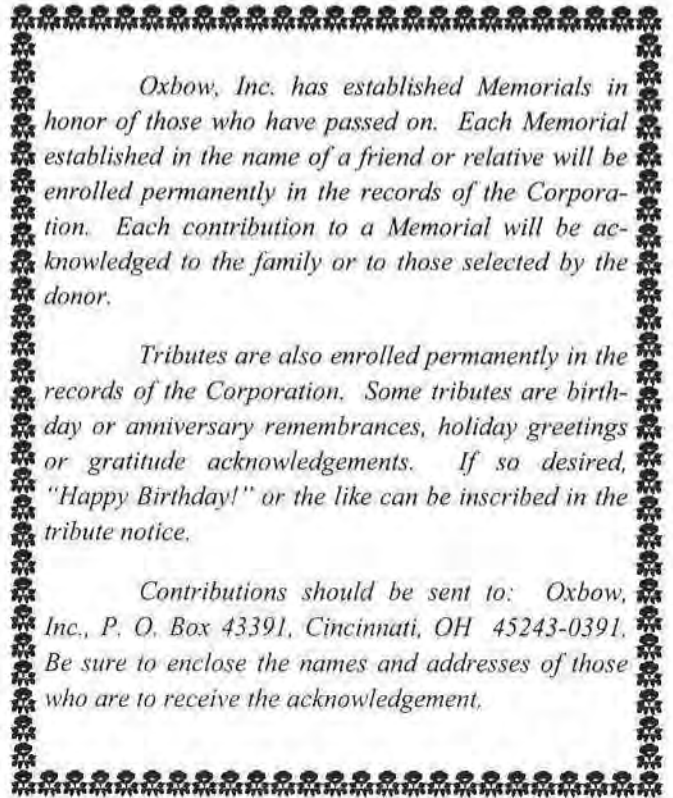
Walter and Susan McBeath  
 Kelly M. Riccetti  
 and  
 Whit and Bon Wharton

*for their generous gifts*

*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.*





Sometimes trash can be good. This mother goose selected a tire to become her nest. When the floods came to the bottoms the nest floated up and kept the eggs high above the water. The only problem is that her nest will probably change location when the waters subside. Hopefully the nest will settle back down in a safe area. (photo by Tom Uhlman)



The youngest birders to participate in this year's Birdathon were from the Miami Valley Christian Academy. They are pictured here in the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge with their adult leaders. Left to right are: William Babb, Naomi Layne (in the back), Tyler Ficker, Cassidy Ficker, (adult leader) Bill McGill. (photo by adult leader Rene' Layne). Not pictured here but present during the Birdathon were Sarah Moreland, Jenna Breuer, and Leah Breuer. All the children participated in the fundraising project to support Oxbow, Inc.



Participants in the nature walk led by Wayne Wauligman pause to strain water and examine water creatures that normally hide in ponds and rivers. (photo by Wayne Wauligman)



A beautiful Zebra Swallowtail presented itself to Wayne Wauligman's tour group for examination and amazement. This beautiful butterfly has some of the longest tails in the swallowtail butterfly family. (photo by Wayne Wauligman)



Birders line up at the Tally Party at Winton Woods for pizza and other goodies. Anita Buck stewards the table and makes sure that everyone knows which type of pizza is in each box. (photo by Jon Seymour)

### THANKS TO THE FINNEYTOWN PAPA JOHNS FOR THEIR HELP WITH THE BIRDATHON PIZZA!



Birders mingle, eat pizza, and exchange stories from their 24 hours of birding. Nineteen teams with over 50 people reported to the Tally party for the final count. Each team was asked to share a story with the others from their birding experience during the Birdathon. (photo by Jon Seymour)





An immature Bald Eagle glides across the Oxbow Area.. Note that this bird is banded. Maybe we will be able to read the band someday and have a little more history of the eagles that are using the Oxbow. (photo by Ruhikant Meetei)



Great Miami River Clean Up - Dan & Janet Schneider (photo by Kani Meyer)



Great Miami River Clean Up - Matt McAdams (above) and Mark Warger (right) (photos by Kani Meyer)



Great Miami River Clean Up - Dave Meyer (above) and Chris Powell (below). (photos by Kani Meyer)



