

LEVY PASSES - THE JOB IS NOT DONE.
Editorial

The Hamilton County Park District's levy appeal was successful by an impressive 60.4% margin and the Park District is now positioned to acquire additional land as it becomes available. High on their priority list are the 1,000 oxbow acres located in Ohio. For the second time in the short life of Oxbow, Inc. it appears a victory has been won.

The first victory, getting Ohio legislation dropped that would have established a joint Port Authority with Indiana for the construction of an industrial complex at the oxbow, was an exciting but short-lived experience. That first victory led directly to the organization of Oxbow, Inc. and its stated goal of the protection and preservation of the oxbow wetlands. The charter members, those who pushed so hard to stop the legislation, might have easily said,

"Well, we stopped that, the job is done."
Intuitively, however, they knew the job wasn't done and that it really hadn't even begun.

To have the Hamilton County Park District as an ally, committed to the purchase of 1,000 Ohio oxbow acres is, it appears, a second victory. But, again, as we savor the victory we must heed the voice of caution. Now is when complacency becomes the enemy. The Job Is Done syndrome must not be allowed to prevail because the job is not done and the work is not over.

It is of the utmost importance to remember that 1,500 acres still remain unpreserved in Indiana. It is of the utmost importance to realize that these Indiana acres hold the majority of the wetland habitat and comprise the area most used by migrating waterfowl and is the area most in need of protection. So, again, with victory comes the need to recommit.

The job is off to a good start but we must see that it ends with a good finish. Oxbow, Inc. looks to you to stay the course and to be with us when we can finally and truly say,
"The job is done!"



SURVEY SUMMARY.
Sue Simon

The Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society has completed their 1988 survey of reptiles and amphibians in the oxbow area. The survey area included the bottomlands of the Great Miami River in Miami-Whitewater Townships in Hamilton County, Ohio and Lawrenceburg Township in Dearborn County, Indiana. The area was bordered by Lost Bridge and U.S. 50 on the north, the Ohio River on the south, Lawrenceburg Road on the east and Interstate 275 on the west.

The spring and summer of 1988 will be remembered as seasons of extreme drought. The drought conditions had a mixed effect on the survey. Snapping turtles (*Chelydra s. serpentina*) were very easy to locate in the drying ponds but the Eastern Hognose Snake (*Heterodon platyrhinos*), which is known from the area, was not found. Most amphibians dependent upon vernal ponds

Continued, next page.

did not have successful breeding seasons because the ponds dried up before the transformation of the larvae. The drought also brought large numbers of predatory birds into the area. Although beautiful to see and exciting to watch, they were hard on the herpetofauna. All effects of the drought, however, will be temporary.

The survey team made at least one visit per week to the area during the survey period. All suitable habitats were searched. Turtle traps were placed in the Great Miami River and its backwaters to trap turtles which would otherwise not have been seen. All sight and capture records were recorded on survey documentation sheets. Dot maps were prepared showing areas where species were observed and photographs were taken for permanent verification of each specie's presence in the area.

Species recorded in the study area.

Jefferson's Salamander -	<i>Ambystoma jeffersonianum</i>
Small Mouthed Salamander -	<i>Ambystoma texanum</i>
Northern Two Lined Salamander -	<i>Eurycea bislineata bislineata</i>
* Ravine Salamander -	<i>Plethodon richmondi</i>
American Toad -	<i>Bufo americanus americanus</i>
* Fowler's Toad -	<i>Bufo woodhousei fowleri</i>
* Blanchard's Cricket Frog -	<i>Acris crepitans blanchardi</i>
* Copes Gray Treefrog -	<i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i>
Bullfrog -	<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>
(The Bullfrog was the most abundant amphibian in the study area.)	
Green Frog -	<i>Rana clamitans melanota</i>
Common Snapping Turtle -	<i>Cheyladra serpentina serpentina</i>
Eastern Box Turtle -	<i>Terrapene carolina carolina</i>
* Map Turtle -	<i>Graptemys geographica</i>
Midland Painted Turtle -	<i>Chrysemys picta marginata</i>
* Red-eared Turtle -	<i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>
* Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle -	<i>Trionyx spinifer spinifer</i>
* Midland Smooth Softshell Turtle -	<i>Trionyx muticus muticus</i>
(Sightings of this turtle have not been reported since 1901.)	
Northern Watersnake -	<i>Nerodia sipedon sipedon</i>
Eastern Garter Snake -	<i>Thamophis sirtalis sirtalis</i>
Black Racer -	<i>Coluber constrictor constrictor</i>
Black Rat Snake -	<i>Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta</i>
-	<i>Ambystoma</i> sp. (probably <i>A. platineum</i>)
	The identification of this species is being held back due to the recent descriptions of salamanders in this complex.

