



July— August 2013

No. 162

WETLAND *matters*

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

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Birdathon 2013 Finds 198 species in the Birdathon Area

Seventeen Birdathon teams reported to the Tally site in the Oxbow office at 5 p.m. on Saturday May 11, 2013. Three other teams, unable to attend the Tally party, filed reports after the Birdathon. These three teams were not included in the overall 198 species total (and would not have changed it anyway). The single species list filed by a photography contestant was also not counted in the total because seeing and hearing a species is not a guarantee that you can photograph it, so it was not a fair comparison to the other totals.

The 17 teams that reported competitive totals at the Tally found 198 species in the Birdathon area (any county within or touched by a circle of 50 mile radius with its center at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio Rivers). **JUST SHORT OF THE 200 THAT WE KEEP HOPING FOR!** Still a total of 198 is nothing to sneeze at. Species that we have had in the past should have been there!

Where was a Sandhill Crane, a Green-winged Teal, a Ring-necked Duck, or Connecticut Warbler (yes they are hard to find but they are not uncommon). We just needed two to show up to make it to 200 species.

While we did not quite make the 200 species, the 198 we did find made a lot of people happy. Of the 17 reporting teams, 13 reported at least one species that no other team saw or heard. This included the reporting team with the lowest number of species for the Birdathon who were the only ones to see a Snowy Egret. Of the 17 reporting teams there were 41 species of birds that EVERY team saw or heard and another 17 species that were seen by all but one team. Of the 198 birds reported, 18 species were found by only one team and an additional 12 species were found by only two teams. Conclusion: It takes every team in the field to make a really successful Birdathon and EVERY team COUNTS!

Never too Late to Make a Birdathon Donation

The Birdathon is our only fundraiser that we do outside of our membership dues. Unlike a large number of local non-profits who have mid-year fundraisers and year-end fundraisers, special project fund drives and quarterly fund drives, we have only one fundraiser each year. And it is not just a fundraiser. It is a celebration of nature in the Cincinnati area and it is a reason to get together and celebrate the preservation of nature and natural areas in and around Cincinnati. It is a gathering for fellowship with other nature enthusiasts.

So now it is all Oxbow members' turn to show how much you appreciate what we do and how we go about doing it. Check out the Birdathon results and then sit down and write a check to Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. in support of your favorite Birdathon team.

Birdathon Results 2013

Solitary Vireo (One Birder on their own):

- Bill McGill – “Birds of Pray (Individual)” – 118 Species
- Kirk Westendorf – 116 Species
- Erich Baumgardner – 110 Species
- Jon Seymour – “First Timers” (none this year) Limited to the Miami Whitewater watershed 109 Species.

Photography (number of species photographed):

- Cassidy Ficker – “Birds of Pray (photos)” - 55 Species

Teams 18 and under with an adult leader:

- Tyler & Cassidy Ficker and Ethan & Josh Rising – “Birds of Pray #1” representing Miami Valley Christian Academy – 130 Species. **This total is the highest ever for an 18 and under team.**
- Sam Byrd, Alex Byrd, Daniel Wellington & Dave Tennant (adult leader) – Birds of Pray #2 – 103 species

(continued on page 2)

Never too late...(continued from page 1)

Birdathon area Team Competition:

- Dave & Vicky Tozier and John & Jen Eckles, "Bird Eludeus" – 72 species
- Sr. Marty Dermody, Katherine Miller, Lois Shadix & Chris Moran – "The Ladyhawks" – 85 Species
- Mark & Dan Koller – Representing Cincinnati City Parks – 115 Species
- Gary & Jeremy Stegner – "The Fernald Preserve Team" – Also competing as birding on only privately owned land in SE Indiana – 117 Species
- Wayne Wauligman, Jerry & Madeleine Lippert – "The Fabulous Finnytown Flying Fortune Seekers" – 117 Species
- Sean Kirby, Nick Baker & George Farnsworth – "X-pert Birders (not!) – representing Xavier University and birding in only Hamilton and Adams Counties – 121 species
- Chris & Suzanne Clingman – Representing the Clermont County Park District – 124 Species
- *Note: this is where the 18 and under Miami Valley Christian Academy #1 Team fits in the general competition with their 130 species.*
- Dave Brinkman and Don Morse, Jr. – "Teacher, Teacher, Teacher!" – 132 Species
- Evan, John, and Sarah Leon – "The Leons" – 136 Species
- Bill Hull and Bill Zimmerman – "The two Bills" – Competing in only western Hamilton County and of course Oxbow – 139 species

AND THIS YEAR'S WINNER OF THE "GOLDEN STARLING AWARD":

Jay Stenger, Jack Stenger, Joe Bens, and Paul Wharton – "Beasts of Birdin'" – 158 Species

Congratulation to all the birding teams. It was great fun and great birding. Now it's up to the supporters and Oxbow members to send their donations in support of their favorite teams. Birdathon is a money raising event (as well as lot of fun), so let's raise some money.