This elegant Caspian Tern hunts the lakes and rivers of the Oxbow. From their passage above the water they spot small fish near the surface and then dive into the water to catch them. (Photo by Ruhikant Meetei)



by Dave Styer

### The Downy Woodpecker

The Downy Woodpecker must be one of the most widely spread birds in Ohio. It is one of ten species that were recorded in every single priority block (764 in all) during the Ohio breeding bird atlas project. (See *The Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas*, 1991.) In this respect the Downy Woodpecker joins the company of birds such as the Mourning Dove, the Starling, and the Cardinal, although I don't believe that the Downy is as abundant as these others.

Downy Woodpeckers come to feeders, especially suet feeders. However, when I think of flocks of birds at our feeders, I think of Cardinals or Goldfinches, not woodpeckers. How many Downy Woodpeckers might be coming to your feeder during the winter: I've read that the winter territory of a Downy Woodpecker is 10 to 15 hectares. I've also read (see the article in *the Birds of North America*) that Downys will fly up to nine-tenths of a kilometer outside of their territory to take advantage of a good feeder. With the great Downy Woodpecker habitat in Ohio, I calculate that there may be 25 territories within range of your feeder. While you think you have 3 or 4 Downys visiting your feeder, you may have up to 25! But, wait. Who lives in a Downy Woodpecker territory? One bird or a pair? Could you have up to 50 Downys visiting your feeder over winter? Unbelievable.

They say that the breeding territory of the Downy Woodpecker is roughly one-twentieth the size of the winter territory. Surely the breeding territory contains a pair of birds. The woodpeckers breed when the food resource is optimal and they choose the best habitat, so they don't need a very large territory. Furthermore, while feeding young on the nest they need to stay nearby. While the woodpeckers are nesting don't expect them to come to your feeder from half a mile away. That all makes perfectly good sense.

They say that Downy Woodpeckers don't migrate, although they may disperse some. When nesting season starts we should be dealing with roughly the same number of Downys as in winter. (Actually, fewer, because not all birds survive the winter.) The drastic shrinking of territory size would leave 95% of the area without any Downy Woodpeckers during the breeding season. (Think of people who live on a 20-acre lot, and wander all over that lot during the winter. Now suppose that they just stay on one acre near their house in summer. Then 95 percent of their lot would be unoccupied in the summer.) Maybe that's just the way it is. I used to think that Downys got very secretive during breeding season. That would make sense, because they would want to protect their nest. But it may be that they are not in most of their winter territory. Then you wouldn't see

them where you had been seeing them, and you might think that they had simply gotten secretive.

All bird watchers in the Cincinnati area have experienced the problem of telling a Downy Woodpecker from a Hairy Woodpecker. According to what I read, the two species are not so closely related as you might think. That makes the identification problem simple: just take a DNA sample. The two species are sufficiently different that you should be able to tell whose DNA it is. Impractical? Then I recommend that you look in a field guide such as *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. The Hairy is larger than the Downy, but the size can be hard to tell in the field. The Hairy's bill is relatively larger; most of the time that works well for identification. Usually the Hairy Woodpecker's outer tail feathers are all white, while the Downy's white outer tail feathers have a few dark bars. That works pretty well to separate the two species if you have a good look at the tail. Sibley points out that the Down Woodpecker has a much more conspicuous tuft of nasal bristles. Finally, the Downy has a mellow call note, and the Hairy has a harsh (relatively harsh) call note.

