



WETLAND *matters*

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

Did we pass in the mail?

Our apologies if you received a dues renewal envelope in your Wetland Matters and you have already sent us your dues. Every effort is made to work incoming mail up to the day the newsletter is prepared for mailing. You may expect a two-week hiatus during which received dues will not be reflected. Should you receive another renewal envelope in the following issue, call us at 513-471-8001 to determine the status of your account.

Thank you,
Membership Committee

Hunting update

To further define Oxbow's hunting policy: hunting privileges are for those members holding a current paid membership. Authorization is granted only to individual members (upon their application for permission to hunt). There is NO corporate authorization. The Oxbow-owned land on which hunting is permitted is approximately 30 acres and is difficult to access.

This parcel is the first land Oxbow has been able to acquire east of I-275 in the portion of the flood plain that is designated as an area for hunting in Oxbow's long-range land use plan for the area.

Address Correction?

Once each year we ask you to inspect the mailing label on your Wetland Matters. Is it correct in every way including the zipcode? If so, great!

If there's an error, please mail your corrections to:

Oxbow, Inc.
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243-0391

Programs

March 9 1999 (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo's Education Building. Enter at the automobile entrance and tell the attendant you're attending the Oxbow program.

Our speaker this evening will be Thane Maynard, Education Director for the Cincinnati Zoo. Thane, an active conservationist and long-time supporter of Oxbow, is also well known as the narrator on our video "Birds of the Oxbow." His programs are always entertaining and informative. This evening his title will be "Window in the Wild."

April 13, 1999 (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting in the Clifford Room at the College of Mount Saint Joseph.

Dr. Gene Kritsky, from the Biology Department at Mt. St. Joseph, will present a slide show based on his recent trip to "Darwin's Islands."

Field Trips

March 28, 1999 (Saturday) 9:00 A.M. Oxbow field trip.

Meet Jay Stenger at Gardens Alive! parking lot. Jay is one of the instructors for Audubon's course on birding, so going afield with him will be a great way to sharpen your skill for the coming season. This will be primarily a birding trip into the Oxbow area. Expect a good variety of ducks and early spring migrants.

April 18, 1999 (Sunday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow field trip.

Ned Keller will lead this field trip starting from the parking lot at Gardens Alive!.

Volunteer

April 17, 1999 (Saturday) 9:00 to Noon Winton Woods Cleanup.

Contact the Forest Park Environmental Awareness Program (513) 595-LAND (5263) for more information.

BIRDATHON '99

Oxbow's annual fund raising event is a birdathon. Participants solicit pledges of money for each species of bird they identify and then spend a 24 hour period in early May scouring the Tristate area looking for birds. This year the birding part of the event will be held from 5:00 P.M. Friday May 7th to 5:00 P.M. Saturday May 8th.

Birdathon participants compete in self selected categories, such as "Most birds found in a single county" and "Most birds found without using fossil fuels." The **Golden Starling** is awarded to the team that finds the largest number of birds in the entire birdathon area. Other awards include the **Fearsome Fledglings Award** (most birds by young birders), and the **Solitary Vireo** (most birds by an individual).

Birdathon helps other worthy conservation organizations raise funds too. The Cincinnati Nature Center, RAPTOR, Gilmore Ponds, Cincinnati Zoo, Northern Kentucky Bird Club and Cincinnati Bird Club organize birdathon teams, collect pledges, and split the funds they raise with Oxbow.

Oxbow will enter several teams of its own in the birdathon competition, and we invite members (and others) to pledge money in support of one of these teams. All funds pledged to these teams go directly to Oxbow. You can make a pledge by filling out and mailing the form below. Pledge for your favorite team, or pledge for Oxbow's highest scoring team.

After Birdathon is over, you'll receive an account of how Oxbow's teams did — where they went and what they saw — as well as a memo of what your pledge comes to.

Oxbow's Birdathon Teams

Oxbow Team #1 Geriatric Gents and a Junior (Karl Maslowski and George Laycock will assemble a team of associates and friends.)

Oxbow Team #2 The Fire and Brimstone Birders Guild (Joe Bens, Paul Wharton, Jay Stenger)

Oxbow Team #3 The No See 'Ums (David Styer, Charlie Saunders and Steve Pelikan)

BIRDATHON '99 Pledge Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail to:

Oxbow, Inc.

PO Box 43391

Cincinnati, OH 45243



My pledge is per species found:

\$1 50¢ 25¢ 20¢ 10¢ other: _____

or for this amount: _____

My pledge is for:

Oxbow Team #1 (Geriatric Gents)

Oxbow Team #2 (Fire and Brimstone)

Oxbow Team #3 (No See 'Ums)

Highest Scoring Oxbow Team

And now, a little test from the Birdathon Committee. . . .

