



WETLAND *matters*

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

Have you visited our website? — www.oxbowinc.org

Need a speaker? Call 513-851-9835

Mercury in the Oxbow Lakes?

.....By Michael C. Miller, board member Oxbow, Inc. & Professor Emeritus of the Univ. of Cincinnati.

Mercury (Hg) is an element that is liquid at room temperature and is easily vaporized into a gas that is invisible to the naked eye. It is naturally occurring in many minerals, usually in its salt form, as a contaminant and finds its way into all of our waters from coal fired power plants in rainfall or ash, as a byproduct of many industrial applications, and from automobile shredding plants along the Ohio River. It is most dangerous as a gas (nerve poison) or in water and soil as an organic mercury compound (nerve and birth defect poison). "The majority of atmospheric human caused emissions are released as gaseous elemental mercury. This is capable of being transported over very long distances with the air masses. The remaining part of air emissions are in the form of gaseous divalent compounds (such as mercury chloride) or bound to particles present in the emission gas. These species have a shorter atmospheric lifetime than elemental vapor and will deposit via wet or dry processes within roughly 100 to 1000 kilometers". www.greenfacts.org/en/mercury/l-3/mercury-4.htm

The problem is that 13 years ago the power industry was told they should remove Hg from stack gases which is being done along with Sulfur removal. But both are captured in water during removal and dumped into open ponds near the plant to let the solids settle out. However if reduced to salt compounds in the sediment or methylated (organic form) by bacteria, the Hg becomes soluble and can drain from the ponds to the Ohio River or its watershed streams. Or if the settling pond fails it can flow directly into the Ohio River watershed. The US EPA has said that Hg released into the

Environment (end of pipe) shall be at a safe level (0.012 micrograms Hg/liter or 12 nanograms Hg/liter), not at a higher concentration to be diluted in a mixing zone in the river. However dilution in mixing zones is currently becoming standard practice. ORSANCO has extended the mixing zone concept to pre 2003 power plants on an individual basis to be reviewed at each permit cycle, but has not enforced the end-of-pipe limit for dischargers. Two plants now have variances; more will follow.

"Methylmercury [methyl-Hg] is the most toxic form. It affects the immune system, alters genetic and enzyme systems, and damages the nervous system, including coordination and the senses of touch, taste, and sight. Methylmercury is particularly damaging to developing embryos, which are five to ten times more sensitive than adults." <http://www.usgs.gov/themes/factsheet/146-00/>

Methyl-Hg is soluble through lipid membranes and is taken up by algae and bacteria that are eaten by grazers, by invertebrate predators and by sportfish being bioconcentrated at each transfer and elevated with age of the fish and concentrated in the fatty tissues. Fish consumption advisories for methylmercury (>0.3 milligrams/kg or ppm) now account for more than three-quarters of all fish consumption advisories in the United States. Forty States have issued

(continued on page 2)

Important Notice Important Notice

All Oxbow Members are asked to vote for the 2016 slate of candidates for the Boards of both Oxbow, Inc. and for the Board of Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. The Ballot is on Page 11. Cut it out, vote, and send it in to Oxbow, Inc., P.O. Box 4172, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025. We need everyone to vote!

(Mercury—continued from page 1)

advisories for methylmercury on selected water-bodies and 13 states have statewide advisories for some or all sportfish from rivers or lakes. Most of the advisories in Ohio and the Ohio River are for both Methyl-Hg and PCBs.

Harrison Pike (Miami town) to mouth (Ohio River)
(Hamilton County)

Fish Species	Advisory	Cause
All Suckers	Do Not Eat	PCBs
Striped Bass Hybrid	1 meal/2 mo.	PCBs, Lead
Flathead Catfish	1 meal/mo	PCBs, Hg
Channel Catfish, Common	1 meal/mo	PCBs
Carp & Smallmouth Buffalo		
Freshwater Drum >16",	1 meal/mo	Hg
Sauger & Largemouth White Bass		

Mercury attached to clay or organic particles can settle onto the sediments where it can diffuse into the water column as divalent Hg (salt compounds), like mercury chloride, be resuspended, be buried by other sediments, or be methylated by anaerobic bacteria in the mud. Methyl-mercury can enter the food chain <http://www.usgs.gov/themes/factsheet/146-00>. The Oxbow has three possible sources of Hg, one from fish that migrate into the Oxbow-lakes-with-floodwaters, a second from wetfall and dryfall on the agricultural fields that surround the lakes, and a third from fine clays with adsorbed divalent Hg that enter with flood waters and settle, most nearer the Ohio River side. Bottom feeding fish have the highest concentrations of Hg because they disturb the anoxic sediments where methyl-mercury is formed.