Send your donations to: Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.

Make checks payable to:

**Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.
P.O. Box 4172
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025**

**Cincinnati Birdathon –
Very, Very West (like California)**

.....by David Styer

Jane and I found ourselves with many obligations, and decided to do our Birdathon this past Friday and Saturday, May 17-18. Most shorebirds were gone, and we were a bit casual, but we did get up early enough Saturday morning to get Poorwills before dawn and proceed to the Big Sur area to get early morning Mountain Quail. In all we tallied 121 species.

Some of the highlights include a Golden-crowned Sparrow at our home on the 17th. That is a late record for our place. We went and saw the Yellow-billed Magpies, our only CA endemic. At a dripping faucet at the BLM office on Ft. Ord Nat'l Monument we saw 3 pairs of goldfinches: American, Lesser, and Lawrence's, one pair each, as in a showcase. What a treat! The Sage Sparrow we found at Ft Ord is a Bell's; some books treat this as a separate species from the more widely distributed one. Ft Ord National Monument has a Tricolored Blackbird colony in the middle of the grasslands, an unusual place supported by a population of stinging nettles. It is almost automatic to get 2 pelican species and 3 cormorant species if you just go to where they are.

We had a great time. And, yes, we still care very much about the Oxbow area, and its protection.

**Corrections and Consternations for the May-June
(#161) issue of Wetland Matters**

.....by Jon Seymour

Your erstwhile writer was asleep at the keyboard during the May-June issue of *Wetland Matters*. Apologies and apologies are due to graphic design artist, Bill Zimmerman, who is working hard to renew our levee sign. I inadvertently referred to him in the article as Bill Thompson (I must have been reading Bird Watcher's Digest at the time). In the photo section I also noted that Dr. McLean's class was from NKU Not! The class was from Thomas More College. Again something I knew but it came out wrong when I wrote it down. In the process I also spelled Dr. McLean's name wrong, twice. I really need more sleep. Hopefully your erstwhile chronicler will do better in this and future issues.

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

4	EEEE	Vesper Sparrow
7	CCDDD	Savannah Sparrow
5	DDDDD	Grasshopper Sparrow
3	EEEE	Henslow's Sparrow
17	AAAAA	Song Sparrow
7	EDDDE	Lincoln's Sparrow
4	BCCE	Swamp Sparrow
8	AABCD	White-throated Sparrow
16	CBCE	White-crowned Sparrow
1	DDD	Dark-eyed Junco
17	AAAAA	Northern Cardinal
14	BBBBB	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
13	EEDDD	Blue Grosbeak
17	BAAAA	Indigo Bunting
14	EDDD	Dickcissel
10	ECCDD	Bobolink
17	AAAAA	Red-winged Blackbird
16	BBBBB	Eastern Meadowlark
1	DDE	Rusty Blackbird
17	AAAAA	Common Grackle
17	AAAAA	Brown-headed Cowbird
17	BBBBB	Orchard Oriole
17	BAAAA	Baltimore Oriole
14	DDE	Purple Finch
14	AAAAA	House Finch
8	DDDEE	Pine Siskin
17	AAAAA	American Goldfinch
17	EE	Evening Grosbeak
17	AAAAA	House Sparrow
1		Greater Scaup
1		European Collard Dove
1		Lark Sparrow
3*		White-winged Crossbill

CinCheck

Cincinnati Birding Checklist
cincinnatibirds.com

Date: May 11, 2013

Birders: 17 Teams turned in
cards @ Tally plus one
photography competitor

Location: Greater Cincinnati
Birdathon Area

Notes: 198 species Recorded

Form XXXXX indicates 5 wks
of May A = abundant
E = rare and the
position indicates the
week of May for which
the letter applies

* Indicates the number of teams
reporting the Species

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

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

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

Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

May 11, 2013

.....by Jon Seymour

On this final day of Birdathon, I am not doing very well. Ducks are scarce and I cannot find a "peep" to save my soul. No, I don't mean those little bunny and chick colored marshmallows left over from Easter, but rather all the small shorebirds of diminutive size and uncertain identification. Part of my problem is that I have limited my search to the Whitewater/Great Miami River watershed. While not horrible, it eliminates two of the best shorebird locations that I know of in the Greater Cincinnati area. One of those, I will learn at Tally, would have given me 7 additional species that I was unable to find on my chosen path. In addition, it seems as if every other warbler that I have heard since morning light is a Cerulean Warbler. They are ubiquitous at every stop I make in warbler habitat. And yet, some groups will report back to Tally that they had not seen or heard one. I cannot explain it!

