



Winter 2006-2007  
Volume 32

the quarterly newsletter of Audubon Miami Valley, in Ohio's Butler and Preble Counties

## Oxford Christmas bird count is Dec. 16

The Audubon Society's 107th Annual Christmas Bird Count takes place around Oxford on Saturday Dec. 16, according to Larry Sherman, Coordinator.

Beginning at 7:30 a.m. at Miami University's Ecology Research Center on Somerville Road, Audubon Miami Valley's dawn-to-dusk census of bird species covers 176 square miles and is conducted according to National Audubon Society rules.

The original bird count was on Christmas Day in 1900. It now incorporates more than 1,600 organized efforts and more than 50,000 participants throughout most of North America, Hawaii, U.S. territories, Bermuda, the Caribbean and Pacific islands. Data collected are sent to National Audubon and published annually in a special "Christmas Bird Count" issue of "American Birds."

Regardless of experience, new participants are

### Other area counts

For information on the Hamilton/Fairfield Bird Count, also on Saturday the 16th, contact Mike Busam, 513.755.0057 (email [mjb@schaffer.cc](mailto:mjb@schaffer.cc))

The Preble County Bird Count will be Friday Dec. 15. Contact Daryl Michael, 937.456.1187 x131, (email [pbmichael@swoca.net](mailto:pbmichael@swoca.net))

welcome to join groups led by experts covering portions of the count area. First-time counters do not pay the \$6 participation fee, which covers data processing and publication, and a hot lunch served at noon. Participants under age 18 do not pay the fee either. All participants are encouraged to bring food to share and their own table service.

**(Continued on Page 7)**

## Board supports balanced use at VOA park

The possible transfer of 330 acres at Voice of America park has raised questions about the future of one of Butler County's three Important Bird Areas.

West Chester Twp. is considering transferring the acres to Butler MetroParks, which currently operate an adjacent 178 acres as Ronald Reagan Voice of Freedom Park. Both parcels

are former federal land.

West Chester's plans for its acreage support conservation and birding, but reports of a desire for soccer development under Butler MetroParks have accompanied the transfer news.

Local parks officials, environmentalists and Audubon Ohio are working on a plan in which both birding

and organized recreational interests can be served if the acres are transferred. In support of a compromise effort, the Audubon Miami Valley board in late November approved the following resolution:

**The Voice of America Park has been designated by the National Audubon Society as a national**  
**(Continued on Page 6)**

## **AMV AT WORK**

### **Bird Seed Sale thanks**

The Audubon Miami Valley would like to thank all of our bird seed sale patrons. Our 28th annual Birds Seed Sale was a great success and fun, too.

Yerevan Peterson was the lucky winner of the door prize, "Birds of Ohio."

Thanks to the staff at the Whistle Stop Drive-through for hosting the sale. The Whistle Stop staff and owners are the best. Kelly and Sharon Hansel and John Jones are wonderful and sure are a fun bunch to be around. I hope all our AMV members patronize the Whistle Stop for their bird seed and pet supplies.

Thank you to everyone who helped the day of the sale: Alex Hickey, Hardy and Barb Eshbaugh, Ron Phoff, Dave Barrett, John Blocher, Bill and Mary Heck, and Linda Williams. Without everyone's help we would not be able to provide the education and ecology programs we do for the Butler and Preble county area.

Thanks again to all our customers for their loyalty and commitment to AMV and the local birds. It is a real privilege to organize the bird seed sale. Thanks to all the great people who help make it a success.

See all you birders next year!

– Marlene Hoffman, Special Projects Chair

## **SIGHTINGS**

### **In a flurry of feathers . . .**

10:45 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 30

Now this is an adult chicken I'm talking about: a heavy-bodied adult laying fowl, and it's squawking loudly. It's right up against the house, and all I can see are feathers flying and an occasional body part flopping about. At the glass back door, I see little barn dog running across the yard to assist "whatever."