Is Hg is problem for Oxbow fishers and wildlife? Yes. The dominance of the bottom in shallow ponds means the transfer from mud to water to algae and zooplankton then to our shrimp and fish is more direct. We do not know what the divalent Hg or methyl-Hg levels might be in the Oxbow. The best advice is to assume we have a similar problem as the Great Miami River and use catch and release. Top of the food chain predators tend to bioconcentrate Hg to higher concentrations in their muscle tissue. PCBs can be reduced by skinning, trimming out fat and nervous tissue, and rendering out the fats over a charcoal cooker, but that does not work for Hg fixed in muscle tissue primarily. Although the sediment depth is not great, older sediments may contain Pb, Cu, DDT residues, etc. that have not been used for decades. These should not be a big problem unless the surface foot of sediments are disturbed. Gravel mining disturbs clean preindustrial deposits and gravel mines are

flooded regularly in the lower portion of the Great Miami Valley.

The indiscriminant pollution of the rivers and lakes of the world has limited the value of these vital resources for water and food and increased the costs of everyone who depends, or could depend, on the rivers and lakes for their food and water. The cumulative cost of these losses to the general population is considerably greater than the cost to the individual industries of prevention of the pollution in the first place.

(Oxbow permits fishing in some of the ponds on the property. We believe that any fish consumed from the Oxbow should follow state recommendations for the Great Miami River for the safety of the fishermen and their families.)



ADDENDUM: THE RETURN OF FISH SPECIES TO THE OXBOW AREA RIVERS AND STREAMS (original article appeared in the last issue of *Wetland Matters*)by Wayne Wauligman

After the last *Wetland Matters* went to press with this article, I received a note from Dr. Meg Riestenberg concerning a 1995 study of Oxbow fish, part of her son, Dave's, study for a degree in Biology from the College of Mount St. Joseph.

Dave Riestenberg found four species of fish not included in the Army Corp of Engineers study during the period of 1955-1980.

- Mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*) in Oxbow Lake – at the time the only natural population in the Tri-state Area.
- Shortnose Gar (*Lepisosteus platostomus*) in Mercer Pond
- Brook Silverside (*Labidesthes sicculus*) in the Cement Plant Pond
- Golden Redhorse Sucker (*Moxostoma erythrurum*) in Mercer Pond

The ponds at the Oxbow provide a sheltered area for breeding by many fish populations and the populations in the river and the ponds will mix several times each year.

Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

Friday, September 18, 2015

I had an early morning breakfast meeting at Kennett's truck stop, across the street from the Hardintown entrance, and now I decide that with several tours coming up next week I need to do a little trash patrol on the major areas of the parking lot, and the two birding overlooks. My car comes equipped with many plastic trash bags and an 30" handle extension grabber (technical term) that saves my back the trouble of bending over to pick up most trash. (Very handy car) I am hard at this when a small bus from South Dearborn High School pulls up and disgorges a class from the school. This is a surprise to me as I had no idea they were coming. Teacher Kim Pragar-Taylor and her assistants had brought their MoCD (Moderately Cognitive Disability) class from South Dearborn High School on a field trip to the Oxbow.

Flashback: Kim reminds me that a year ago she brought her class to Adam's Art, next door to our office, for an outing of an art class with Adam. But, Adam was late in arriving and I saw them outside the door and invited them into the office to wait for Adam to arrive and I entertained them with some of the curiosities we have to display and gave Kim literature on the Oxbow.

