



The Hushwing **HERALD**

*Blackbrook Audubon Society
Volume 44 Number 3 February/ March, 2009
Spreading the Love of Nature in Lake,
Geauga and Ashtabula Counties*

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: TUESDAY, FEB 17th, 2009
PROGRAM: "The Polar Bears and Wildlife of Spitsbergen"
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Lantern Court, Holden Arboretum

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 17th, 2009
PROGRAM: "Snakes of Lake County"
SPEAKERS: Andy Avram
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Penitentiary Glen in Kirtland

In 2006, Lori Diemer, Marilyn Dolence and Carol Hoffecker traveled to the Svalbard Islands, in the Arctic Circle, to photograph Polar Bears. They compiled their images into a multi-media program titled "**The Polar Bears and Wildlife of Spitsbergen**". It runs approximately 45 minutes and highlights the amazing scenery, and captivating wildlife they were able to experience.

The below photograph was taken by Carol Hoffecker.



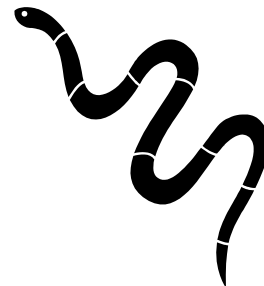
Lori Diemer is a freelance photographer from Willoughby. She has been photographing since 1978. Traveling always adds wonderful adventure to her experiences with her camera.

Carol Hoffecker has been photographing for twelve years. Now as a retired teacher she is able to devote more time to traveling and pursue her passion of photography by capturing the wonders of nature.

Marilyn Dolence is a retired schoolteacher from Willoughby-Eastlake Schools. Her passion is photography and traveling.

To many people, the word "snake" instills a sense of fear and danger. When confronted by a living snake, they will run, scream, or worst of all, grab a shovel. The reality is that snakes are a beautiful, important, and for the most part, harmless part of the ecosystem, deserving of just as much respect and admiration as some of the more charismatic creatures.

Lake County is home to ten species of snakes, which is a little less than half of the species found in Ohio. Of the ten species found in the county, none are venomous, but two rattlesnakes and the copperhead call other areas of Ohio home. This presentation will focus on our local species and their habitats along with the three venomous species. We will also take a look at an ongoing Lake Metroparks snake survey and how you can get involved. A live snake will be displayed. Andy Avram is an Interpretive Manager at Lake Metroparks, where he has worked since 2004. Previously he acquired his degree in Wildlife Management at Ohio State University.



**See Page Three for
Directions to Lantern Court!**

ACTIVITIES

February Activity

DATE: **SUNDAY, FEB. 15th**, 2009
 ACTIVITY: ***Power Plant Watch***
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
 PLACE: Avon Lake Power Plant
 Avon Lake, Ohio

Well, we are in the "dead" of winter, but with the open water at Avon Lake Power Plant and E. 72nd St, the winter birds should be abundant. Many species of gulls and ducks use the "warm" waters from the power plants to forage for food and just rest. We have had many good looks at these birds, such as Glaucous, Iceland, Lesser Black-backed and Thayer's gulls as well as Redhead, Golden-eye and Greater Scaup to mention a few, on past trips to these areas and this hopefully will be the case again this year.

We will meet in the parking lot by the power plant in Avon Lake on Ohio Rt. 6 at 9 A.M. Please dress warmly and bring your scope if you have one to share. Need more info? Call Jim McConnor at 440-257-2507

Directions: From Mentor take I-90 WEST toward Toledo. Get off at exit 151 and turn RIGHT onto Ohio Rt. 611. Go about 1/4 mile and turn Right onto Miller Road. Follow to Ohio Rt. 6 and turn Right. Watch for the parking lot on the Left side of the road (lake side).

MEETINGS OR HIKES CANCELED DUE TO WEATHER

How do I know if a meeting or hike is canceled? Blackbrook Audubon is now registered with the I-Alert system that is seen on WKYC-TV 3, wkyc.com; Newsradio WTAM 1100 AM, wtam.com; as well as our website:

www.blackbrookaudubon.org

Please check one of these sources if the weather is bad or it is extremely cold outside. We do not want any members making a trip to a meeting or hike only to find out that it had been cancelled.

