



WINTER ACTIVITIES

Wrap up and get going!

Auduboners may change their plumage for the winter season, but wrapping up in coats and hats and scarves and boots doesn't keep us at home. On this page and on pages 4 and 5 are some of the many winter activities you can choose.

AMV CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DEC. 15

The Audubon Society's 108th Annual Christmas Bird Count takes place around Oxford on Saturday Dec. 15.

As is customary, counters will gather at 7:30 a.m. at Miami University's Ecology Research Center on Somerville Road. Participants are urged to bring a dish to share and their own table service for a post-count lunch.

New participants are welcome to join groups led by experts covering portions of the count area. No experience is needed! First-time counters – and all participants under age 18 – do not pay the \$6 participation fee, which covers data processing and publication.

Audubon Miami Valley's dawn-to-dusk census of bird species covers 176 square miles and is conducted according to National Audubon Society rules.

At any time on count day, birdwatchers at home can

phone reports to Liz Woedl at 513.523.1782. Soon after the count, results will be available from the AMV Web site: <http://www.audubonmiamivalley.org>

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT, THROUGH JAN. 4

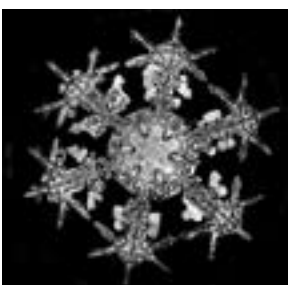
Birds in flight and birds in repose, birds near home and birds from far away – all line the walls of one of the second-floor galleries at the Fitton Center for the Creative Arts. They are the subjects of photographs by Bob Scholl, retired Miami professor turned nature photographer.

The show runs through Jan. 4 at the center, 101 S. Monument Ave. in Hamilton. Call for hours: 513.863.8873.

CINCINNATI ZOO FIELD TRIP, FEB. 16

The reinvigorated AMV field trip program led by Linda Williams has planned a behind-the-scenes tour of the insect and bird areas of the Cincinnati Zoo. The program is a great opportunity for a family outing.

The group will leave Oxford at 9 a.m. and be back about 4 p.m. Please note you must pre-register by Feb. 7, and that you will be charged an admission fee. The limit is 20 people. Contact Linda at 513.523.1538.



MORE TRIPS AND TO-DOS

CALENDAR, PAGES 4 AND 5

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Who will be our new neighbors?

Tired of the weather, sick of high housing prices, fed-up of the commute, our species here in the U.S. will up and move elsewhere given the opportunity of a new job or courageous whim.

We might end up in a new neighborhood just a few miles away or become immersed in the culture of a whole new community in a place far away from our childhood haunts or first adult home. No matter where our ancestors began the journey, we might end up anywhere.

Sometimes our human communities are displaced through extreme calamities or changing fortunes, causing forced migration that try the mettle and endurance of our kind. Fortunately, we are a tough and persistent bunch and manage to endure resettling somewhere, somehow.

In all of our constant reshaping of our environment we test the resiliency of our wildlife neighbors. In "Birds of Ohio" by McCormac/Kennedy we find that many

species first came to this area when openings were made in the landscape or imported disease devastated a whole tree population.

Some common birds became infrequent visitors or only settled in sparse numbers when forest, prairie or wetlands became depleted.

The birds that we see around us now are the ones that best coped with the landscape we have shaped.

So, who will be our new avian neighbors and who will fly elsewhere to find new nesting places and habitats to nourish and sustain their particular – sometimes very narrow – bare necessities?

It seems that the creatures who will continue to share these surroundings will be the ones who can survive in the landscape humans have created.

What species will be thriving and common in the Ohio field guides published 50 years from now?

– Liz Woedl



Editor's note: The snowflake images used throughout this newsletter were photographed by Wilson A. Bentley, the man who discovered "no two snowflakes are alike." See more images and information at <http://snowflakebentley.com/>



OUR VISION

We envision a world where humankind accepts the obligations of being part of nature, especially the obligation of stewardship. We seek to shape a culture in which the violation of nature is socially, politically, and morally unacceptable. In short, we seek a culture of conservation and an environmental ethic.