A fine feature of *The Sibley Guide to Birds* is that he shows variations from west to east of adult female Downy Woodpeckers on one page and the same variations for Hairy Woodpeckers on the facing page. Remarkably, the two species vary the same way, with the darkest birds from the Pacific (North West) and the lightest from the Atlantic states. The Pacific Hairy Woodpeckers even have dark spots on their white outer tail feathers. I can imagine three reasons that the woodpecker's plumages would change synchronously. First, if they hybridized a little, they might swap enough genetic material to keep their looks much the same in any location. Alas, the birds don't hybridize at all, so the first idea can't work. Second, different climates support different plumages. For example, birds of rainy areas are generally darker than their relatives in dry areas. The fact that the Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers may be their darkest in the rain forests of the Pacific Northwest would fit this concept. This would be an example of what is called parallel evolution. A third possibility is that it is beneficial for one, or both, to look like the other. A classic example in eastern North America is the Monarch and the Viceroy butterflies. The Monarch is unpalatable, so it is advantageous for the Viceroy to look like a Monarch, which it does. (Some studies have indicated that the Viceroy is also unpalatable. In this case it is mutually beneficial for each to look like the other.) When I look at Sibley's pictures, I strongly feel that there is more going on than just parallel evolution. Now I'll get in trouble by suggesting that it's beneficial for the two woodpeckers to look alike, although I haven't a clue why. Even with birds we know well, there are so many unanswered questions! The study of nature provides a lifetime of learning.





## Oxbow, Inc. 2008 Treasurer's Report

Category Per Report	Profit and Loss		Combined Figures
	Oxbow, Inc.	Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.	
Contributed Support	\$10,208.65		\$10,208.65
Legacies & Bequests	\$36,197.20		\$36,197.20
Earned Revenues	\$89,373.15	\$967.73	\$90,340.88
Special Events	\$5,859.43		\$5,859.43
Interest Income-Restricted Assets	\$2,124.86		\$2,124.86
Restricted Funds Activity	(\$1,590.49)		(\$1,590.49)
<u>Cost of Goods Sold</u>	<u>(\$18.00)</u>		<u>(\$18.00)</u>
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>\$142,154.80</u>		<u>\$143,122.53</u>
Less: Cost of Goods Sold			\$0.00
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$142,154.80</b>	<b>\$967.73</b>	<b>\$143,122.53</b>
Grant & Contract	\$965.94		\$965.94
Program Expenses-Ed.	\$38.47		\$38.47
Security	\$8,760.00		\$8,760.00
Legal & Accounting	\$6,598.65		\$6,598.65
Non-Personnel Expenses	\$12,751.11		\$12,751.11
Occupancy Expenses	\$13,975.61		\$13,975.61
Conference & Meeting	\$588.00		\$588.00
Depreciation	\$588.00		\$588.00
Miscellaneous	\$16,750.07		\$16,750.07
<u>Business Expenses</u>	<u>\$334.00</u>	<u>1644.25</u>	<u>\$1,978.25</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$61,349.85</b>	<b>\$1,644.25</b>	<b>\$62,994.10</b>
<b><u>Net Income</u></b>	<b><u>\$80,804.95</u></b>	<b><u>(\$676.52)</u></b>	<b><u>\$80,128.43</u></b>

Category Per Report	Balance Sheet		Combined Figures
	Oxbow, Inc.	Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.	
Checking/Savings	\$1,353,559.78	\$40,271.23	\$1,393,831.01
Other Current Assets	\$11,863.93	\$0.00	\$11,863.93
Total Current Assets	\$1,365,423.71	\$40,271.23	\$1,405,694.94
Land	\$245,551.60	\$1,281,356.06	\$1,526,907.66
Easements Owned	\$231,963.28		\$231,963.28
Land Improvements	\$6,734.10		\$6,734.10
Office Furniture & Equipment	\$3,183.00		\$3,183.00
(Less) Accumulated Amortization- Land Improvements	(\$937.00)		(\$937.00)
(Less) Accumulated Depreciation- Office Furniture & Equipment	(\$2,723.00)		(\$2,723.00)
Total Fixed Assets	\$483,771.98	\$1,281,356.06	\$1,765,128.04
Other Assets (Included Witte Endowment)	\$1,268,581.48		\$1,268,581.48
Total Assets	\$3,117,777.17	\$1,321,627.29	\$4,439,404.46
<b>Net Worth</b>	<b>\$3,117,777.17</b>	<b>\$1,321,627.29</b>	<b>\$4,439,404.46</b>

I never realized what an easy job I had as treasurer until this year. Handling funds during economic boom times is easy. This year was rather difficult. While this was the first year for the Witte Endowment and the funds generated by our new stock portfolio, the portfolio itself lost value, as did our money market funds. Contributed support, which includes memorials, grants and contributions, were off 44%. Earned revenues, which include dues, cropland rental, and interest on money market funds, were down 25%. On the expense side, expenses increased due to the addition of our first permanent office in Lawrenceburg. There was much debate and soul-searching on the part of the Board of Directors when contemplating taking on additional expenses in such economic times, but it was agreed that this was the next logical step for the organization, and I don't think anyone regrets taking on this burden. We have our own space for membership and board meetings and a constant visible presence in Lawrenceburg. With the renaissance that Walnut St., Lawrenceburg is currently experiencing, we couldn't have picked a better place.