Now they were back to enjoy the area. I immediately decided to give an impromptu tour if they wished to have it and they welcomed the offer. We viewed some birds, talked about animals, plants and trees, pulled some plants apart to see what was inside. It was a great deal of fun and one of the students told me before he left that "this place is Zen like - I feel relaxed here." No one could say it better. I hope they call me when they want to come again. I would not want to miss the experience of their experience.

Thursday, September 24, 2015

The members of the Clovernook Garden Club are arriving. They have come for a tour of the Oxbow, lunch, and to conduct their monthly meeting. This is a bit different for me in that, while we can lend our facility to other groups as appropriate, it is something we seldom have opportunity to do. We will see how it goes. We have been planning this for months, ever since I spoke to the group about Oxbow last February. At the time I invited them to come take a tour and they jumped at the opportunity.

It is a small group of 9 but that makes it easier to conduct the tour. We will carpool in three cars, including my own, along the route of Oxbow Lake Road. Having done this tour many times it can be accomplished in about 2 hours by a car caravan with about 6-7 stops along the route and requires minimal walking for those that find it difficult to get about. It is the tour I usually recommend if there are members of a group who have difficulty walking or difficulty walking long (or even moderate) distances.

After an initial introduction and organizational planning at the office we set out for the Oxbow and make it to the entrance together and without incident. I am getting pretty good at judging the distance needed for a caravan of cars to turn right onto Highway 50 and not get left behind. There are no guarantees and the potential to lose the last car or two of a long caravan is pretty high.

Juno Pond is nearly empty but there are an egret and a Double-crested Cormorant on the other side of the pond. With the scope I am able to give the club members a good look at each bird. The members have brought binoculars and one of them spots a dark bird with a white bill near the cormorant. I swing the scope a little and am able to show them a good close up of an American Coot.

We continue down Oxbow Lake Road and I stop the Caravan at a particularly beautiful patch of Jerusalem Artichoke in bloom. This member of the sunflower family is a very late bloomer that usually does not start blooming until September and carries well into October. It has an edible root that was cultivated by native peoples which may account for its abundance in the Oxbow. As I am talking about the plants another member of the group tells me there is an Osprey in a tree out by the levee. With her help I locate the Osprey in the scope and we settle down to watch the Osprey eat a nice size fish it just caught. That is we try to. About half the group gets a look before the Osprey suddenly grabs its fish tight and vacates the branch. Looking to the tree next to where the Osprey had been leisurely enjoying his hard earned lunch there is now a Red-tailed Hawk that was not there a moment ago. It has also brought with it a cheering section of three very noisy crows that are swooping on the hawk. The Osprey has departed for quieter climes. However, if you are an Osprey with a large "lunch" fish, departing for a quieter destination is not exactly an easy thing. There is the matter of the grip, the aerodynamics of the fish body, the weight of the fish, and the strength of the wings.

Our favorite Osprey has to deal with it all. The fish is secured between opposing talons as the bird

(continued on page 4)

Horseshoe Diary (Continued from Page 3)

takes off. The head of the fish is facing forward to improve the aerodynamics of the flight. Tail first or sideways creates too much air drag. It is a large fish and heavy. All the effort is put into circling and trying to catch the thermals rising in the air. If it can rise high enough on the thermals, it can begin a long downward glide to its next resting spot. All depends on the strength of the wings and its experience in catching the thermal columns of warm rising air. If it cannot make the necessary height it will drop the fish and opt for the safest escape and hunt for lunch some time else and somewhere else. Our favorite Osprey circles above our heads for what seems like many minutes and then glides off in a bee line for a safer, quieter lunch tree. We reach the overlook of Oxbow Lake and are able to view more egrets, cormorants and add a Great Blue Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron to our list of scope birds.

Back at the office I retire to the desk in the back to catch up on Oxbow paperwork and the Garden Club breaks out their bag lunches and coolers of beverages they brought with them and launch into their meeting. A good time is had by ALL!

Saturday, September 26, 2015

GREAT OUTDOOR WEEKEND!