My last stop is the Oxbow and as I pull up to the causeway overlook I have 102 species on my list. Okay but definitely not what I was hoping for. I need to finish here at the Oxbow and get back to the office so I can help Kani Meyer prepare for the Tally Party. Kani is in charge of the refreshments, which include beverages, veggies and dip, cookies, and of course PIZZA. I have to finish moving a dozen chairs from the Knights of Columbus meeting hall above our office to seat our guests. Hence, time at the Oxbow is limited.

As soon as I step out of the car I see two Great Egrets take flight from the far side of the cement plant pond (note to self: think up a new name - the Cement Plant is missing). That adds species #103. I turn to look down Oxbow Lake and 3 Caspian Terns are hunting the open water. Check # 104. I greet two fishermen plying Juno Pond for things below the surface. What I am looking for stays above the surface (mostly). I step over the "gate" on the causeway and walk back toward the open field on the east side of Oxbow Lake. If I am lucky the flood pond that was there two days ago still exists and I will have my last chance to see shorebirds. This causeway, usually good for a couple of Warbling Vireos, does not disappoint as I hear one of my favorite warbler songs in the trees in front of me on my right. No check here. I already have this species.

At the end of the causeway I step through the old bed of the Great Miami River. A swamp, one of the few around Cincinnati, sits on my right. Nothing shows itself from the depths of the trees whose trunks sit underwater. There is a pool of water 3 inches deep and maybe 12 feet across that separates me from the back field. On the other side of the pool the land rises and becomes an open field. I hot foot it across the pool and only my right sock is damp. Not much of a penalty to get to the backside. Of course it will take a repeat performance to leave the area. As I enter the field and start to climb the rise a Horned Lark flushes from the road on my right. Check #105.

The next part can be tricky. As I walk up the gentle slope, I see that the flood pool is smaller but still there. On the far left are the 2 egrets that I probably flushed initially. In the center there are Caspian Terns and several smaller terns circling the pond and occasionally flying off toward Oxbow Lake or Mercer Pond. There is also a streak of something that appears gray at the far right end of the pond. The pond is about a third of a mile away but the birds on this pond are here because they like their solitude to rest and feed. I, on the other hand, am a large object up to no good (from their point of view, of course) and I am standing in the middle of an open field with absolutely no cover between myself and the birds I came to spy on. My only hope is to get them to ignore me.

I set up my scope in the open and start to scan. I see egrets, Canada Geese, Mallards, Caspian Terns, smaller terns, and at the far right end, masquerading as that streak of gray, are 3-4 Black-bellied Plover. Check #106. The small terns and the plovers are obscured by last year's soybean stubble and this year's crop of butterweed. I need to get closer. My strategy is to move directly forward 75-100 feet at a time and close the distance between me and the pool. I carry my scope and tripod, fully extended, ahead of me, to break up my outline and possibly make them more curious than afraid. This process is repeated about 5-6 times and I have closed the distance by over 100 yards. It is enough to get a much better line of sight on the edge of the pool and the locality where the plovers are. Now I can see more birds as they move around in the stubble and the number of plovers comes to 10-12. It is hard to be more accurate as they cross each other and move around. But there is something else black and white and much smaller than the plovers. It seems to be half as tall as the plovers and at first I think, it cannot be chicks, but that is what it looks like --- diminutive plover. Then I see that the black and white is a head and I see the red backs almost invisible in the stubble. But the backs are following the little heads around and suddenly I know I am looking at three Ruddy Turnstones. Check BIG #107. Ruddy Turnstones do not always show up on a Birdathon and for that matter are not exactly common in the Oxbow. Black-bellied Plovers are uncommon in the Oxbow but Ruddy Turnstones are even less so. Now I can go home happy!