The rock-and-log turners, mudflat waders and river splashers are gearing up for the February start of the 1989 survey. They will concentrate more heavily this year on the Indiana oxbow area. They stand ready to welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer for a spot on this exciting survey team. Call Sue Simon, 513-251-2287, to sign up for the time of your life.

* New records for Hamilton County, Ohio.+

+ Taken from the latest Ohio Department of Natural Resources Herpetological Data Base. As of Walker 1946 Amphibs. of Ohio Part 1, Frogs and Toads. Conant 1958 Reptiles of Ohio.



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BUILDING THE LAND ACQUISITION FUND - 1988.
Art Wiseman, Treasurer

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1988 was a financially productive year. The following is a review and brief description of some of the activities and fund raising projects Oxbow, Inc. was involved in during the year.

Membership contributions were most generous. Very few members failed to renew and many increased the level of their donations. New memberships continued to be received throughout the year while renewals, although coming in every month, were particularly heavy in March. Several thousand dollars were added to the Land Acquisition Fund through membership monies.

In January, the Bob Hart Sport, Travel and Boat Show was held at the Convention Center. Hart Productions donated a booth to Oxbow, Inc. which offered hundreds of contacts and afforded excellent publicity opportunities with the general public. The result? 25 new memberships, \$200 from the sale of Ralph Scott's photo prints and \$350 from the sale of raffle tickets on William Zimmerman's print, "Mallards in Flight".

In February, the Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society donated \$250, a gesture typical of the support received from local conservation groups. Without the support of these groups, efforts to protect the oxbow would be far less successful. We appreciate their cooperation and support.

In April, the Cincinnati Wild Flower Preservation Society issued a \$2,000 Challenge Grant which quickly brought in close to \$5,000 in new funds and new memberships.

May's BIRDATHON '88 was a huge success. By the time all of the pledges were received and added to other donations and contributions from sponsors, we had well over \$8,000 to add to our fund. We anticipate this year's event being even more successful.

Charlie Harper's "The Duck Stops Here" T-shirt went on sale in July. The Cincinnati Nature Center, the Museum of Natural History and Farbach Werner's Nature's Niche have made the T-shirts available in their shops. Jinny Wiseman has sold over \$5,000 of shirts which converts into a net profit of over \$1,700. There is still a comfortable paid-up inventory on hand that will add to this amount.

A booth at the "Toys for Adults" show in November was a successful two day venture. Memberships, donations, raffle tickets and T-shirt sales brought in over \$600. The booth was donated by the show's sponsors.

December brought our first income as oxbow land owners. Donald Mitchell, who farms the 11 tillable acres of Wood Duck Slough, presented Oxbow, Inc. with a \$740 check, representative of 40% of the corn crop raised on our property. We thank Mr. Mitchell for his perseverance through the drought.

The total of all these efforts have made for a financially successful year. We started 1988 with just under \$30,000 on hand. We have doubled that to end the year with just over \$60,000. While we have not been successful in purchasing additional land, we are now in a more favorable position to move, should a desirable parcel become available. We will see that you get your money's worth when the time comes to use these funds.

All of these activities were made possible by the active, generous members of Oxbow, Inc. who gave so willingly of their time and money to make these things happen. We thank them and YOU for all the time, effort and money that has been contributed.

FANTASTIC!

FIELD NOTES



THINGS AREN'T AS GOOD AS THEY USED TO BE.

Dave Styer

The title refers to this year's Hamilton County Park District bird count, held on Saturday, 10 December. Nine of us showed up to count at Shawnee Lookout, with Morris Mercer as our leader. We had a good time counting from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m., and then we went to Farbach Werner for the tally. The tally is always a lot of fun because we get to compare how the different parks did. Also, they bring along last year's records, so we can compare with the recent past.