March Activity

DATE: **SUNDAY, MARCH 15th**, 2009
 ACTIVITY: ***Sheldon Marsh Visit***
 TIME: 8:30 a.m.
 PLACE: Sheldon's Marsh in Huron Ohio

Spring has sprung or at least trying by this time and we will be out looking for early migrants and waterfowl at one of Ohio's little "gems". Sheldon's Marsh is a small area that borders Lake Erie and has been known to have many species of birds. We will explore several of the trails in search of such species as Hermit Thrush and will also check out the marsh for waterfowl and other species that may arrive early. We also plan to drive a short distance to the Cedar Point area to check the other side of the marsh and open water. If you haven't been to this area before, why not plan to join us on this trip and discover another of Ohio's "best" locations. This spot is ALWAYS a stop for either coming or going to Magee Marsh (we went there last year). Car-pooling is an option. Please call Jim McConnor at 440-257-2507 if interested or you need more information.

Directions: From Mentor take I-90 WEST toward Toledo and follow Ohio RT. 2 as it splits off (bear right) .Get off at Rye Beach Road exit, then turn right to the traffic light and turn LEFT. Sheldon's Marsh parking lot is on the right (about a mile or less) just past Sawmill Resort entrance. There is a McDonald's on the left of the traffic light if you need to stop before the marsh as there a no facilities at the marsh. This will be a "rain or shine" event, only exception would be the St. Paddy's Day type snowstorm. See you there!

Directions to Lantern Court:

Lantern Court is located at 9203 Kirtland-Chardon Road in Kirtland.

If you are coming from the West, watch for the only streetlight on Kirtland-Chardon Road (other than at intersections). It is on the right (south) side of the road and the drive for Lantern Court is on the left (north) a couple hundred feet farther on. The Lantern Court sign is on the south side of the street directly opposite the drive, and there are lights at the end of the drive. The sign and driveway lights are not real noticeable until you are on top of them, so it's helpful to watch for the streetlight.

If you are coming from the East, Lantern Court will be on your right (north) side, not too far from Sperry Road.

Go up the driveway toward the main house. The arcade is on the left side of the house. You can drop passengers at the arcade, then follow the driveway to the parking area. We will have a volunteer shuttling people from the parking lot to the arcade for anyone who doesn't want to walk.

Lake Metroparks Activities

Lake Metroparks is offering the following Bird Watching Programs during February and March. You can register online at lakemetroparks.com or by phone at (440) 358-7275 or 800-669-9226 (registration for March programs will be open effective 2/2/09).

FREE Bird Walks at Penitentiary Glen Reservation
Saturdays – 2/14/09 and 3/7/09, 8 to 9:30 a.m.

Exploring Winter Fields: Join us as we head west into Lorain County and large open fields in quest of wintering owls and raptors. These large birds move south from their Canadian breeding ranges looking for easier hunting but still prefer the open spaces which are characteristic of their summer ranges. The later time for this trip will give us a chance to be in the field at dusk and a better chance of finding owls!! Dress for cold weather!! Bring money for supper, binoculars/scopes, and a field guide.

Saturday, February 21, noon to 8 p.m. Trip departs from Penitentiary Glen Nature Center and costs \$40.

Eagles Wings & Waterfowl: Spend a day with two naturalist birding guides exploring the western Lake Erie marshes (Ottawa Nat'l Wildlife Refuge) in search of eagles and migrating waterfowl. If you are a new birder, this trip is an excellent opportunity to focus on waterfowl which does not breed in this region. Bring lunch, binoculars and money for supper. Saturday, March 21, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Trip departs from Penitentiary Glen Nature Center and costs \$40.

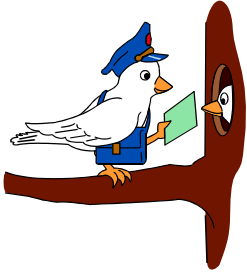
Coming up in March!! Pat Morse will be offering a family friendly program, Eagles In Ohio, from 2 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, 3/22/09 and Dan Burnett will lead a Build A Bluebird Box workshop on Saturday, 3/28/09 from 10 a.m. to noon. Watch for the spring issue of Parks Plus for more information on these two programs or check the website after 2/2/09 for details and to register.

For regular e-mail updates on Lake Metroparks birding programs, contact mhuey@lakemetroparks.com.

Nominating Committee Report

Every year, in the spring, we in Blackbrook Audubon Society have an election for the four most important officers on our Board of Directors. And every year in this Newsletter, we always print the list of those candidates for those offices in the "spring" issue. So we're doing our job here and your job, then, is to attend our April meeting and vote for these fine candidates to show your support for the all the time, effort, and work they (and the other members of the Board) do for Blackbrook Audubon Society. Here, then, are the Nominations for those four important offices.