OUR MISSION

Audubon Miami Valley works to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

The Audubon Miami Valley newsletter is published four times a year, as the seasons change.

Deadline for the spring 2008 issue is Feb. 15. Send contributions to Newsletter@audubonmiamivalley.org or to Newsletter, P.O. Box 556, Oxford, Ohio 45056

- Judi Hetrick is editor.
- Celia Ellison is proofreader.
- Caitlin Stone designed the Meadowlark logo.



The newsletter is printed by Letterman Printing in Oxford on 100 percent recycled paper.

Visit us online at www.audubonmiamivalley.org.



Seed money

This year's bird seed sale netted \$1,431.10, more than \$200 more than last year. Congratulations and thanks to Special Projects Chair Marlene Hoffman and all her helpers!

OUT AND ABOUT



Photos courtesy of Jim Reid

Hike-A-Thon attracts 257

When Jim Reid asked us to go take a hike, he hoped 100 people would visit the Miami University Natural Areas as part of the Employee Health and Well-Being Program.

What he got was 257 hikers, including many Auduboners, who turned out on Oct. 27, an overcast, drizzly day. Among them were our own John Blocher, shown in the picture directly above along with Jim, Natural Areas field manager.

See event details and more pictures are <http://web.mac.com/reidje/Hike-A-thon/Welcome.html>

EDUCATION

Earth club work turns cheeks rosy

I don't know how she does it!!

Sharon Edwards, naturalist and director of EMU (Environmental Mobile Unit) has after-school Earth Clubs up and running at six area schools: Kramer, Marshall, and Bogan Elementary Schools and the Talawanda Middle School, Elda School in Ross, and Grant School in Hamilton. That's on top of close to 500 in-school programs she delivers every year!

I had the pleasure of attending two Clubs recently.

At Marshall, 16 students in grades 3-5 gathered under the picnic shelter to organize for activities improving the school's natural areas.

One group hauled seed to the wooded bird blind area, filled feeders and studied posters of local birds, while another planted native perennials in a butterfly garden.

Students wielded shovels and buckets to spread fresh gravel on the nature trail, and others pitched in to clear the area of litter.

After all that activity, "Ms. Edwards" shared nature lore on a hike through the woods.

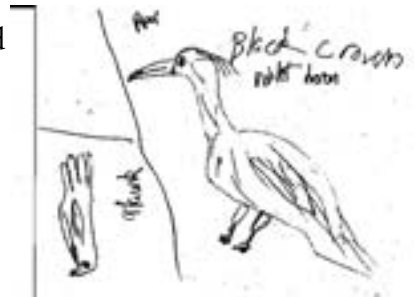
It was a cold and blustery day at Bogan! Sharon brought several "study skins" (stuffed birds) and models on loan from Miami University's Hefner Zoology Museum for a lesson on bird adaptations and identification.

Twenty-two students enjoyed sketching the birds, viewing a feather through a microscope, and receiving a poster to take home to help with their birdwatching.

Then they were off for a fast-paced hike to check out the emerging natural area where honeysuckle is being cleared for natural plantings. There were rosy cheeks on the Earth Club members that day!

Sharon, you do a great job, and AMV members, you should be proud to help sponsor such great programs!

– Gail Reynolds





DECEMBER

MONDAY DEC. 10

AMV public program

Aullwood R.E.A.C.H.E.S.

Chris Rowlands,

Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm

7:30 p.m., The Oxford Community Arts Center,
10 South College Ave.

Aullwood R.E.A.C.H.E.S. (Real Experiences Arouse Curiosity, Helping Everyone Succeed) is a dynamic outreach program that provides exciting, entertaining, and educational experiences for elementary students (and people of all ages).