I am heading for the Oxbow with some time to spare before the Saturday contingent of the Great Outdoor Weekend (GOW) tour will start to arrive. Jackie and I have been on an all morning (and into the afternoon) tour of the Cincinnati Water Works Kellogg Ave. plant and picked up two Elderberry bushes and a Black Chokecherry bush from the sale at Farbach-Werner County Park on the way home. We had enough time to unload the bushes, water them down, throw my equipment into the car and I was off. Jackie will stay home this evening but will be with me on the Sunday night walk.

At the Oxbow a quick ride down the route we will walk tonight shows that the way is clear and while the wildlife on Juno Pond is sparse there is enough to keep the group busy. Back to the parking area with 20 minutes to spare and one car is already there. We have had from 3 – 60 people on these GOW walks so we never know what to expect. The GOW event for the past several years has been a late afternoon to sunset walk from the parking area to the Oxbow Lake overlook, about 1.25 miles round trip. The route of the walk is the same but the experience itself never is. It is a general walk that covers the history and activities of Oxbow, Inc., the geology and hydrology of the area, the plants and wildlife, and hopefully some great views

of the local wildlife through the spotting scope that I carry the whole route. We target first time visitors with this walk and usually about one-half of the participants are here for the first time.

Tonight we gather 14 people ranging in age from 3 months to maybe early 70's. We have two young people that require the scope to be set up two feet lower than the level of the scope set up for the adults. This adds to the effort of looking at the birds but the look on the faces of the kids when they see the bird close up is worth the effort. The remaining adults are patient and I hear no complaints about having to wait for the kids to see the bird. A simple reset of the scopes tripod and the adults get a look also. The birds are cooperative and stay fairly still until everyone has a view. Velda Miller, our education committee leader, is right there with the bird book and a picture of the bird we are looking at. This always helps first time viewers get a better fix on what they are watching. Great Egrets, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, and Green Heron are all cooperative. A small flock of Wood Ducks, an American Coot, and Double-crested Cormorants are also cooperative.

Halfway to the Oxbow Lake overlook we have an Osprey fly over that circles above us long enough for everyone to see it well. As we approach Osprey Lake someone asks if we ever see eagles. I say we do, but I cannot predict when. I do not usually see them this late in the day close to sundown. From where I am standing I automatically turn to check out the top of the next electrical tower where I have seen eagles before but do not expect them now. There is, however, a smaller bird perched on the top of the tower at a 40 degree angle to the top of the tower. This implies a possible hawk or, unfortunately, maybe a crow. I swing the scope around and focus in on the Peregrine Falcon sitting placidly on the top of the tower. Everyone lines up and gets a view of a recovering but still relatively uncommon bird.

We swing into the parking lot at the overlook, our destination, and I set up the scope for the view of the end of Oxbow Lake. There are about 30 Great Egrets hanging out at the end of the lake (there will be 60 Great Egrets for the folks on the Sunday night GOW walk) and I start to scan the crowd to find a view through the scope that shows several egrets at once. As I scan I notice a smaller white bird that has some color. In fact it has a wide black band along the side parallel to the ground. While smaller than the Egrets it is still a fairly large shorebird. Now I have to explain an Avocet to the group and why I am

(continued on page 11)

Oxbow Inc. PROGRAMS

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 November 10, 7:30 PM

"Frigid friends and frozen foes"

Dr. R. A. Davis, Professor Emeritus of Biology and Geology, Mount St Joseph University professor, world-famous paleontologist specializing in the study of cephalopods (squids, octopi and their relatives), expert on Ordovician age fossils (those found in our local bedrock), as well as an expert on Ice Age animals and the environment in which they lived — will present a lively, informative, and interactive talk on the mammals that lived right here in Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana during the most recent Ice Age. Dr. Davis can be reached by calling his home at 513 751- 3739 (home)

Tuesday January 12, 7:30 PM

Beer: Past, Present, and Future of the Nectar of the Gods

Andrew Rasmussen is an award-winning teacher at Mount St. Joseph University, where he advises MSJU's Biological Honor Society, teaches microbiology, biology, and the art and science of beer-making. His talk will be entertaining and informative as well!