For President: **Rebecca Thompson**
for Vice President: **Barb Shuter**
for Secretary: **Mary Ann Wagner**
and for Treasurer: **Nancy Dilgren**



FROM the DESK of the PRESIDENT

by Becky Thompson
btkingfisher@yahoo.com

While some chapters in Ohio and other states are struggling to keep membership and active members, Blackbrook is growing in both membership and participation. A few months ago I approached the board about adding Ashtabula County to our chapter. With the exception of one zip code, Ashtabula County was not assigned to any chapters in the area. This means that when an individual or couple joined National Audubon they were not connected to local people, programs or field trips. If an individual or couple joined National Audubon and lived in Lake or Geauga County, they automatically were assigned to Blackbrook as their chapter unless they requested otherwise.

The board weighed the pros and cons of Ashtabula County including gaining potential active members and the cost of printing more Hushwing newsletters. The board also took a look at the current membership, some of which included individuals or couples from Ashtabula County, including myself, that were already part of the chapter. After a short deliberations, I am happy to announce in November Blackbrook officially added Ashtabula County to the chapter. We have gained 100+ new chapter members. I would like to extend to all Ashtabula County members an official welcome from the board and myself. I look forward to seeing you at our future programs and field trips.

Speaking of field trips, we have a field trip planned on Saturday, April 18 in Ashtabula County. Jim McConnor, field trip coordinator, will be taking us on an adventure at Conneaut Harbor and vicinity. I look forward to seeing our new and experienced chapter members on the April field trip.

On a side note we have a change in position; Lisa Casamatta stepped down from Publicity chair. Lisa’s traveling schedule conflicted with her Blackbrook obligations so she decided to step down. Thank you, Lisa for all your help the past few months.

Pat Morse, interpretive manager for Lake Metroparks’ Penitentiary Glen Nature Center in

Kirtland, took over the publicity position in December. She has been with Lake Metroparks for 21 years as a naturalist with an emphasis on birdwatching, eco-trips, general nature topics, and local history. She will be a great addition to the board! We look forward to working with her on future publicity projects.

How to Join Blackbrook Audubon Society

Many of you reading this are already members of Blackbrook. But for those of you who aren't and would like to join, there are two ways you can do so. You can join the National Audubon Society and if you live in our territory - Lake, Geauga or Ashtabula Counties - you will be assigned to this chapter. You can pick up a brochure at any of our meetings.

Or, if you prefer not to belong to the national organization, you can join Friends of Blackbrook as a Chapter member. (See below) We are a 501(c)3 organization and your donation is tax deductible.

And if you wish to belong to National Audubon and also provide additional support to Blackbrook, you can do both.

Friends of Blackbrook Audubon

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Amount of Donation: ___ \$20 ___ \$30
 ___ \$40 ___ Other

Please make checks payable to: Blackbrook Audubon Society and mail to: James McConnor 5758 Beech Dr. Mentor on the Lake, OH 44060
 Or call (440) 257-2507 for more information.

JOIN THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Count for Fun, Count for the Future

New York, NY and Ithaca, NY—Bird and nature fans throughout North America are invited to join tens of thousands of everyday bird watchers for the 12th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), **February 13-16, 2009**.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, this free event is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature in backyards, schoolyards, and local parks, and, at the same time, make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org.

“The Great Backyard Bird Count benefits both birds and people. It’s a great example of citizen science: Anyone who can identify even a few species can contribute to the body of knowledge that is used to inform conservation efforts to protect birds and biodiversity,” said Audubon Education VP, Judy Braus. “Families, teachers, children and all those who take part in GBBC get a chance to improve their observation skills, enjoy nature, and have a great time counting for fun, counting for the future.”

Anyone can take part, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Participants can also explore what birds others are finding in their backyards—whether in their own neighborhood or thousands of miles away. Additional online resources include tips to help identify birds, a photo gallery, and special materials for educators.

The data these “citizen scientists” collect helps researchers understand bird population trends, information that is critical for effective conservation. Their

efforts enable everyone to see what would otherwise be impossible: a comprehensive picture of where birds are in late winter and how their numbers and distribution compare with previous years. In 2008, participants submitted more than 85,000 checklists.

“The GBBC has become a vital link in the arsenal of continent-wide bird-monitoring projects,” said Cornell Lab of Ornithology director, John Fitzpatrick. “With more than a decade of data now in hand, the GBBC has documented the fine-grained details of late-winter bird distributions better than any project in history, including some truly striking changes just over the past decade.”