Aullwood R.E.A.C.H.E.S. features the musical and artistic talents of Chris Rowlands, a nationally recognized performer, teaching children about nature through innovative programs. Chris creatively blends music, art, comedy, and education to create high-energy, fast-paced shows, which teach and inspire young people.

The Environment Magazine honored Chris by

awarding him its first E Award for his educational programs.

* Please note that this program will be at The Oxford Community Arts Center.

SATURDAY, DEC. 15

Oxford Christmas Bird Count

See details on page 1.

See all the counts across Ohio and our region on a map at http://www.ohiobirds.org/calendar/winter_counts/overview.php

HOLIDAY SEASON

Gift ideas

You can order bird-related merchandise from home through the AMV's own virtual store at <http://www.cafepress.com/audubonmv> or from the national society's Audubon Marketplace at <http://www.audubon.org/arket/licensed/>



JANUARY

AUDUBON MIAMI VALLEY HAS NO PUBLIC PROGRAM IN JANUARY

THROUGH JAN. 4

Photography exhibit

Bob Scholl, retired Miami professor turned nature photographer, shares his images of a multitude of different birds in an exhibit at the Fitton Center for the Creative Arts, 101 S. Monument Ave. in Hamilton. Call for hours: 513.863.8873.

ALL MONTH

Winter bird atlas

It's that time of year again. The Black Swamp Bird Observatory in Oak Harbor is looking for help with the 2008 Ohio Winter Bird Atlas. During the month, volunteers count birds on a weekly basis to try to determine what hearty species stick out the winter across the Buckeye State.

More information – including instructions, forms and a detailed explanation of the overall project – is available on the Web at www.bsbbird.org.





FEBRUARY

THURSDAY, FEB. 7

Cincinnati Zoo Field Trip sign-up deadline

See trip details below.

MONDAY FEB. 11

Wild Research

Dr. Chris Myers, Miami University

AMV public program

7:30 p.m., Community Room, Lebanon Citizens National Bank, 30 Park Place West, Oxford

Wild Research, developed by Project Dragonfly at Miami University and the Cincinnati Zoo, seeks to deepen public engagement in ecology and conservation.

Wild Research Stations will allow families to investigate polar bears, gorillas, and other species at popular zoo exhibits, while connecting the public to real-world conservation projects.

Leadership workshops leverage the Earth Expeditions program, which offers graduate courses for educators and conservationists at field sites in Belize, Costa Rica, Kenya, Mongolia, Namibia, Thailand and Trinidad.

Chris Myers will present both local and global aspects of Wild Research and exciting new approaches to conservation and education. Myers directs Project Dragonfly and its related programs, including Wild Research and Earth Expeditions. Project Dragonfly reaches millions of people through inquiry-driven print,

radio, Web and television media (including the PBS television series DragonflyTV), graduate-credit programs for teachers, and conservation partnerships. He received his Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology from Vanderbilt University, taught environmental education at Yale, and is now Professor of Zoology and Interdisciplinary Studies at Miami.

PRESIDENTS' DAY WEEKEND,

FEB. 15-18

Great Backyard Bird Count

The 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, sponsored by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is a chance to "count where you are." Details about the count and how to participate are online at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

SATURDAY FEB. 16

Cincinnati Zoo Field Trip

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MARCH

SAVE THE DATES

- The public program March 10 will feature Kelly Williams-Sieg of Ohio University discussing "Northern Saw-whet Owls: A Fall Migration Study."
- A March 15 field trip to the Fernald site will let you see the status of birds and plants in the area following the cleanup at the former uranium processing site.



SIGHTINGS

It's cold out there at the bird feeder area where an old iron rake head is stuck upside down into the end of a pipe driven in the ground.

A precious peanut-butter rustic log (precious, because a friend made it for me and because it's the reason for this story) hangs on one end of the rake, and a rusty metal egg basket full of big chunks of suet hangs on the other end.

"Big Girl" lands on the log and reaches her head upside down and waaay over to peck chunks of suet through the wires of the egg basket.

