

# wetland matters



## OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391  
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

NO. 29

MAY - JUNE, 1991



### A VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

The following exclusive, secured for a price by WETLAND MATTERS, is a recorded report of a covert meeting made by one or two birds of the TATTLER species. To protect our source, no names may be revealed. These undercover birds, at the risk of their own lives, infiltrated a secret BIRDATHON '91 Planning and Strategy meeting. Top-flight birds, representing all endemic and migratory species, were present. The meeting, led by an elderly, balding eagle, picks up in progress -

" - word is, it's going to be held on **MAY 10TH** and **11TH** this year and they've already begun. We have reports of isolated groups doing what they call 'Good Weather Dances' and filling out papers called 'Pledge Cards.' "

"We were lucky last year. Many of us were missed because of rain. We can't count on that again this year. Hiding places must be selected and kept secret. Anywhere within a fifty-mile radius of the Oxbow will do. Just hunker down and be quiet."

(Background comments from the audience can be overheard on the tape.)

"It's hard to be quiet when you're being Canada goosed!"

"It's hard to be quiet when those breeding hormones say, SING!"

"It's hard to be quiet when you're trying to see 'WHOO' is looking for you!"

(The tape resumes.)

"You, **HARD-TO-FIND-BIRDS!** Get out there, now! Show up in different locations! Sit and preen. Act unconcerned. Let yourselves be seen! Just don't be anywhere near where you've been seen once BIRDATHON '91 has begun."

"You, **MIGRATORIES!** Your strategy is hide and seek. Tops of the tallest trees. Keep moving. If you stop, be sure it's behind a leaf the same color as yourselves. The name of your game is camouflage!"

"You, **SPARROWS!** Into the middle of the biggest, brownest, bramble field you can find! Jack-in-the-box - **pop up, drop down!** Pop up, drop down! Don't give them a clean shot.

You guys with the eye stripes! Perch where you can take advantage

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of a twig that conveniently covers the stripe. That drives 'em wild!"

"You, MOCKERS! Get out there and sing! Any song! Your job is to lay a false trail. Confuse them! Delay them! Remember, for them, time is precious."

"You, STARLINGS, GRACKLES, ROBINS, BLUE-JAYS CHICKADEES, TITMICE! All of you wing-soldiers! Follow them. Get in their way. Over-run them. Throw yourselves in front of their 'scopes and binoculars! Be prepared to sacrifice yourselves to let a real counter escape. Keep in mind, 'the redder the face, the more successful the mission!' "

"You, EARLY NESTERS! Your assignment is air cover. Continuous fecal-sac, umbrella bombing during daylight hours. No target is to be spared!"

"You, NOCTURNALS! Thin your ranks. Spread out. Move silently. Make them work if they are going to be successful in counting you!"

"You, SHOREBIRDS! You're safe! Nine out of ten of you look alike and the tenth one is likely to be misidentified!"

"You, GOLDFINCHES, ORIOLES, TANAGERS! Unless you can do a quick molt, you're goners. Just try to stay out of sight. If you must surrender, give up slowly. Always play for time!"

"You, VULTURE! Drop that birder! He won't be ripe enough until 5 P.M., May 11th!"

"I, MYSELF, plan to glide majestically over the Oxbow, catch a fish or two, roost where I cannot be missed, and then, on May 10th, at precisely 4:59:55 P.M., depart the count area."

"IN CONCLUSION, let me make this perfectly clear! This will be our most testing twenty-four hours of the year. The more people who sign pledge cards, the more birders who compete, the more of us they find, the more money they earn for Oxbow, Inc. I know it's for a GOOD CAUSE, but let's not make it easy. And, should we be tempted to falter in our assignments, bear in mind what it is they are working so hard to attain. The coveted, and I shudder as I say it, GOLDEN STARLING AWARD!"

"Remember our strategy - JUST HUNKER DOWN AND BE QUIET!"

(Tape ends.)

And that's what they all planned to do.  
That is, all but two TATTLERS.