Tuesday February 9, 7:30 PM

Fascinating Flying Squirrels

John Klein spent his 33-year career as Land Manager for the Hamilton County Parks. Now five years into retirement, he enjoys teaching others about the wonders of nature through hiking and kayaking. He has been observing and studying flying squirrels for the past two years and has become fascinated with these friendly yet rarely seen animals.

Tuesday March 8, 7:30 PM

Surface Water Chemistry and Creatures Associated with the Lower and Middle Great Miami River: the Health of Water in our Oxbow Lakes and Feeder Streams.

Michael Miller taught Limnology (fresh water biology) at the University of Cincinnati for many years, and in retirement has been using his impressive energy, knowledge and skill in helping to protect our waterways. Michael is a kayaking enthusiast, bicycler, and a member of the Mill Creek Yacht Club!

Participants in the outdoor programs need to be aware of the following potential hazards that could be encountered during any of the outdoor programs offered by Oxbow, Inc.:

The trails are uneven graveled and often unmaintained dirt roads. We may have to go off the road if there is an obstacle in the road. Areas off road are often more uneven, may have poison ivy and may be close to water and steep banks. You must decide for yourself if you are able to safely navigate this terrain. If at any point an individual decides they need to discontinue the tour the tour leader will do their best to help them to the extent that that it does not prevent the tour from being completed for the enjoyment of the other participants or put their safety at risk. There are no restrooms. (ADA)



American Coots behave and look a lot like ducks but are more closely related to cranes. Unlike ducks who can burst from the water in a single wing pump and leg thrust a coot needs to build up airspeed in order to launch into the air. Its solution is to run on water until airspeed is attained: *(photo by Tom Uhlman)*.



While a duck has webbed feet to propel itself out of the water the toes of the foot of the American Coot are fringed. When being dragged through the water in a forward motion the fringes close only to open when the foot move backward to give greater push to the forward motion of the coot. They also are the means by which the coot can run on water. The spread fringes and the scooped up water are seen plainly in the enlargement of the above photo. *(photo by Tom Uhlman)*



The Clovermook Garden Club enjoys a personal guided tour to the Oxbow (Photo by Jon Seymour)



The Sunday Great Outdoor Weekend hikers crowd in front of a bed of blooming Jerusalem Artichoke. (Photo by Jon Seymour)

"This place is Zen like - I feel relaxed here."



The Saturday Great Outdoor Weekend hikers (minus a few stragglers) enjoy a beautiful evening in the Oxbow. (Photo by Jon Seymour)



Kim Pragar-Taylor's MoCD (Moderate Cognitively Disabled) class enjoys a morning exploring nature in the Oxbow (Photo by Jon Seymour)

Oxbow Inc. FIELD TRIPS

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.

Late Fall Migration in the Oxbow Sunday, November 15, 2015, 8:30 A.M.

**Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow
Leader: Jack Stenger, (513) 503-3389, jackstenger@gmail.com**

November, to some people, conjures up an image of a cold and dreary month. I for one would disagree. I think late autumn is a beautiful time of the year and the subtle hues of the landscape interspersed with fall colors offer up a stark beauty. It will be against this backdrop that our trip leader Jack Stenger will lead this morning visit to the Oxbow. Jack is an expert birder and will surely find a diverse number of seasonal birds. When birders and naturalists think of the Oxbow during November the first thing that usually comes to mind is waterfowl. The peak of fall waterfowl migration occurs in our region during November and the Oxbow offers a great refuge for them. Waterfowl will be the primary focus of this trip, but Jack will not ignore the many other species that can be found here at this season. Bald Eagle numbers usually peak at this time of year. Other hawks, gulls and water birds should be present and there is even a good chance we will see migrating Sandhill Cranes. Late migrant and winter songbirds should also be abundant and the weedy fields will likely abound with sparrows of many species. So come out and join Jack to see what nature has to offer us on what should be a beautiful autumnal morning in the Oxbow. Remember, the Oxbow can be muddy in places at this time of year and November weather can be cold & wet, so prepare accordingly. This trip will end by noon. Feel free to contact Jack if you have any questions.

2015 Ohio River "Oxbow" Christmas Bird Count (28th Annual) Sponsored by the National Audubon Society, Supported by Oxbow Inc.

When: Saturday, December 19, 2015, 7:45 am.