As the operation of Oxbow becomes more complicated, we have seen a dramatic increase in professional expenses. Legal fees were up, and for the first time we have engaged the services of an accountant. As the organization grows, we will be a more public presence, and as such it is imperative that the books are in good order. Non-personnel expenses, which encompass office, fundraising postage and printing expenses, were held to a 14% increase this year, which I find reasonable. Occupancy expenses, which previously only covered renting Earth Connection at the College of Mount St. Joseph, were the largest single increase this year due to opening our office in Lawrenceburg.

Miscellaneous expenses, which include insurance, membership fees for organizations to which Oxbow belongs and other expenses, also saw a dramatic leap as this is where the management fee for the endowment resides. As we engage the services of attorneys, accountants and surveyors as needed, none of us are financial experts and are looking for Board members with more experience in these matters to help guide the Board's decisions. Management fees for the endowment alone were nearly \$12,000 last year, while interest and dividends yielded over \$36,000.

When everything was said and done, the combined organizations saw net income of \$80,128.43, which was down 29% from 2007, mostly due to reduced interest on investments. We successfully operated in the black while opening our first permanent office and improving the roads in the Oxbow. As the economy recovers in the coming year, we should see a leveling off of the downturn seen this year and hopefully an increase in 2010.

Oxbow, Inc. is a 100% volunteer organization—no salaries or expense accounts are paid for by the organization. We are 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 at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

The number in front of each species = the number of teams reporting that species.

1 BCD Hermit Thrush  
9 AAAAA Wood Thrush  
10 AAAAA American Robin  
10 BAAAA Gray Catbird  
10 BBBBB Northern Mockingbird  
10 ABBBB Brown Thrasher  
10 AAAAA European Starling  
10 EEE American Pipit  
10 DCBBB Cedar Waxwing  
9 BBBBB Blue-winged Warbler  
15 DDDDE Golden-winged Warbler  
15 BAAAD Tennessee Warbler  
11 DDD Orange-crowned Warbler  
11 BABC Nashville Warbler  
16 CCCDD Northern Parula  
18 AAAAA Yellow Warbler  
9 CBBBD Chestnut-sided Warbler  
7 DCBBC Magnolia Warbler  
3 CBBCE Cape May Warbler  
3 DCCD Black-throated Blue Warbler  
13 AAABE Yellow-rumped Warbler  
11 AAABD Black-throated Green Warbler  
6 CBBBD Blackburnian Warbler  
10 BBBBB Yellow-throated Warbler  
4 CCDDD Pine Warbler  
11 CCCCC Prairie Warbler  
11 BBBCD Palm Warbler  
5 DCBBD Bay-breasted Warbler  
14 DCBBD Blackpoll Warbler  
12 BBBBB Cerulean Warbler  
6 BBBCD Black-and-white Warbler  
9 DCBBC American Redstart  
12 CCCCC Prothonotary Warbler  
3 DDDDD Worm-eating Warbler  
9 BBABC Ovenbird  
4 CCCDD Northern Waterthrush  
11 BCCCC Louisiana Waterthrush  
9 CBBBB Kentucky Warbler  
1 EEE Connecticut Warbler  
1 DCCD Mourning Warbler  
10 BAAAA Common Yellowthroat  
11 BBBBB Hooded Warbler  
1 EDCCD Wilson's Warbler  
1 DCCC Canada Warbler  
15 DCBBB Yellow-breasted Chat  
12 CBBBB Summer Tanager  
16 BAAAB Scarlet Tanager  
17 AAAAA Eastern Towhee  
19 BBBBB Chipping Sparrow  
8 AAAAA Field Sparrow