I swing my attention back to the small terns and it is beginning to look good. Some are on the ground and some in the air and between the two I collect enough info for me to identify a Common Tern. Check #108. The closer examination of the area where the Caspian and Common Terns were resting allowed me to pick out a shore bird feeding leisurely among them. Then there was another. Shape, comparative size and habit of feeding leads me to believe that I am looking at a couple of Lesser Yellowlegs. Then there is a burst and 20-25 birds are in the air and now there is no doubt they are Lesser Yellowlegs. Check #109. They fly down to where the plovers are resting and settle into the stubble. Now I see 3.

I have a little more time and I know that many groups make the Oxbow their last stop. I wait patiently for another 20 minutes without finding any more species or being able to direct any new arrivals to the plovers and turnstones. No one else shows up. Time to head in to help get ready for the Tally. I entered the Oxbow with 102 species and left with 109 on my list. Not bad for a last stop of a Birdathon.

Scholarships 2013

Ellen Kirst – East-Central High School

For as long as she can remember, Ellen has always wanted to be a veterinarian. Why shouldn't she? She has grown up surrounded by animals, bunnies, squirrels and even baby deer. And, her mother, Lori Kremer, is a veterinarian. Talk about role models.

Ellen will be attending Thomas More College and will take biology on her way to a degree as a small animal veterinarian. Ellen and her mother live on Georgetown Rd. in Lawrenceburg.

Teddy Graham – Taylor High School

Teddy plans to attend The Ohio State University, majoring in zoology. He then hopes to go on to medicine or veterinary medicine. We wish him success in his endeavors.

Robert Feichtner – Lawrenceburg High School

Robert recalls growing up fishing and watching the animals around the fishing ponds on the family farm and being very curious about their lives. He helped build bird houses and floating nesting islands. He maintained that interest into high school obtaining an internship with the waste water treatment plant near the mouth of the Whitewater River. Robert will attend Cincinnati State in Environmental Engineering/Water and Wastewater Management. Robert lives with his Mom and Dad on Dickens Ave. in Greendale.

Nicole Gill- Harrison High School

Nicole's interest in nature developed at a young age encourage by a favorite aunt who took the three R's (reduce, reuse, and recycle) seriously. Growing up her idol was Jane Goodall. As she grew older her interest began to take a more defined concern for the environment and the creatures who inhabit it, and she wondered what she could do to make more people aware of the little things they could do to make the world a better place. She has decided to go into environmental science. She envisions a career where she is able to inform people about the "little things" that really do make a big difference. Her goal is to "leave this world in a better state than when I entered it".

Nicole plans on attending Miami University Hamilton. Her parents are Karen A. Gill of West Harrison, IN and V. Taylor Gill of Harrison, OH

Caitlynn Turner – South Dearborn High School

At thirteen Caitlynn began volunteering at Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens. She was part of a special teen program called TRIBE (Teen Recruits Inspiring By Example). In the program, her duties included assisting the keepers, cleaning, and providing guests with interactive animal encounters.

The Cincinnati Zoo is an Arctic Ambassador Center which means they work closely with an organization called Polar Bears International (PBI) to help save polar bears in the wild. They sponsor a contest called Project Polar Bear in which teens from the US and Canada compete to creatively reduce carbon dioxide in a four month period. Caitlynn formed a team called "Impact" and their project consisted of running a milk carton recycling trial at school, promoting people to switch to CFL light bulbs, and planting three-hundred tree seedlings. The project placed third in the Zoo's regional contest.

Though her involvement at the zoo and Project Polar Bear, she was chosen to represent the zoo as their Teen Arctic Ambassador at PBI's Teen Leadership Camp and spent a week in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada studying polar bears and climate change with teens from the US and Canada.

Back home she developed a plan to collect non-biodegradable polypropylene animal feed bags and upcycle them into reusable grocery totes. Bags were sold at various events while spreading the word about the polar bears and climate change. Her team ended up selling one-hundred-and-fifty-seven bags and the proceeds went towards purchasing fifteen large carbon-sequestering trees planted at Lesko Park and the Aurora Soccer Fields. The project placed first in the zoo's regional contest and third in PBI's bi-national competition, earning the team a weekend in San Diego, California to go behind-the-scenes of the San Diego Zoo and Sea World.

Caitlynn's parents are Jonathon and Leigh Turner of Aurora. She is planning on attending Ball State and majoring in Biology and Zoology.