Where: Meet at the Shawnee Lookout Park upper boat ramp parking lot.

Compiler: Jack Stenger, (513) 503-3389, jackstenger@gmail.com

As in past years there will not be a "regular" Oxbow field trip in December, due in part to the busy holiday season but also because the annual "Oxbow" Christmas Bird Count provides everything and more that a normal monthly field trip does. Come out and get your monthly Oxbow fix by joining count compiler Jack Stenger on this annual holiday bird count (known locally as the Oxbow Christmas Bird Count) which censuses winter bird populations in a 15-mile diameter circle, which includes the Oxbow area, Shawnee Lookout Park and most of Dearborn County Indiana. Everyone is invited to participate regardless of skill level. There is no participation fee. You can request the area you would like to census. You can participate all day, for just a couple of hours or just by staying home and counting the birds at your feeders if you live in the count area. Christmas Bird Counts are a lot of fun and always turn up some interesting finds. The data collected from this citizen/science effort goes into a historical database that is used in all sorts of bird related projects. If you have any questions or if you plan on participating please contact Jack and let him know to expect you (for coverage and planning purposes).

Christmas Bird Counts: If you are interested in these other local National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts, contact the count compilers for more information.

- Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count (68th Annual), Sunday, December 27, 2015, Co-Compiler Jay Stenger, (513) 522-8147, jaystenger@cinci.rr.com; Co-Compiler Jack Stenger, (513) 503-3389, jackstenger@gmail.com
- Western Hamilton County Christmas Bird Count (49th Annual), Sunday, December 20, 2015, Compiler Ned Keller, (513) 349-3369, nedkeller49@gmail.com
- East Fork Christmas Bird Count (32nd Annual), Saturday, January 2, 2016, Compiler Joe Bens, (513) 353-4229, joebens@live.com
- Hamilton-Fairfield Christmas Bird Count, Saturday, December 19, 2015, Compiler Mike Busam, (513) 755-0057, mbusam@gmail.com
- For more information on Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts visit the following website: <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>



Musings

by Dave Styér

The American Tree Sparrow: Bird Names Again

As winter comes on you can look forward to the return from the Canadian north of the American Tree Sparrow. Brushy field edges in the Oxbow area are a fine place to look for these sparrows. My earliest fall records there have been about the beginning of December, and the numbers seen peak in January and February. I always enjoyed their cheerful chatter, but rarely had the pleasure of hearing them sing.

Why should this bird be called a Tree Sparrow, when it doesn't favor woods? Christopher Naugler provides the answer in his *Birds of North America* article on the American Tree Sparrow: The name "is somewhat of a misnomer for this species, as most individuals breed in remote northern areas, often north of the tree line. The name was given by early European settlers for the superficial resemblance of this species to the Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)." For those of us who have lived in North America, we would immediately relate American Tree Sparrows to other American sparrows, such as Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, etc., rather than the much more distantly related Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Let's move on to the scientific names. The scientific name of the American Tree Sparrow is *Spizella arborea*. *Spizella* is the **genus**, a name restricted to close relatives, and *arborea* is the **species** name. For example, the Chipping Sparrow has the name *Spizella passerine*, and the Field Sparrow has the name *Spizella pusilla*. These sparrows are all, likely, very closely related. In high school biology we are taught that "there are often many common names for a given species, differing from place to place, but only one scientific name." Even though I'm about to poke a few holes in this statement, it is basically true and of fundamental importance in communicating to others just what species you are talking about.

Thanks to *Birds of America*, edited by T. Gilbert Pearson (1917 and 1936), I can give a list of other names given to the American Tree Sparrow: Snow Chippy; Winter Chip-bird; Winter Chippy; Tree Bunting; Canada Sparrow; Artic Chipper; Winter Sparrow. And that's just common names in English. Imagine all the common names in other languages.

How about Baumammer? Have you wondered what the American Tree Sparrow is called by various Native Americans? I can't even imagine it.