BIRDATHON '91

PLEDGE CARD

Mail to: Oxbow, Inc., P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, OH 45243  
YES, I am willing to pledge per species -

\$3\_\_\_ \$2\_\_\_ \$1\_\_\_ 75¢\_\_\_ 50¢\_\_\_ 25¢\_\_\_ 10¢\_\_\_ other\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
(area code)

My pledge is for (team or individual name) \_\_\_\_\_

continued, next page.

# Sunny Weather Tips

**WE'VE GOT  
SHIRTS!**

T-shirt weather is here! If you are shopping for a remarkably attractive gift or something new for summer, let our Marketing committee help. Oxbow, Inc. member, Julie Godsey has succeeded Jinny Wiseman as the keeper of the CHARLIE HARPER line of Tee and Sweat shirts. You may order by mail, (add \$2 postage and handling for each mailing address) or pick them up from Julie. Call 513-451-5793 to arrange for pick-up. The shirts are also on sale at Oxbow, Inc.'s monthly meetings at the Cincinnati Zoo and the Lawrenceburg Public Library. Shirts may also be purchased from Nature's Niche at Farbach Werner Nature Preserve, The Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, and The Cincinnati Nature Center. Membership prices do not apply if purchased at these outlets.

Field trip leaders can take your order but they will not have shirts available for sale.

For those of you who have not seen "THE DUCK STOPS HERE", it is a two-color design printed on a gray-blue background. The characteristic marks of the wood duck are clearly presented in bright white,

Sizes and Prices: YOUTH 2-4, 6-8, 10-12, 14-16  
Members \$8 Non-members \$9

Tee's

ADULT S, M, L, XL, XX-L\*  
Member \$8 Non-member \$10

Sweat's

ADULT M, L, XL, XX-L\*  
Members \$18 Non-members \$20

\* Add \$2 for all XX-L sizes



These CHARLIE HARPER'S make an ideal gift that will be used and appreciated. If you don't have yours, add your name to your list and give Julie a call --- RIGHT NOW!

## Oxbow Shirt Order Form

Quantity	Size	Price	TEE	SWEAT	Amount
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

**ORDER  
FORM**

Postage & Handling \$2.00 per mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING INFORMATION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Allow ten days  
for delivery

Make your check payable to: Oxbow, Inc.

Mail to: Julie Godsey

265 Jupiter Drive  
Cincinnati, OH 45238

# A Special Program

Thursday, May 9th, 7:30 P.M. at the Lawrenceburg Public Library, Elvin Blasdel presents the fourth "Special Slide Show Program" to benefit Oxbow, Inc. (see meetings.)

Mary Nemeth of Batavia, OH brings her show on "ICELAND."

"Different from anything I've ever seen. Her photographs are perfect in every way. This is really an outstanding program" is how Mr. Blasdel describes Mrs. Nemeth's work.

A voluntary donation will be accepted after the program.

Oxbow, Inc. thanks Elvin for his continuing support.

Oxbow, Inc. has established Memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each Memorial, established in the name of a friend or loved one, 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 and should be sent to Oxbow, Inc., P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, OH. 45243. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of the donor and those to receive the acknowledgment.

\* \* \* \* \* Oxbow, Inc. Memorials \* \* \* \* \*

\* IN MEMORY OF - DONOR \*

* Mary Calvin	Patricia A. Shanklin
* Tom Calvin	Patricia A. Shanklin
* Richard H. & Elizabeth M. Peckham	Richard H. Peckham, Jr.
* Mr. & Mrs. Caleb Roessler	Marguerite R. Whitney
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* Carl Schlegel	William C. Bien
* Carl Schlegel	Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Horsley
* Carl Schlegel	Joe, Trudy, Becky, Sarah, and Jessica Jester
* Carl Schlegel	Mr. & Mrs. Raymond J. Long
* Carl Schlegel	Mr. & Mrs. Art Pfirrmann
* Howard Stanford	Evelyn C. Rice
* Winston F. White, Sr.	Frederick C. Young
	Patricia A. Shanklin
	Mrs. Frieda White



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continued.

A BIRDATHON '91 report will be mailed to you after the contest. It will include highlights of the competition, the number of species recorded, and the pledge amount you owe. Need more details? Want to form a team? Want to be on a team? Call Anita Buck 513-681-2574. Detach and mail your pledge card right now! Your pledge is tax deductible.