And there it is: a Sharp-shinned Hawk riding on the back of this chicken, and there ain't no way this hawk can carry off that big chicken, but on the other hand, when an adult chicken has a hawk's talons in its back and the weight of the hawk riding it down, well, it can't exactly just run off either! It's like a Fowl Rodeo!

Little barn dog rushes the scene and the hawk flops against the glass of the back door, giving me an excellent view of its underparts and those bold undertail bands.

Now the hawk is gone and the little dog is sitting where the chicken, in a stupor of fright, has hidden under the kindling barrel. I tuck the chicken under my arm and hold it close for warmth and comfort it. It might die later from the shock (they often do that) but within minutes, life goes on without a trace . . .

– Debra Bowles



#### **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 issue is February 15, 2007. Send contributions to Newsletter@AudubonMiamiValley.org or to Newsletter, P.O. Box 556, Oxford, Ohio 45056

- Debra Bowles, former chapter communications chair, is retiring newsletter publisher.
- Judi Hetrick is editor.
- Celia Ellison is proofreader.
- John Blocher is mailing manager.
- 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](http://www.audubonmiamivalley.org).



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

# 4+4+4 = A good time at state assembly

FOUR Audubon Miami Valley members attended the Audubon Assembly in Columbus in November. The event attracted over 200 participants from FOUR states and brought in FOUR of the best experts in the area of birds and wildlife habitat.

The line up included:

**1.** SW Ohio native Stephen Kress, who has reestablished puffin colonies on islands off the coast of Maine, now specializes in techniques to improve gardens and landscapes for birds. He is a familiar face to all who have visited Audubon's summer camp in Hog Island, Maine.

**2.** Kenn Kaufman, who now lives

in Ohio, is the writer and illustrator of a wonderful series of field guides. He spoke of taking birdwatching from the levels of listing and identification all the way up to a larger awareness of bird behavior and a big-picture appreciation of habitat needs.

**3.** Peter Dunne, director of the Cape May Observatory and writer, recently published "The Art of Pishing." He led a workshop that fine-honed the pishing technique of many participants. Just hearing those noisy avian enthusiasts brought giggles from just about everyone in adjacent rooms.

**4.** Jerome Jackson, whose recent "In Search of the Ivory-billed

Woodpecker" chronicled his many years of interest in the hopefully not-extinct species, reminded all present of a time when birding was a predatory venture and contributed to the depletion of some species. He described our passive-style modern birdwatching and methods of nature journaling as a joy to humans and a great relief to the birds.

Those four, many more wonderful workshop leaders, old and new friends, really made it an enjoyable weekend to remember.

The next assembly is planned for 2008. Let's get a couple van loads of us going and have a great time!

– Liz Woedl

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS NEWS

### 75 sign up for Earth Clubs

Earth Club Program: AMV in partnership with EMU (the Environmental Mobile Unit) has SEVEN after-school Earth Clubs up and running in the 2006-07 school year! A total of 75 students meet with EMU Naturalist Sharon Edwards for environmental education at schools in the Talawanda, Ross, Hamilton, and New Miami school districts.

In addition, Debra Bowles of AMV has a growing after-school bird club at Talawanda Middle School. Bird club members publish a newsletter in addition to bird-related activities. Great job, Sharon and Debra, and thanks to all our members and supporters for making these programs possible.

### Scholarship applications sought

Rosie Bloom Scholarships: It's that time of year again! We are searching for a local teacher, active in environmental education, who would like to attend an Audubon camp workshop in the summer of 2007 (on an idyllic island in Maine.)

Applications are now being accepted. For a history of the Rosie Bloom Scholarship, and the application form, visit our Web site [www.audubonmiamivalley.org](http://www.audubonmiamivalley.org)

### Environmental conversation

I recently attended a meeting hosted by Don Kaufman and Barbara Hamilton at the Hefner Zoology Museum of Miami University. It was their idea to bring together representatives from organizations in the area involved in environmental education and conservation. Sharon Edwards from EMU and Derek Green from Oxford Parks and Recreation also attended.