Actually, before we compared with last year, we already knew that we didn't do quite as well. The starlings had surely increased in numbers, but that was not counted as success. Besides starlings we saw a good number of robins and bluebirds. That was nice. Also, hundreds of crows flew over on the way from and to a roost in Kentucky. The most outstanding feature was the 90 great blue herons we counted. Aside from those we realized that we just hadn't seen as much as last year. Possibly it was the cold and overcast weather that suppressed bird activity.

Jim Simpson tallied the Shawnee Lookout record. We had seen only 36 species. Ned Keller then checked last year's record. By golly, exactly 36 species were recorded for Shawnee Lookout in 1987. We didn't do that bad after all.

The reason the count was weaker this year must have been because the number of individuals was way down for the vast majority of the species. Perhaps the drought was having its effect. As the tally got under way, we realized that a funny thing was happening. For the vast majority of species Shawnee Lookout was doing quite well. In fact, the totals for the majority of species seemed to be higher than last year.

The interesting question is this. Why, if we really did well, did "old timers" like Morris, Steve Wagner, and I think that we did poorly? This year we didn't see any really unusual species. Our rarest sightings were of a winter wren, a Cooper's hawk, and a couple of pileated woodpeckers. Many years we see something rarer and much less expected than any of these. That adds a lot to the excitement. I feel, however, that there is a psychological factor more basic than the lack of great rarity. Over a period of several years we remember highlights, but forget the weaker aspects of particular counts. Furthermore, we may tend to blend several years together. The blend we remember is better than any one year. This phenomenon is similar to what has been said about the British humor magazine PUNCH - It's not as funny as it used to be, but then, it never was.

To summarize, we had a good count and a really good time!



LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

Robert Folzenlogen, author of Birder's Guide (critiqued in the Nov-Dec NEWSLETTER) writes to the reviewers:

..."Your comments regarding the Guide's omissions are well taken. My decision to exclude rare species and to avoid use of detailed graphs was based on a desire to appeal to beginning bird watchers. I feel that the compilation of facts and figures that characterize many regional guides are often distracting and discouraging for a novice.

The information presented in this book was based on my 15 years of experience as a birder, notes from a two year sequence of weekly field trips, data from the Bibliography texts, regional bird lists and sightings reported in local newsletters. While I realize that some errors will be found in the Guide, it is also true that any book of this scope will always produce disagreements, even among local experts.

I do feel compelled to respond to a couple of the errors that were cited in the review:

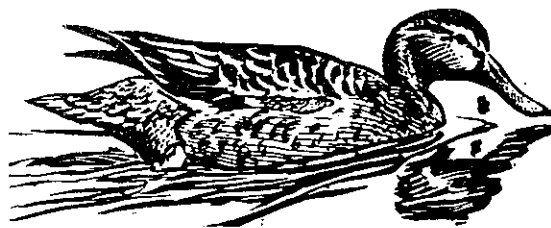
Lunken birds - I have, in fact, seen both loggerhead shrikes and buff-breasted sandpipers at Lunken, the former in December and March and the latter in September. My Guide suggests that Upland Sandpipers may be seen during migration, but also reports that these birds are rare migrants through the Tristate. Audubon's Field Guide suggests looking for this species at airports.

Ruffed Grouse - I should certainly have emphasized that this bird is uncommon and restricted to fringe areas of the Tristate. Muscatatuck lists it as a year-round resident and I have heard a grouse drumming at East Fork in early April. In section III of my Guide the ruffed grouse is mentioned in only one of the field trips (Muscatatuck, mid November).

I was disappointed that the review did not refer to a central theme of the Guide - namely, to encourage local birders to become involved in Tristate conservation organizations. Several of the "Birding Area" narratives as well as the two Appendix tables direct readers to these vital groups. It is my sincere hope that the book will contribute to the efforts of Oxbow, Inc.

Thanks again for your review and comments."

Sincerely,



F Y I.

FEBRUARY AND MARCH are peak times for migrating ducks. Oxbow, Inc. has set up hot lines to keep members informed on birds using the oxbow wetlands. INDIANA residents can call Velda Miller, 438-3641. OHIO residents can call Art Wiseman, 481-4302.