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3 EEEEE Vesper Sparrow  
9 CCCDD Savannah Sparrow  
11 DDDDD Grasshopper Sparrow  
3 EEEEE Henslow's Sparrow  
19 AAAAA Song Sparrow  
1 EDDDE Lincoln's Sparrow  
1 BCCE Swamp Sparrow  
3 AABCD White-throated Sparrow  
9 CBBCE White-crowned Sparrow  
1 DDD Dark-eyed Junco  
19 AAAAA Northern Cardinal  
14 BBBBB Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
7 EDDDD Blue Grosbeak  
18 BAAAA Indigo Bunting  
8 EDDD Dickcissel  
9 ECCDD Bobolink  
19 AAAAA Red-winged Blackbird  
19 BBBBB Eastern Meadowlark  
3 DDE Rusty Blackbird  
19 AAAAA Common Grackle  
19 AAAAA Brown-headed Cowbird  
17 BBBBB Orchard Oriole  
10 BAAAA Baltimore Oriole  
2 DDE Purple Finch  
17 AAAAA House Finch  
1 DDDDE Pine Siskin  
19 AAAAA American Goldfinch  
19 EE Evening Grosbeak  
19 AAAAA House Sparrow  
3 Lark Sparrow  
2 White-winged Scoter

Key

A B C D E  
 each letter  
 represents the  
 week in May  
 1st to 5th

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## CinCheck

Cincinnati Birding Checklist  
 cincinnatibirds.com

Date: May 9, 2009

Birders: All Reporting  
 Teams 2009  
 Birdathon

Location:

Oxbow, Greater  
 Cincinnati  
 Birdathon Area

Notes:

19 Reporting Teams  
 \* 195 species \*

1 EEE Snow Goose  
18 AAAAA Canada Goose  
13 DD Mute Swan  
15 BBBBB Wood Duck  
1 DDD Gadwall  
1 CDDE American Wigeon  
1 DDEEE American Black Duck  
18 AAAAA Mallard  
14 BBCCC Blue-winged Teal  
3 CDDDD Northern Shoveler  
1 DD Northern Pintail  
1 CD Green-winged Teal  
2 E Redhead  
3 CDDDD Ring-necked Duck  
1 CDDE Lesser Scaup  
1 DEE Bufflehead  
5 DDDDD Hooded Merganser  
5 DDDE Red-breasted Merganser  
1 DDDDD Ruddy Duck  
1 EEEEE Ring-necked Pheasant  
15 CCCCC Wild Turkey  
1 CCCCC Northern Bobwhite  
5 DDDDD Common Loon  
5 BCCCC Pied-billed Grebe  
1 EE Horned Grebe  
14 CCCCC Double-crested Cormorant  
2 DDDDD American Bittern  
2 DDDDD Least Bittern  
18 BBBBB Great Blue Heron  
4 DDDDD Great Egret  
1 EE Snowy Egret  
1 EEEEE Little Blue Heron  
1 EEEEE Cattle Egret  
12 CBBBB Green Heron  
1 CCCCC Black-crowned Night-Heron  
1 EEEEE Yellow-crowned Night-Heron  
14 DDDDD Black Vulture  
17 AAAAA Turkey Vulture  
3 CDDDD Osprey  
12 DDDEE Bald Eagle  
3 DDEEE Northern Harrier  
2 DDEEE Sharp-shinned Hawk  
14 CCCCC Cooper's Hawk  
10 CCCCC Red-shouldered Hawk  
4 CCCCC Broad-winged Hawk  
16 BBBBB Red-tailed Hawk  
15 BBBBB American Kestrel  
1 EE Merlin  
3 DDDDD Peregrine Falcon  
2 DDDDD Virginia Rail