Dave McNally, Sam, Nick, & Cindy Vogt, Mark Hemmerle, Corinne Feldkamp, John Ireland, Jr. and Jack Hemmerle (L to R) with guidance from Wayne Wauligman get ready to install several nest boxes in the Oxbow area. (photo by Wayne Wauligman)



Dave and Sam Vogt, with Nick and Cindy Vogt and Mike Hemmerle (L - R) watching, fasten a Prothonotary Warbler box to a tree near the vernal ponds. (photo by Wayne Wauligman)



John Ireland checks the box he has just installed to see how tight the box is to the tree. (photo by Wayne Wauligman)



Maria McLean's Animal Behavior Class from Thomas More College came to the Oxbow to learn about behaviors of animals in the wild. This is the third year that Dr. McLean has brought her class to the Oxbow to get a little field learning. (photo by Dr. Maria McLean)



Sam and Nick Vogt and Josh Edwards (L - R) fasten a tree swallow box to the base of the Osprey nest pole at Osprey Lake. (photo by Wayne Wauligman)



New Oxbow T-Shirts Are Here

The new oxbow T-shirts, designed by local wildlife artist Ann Giese, features an Oxbow scene surrounded by iconoclastic symbols of nature protected within the Oxbow area. The shirt costs \$15 if picked up at the Oxbow office. By mail, we must charge four dollars to cover shipping. This is not a fundraiser but it is an ADVERTISER. We want all of Oxbow's supporters to advertise their love for the Oxbow area and be ready to recruit a new member when your friends (or total strangers) ask about your great t-shirt.

Oxbow T-shirts come in M, L, XL and XXL only. If there is a large order for another size, we may be able to have them printed. To order your T-shirt, send \$19.00 per shirt, to:

Oxbow, Inc.
Attn: T-shirt
P.O. Box 4172
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

**Be certain to include
your return mailing
address!**

The 2013 Art and Ginny Wiseman (Witte) Scholarship Winners. Each winner was selected by their High School's Science and Guidance Departments as a deserving scholar headed for College level training in a subject related to nature. We are extremely proud of this year's set of recipients who each received \$500 toward their continuing education. Complete Bios are on page 5.



Caitlynn Turner 2013 Scholarship winner South Dearborn High School with friendly Beluga Whale.



Ellen Kirst 2013 Scholarship winner East-Central High School



Robert Feichtner (R) 2013 Scholarship winner Lawrenceburg High School with mother Pam Feichtner



Jean Lammers, Laura Graham, Teddy Graham, (winner Taylor High School), Jim Lammers -mother & grandparents

Nicole Gill,
Scholarship
winner 2013,
Harrison High
School



Oxbow Inc. PROGRAMS—submitted by Kani Meyer

To reach the Oxbow, Inc. office take Highway US 50 west from the #16 exit off I-275. Pass the Hollywood Casino exit and turn left at the second stop light onto Walnut St. 301 Walnut is on the right side at the second stoplight 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. All meetings are at The Oxbow, Inc. Office, 301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg unless otherwise noted

Tuesday, August 13, 2013 @ 7:30pm

301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg—The Oxbow, Inc. Office

The study of bird behavior began with Charles Darwin. Oxbow member and frequent program presenter Jack Berninger will help us follow in Darwin's footsteps as we observe and enjoy the self-maintenance and communication behaviors of our feathered friends. Awareness of the anthropomorphism (birds acting like us) of these activities adds to our bird watching fun.

Tuesday, September 10, 2013 @ 7:30pm

301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg—The Oxbow, Inc. Office

Dr. Dave Meyer has dived on coral reefs around the world in his 40 year pursuit of crinoids. Over that time human activity as well as climate change has presented a great many challenges to the health and well-being of coral reefs. This program will explore those changes with vivid underwater photographs.

Tuesday, October 8, 2013 @ 7:30pm

301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg—The Oxbow, Inc. Office

Dr. Steve Matter of the University of Cincinnati has spent many years investigating factors affecting movement among populations of the Rocky Mountain Apollo Butterfly *Parnassius smintheus* and the consequences of local extinction and recolonization. This talk will focus on perspectives he has developed on climate change through this long term study.

Oxbow Inc. FIELD TRIPS—submitted by Jay Stenger

*Revised Directions for Oxbow Inc Field Trip Meeting Location — Unless otherwise indicated, all trips start at the upper Oxbow parking lot. To reach the upper Oxbow parking area, go south on US Hwy 50 from the I-275 #16 exit. In about 200 yards, turn left (east) at the edge of the Shell/Subway and go over the levee to where the road T's with a fence directly in front of you. Turn right and go to the Oxbow entrance sign. Turn left into the Oxbow. The upper parking area is immediately on the right.