We shared information about our organizations: mission statements, current programs, and outreach/education activities. Hopefully, this will lead to collaboration on environmental projects of benefit to the whole community. Thank you, Don and Barbara, for bringing us together.

– Gail Reynolds, Education Committee Chair



# DECEMBER

## MONDAY DEC. 11

AMV public program

### **Audubon's River**

**DeVere Burt, Wildlife Artist**

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

Arguably the country's most renowned artist, John James Audubon spent 13 formative years on the American frontier living and working in the Ohio Valley. The 13-year period culminated with his employment at the Western Museum Society in 1820. In the Queen City he committed to the creation and production of his life's work, the monumental, "Birds of North America."

Wildlife artist DeVere Burt, former President and CEO of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and Science, traces his corporate pedigree to Audubon,



### **Audubon**

<http://www.amphilsoc.org/library/mole/a/audubon.htm>

who was his institution's first salaried employee. Burt's presentation includes accounts of Audubon's interactions with the frontier's more notable characters, including Alexander Wilson,

Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, William Clark, Meriweather Lewis, Daniel Drake, Sacagawea and her husband Toussiant Chardonbonneau, and others. The talk will be illustrated with some of Burt's paintings inspired by Audubon's journals and the ecological beauty of the Ohio Valley in the 1920s.

## FRIDAY, DEC. 15

### **Preble County**

### **Christmas Bird Count**

Contact information on page 1.

## SATURDAY, DEC. 16

### **Oxford Christmas Bird**

### **Count and Hamilton/ Fairfield Bird Count,**

See details on pages 1 and 7.

## THURSDAY, DEC. 21

Winter solstice

# JANUARY

## AUDUBON MIAMI VALLEY HAS NO PUBLIC PROGRAM IN JANUARY

### ALL MONTH LONG

### **2007 Ohio Winter Bird Atlas**

The Black Swamp Bird Observatory in Oak Harbor needs help coordinating the 2007 Ohio Winter Bird Atlas. The Atlas is conducted during the January anywhere in Ohio. Volunteers count birds on a weekly basis if possible (1-4 hours a morning at your favorite birding spot or pick a quadrangle block near you from the Ohio Gazetteer DeLorme). Anything you

can do would be great! This is a great opportunity to venture out with friends and contribute to the Ohio winter bird knowledge. More information is available on the Web at [www.bsbobird.org](http://www.bsbobird.org) or call the Observatory (419-898-4070). People there will send you an information packet or answer your questions.

## WEDNESDAY, JAN. 3

Full wolf moon

Moon names are from <http://www.farmersalmanac.com/astronomy/fullmoonnames.html>. Dates and times for the solstice and equinox are from <http://www.almanac.com/astronomy/moon/index.php>



# FEBRUARY

## FRIDAY, FEB. 2

Full snow moon

## MONDAY FEB. 12

AMV public program with **Susan Willson, Ph.D.**  
7:30 p.m., Community Room, Lebanon Citizens  
National Bank, 30 Park Place West, Oxford

Watch for details on this program. Willson specializes in tropical avian ecology, environmental studies and the ecology and spatial behavior of army ants, and she teaches at Earlham College.

## SATURDAY, FEB. 17

### **"Birding 1." Ohio Bird Banding Association Semi-annual Meeting**

The Wilds, Cumberland, Ohio

A full morning of seminars will be followed by an afternoon of searching the Wilds for interesting Raptors including Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owls, and Northern Harriers.

Tentative a.m. schedule:

- "Red-shouldered Hawk research in southern Ohio" by Cheryl Dykstra, Ph. D., Wildlife Biologist.
- "Raptor research in Indiana and Ohio" by Al Park-

er, Conservation Educator at The Wilds, a 10,000-acre preserve of reclaimed surface mine with grasslands that attract wintering raptors.

For more information please visit [www.ohiobba.org](http://www.ohiobba.org), or email [cheryldykstra@juno.com](mailto:cheryldykstra@juno.com)

## SATURDAY, FEB. 24



### **North American Owl Symposium**

Hueston Woods State Park  
Oxford, Ohio

At this event presented by the Ohio Ornithological Society, in cooperation with Audubon Miami Valley, speakers will include Julie Zickefoose, Kelly Williams-Sieg, Dr. Dave Russell, and keynote speaker Denver Holt, founder of the Owl Research Institute.