In 1810 Alexander Wilson, "father of American ornithology," gave the American Tree Sparrow the scientific name *Fringilla arborea*, and today's scientific name is based on that. It appears that 20 years earlier John Latham named the Tree Sparrow "*Fringilla Canadensis*." This is the name Audubon used on an 1834 painting of the Tree Sparrow. It is curious that *canadensis* is not used, because the rules give naming priority to the first person to give a scientific name to a species. I will guess that when Wilson named the Tree Sparrow, he made it perfectly clear with a specimen or specimens of the bird he was naming, and that it was not so clear what bird Latham was naming.

A few years later, 1831, Charles Lucien Bonaparte realized that our sparrows were not really so closely related to the Old World finches of the genus *Fringilla*, and he set up a new genus, *Spizella*. Thus the American Tree Sparrow became *Spizella arborea*, which it may still be. This sort of name changing has caused people with a little more experience than a high school biology course to say "common names change from place to place, and scientific names change from time to time." [On the subject of Bonaparte, I seem to remember growing up hearing about people in mental institutions who believed they actually were the 19th century ornithologist, Bonaparte. Such glory! Whoops, Jane informs me that those people actually thought they were C. L. Bonaparte's uncle, Napoleon Bonaparte. I guess we all have our own view of glory.]

Complicating the scientific name problem a little more, both Coues' 1872 book *Key to North American Birds* and Forbush's 1929 book *Birds of Massachusetts* state that the scientific name of the Tree Sparrow is *Spizella monticola*. Since then, until recently, the scientific has been given as *Spizella arborea*. Recent DNA researchers have indicated that the American Tree Sparrow is not so closely related to other sparrows in the genus *Spizella*, such as Chipping Sparrow and Field Sparrow. The *Handbook of the Birds of the World* (2011) suggests that Tree Sparrows are more closely related to the Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliace*), and they give the Tree Sparrow the scientific name *Passerella arborea*. An even more recent publication by Blager and Kicka (2014) states that the Tree Sparrow stands in a genus of its own, *Spizelloides*, so that the Tree Sparrow's scientific name should be *Spizelloides arborea*. This leads to another modification of our high school training: the scientific name may change over time, and it may differ according to different authorities.

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

George & Jean Perbix

Donor

Jon & Jackie Seymour

In Memory of

Bill Ewan



Fourth Annual Butterfly Count and Hike

.....By Bob Nuhn

The 4th annual late summer butterfly hike and count was held on a dreary, cool September 12th day. Led by retired Great Parks ranger Bob Nuhn, 9 other intrepid people met at the east entrance to Oxbow at 11:15 a.m. and walked the roadway about a mile total out and back before rain cut everything short at 12:45 p.m. Despite having only about 10 minutes of sun on a day when the temperature ranged from 62-67F, we counted 33 individual butterflies representing 10 species. I was surprised to see this many considering the weather. Last year on August 16th during 2.5 hrs., we counted 36 individuals representing 15 species on a cloudy day in the low 70s. So, this year wasn't too bad. The species breakdown was as follows: 7 Cabbage Whites, 1 Orange Sulphur, 3 Cloudless Sulphurs (an emigrant species), 2 Eastern Tailed-Blues, 1 Summer Azure, 5 Pearl Crescents, 3 Red-spotted Purples (all females), 8 Monarchs, 2 Silver-spotted Skippers, 1 Hayhurst's Scallopwing Skipper.

The Hayhurst's Scallopwing was a new species for us on this series of Oxbow counts. The cumulative total species count for all 4 years of counts/walks is now 32 species. Five species have been seen all 4 years: Cabbage White, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Pearl Crescent, Red-spotted Purple, and Monarch. The eight Monarchs we counted this year (in inclement weather no less) were the most we have counted in any of the 4 years of our Oxbow butterfly counts. Seven of the eight individuals were non-migratory Monarchs, based on their generally worn appearance. The only brood of Monarchs which migrates to Mexico is the final summer (August/September) brood. Since we only found one fresh (migratory) Monarch flying, that meant the others were still larvae or chrysalides so observations by naturalists and others of more Monarchs seen this year than last year appear to be correct. This is a hopeful sign but the Monarch migrating phenomenon is still an endangered one, since ten years ago, we would possibly have counted scores of Monarchs, not just eight.