Saturday, July 20 2013, 12:00 PM (Noon) - Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance

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

This trip will focus on butterflies and other insects. Join skilled naturalist and Oxbow board member Steve Pelikan for an early afternoon walk through the Oxbow as we look for butterflies, insects and other flora and fauna. Steve is also an expert birder, so he won't ignore the birds, as the first fall migrant shorebirds should be moving through, with herons and egrets in large numbers. This two or three leisurely walk on the farm roads through the Oxbow, will be an extraordinary opportunity to learn about butterflies and the lesser known wildlife of the Oxbow. Sunscreen, insect repellent and water will make your visit more comfortable. Contact Steve with any questions.

Friday Evening, August 16, 2013, 6:30 PM—Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow.

Leader: Jay Stenger, (513) 522-8147, jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

Note that this is an evening field trip. This trip will focus on early fall migrating birds through the Oxbow, as the southbound fall migration of shorebirds and herons will be well under way by this date. Board member and skilled birder Jay Stenger expects to find numerous Great Egrets and herons including Great Blue, Green and Black-crowned Night-Herons. Also possible are a few rare species like Little Blue Heron and Snowy Egret, Purple Martins and other migrating swallows, Osprey, Bald Eagle and others are also likely. Jay plans to hit several spots around the Oxbow including Lost Bridge over the Great Miami. The trip will end around dusk. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent and water for a comfortable visit. Contact Jay with any questions.

Sunday, August 25, 2013, 10:00 am—Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance

Leader: Denis Conover, (513) 513-641-3651, conovedg@hotmail.com

This field trip will focus on the plants of the Oxbow. Oxbow board member, UC professor, skilled botanist and naturalist Denis Conover will point out the interesting and diverse botanical life that thrives in the Oxbow and give us insight into the eco-system that flourishes here. A long time Oxbow advocate, Denis will identify plants and tell us about their natural history. Denis will be sure to point out birds and other fauna we might run across. Be prepared for a lot of walking (mostly flat) and consider wearing long pants and boots for walking in tall grass and possibly mud. Sunscreen and water will insure a comfortable trip. If you have any questions feel free to contact Denis.

Saturday, September 7, 2013, 11:00 AM—Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance

Leader: Bob Nuhn, 513-742-3705, mnuhn@cinci.rr.com

This field trip will focus on butterflies. Bob Nuhn, a retired Hamilton County Park Naturalist and butterfly specialist, considered to be the authority on the subject, plans to search for a variety of butterflies that may astound you. We plan on a 3 hour trip but Bob may stay out longer if there is interest. A side trip to Shawnee Lookout is a possibility. Sunscreen, insect repellent and water could prove useful. Contact Bob with any questions.



usings

by Dave Styer

The Blue Jay

The familiar Blue Jay is around all year where there are homes. The bird is omnivorous, and readily takes advantage of food sources created by people. However, Blue Jays are most common where there are plenty of oak trees. Acorns are a Blue Jay favorite food.

The fact that the jays carry away acorns and cache them for future food must be an important means of the dispersal of oak trees. In her book, *After the Ice Age*, E.C. Pielou writes of the speed at which trees advanced north when the last glaciers retreated. As she describes it, generally trees with wind-blown seeds have an advantage over others. "The average rates of advance were as follows: eastern white pine 300 to 350 meters per year; eastern hemlock, 200 to 250 meters per year; maple, 200 meters per year; and chestnut 100 meters per year." Oaks formed an exception; "oaks migrated at an average rate of 350 meters per year, in spite of their heavy, animal-dispersed acorns." And, guess what animal gets the lion's share of the credit for this. Tarvin and Woolfenden report in the Blue Jay account in *The Birds of North America* that the jays may carry acorns up to 4 kilometers in order to cache them. The Blue Jay may carry 2 to 5 acorns in its throat and bill. It will put them in a pile, and bury them singly. Studies have indicated that individual birds may cache "3,000 to 5,000 acorns in one autumn." While Blue Jays have excellent memories for where they have cached the acorns, they don't retrieve all the acorns, and the jay's actions certainly serve the oak well.