## FIELD NOTES

1991 NORTHERN MIGRATION AT THE OXBOW.  
Morris Mercer.



This year's northern migration of waterfowl is all but over at the Oxbow. It did not seem to be a normal migration this year. Past years usually found the Oxbow ice-covered during January into early February. Ducks, mostly mallards and blacks, were found out on the river along with good numbers of Canada geese.

This year, in early January, it was evident why the Oxbow area is designated as a floodplain. The Ohio River reached 57 feet and everything in the Oxbow except the I-275 expressway was under water.

A few thousand ducks and geese found the flooded fields to their liking and spent their time resting and feeding there. Viewing the large numbers of ducks and geese present in January and February, I thought March would be great, but the large numbers expected just didn't show up.

I believe there are a number of reasons for the strange migration pattern this year. The winter was so mild that the ducks weren't pushed very far south to find food. With the river so high much of the time, the waterfowl present stayed hidden in flooded habitat and in areas away from the roads.

Occasionally, when the ducks were in the air, you could get an idea of the number of birds in the area. People have agreed that there were more black ducks than usual. On a number of occasions the blacks outnumbered the mallards. In years past, the mallards have always outnumbered the blacks.

I saw fewer pintails, but their numbers are down nation-wide. I saw fewer canvasbacks, but they have never been at the Oxbow in large numbers. I also saw fewer red-headed ducks and scaups. The gadwall is one duck I saw in higher numbers than in years past.

A few mornings in early April were memorable. High water from the Great Miami was slowly draining from the fields down stream from the Lost Bridge. The small, shrinking water holes were crowded with ducks. I saw more than 40 colorful male wood ducks, a couple hundred mallards, a few American black ducks, northern shovelers, 30 or 40 blue-winged teal, and green-winged teal. To see a flight of blue-winged teal as they turn in the morning sun is a thing of beauty.

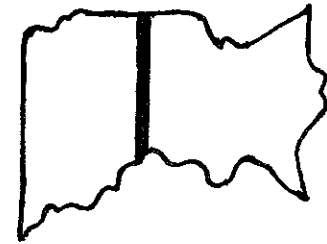
The shorebirds are moving through now, and soon other species will return to the area to nest. Other migrants, such as the colorful warblers, will also be passing through, their song and secrecy challenging us to identify them.

Monthly field trips are planned for us to enjoy the wildlife found in the Oxbow and Shawnee Lookout Park. Hope to see you afield!

Morris.

**A HISTORY OF THE OXBOW AREA.**

Don Bogosian



**PART 8 - THE INDIANA STATE LINE.**

In 1788, John Cleves Symmes received a charter for one million acres of land bordered by the Great Miami, Ohio, and Little Miami Rivers, and called it the "Miami Purchase". Symmes re-sold much of the land to settlers and he himself settled in North Bend in January of 1789. Others soon followed, including settlers Dunn and Hayes previously mentioned. Symmes went bankrupt when North Bend did not become the metropolis he had hoped.

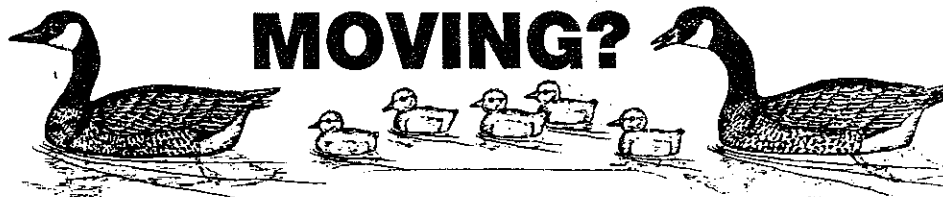
West of the Great Miami River is what was called the "Congress Lands". It was land sold by the government, beginning in 1802, to raise money for government operation. The Miami Purchase had been surveyed haphazardly, using the metes and bounds system and natural landmarks. The resulting confusion was one factor in Symmes downfall.