Check the statements that are true:

_ Birdathon is a testosterone-fueled, breakneck competition among the top birders in the Tri-state.

_ Birdathon gives overbusy birders an excuse to push off their work, family, and volunteer duties and get out in the field during the peak of migration.

_ Birdathon is a good opportunity for novice birders to test themselves.

_ Birdathon gives your friends, neighbors, and co-workers whose children sell you Scout cookies, magazine subscriptions, candy bars, entertainment books etc. a chance to return the favor.

_ Birdathon consumes 24 hungry, cold and sleepless hours, plus weeks of scouting beforehand.

_ Birdathon is a leisurely evening's and a leisurely morning's birding, broken by a good night's sleep.

_ Birdathon is about identifying as many species as possible.

_ Birdathon is about raising as much money for Oxbow land acquisition as possible.

The answer: Every statement is true.

Birdathon is many things to many people. For Oxbow, it represents our single biggest (and only) annual fundraising event. For the participants, it's fun, no matter how they choose to get involved.

It can't be denied that many Birdathon participants are highly competitive. However, others feel no need to compete: They designate Birdathon as a day they'll spend relaxing and birding with their friends in their favorite areas. Still other participants enjoy the opportunity to contribute to a cause they believe in — without opening their own checkbooks.

Our problems in the Oxbow are different than they used to be. In the beginning — naively — we thought if we bought enough land, and enough conservation easements, our task would be over. We thought we could save the Oxbow, once and for all, and go away.

Now we know better. So much ill-advised floodplain development has been proposed for the Oxbow area — and has in fact had considerable sums invested before it was proven unworkable and/or illegal — that we realize we can't save the Oxbow just once; we have to save it a thousand times.

But if we lose it just once, it's gone forever.

If you'd like to help raise some Birdathon money, you do at least have some options:

1) Participate in the Birdathon, either as a non-competitor or as a competitor.

2) Pledge your support for one of the Oxbow teams.

3) If you want to do more than just pledge but don't want to bird, you can participate on the fund raising end. Get a conservation-minded friend or two to pledge for an Oxbow team. We'd be happy to send you pledge sheets with which you can solicit these pledges.

Just 'phone (513) 681-2574 and tell us how you'd like to help.

Thank you!

Birdathon Participant Information

Birdathon '99, Oxbow's annual fundraising competition, will take place 5 p.m. to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday, May 7 & 8.

Remember that Birdathon is a fundraising event, not just for Oxbow Inc. but for all participating organizations. High school and college biology clubs and conservation and natural history organizations of all kinds — not just those that are bird-related — can benefit greatly from Birdathon and have a good time in the meantime.

There are a number of categories in which you can compete. When you register you can select what category you wish to compete in, or you can register as a non-competing participant.

Teams: 2-6 people

1. Most species, entire Birdathon area
2. Most species in one county of choice within the Birdathon area
3. Most species, traveling by human/animal/solar or non-fossil fuel power. Fossil fuel to point of departure and back permissible, but no birds may be counted at that time.
4. Most species, high-school age and younger. 1-2 older members permitted, but 50% of team must be minors.
5. Most species identified by sight only.

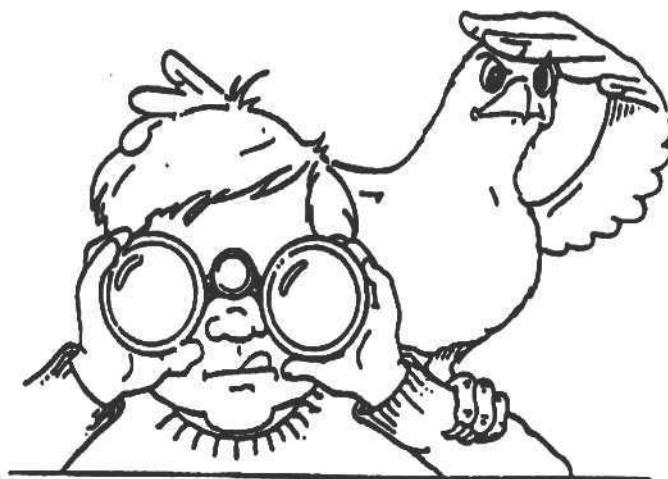
Individuals

1. Most species, entire Birdathon area
2. Most species in one county of choice within the Birdathon area
3. Most species, traveling by human/animal/solar or non-fossil fuel power. Fossil fuel to point of departure and back permissible, but no birds may be counted at that time.
4. Most species by high school age or younger. Older, non-participating driver permitted.
5. Most species identified by sight only.