Blue Jays are often around people, because the birds can take advantage of our activities. In a similar way, humans, bird students, at least, can take advantage of Blue Jays. There have been a number of interesting studies of the mental abilities of captive Blue Jays. One of these studies is published in a much quoted article in *Science* by Jones and Kamil. It is titled Tool-Making and Tool-Using in the Northern Blue Jays. The results are stated in the abstract:

Laboratory-raised Northern blue jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) have been observed tearing pieces from pages of newspaper and utilizing them as tools to rake in pellets which were otherwise out of reach. The frequency of this behavior was dependent upon the motivational state and presence of food pellets.

The article, including photographs of a Blue Jay doing this, can be viewed online. You may have read about tool-making birds on the Galapagos Islands, but the Blue Jay is much closer to home.

In another experiment, Blue Jays were shown to learn by watching others. This involved "student" and "teacher" Blue Jays in separate cages where the student could watch the teacher. It also involved two equally tasty butterfly species. Since I don't know what the butterfly species were, I'll make up names: the Alpha White and Beta Orange. In one situation the teacher was offered Alpha Whites, and the student watched the teacher eat them. Eventually, the student was offered both Alpha Whites and Beta Oranges. The experiment was performed over and over with different students and teachers, and the student nearly always chose to eat the Alpha Whites; presumably they learned this by watching the teacher. Or, is white just more appealing than orange? No. When the experiment was performed on other jays with the teacher being given Beta Oranges, the students then showed a great preference for Beta Oranges.

In Gill's *Ornithology*, he describes a food finding problem solving experiment (the Krushinsky problem) where dogs and crows performed best, but Blue Jays do well, while cats and squirrel monkeys never catch on.

Birds of the crow family, and this includes the jays, have always been noticed by people. I think this is because they share many human traits. They have a broad diet, they are inquisitive, and they are social and very vocal. There is a curious story told by Forbush in *Birds of Massachusetts*:

Jays not only take care of their young, but occasionally in winter or early spring one of these birds is seen to feed a companion. They are said to care for the aged and infirm. Mr. Frithof Kumlien tells of an old, worn, partially blind Blue Jay that was fed, tended and guarded by his companions, who never deserted him. They guided him to a spring where he bathed regularly, always with some companions close by.

Blue Jays are so vocal, it could be informative to listen more. Their alarm call is, indeed, an alarm. When it is extra loud, there may be an owl nearby. What does the musical "pump-handle" call mean? I have heard them give a Red-shouldered Hawk call. I read one account of a Blue Jay giving a hawk call so that a near-by-bird ducked for cover and the Blue Jay then rushed in and took the other bird's food. No wonder Blue Jays are called mischievous! Watch carefully when the jays are around; you may find out what they are up to.



Cincinnati's Mill Creek

The Mill Creek Watershed is a 166-square mile basin which drains the western half of Greater Cincinnati. Early in Cincinnati's history the Mill Creek supplied the water that made the city's industry flourish but has, for over two centuries, suffered from the very urbanization and development it made possible. Today the long-abused but resilient Mill Creek is showing improvement in water quality but it has a long way to go to reach its potential as an asset that sets Cincinnati apart as a desirable urban area. At our May meeting, Jennifer Eismeier, Executive Director of the Mill Creek Watershed Council, spoke to us about watershed action planning and how it ties to overall water quality improvement in an urbanized stream. The Mill Creek Watershed Council enables the Mill Creek communities to protect and enhance the value of the Mill Creek, its tributaries and watershed. Through collaborative action, the Council strives to make the Mill Creek area a more desirable place to live, work and play.

Boxing the Oxbow

.....by Wayne Wauligman

On March 30 and April 13 leaders and members of Boy Scout Troop 645, chartered by St. Lawrence Church in Lawrenceburg, installed two Screech Owl, twelve Prothonotary, and one Tree Swallow nest boxes in three separate locations at Oxbow Inc. property. These locations are on higher ground to lessen the chance of flood waters filling the boxes with mud or drowning the active nests. They were placed near both Oxbow entrances and at the overlook area. Dave McNally, scout leader and owner of DMC Woodworks in Lawrenceburg, along with John Ireland, assisted the scouts in making and placing the nest boxes.

Research that went into this project included taking a census of calling Prothonotary males on June 9 - 10, 2012. At that time, seventeen males were calling throughout the Oxbow. Some called along the hill up to I-275, competing with the road noise! Input regarding box construction, hole size, and placement height was obtained from Charles Bombaci in Columbus who placed numerous Prothonotary boxes at Hoover Reservoir. His boxes were highly successful. However, his area doesn't have the extensive flooding levels the Oxbow experiences. I remember years ago a nest box placed fifteen feet high along the Great Miami Floodplain that filled with mud entirely. Will we increase the number of breeders in the Oxbow as was done at Hoover Reservoir? Or will we simply have boxes of mud? We hope it will be an increased number of warblers. Oxbow, Inc. thanks Troop 645 and their leaders for a job well done.