Next year's Nuhn-led hike will likely be in early September, keeping with the late summer/early fall season to better gauge seasonal numbers, especially regarding the Monarchs. The exact date has not been set but will be published later next year. Everyone on this year's hike had a good time and learned something new, even if only one thing!

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.*

Horseshoe Diary (Continued from Page 4)

probably more excited to see the common Avocet versus the uncommon Peregrine. It all has to do with where the common Avocet should be. While very common west of the Mississippi River it is uncommon to see one this far east of the Mississippi. Velda is back with her book to show the picture of the bird in the book and show the upturned bill, unusual among birds, that is not really visible in the diminishing light at the distance of the viewing.

That completes our 2 hour walk in the Oxbow and we all head for home. Tomorrow night I do it all over again but Jackie will be with me. When we are done with the Oxbow walk tomorrow we will have a little dinner out and head for Fernald where the area is open for the last event of GOW, the viewing of the Lunar eclipse. The spotting scope turns into an astronomical telescope. The cloudy skies will hopefully clear and we will watch the moon go into total eclipse. Did you know that a bird spotting scope can see the rings of Saturn and four of the moons of Jupiter? If not, you do now. I have such a hard job. *(Many thanks to Velda Miller, Kani Meyer, and Ed Gemperle for helping out with the tours on the GOW weekend. We have the very best volunteers.)*

Oxbow's Wish List for 2015

- We still need a volunteer interested in interviewing other volunteers and writing short stories on the efforts of other volunteers for publication in *Wetland Matters*. This is very important since our volunteers are wonderful and deserve to be recognized in many ways for their unselfish efforts.
- We need a volunteer to put together a legacy giving campaign.
- We need a volunteer to help with more media coverage for Oxbow and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.
- If you have a truck in good shape that you are no longer using and wish to donate it to Oxbow, we are interested. Having a truck available to use when we have to haul something in or out of the Oxbow is a valuable necessity. Lack of a truck has more than once caused us to lose the opportunity to haul a piece of trash out of the Oxbow when conditions were right to do so. We have an offer of a nearby location where we can park the truck when not in use so all we need is a donor and a truck that works.

If you can help with any of these needs or think you know someone who can, please call Jon Seymour at 513-851-9835.

Important Notice Important Notice
Ballot of Election of Directors

Our corporation regulations call for the election of the Boards of Directors by ballot with the deadline for receipt of that ballot to be January 1, 2016. The Directors serve a 3-year term and about 1/3 of the directors are elected each year.

Here are the candidates for election to the **Board of Oxbow, Inc.** Vote for 5 candidates:

_____ Ed Gemperle
 _____ John Klein
 _____ Mike Miller
 _____ Jon Seymour
 _____ Wayne Wauligman
 _____ Write in _____

Here are the candidates for election to the **Board of Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.** Vote for 5 candidates:

_____ Ed Gemperle
 _____ John Klein
 _____ Mike Miller
 _____ Jon Seymour
 _____ Wayne Wauligman
 _____ Write in _____

Vote for both Boards, cut the ballot out and mail to Oxbow, Inc. P.O. Box 4172, Lawrenceburg, Indiana, 47025 by January 1, 2016. First class postage is required.

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 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 4172
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025
513-851-9835

Corporation Officers

President, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Vice President, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Corresponding Secretary, Dennis Mason	(513) 385-3607
Treasurer, Ed Gemperle	(812) 539-3666
Ohio Agent, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Indiana Agent, Ed Gemperle	(812) 539-3666

Committee Chairpersons


Conservation, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Easement Inspection, John Getzendanner II	(812) 537-0481
Education, Velda Miller	(812) 584-018
Field Trips, Jay Stenger	(513) 522-42
Land Management, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-86
John Klein	(513) 941-487
Programs, Dr. Meg Riestenberg	(513) 921-398
Kathy McDonald	(513) 748-0281
Webmaster, 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@twc.com

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

Printed on recycled paper by
Rapid Copy Printing - 513-385-0888

513-851-9835



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

www.oxbowinc.org
LAWRENCEBURG, IN 47025
P.O. BOX 4172