Everyone

6. Most dollars raised per species, open to all, but as individuals. Monies raised as a team via whatever institution sponsors the team do not count. If you wish to compete in this category, personal pledge sheets (please total pledges at the bottom!) must be turned in at beginning of tally. Two trophies: one award given to adults, another to high school aged participants and younger.

If you are interested in Birdathoning this year, either to compete for one of the awards or just to have a good time birding without competing, please call Steve Pelikan or Anita Buck at (513)-681-2574. In mid- to late March we'll send you a packet containing rules, registration information, maps, and pledge forms.



Field Notes

Morris Mercer

As usual, I was looking forward to winter. December came along, and I'll remember it as one of the warmest on record. Frances and I had made plans to visit our son David in Texas. It was a warm day in Houston when we heard the news that real winter had arrived in the Ohio Valley.

We had an extra nice visit at Dave's and added to our field notes with several trips to Brazos Bend State Park where we enjoyed many animals we don't find often around the Oxbow — including Little Blue Herons, White Ibis and several 'gators.

We also made several trips to the Attwater Wildlife Refuge. We didn't see a Prairie Chicken, but there were plenty of other things to look at. By the time we reached the refuge, we'd counted thousands of Snow Geese; they filled many of the rice fields. When we stopped for a closer look, we noticed that there were White-fronted and Canada Geese mixed in with the Snow Geese. When the birds took wing, what a roar! And it looked like a blizzard in Texas.

We toured the refuge stopping at water holes to look for waterfowl and were kept busy checking them off on the bird list. As the sun dropped into the western sky and a beautiful evening arrived we were at Pintail Lake. The slanting light shone on the ducks and the water. The colors were great. Dave said, "Dad, look at this." The 'scope was focused on several Cinnamon Teal, looking like pure gold in the brilliant evening light.

Then we stopped at fields to admire the Snow Geese. At one field, we saw Caracaras feasting on a dead goose. Every field also had one or two marsh hawks hunting just above the tall grass.

When we returned to the banks of the Ohio from our Texas visit, the ice- and snow-storm was pretty much over. I gather that there's been a little too much to please most folks.

I began to hear reports of visitors to our area, seemingly driven down from the north by the winter storm. Hundreds of Horned Larks, a good many Snow Buntings and many Lapland Longspurs moved in for a spell, and I heard reports of thousands of Canada Geese out in the Oxbow.

With snow melt and some rain, the river rose, and crested at 45 feet — ideal conditions for a trip to the Oxbow. When I stopped at the underpass near Cemetery Lake, the large fields were full of water and the ducks had found it. I saw more than a dozen species of ducks, and over 500 gulls. Most were Ring-bills, but there were several Bonaparte's and Herring Gulls too. There might have been more gulls there, but I have trouble looking at gulls when there's so many ducks around.

One morning I saw a Short-eared Owl near Lost Bridge, and that's the first short-ear I've seen in the Oxbow area. The same day I saw the owl, Dave Styer and Denis Conover were over near the Oxbow and found a Harris' Sparrow. It was around for several days, but I didn't see it.

Much too soon for me, the river began to fall, reaching 32 feet in a week. Where the water left, the fields were a sea of mud. I had agreed to take the Darke County Bird Club on a field trip to the Oxbow. They were coming a long way and I was afraid we couldn't get anyplace where we could see the ducks. We met at Gardens Alive! and drove back by the gambling boat and over the levee, parked on the soft ground near Jackpot Pond, and walked over to the Oxbow Lake. We could hear the ducks, but couldn't see them. We went back and drove in by the cement plant. The walk from there was through mud, and as we went on, the mud got deeper. We reached the turn in the road, and we could see the sky pond out in the big field. The water was covered with ducks. When the ducks noticed us, they started to take off. There was a large flock in the air, and as many still on the water. We watched them circle and come back in. Most were Mallards and Blacks, but there were also more Canvasbacks than we usually see.

There was a Mute Swan in with the ducks. I heard one lady say that it was the first time she'd ever seen a swan in the air. The huge flock of ducks and the airborne swan were a fitting end to a nice field trip.

I'm now looking forward to spring — a great time to be out in the Oxbow. I hope to meet you there.



1998 Treasury Report

Oxbow* gained over \$78 thousand in 1998, and continues to save for an opportunity to buy wetland in the Great Miami/Ohio river flood plain. However, land prices remain high due to speculative interest in the area.

Proposals exist for the commercial development of the flood plain. Oxbow evaluates these and represents the interests of the wetland before various public and private offices as necessary. This expense, mostly legal, was more than \$6 thousand in 1998, not including the value of gracious donations of legal services.