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5 CCCCC Sora  
1 DDDDD Common Moorhen  
6 BCCCC American Coot  
1 EEE Sandhill Crane  
1 DDDCC Black-bellied Plover  
1 EEE American Golden-Plover  
3 DCCCC Semipalmated Plover  
18 AAAAA Killdeer  
1 EE American Avocet  
13 BBBBB Spotted Sandpiper  
11 BCCCE Solitary Sandpiper  
8 BCCDD Greater Yellowlegs  
1 EEE Willet  
10 BOCDD Lesser Yellowlegs  
1 EEEEE Upland Sandpiper  
1 EEE Ruddy Turnstone  
3 DCCB Semipalmated Sandpiper  
5 DCCCC Least Sandpiper  
1 DDD White-rumped Sandpiper  
5 CCCCC Pectoral Sandpiper  
4 DDDDD Dunlin  
1 EDDD Stilt Sandpiper  
5 DDDDD Short-billed Dowitcher  
1 E Long-billed Dowitcher  
1 CDD Wilson's Snipe  
7 CCCCC American Woodcock  
1 EEEE Wilson's Phalarope  
1 DDDEE Bonaparte's Gull  
9 CCCCC Ring-billed Gull  
2 DDDDD Herring Gull  
2 DDDEE Caspian Tern  
1 DDDD Black Tern  
3 DDDEE Common Tern  
2 DDDD Forster's Tern  
19 AAAAA Rock Pigeon  
19 AAAAA Mourning Dove  
16 DCBBB Yellow-billed Cuckoo  
6 DDDDE Black-billed Cuckoo  
2 EEEEE Barn Owl  
5 CCCCC Eastern Screech-Owl  
9 CCCCC Great Horned Owl  
9 CCCCC Barred Owl  
9 ECCCC Common Nighthawk  
1 EEEEE Chuck-will's-widow  
1 DDDEE Whip-poor-will  
17 AAAAA Chimney Swift  
14 DCCBB Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
12 BBBBB Belted Kingfisher  
5 CCCCC Red-headed Woodpecker  
17 AAAAA Red-bellied Woodpecker

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1 CDE Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
17 AAAAA Downy Woodpecker  
11 BBBBB Hairy Woodpecker  
15 AAAAA Northern Flicker  
13 BBBBB Pileated Woodpecker  
1 DDD Olive-sided Flycatcher  
18 DCAAA Eastern Wood-Pewee  
1 EEE Yellow-bellied Flycatcher  
9 ECBBA Acadian Flycatcher  
1 EE Alder Flycatcher  
7 DDCBB Willow Flycatcher  
3 CBBCD Least Flycatcher  
16 BCCCC Eastern Phoebe  
12 BAAAA Great Crested Flycatcher  
18 BBBBB Eastern Kingbird  
1 EEEEE Loggerhead Shrike  
1 BBBBB White-eyed Vireo  
1 EEE Bell's Vireo  
14 BBBBB Yellow-throated Vireo  
6 BCCDE Blue-headed Vireo  
14 BBBBB Warbling Vireo  
1 DCCCD Philadelphia Vireo  
14 BAAAA Red-eyed Vireo  
17 AAAAA Blue Jay  
17 AAAAA American Crow  
5 CCCCC Horned Lark  
13 CCCBB Purple Martin  
18 BBBBB Tree Swallow  
18 BBBBB Northern Rough-winged Swallow  
0 CCCCC Bank Swallow  
4 DDDDD Cliff Swallow  
17 BBBBB Barn Swallow  
18 AAAAA Carolina Chickadee  
18 AAAAA Tufted Titmouse  
1 DDDDE Red-breasted Nuthatch  
15 BBBBB White-breasted Nuthatch  
1 DD Brown Creeper  
16 AAAAA Carolina Wren  
1 EEEEE Bewick's Wren  
16 AAAAA House Wren  
1 EE Winter Wren  
1 EEEEE Sedge Wren  
2 DDDDD Marsh Wren  
1 DD Golden-crowned Kinglet  
19 ABCD Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
16 BBBBB Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
16 BBBBB Eastern Bluebird  
4 ECCCC Veery  
4 DCCCE Gray-cheeked Thrush  
11 BBAAB Swainson's Thrush

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**Oxbow, Inc.**

A nonprofit organization formed by conservation groups and concerned citizens of Ohio and Indiana for the purpose of preserving and protecting a wetlands ecosystem 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, John Getzendanner	(812) 537-5728
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, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Research, Dr. Steve Pelikan	(513) 681-2574
Speakers Bureau, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Newsletter Editor, Meg Poehlmann	(513) 931-4072
Newsletter Email: meggster@fuse.net	

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

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www.oxbowinc.info  
 CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243  
 P. O. BOX 43391  
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