GOOD SIGHTINGS!

WINTER HINTS FROM THE "DUNCRAFT FLYER".

- Plastic perch guards on metal perches help to insulate bird's feet from the quick drain of heat in cold weather.
- Fill pine cones with peanut butter-bird seed mix. Hang outside and watch the activity.

To conserve body heat, ten or more chickadees may huddle together at night in a feathery ball deep in a tree cavity. To save energy, they slow their breathing from 95 to 65 times a minute.

To attract blue jays, chickadees, tufted titmice and red-bellied woodpeckers, string whole peanuts in the shell and hang outside. These birds will have a feast.

Peanut hearts are recommended for cold weather feeding and suet is an ideal winter food. Buy it from your butcher or supermarket and hang it out in an onion bag.



NAME THE NEWSLETTER CONTEST -- WIN A "DUCK STOPS HERE" T-SHIRT.

Is it time for the NEWSLETTER to be called something other than the NEWSLETTER? The Editor thinks it is. Members are being challenged to submit suggestions for a name. Entrants must be members and the winning entry becomes the property of Oxbow, Inc. Titles submitted should be short and catchy and have the ability to portray the purpose of the corporation. The top ten names will be selected by the Editor. The winning entry will be determined by the Trustees at the February Board meeting. Send your entries to:

Norma L. Flannery
Editor
4137 Jamestown Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45205

Include your name, address and T-shirt size with your entry. The March-April NEWSLETTER masthead will carry the winning name.

GOOD LUCK!



Meetings

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 7:30 P.M. Cincinnati Zoo Education building. Enter through the Exit gate on Erkenbrecher Avenue. A short business meeting and the election of Trustees will precede the program.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH, 7:30 P.M. Lawrenceburg Public Library, High Street. Turn left off of U.S. 50 onto Walnut Street. Turn right onto High Street. The library is on the right side of High Street. Bonnie Fancher will present a slide program on the Eastern Bluebird. Information on building a bluebird trail, care of the nesting box, box location and a lot more. Come and learn!

Field Trips

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13TH, 7:30 P.M. "NEEAKE - SHAWNEE STORYTELLER" Back by popular demand! Rev. Fred A. Shaw, official storyteller and "keeper of the history" of the United Remnant Band of the Shawnee Nation weaves stories of Shawnee culture, ritual tribal history and sacred beliefs. Plan to attend this Audubon sponsored program to be held at the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History auditorium, 1720 Gilbert Avenue. There is no charge. Come early - this was a full house last year!

Norma Flannery 513-471-8001



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 7:30 P.M. NIGHT WALK AT SHAWNEE LOOKOUT PARK. Meet Morris Mercer at the Golf Course parking lot. Will cancel if more than 12 inches of new snow or the temperature is more than 25° below zero. Motor vehicle permit required. Bundle up!

Morris Mercer 513-941-2534

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH, 9:00 A.M. WINTER WILDLIFE. Join in the search for winter wildlife to be found in the oxbow. Meet Morris Mercer at the Shawnee Lookout Park upper boat ramp parking lot. Weather permitting.

Morris Mercer 513-941-2534



MOVING?

Make sure your NEWSLETTER goes with you.

Name

New Address

Old Address

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City/State/Zip

Effective Date

Mail to: Oxbow, Inc. 2073 Harrison Ave Cinti, OH 45214

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Volunteer Coordinator, Cay Tuck	513-631-5933

Editor

Norma Flannery	513-471-8001
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Oxbow, Inc.

A non-profit organization formed by conservation groups and concerned citizens of Ohio and Indiana for the purpose of preserving and protecting a wetlands area known locally as the Oxbow, Hardintown, or Horseshoe Bottoms, from future industrial development and to preserve the existing agricultural floodplain at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio Rivers for use as a staging area for the seasonal migrations of waterfowl. This is an agricultural area rich in geological, archaeological and anthropological history.

Help us save this unique wetland. You can make your state a richer place in which to live by helping us preserve this precious resource.

Membership in Oxbow, Inc. is solicited and encouraged.

Individual	\$10	Organization/Club	\$25	Cornerstone	\$250
Family	\$15	Supporting	\$50	Sponsor	\$500
Contributing	\$25	Patron	\$100	Benefactor	\$1000

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