Activities also will include field trips, and you will have the option to participate in another field trip on Sunday, Feb. 25.

To find out more or to register, check the Web at [http://www.ohiobirds.org/calendar/society\\_events/current/Owls/about.php](http://www.ohiobirds.org/calendar/society_events/current/Owls/about.php) Capacity is limited, and past symposiums have filled up quickly.

# MARCH

## SATURDAY, MARCH 3

Full worm moon

## SATURDAY, MARCH 10 **Bird Banding**

Caesar Creek State Park,  
Waynesville, Ohio, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Demonstrations by licensed banders from the Ohio Bird Banding Association. They will discuss species captured and their plumage variations, as well as what has been learned from this non-invasive research technique.

## MONDAY, MARCH 12

AMV public program

### **KIDSPEAK: Love Birds or Adore Nature? or just Wanna Have Good Fun with Great People?**

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

Indian Creek Palette Bird Clubs  
and Earth Club members from  
Talawanda Middle School will talk

about Audubon Miami Valley-sponsored Indian Creek Palette Bird Clubs and Earth Clubs and the environmental education opportunities they want: to be outside and learn about birds, neat-o membership cards and social activities, eat pizza and know what they're eating, recycle and care for the earth. This will be enlightening!

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

Vernal equinox



# Holiday gift ideas for birds and birders

Birds benefit when we live more lightly on Earth. Consider lifestyle-changing "gifts." Reduce consumption. Use shade-grown coffee and chocolate, recycled and organic products, and reusable table settings every day and for parties. Purchase portable water filters, not bottled water. Get off junk mail lists: [https://www.directmail.com/directory/mail\\_preference?ref=G](https://www.directmail.com/directory/mail_preference?ref=G) or

<http://www.dmaconsumers.org/off-mailinglist.html>.

Whether you want to buy feeders, houses and bird baths for the birds, or field guides, binoculars or outdoor clothing for birders, consider shopping at:

- The AMV virtual store, <http://www.cafepress.com/audubonmv>
- National Audubon Marketplace. <http://www.audubon.org/market/>

Donations are always welcome by bird-related organizations, including:

- Audubon Miami Valley, P.O. Box 556, Oxford, Ohio 45056
- Audubon Ohio, 692 N. High St. Suite 303 Columbus, OH 43215
- National Audubon, Dept. W, 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.

Happy holidays!

## Board seeks balance in VOA park plans

(Continued from Page 1)

Important Bird Area (IBA), one of only three sites so named in Butler County. Grasslands at the VOA Park support significant breeding populations of several bird species that have suffered declines throughout Ohio and surrounding states. As the only site of its type in Southwest Ohio, VOA grasslands also hold our area's largest populations of Sedge Wren, Savannah Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Bobolink, and Eastern Meadowlark.

The natural areas of the VOA Park, with their concentrations of birds and other wildlife, also provide high potential for educational experiences for area students at all levels. Classes from primary and secondary schools, and even from area colleges and universities, can pursue high-quality education experiences in life sciences and allied fields.

Because of its unique habitats and the special environmental significance of the park's natural areas, the Board of Directors of Audubon Miami Valley urges the West Chester Township and Butler County Park Boards to balance the need for additional recreational areas with the need to preserve habitat for birds and other wildlife. The Board endorses plans that preserve the habitats composing the IBA while providing additional opportunities for sports and recreational use.

West Chester and MetroParks officials were meeting in a joint work session to discuss the issue on Dec.

### What you can do

For more information, see <http://www.audubonohio.org/>

Want to voice an opinion on the parks plan?