The Congress Lands were surveyed using a mathematically more logical system of Townships and Ranges - regular rectangular areas of uniform size. This system was first used in Ohio and, due to its success, was widely used by the government elsewhere.

In 1803, Ohio became a state and Miami Township, east of the Great Miami River, assumed its present size. Whitewater Township was established west of the Great Miami. Indiana had become a territory in 1800, and only assumed statehood in 1816.

Along U.S. Route 50, near the Oxbow, is a stone marker, erected in 1827, commemorating the 1798 establishment of the First Prime Meridian, used by the Geological Survey as a base line for westward mapping and surveying. The Prime Meridian's actual origin point was the mouth of the Great Miami River. This line became, and still remains the State Line between Ohio and Indiana.

Next, Hardintown.



**Make sure your WETLAND MATTERS newsletter goes with you!**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

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New Address

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Old Address

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City/State/Zip

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Effective Date

**MAIL TO: Oxbow, Inc. P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio 45243**

Please notify us immediately so we can update our records. The Post Office does not forward third class mail.

# Meetings

**THURSDAY, MAY 9TH, 7:30 P.M.** Lawrenceburg Public Library. 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.

SPECIAL PROGRAM - Mary Nemeth presents a slide program on "ICELAND."

**TUESDAY, MAY 14TH, 7:30 P.M.** Cincinnati Zoo Education Building. Enter through the Exit Gate on Erkenbrecher Avenue.

"EARTHQUAKE LAKE" Here, at this lake can be seen the effects of the 1811 - 1812 New Madrid earthquake.

Karl Maslowski, noted naturalist and photographer, will present a film made at Reelfoot Lake some 40 years ago. Reelfoot, or "Earthquake Lake" is a good place for fishing and many bald eagles winter here. The lake is located along the Mississippi River near the KY-TENN. border.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 11TH, 7:30 P.M.** Lawrenceburg Public Library. For directions, see the May 9th Special "ICELAND" Program.

Featuring the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' slide presentation, "Endangered Species." Also, a first-hand report on the results of BIRDATHON '91.

## Field Trips



**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, MAY 10TH AND 11TH - BIRDATHON '91** Enter a team or be an individual birder. Collect pledges for your favorite or sign a pledge card for the Oxbow, Inc. team that scores the highest total. We need your help to reach our June 30th commitment for our last conservation easement!

**SATURDAY, MAY 25TH, 8 A.M.** Meet at the upper boat ramp parking lot at Shawnee Lookout Park. Nesting birds should be setting up house-keeping. Wild flowers and other things should be found around the area.

Leader, Dave Styer 513-772-4395.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 9TH, 8 A.M.** Meet at the Shawnee Lookout Park boat ramp. The prothonotary warbler should have found a home near the boat ramp by this time. Look for other nesting birds along the trail.

Leader, Jay Stenger 513-522-4245

### Corporation Officers

President, Norma L. Flannery	513-471-8001
Vice President, Morris Mercer	513-941-2534
Secretary, Earl Thirey	513-528-3371
Corresponding Sec., Suzanne Skidmore	513-561-5718
Treasurer, Jim Rettig	513-561-0211
Agent, Dave Styer	513-772-4395

### Committee Chairpersons

Conservation, Bonnie Fancher	812-438-3641
Easement Inspection, Michael Kluesener	513-574-1220
Richard Pope	513-637-1365
Fund Raising, Greg Mendell	812-926-1966
Land Management, Dave Styer	513-772-4395
Marketing, Julie Godsey	513-451-5793
Preservation, Norma L. Flannery	513-471-8001
Programs:	
Ohio, Morris Mercer	513-941-2534
Indiana, Bonnie Fancher	812-438-3641
Research, Kaniaulono Meyer	513-948-8630
Speakers' Bureau, Kaniaulono Meyer	513-948-8630
Volunteer Coordinator, John Getzendanner	812-537-5728

### Editor

Norma L. Flannery	513-471-8001
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### Oxbow, Inc.

A nonprofit organization formed by conservation groups and concerned citizens of Ohio and Indiana for the purpose of preserving and protecting a wetlands 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 encouraged and solicited.

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

Mail to: Oxbow, Inc., P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, OH 45243

## Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!



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