Administration and fundraising expense was about \$1,800, or 2% of revenue.

Of course, Oxbow is a 100% volunteer organization - there are no salaries, expense accounts, gifts, or bonuses - and is beholden to the generous support of the public and the membership.

Mark M. Westrich
Treasurer

* Oxbow Inc., and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. The valuation of a special bequest was unavailable at press time, and is omitted from this report.

REVENUE & EXPENSES	
1998	
Dues	\$24,032.00
Donations	\$8,933.07
Memorials	\$5,759.00
Land Acquisition	\$6,228.08
Interest	\$16,455.81
Fund Raising	\$0.00
Bird-A-Thon	\$8,254.75
Crop Income	\$21,325.50
Book Sales	\$38.95
Video Sales	\$137.00
Shirt Sales	\$230.00
Cap Sales	\$20.00
Miscellaneous	<u>\$767.14</u>
Revenue	\$92,181.30
Postage&Phone	\$1,054.60
Office Supplies	\$295.18
Newsletter	\$1,545.30
Taxes & Ins	\$2,969.83
Legal	\$6,260.08
Fund Raising	\$268.08
Book Cost	\$16.68
Video Cost	\$90.00
Shirt Cost	\$133.58
Cap Cost	\$17.18
Miscellaneous	<u>\$949.52</u>
Expenses	\$13,600.03
Net Gain	\$78,581.27

CAPITAL & ASSETS	
1998	
Cash	\$405,397.99
Land	\$418,221.10
Easements Owned	\$231,963.28
Equipment	\$1,132.75
Book Stock	\$201.63
Video Stock	\$780.00
Shirt Stock	\$2,749.34
Cap Stock	<u>\$77.31</u>
Assets	\$1,060,523.40
Debt	\$0.00
Equity	<u>\$1,060,523.40</u>
Capital	\$1,060,523.40

Oxbow Memorials

In memory of

W. Gilbert Cook
George Dunahue
Leo Edbril
Dom Farrell
Neil Macneale
Dan Riestenberg
Dan Riestenberg
Wilfred Wasinger
Charles M. Zestermann, Jr.

Donor

Donna and Earl Heintzelman
Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Brown
David A. Skidmore, Jr.
Mary Agnes Hogue
Cincinnati Bird Club
Lee Hieronymus
Bill Pfennig
Charley E. Noe
Roy and Jane Bernzott

Oxbow Tributes

In honor of

V. Anderson Coombe
"Christmas tribute"
Norma Flannery
"Happy Holidays"

Donor

Mr. and Mrs. Michael A. Coombe
Stan and Debbie Bohmer

Winton Woods Cleanup

The Forest Park Environmental Awareness Program and the Hamilton County Park District will co-sponsor the 12th Annual Winton Woods Cleanup. This award-winning event will take place Saturday, April 17th from 9am to noon (rain or shine).

Volunteers of all ages are needed to help remove the accumulated trash and debris that threaten the scenic beauty of Winton Woods and the health of the wildlife that live there. Volunteers will be supplied with bags and a limited number of gloves. (Which means you might want to bring your own.) After the cleanup, volunteers are rewarded with a free cookout and raffle prizes. Young children must be accompanied by an adult.

Over the last 11 years, the cleanup has totaled over 4,119 volunteers collecting approximately 83 tons of litter. Last year 205 volunteers picked up 6 tons of litter in less than three hours, proving again that many hands make light work.

Contact the Forest Park Environmental Awareness Program (513) 595-LAND (5263) for more information.

This event is sure to appeal to Oxbow members. It's a chance to get outdoors, improve our environment, meet and work with other enthusiastic volunteers, help out a conservation-oriented organization, and begin your celebration of Earth Day. When you go, tell them you're from Oxbow!

Oxbow, Inc.

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

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

Mail to: **Oxbow, Inc.**
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391
513-471-8001

Corporation Officers

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Vice President, Morris Mercer(513) 941-2534
Recording Secretary,
Dennis Mason(513) 385-3607
Corresponding Secretary,
Suzanne Skidmore(513) 561-5718
Treasurer, Mark Westrich(513) 637-2175
Agent, Dave Styer(513) 772-1287

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation, Bill Bocklage(513) 922-2445
Easement Inspection,
Michael Kluesener(513) 574-1220
Richard Pope (513) 637-1365
Fund Raising, Anita Buck(513) 681-2574
Land Management, Dave Styer(513) 772-1287
Preservation, Norma L. Flannery(513) 471-8001
Programs, Morris Mercer(513) 941-2534
Research, Meg Riesterberg(513) 921-3986
Speakers Bureau, Morris Mercer(513) 941-2534
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Give Us a Call!**

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