To contact West Chester Twp.:  
<http://www.westchesteroh.org/>.  
9113 Cincinnati-Dayton Road, West Chester, Ohio 45069  
Phone: 513.777.5900 / Fax: 513.779.9369

To contact Butler MetroParks:  
<http://www.butlercountymetroparks.org>  
2051 Timberman Road Hamilton, Ohio 45013  
Phone: 513.867.5835  
Toll Free: 1.877.PARKFUN/Fax: 513.867.5954

5 (when this newsletter was in press). The earliest the township trustees would act on a transfer would be at the meeting scheduled for Dec. 19, according to West Chester Parks official Barb Wilson.

Newsletter editor Judi Hetrick compiled this story with information from the AMV board, John Ritzenthaler of Audubon Ohio, Barb Wilson of West Chester Twp. parks, Elyse LaForest of the National Park Service and Web sites including those of the Cincinnati Enquirer, Butler MetroParks and West Chester Twp.



# Stay safe counting birds during deer hunt

**Q** Don't times for the Christmas Bird Count coincide with hunting season for deer in Ohio this year? How can counters remain safe?

**A** Nov. 27 marked the opening day of the deer gun-hunting season in Ohio. As many of you know, the deer gun-hunting season has had an additional weekend tacked on this year, which does coincide with the first weekend of the annual Christmas Bird Count; Dec. 16-17.



**Author Pete Dunne models orange hat**

[http://www.audubonohio.org/images/427x640\\_eDunne.jpg](http://www.audubonohio.org/images/427x640_eDunne.jpg)

Ohio's deer herd is estimated to be around 600,000 animals. Deer browsing can severely impact a forest understory, which can have deleterious impacts on nesting birds. Deer also can impact birds and butterflies by eating eggs, nests, and even nestlings. It has been stated that the extra weekend may

help increase the number of deer harvested. If this is the case, then it may reduce deer impact on birds, other wildlife, and plant communities in the state.

Thirty out of 62 Christmas Bird Count circles in the state will be holding their counts during the weekend of the 16th and 17th. While hunting and birding are not mutually exclusive activities, it is important to remember to use a little caution and vigilance if you'll be out counting birds that weekend.

One of the easiest things you can do is make yourself more noticeable to hunters. This can be accomplished by wearing bright clothing. If you don't have something bright to wear, Audubon Ohio is offering special orange ballcaps at \$5 per hat, to cover the cost of shipping. We only have about 50 hats, so they're available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please email me if you're interested in obtaining a hat.

To find a count near you please visit the Audubon Ohio Web site to download a copy of the CBC directory for Ohio: <http://www.audubonohio.org/bsc/cbc.html>



**Be sure to wear bright clothing for safety's sake. While you are out on the Christmas Bird Count, hunters may be out looking for deer.**

*U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service/line art by Tom Kelley*

You can also find count information at: [http://www.ohiobirds.org/calendar/winter\\_counts/winter.php](http://www.ohiobirds.org/calendar/winter_counts/winter.php)

A little vigilance and common sense can go a long way in keeping everyone safe while enjoying Ohio's natural wonders this winter.

Thanks,

Casey

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**Have a question? Contact Education Specialist Casey Tucker through [www.audubonohio.org](http://www.audubonohio.org)**

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## Christmas count No. 107 set for Saturday Dec. 16

(Continued from Page 1)

Count areas include Springwood, Four Mile Creek, Bachelor Wildlife Preserve, Indian Creek Valley, Rush Run, Hueston Woods State Park-Acton Lake and the Miami University Airport. At any time on the day of the count, reports from birdwatchers at home can be

phoned to Liz Woedl at 513.523.1782. Soon after the count, results will be available from Audubon Miami Valley's Web site (<http://www.audubonmiamivalley.org>)

– Larry Sherman, 513.523.2458,  
[shermalw@muohio.edu](mailto:shermalw@muohio.edu)



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Audubon Miami Valley is  
an incorporated,  
non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization in  
Butler and Preble Counties of Ohio

**Non-Profit Org.**  
**U.S. Postage**  
**PAID**  
**Permit No. 55**  
**Oxford OH**

**Northern cardinal**  
Steven D'Amato



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