It's been 14 years since I moved here and having sighted the big birds from the very first, I have thought of nothing other than wishing for them to visit the feeder. It finally happened a few years back...once... then nothing more. I went from ecstatic to disappointed while waiting for the event to be repeated. The birds obviously had enough to eat from nature.

On the day of my birthday following, I looked out the window to see a rustic peanut butter log hanging from a nearby tree, with a Pileated Woodpecker on it! - made from paper mache, a precious work of art by a friend.



The sculpted bird came into my kitchen for posterity, and the peanut butter log went outside onto the rake head. That's when "Big Girl" began to visit, though not yet until a couple years later.

This past spring, she came regularly and then! she brought a young male.

She's not old, herself, with sleek black feathers and smooth topknot only half very bright red. The young male was extremely vocal and he looked like he'd stuck his beak in an electrical outlet which had caused his topknot to frizz.

Who then but a birder can understand my excitement at seeing "Big Girl" land on the peanut butter log then fly toward the house to the goat cheese chunks on top of my big feeder just outside the kitchen door?

I'm UPstairs, but after a quick run downstairs and a peek around the corner to see her, I can now hear (feel!) her hammering away at that cheese.

It was worth the 14-year wait and this is a formal "Thanks" to my friend.

– Debra Bowles

Above, 'Big Girl's' papier mache alter ego watches over rake, pipe, basket and log

Photo by Debra Bowles





Valerie Green greets a Monarch up close.



Photos courtesy of Hardy Eshbaugh

Jo Layera teaches the butterfly's life cycle.

Monarchs enchant and amaze

Layeras share their enthusiasm, and author asks: why not do more?

The cycle begins as it has for thousands of years. The monarchs are on the move. They are headed south and they stream from the eastern, the central, and the western valleys of the northern reaches of the U.S. and lower Canada trying to gain momentum in the face of an advancing fall punctuated by the first frosts of late September and October.

This has not been a good summer for the Monarchs, with little if any moisture in the dry, burned landscape of the fields of Ohio.

On Saturday Sept. 22, a group of interested Miami Valley Auduboners gathered at the Layeras' home to learn all about what it takes to become an advocate for the Monarchs.

Jo Layera is such an advocate, a retired nurse from McCullough-Hyde Hospital who has joined with her husband, Ramon, to create habitat for Monarchs as well as other butterfly species within the Oxford city limits on the south side of Chestnut Street.

The group gathered at the Layeras' learned all the life cycle stages of the Monarch, how to hold butterflies, how to tag them, and finally how to release them.

We learned that after a short rest on the leaf of a nearby plant, the Monarchs would take off and head south on the long journey to Michoacan, Mexico.

In past years some of these Oxford butterflies have actually reached Mexico, where tagged specimens have been recovered.

We learned that the eastern population of the Monarch spends the entire winter in the hills of this small area in Mexico before repeating the cycle and heading north, back to eastern North America in the spring.

The best part of the experience was watching children and adults mesmerized while holding and releasing the butterflies after they had been tagged.

Oxford needs to become a Monarch-friendly city. The opportunities are here. Why not make the habitat around the City Water Plant and Sewage Plant a home for the Monarchs? Do we really need neatly mowed grass in these locations or could we create a new kind of park – a park for butterflies!

– W. Hardy Eshbaugh

11/06/07

Want to learn more? Hardy recommends the book "Chasing Monarchs: Migrating with the Butterflies of Passage," by Robert Michael Pyle, published by Houghton Mifflin in 1999.

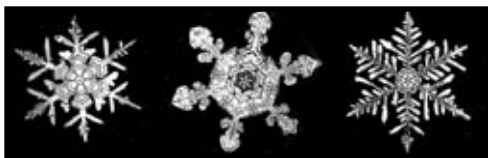
It is at the Fairfield branch of the Lane Public Library, classified under 595.789 P in nonfiction.



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