Oxbow, Inc. Honorariums & Memorials

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Oxbow Inc. would like to thank the following donors for their generous gifts.

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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 4172, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those who are to receive the acknowledgement.

Return to Dater Montessori Project 2012

.....by Velda Miller

In April 2013 I received an email invitation to observe nature activities at Dater Montessori, one of Oxbow's 2012 Art and Ginny (Witte) Wiseman Education Fund Grant recipients. Although the afternoon was booked up, my morning was free. On the morning of May 1, I hopped into the car, double checked my directions and headed off to Dater Montessori.

I met briefly with Susan VonderHaar, Dater Montessori Nature Center Coordinator, then I moved outdoors on my own to explore the area and view what was going on. I enjoyed the visit and the chance to watch the children's interactions. Activities for the day were split into three age groups: 3-6, 6-9, and 9-12. While I was there it was mostly the youngest group that was taking part in the activities.

A couple of the older students, with an adult, were carrying loppers. The adult, one of the many parents assisting with the outdoor program, was helping the students trim some of the fruit trees planted on the school's property. Later, they were on their hands and knees weeding the strawberry patch. Near this area were several small mounds, about 2 foot wide and 1 foot high, lightly covered with straw. The signage read "THREE SISTERS." Ahaa! Cornfield--Indian style. The three sisters being Corn, Beans & Squash. Nearby was one of the new vernal ponds (the focus of our 2012 grant). At that time it was surrounded by rye grass, but Sue planned for a day later in May when the students would plant native species appropriate for the area.

Along the hillside were planted several shrubs and trees. The sign standing before them read "VISION HILL ARBORETUM—Dedicated to the People of Westwood." The area around the sign was well mulched and fungi had already set up shop and were doing their part in breaking down and recycling nutrients. A Sweet Gum, 4 inches in diameter, stood tall and a small patch of violets added color at its base. The leaves of the Tulip Poplar were gracefully unfurling in the bright sunlight. The dogwood was in full bloom, reminding me that the beautiful white petals are not really petals. Taking a closer look, I could see that one of the many flowers encircled by the white petal-like bracts had just opened.

Nearer to the school building was an area called the MEADOW MAZE. From the hillside it appeared to be an area of grasses growing--then about knee high. On closer inspection there were several lants-- goldenrods, Virginia Mallow, Rattlesnake Master and some of the coneflowers--which later this summer, when the new school year begins, will tower above the heads of these young students. Through this area is a mowed path the width of a push mower. Excitement welled up inside me

as I imagined these young students wondering into and being completely surrounded by the plant world and its many creepy-crawlies and 6 & 8 legged inhabitants.

On this day the kindergartners were enjoying other adventures in the area of the Meadow Maze. At one end of the meadow, a group with shovels in hand, were eagerly digging in and turning over the earth. In another area, children were working with shallow plastic containers of dirt. I'm not sure if they were planting bulbs or just investigating the contents, but I did hear one of the students excitedly announce her discovery of a worm. The volunteer parent with them went over and shared in her discovery, explaining that the worm(s) belong in the soil and the purpose they serve. A third group of students was busy watering plants. There were several buckets of water at one of the Meadow Maze entrances. The children were filling their cups from the buckets and giving the thirsty plants a drink. The children were all enjoying their time outside, interacting with nature, and making their own discoveries.

I could hear singing on the playground just around the corner of the school building. Two groups of children holding long colored ribbons stood around separate trees. As Susan sang, the children walked in one direction, encircling the trees in color. The children wondered as the ribbons they were holding got shorter and shorter. It was not until the final inch of ribbon was up against the tree that they looked up and saw the colorful candy cane striped trunk of the tree they had created. What better way to start the first day of May than with a May Pole dance?



Midwest Native Plant Conference

www.midwestnativeplants.org

July 26, 27, & 28, 2013

The fifth annual *Midwest Native Plant Conference* will be held the weekend of July 26-27-28, 2013 at the Bergamo Conference Center in Beavercreek, OH. We hope you will join us for this event!

Oxbow, Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.

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

Help us save this unique wetland ecosystem. Make your state a richer place in which to live by helping us preserve this precious resource. **Membership in Oxbow, Inc. is encouraged and solicited.**

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		

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