Each year, in addition to entering their tallies, participants submit thousands of digital images for the GBBC photo contest. Many are featured in the popular online gallery. Participants in the 2009 count are also invited to upload their bird videos to YouTube; some will also be featured on the GBBC web site. Visit www.birdcount.org to learn more.

Businesses, schools, nature clubs, Scout troops, and other community organizations interested in the GBBC can contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473 (outside the U.S., call (607) 254-2473), or Audubon at citizenscience@audubon.org or (215) 355-9588, Ext 16.

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

FEBRUARY 13–16, 2009

How do you participate?



Long-eared Owl, Ted Schroeder, WA, 2007 GBBC

- 1) Count birds anywhere for at least 15 minutes**
- 2) Tally the highest number of individuals of each species seen together at any one time**
- 3) Enter your counts at www.birdcount.org**



CORNELL LAB of ORNITHOLOGY



Audubon

How Many Are There?

by A. Fjeldstad

INTRODUCTION: At our Blackbrook's meeting in November, Jim McCormac gave us an informative program on some of the great Natural Areas in Ohio. Afterwards, he answered a few questions. And one of them went something like this: "How many different species of animals live in Ohio?" Now Jim, who was originally trained as a Botanist, could and did answer the question as to how many species of **Plants** live in Ohio on their own (it's **2,716 species**). And since he is now the President of OOS [ED.: the Ohio Ornithological Society --- check them out at their web site!!], he also knows a lot about Birds. And so he could and did answer the question as to how many **Birds** live or pass through in Ohio (it's **420 species!**). But I think he was a little embarrassed to admit he couldn't come up with numbers for any other groups of Animals. However, Jim McConnor and I, standing at the back of the room, had to admit that we could not answer this question either!

This question remained in my mind for a few days and finally it itched too much and I had to do something about it -- like research! First of all, we have to define what we mean when we say the word "Animal". Most of us realize that there is this conglomeration of many different life forms that we call the "Animal Kingdom". But when we actually say the word "Animal", we generally don't mean all the "Animals" in this Kingdom, but rather just the "Animals" with Backbones --- better known as the Vertebrates. Except for the **Butterflies** (144 **species** in Ohio!!) and **Dragonflies** (164 **species** in Ohio), most people (including "Naturalists") pretty much ignore all the other "Animals". We don't think about them, study about them, or even count them. So in this article we will do the same as everyone else does and just concentrate on the Vertebrates.

Now, there are five Classes of Vertebrates --- the Fish, the Amphibians, the Reptiles, the Birds,

and, of course, the Mammals. We're all familiar with them, aren't we? But how many of them live in Ohio?

FISH: First off, the number of Fish in Ohio. Online, a recent ODNR [Ed.: the Ohio Division of Natural Resources] publication says there are **(162) species of Fish** in Ohio. And the 2006 "Sport Fish of Ohio: Identification" booklet that was put out by the ODW [ED.: the Ohio Division of Wildlife] says, and we quote: "*With more than 40,000 miles of streams, 2.4 million acres of Lake Erie and inland water, and 450 miles of the Ohio River, Ohio supports a diverse and abundant fish fauna represented by more than 160 species.*" But we're a little puzzled that the folks down in Columbus apparently don't realize that the Ohio River is actually in Kentucky! No matter, we'll accept those numbers anyway. As for a list of all the 162 species, we couldn't find one online. There are only about 30 species that are actually caught and eaten (the so-called 'Sport Fish'). The rest of the species of Fish are generally considered 'unimportant' to man. But if you'd like a complete list, you'll have to make your own by checking out Milton Trautman's massive tome "The Fish of Ohio" from the library.

AMPHIBIANS: Secondly, the number of Amphibians in Ohio. Fortunately we can find this information online; it can be found at **ohioamphibians.com!** And this wonderful web site tells us that there are at least **(40) species of Amphibians** in Ohio. That number is a little fuzzy since the 'experts' are currently debating exactly how many *Ambystoma* (the "Mole Salamanders"; some of them have only one sex !!) there are and the possible occurrence in Ohio of the Southern Leopard Frog. But overall, there are at least 15 species of Frogs in four Families and 25 or so species of Amphibians in 5 Families in Ohio. That makes (40) species. For a complete list, see the above web site.



How many are there? Continued:

REPTILES: Thirdly, the number of Reptiles in Ohio. This, too, can be found online at an ODNR site. Just google up "Ohio Reptiles" and click on "Resources" on the front page and you'll get a complete list of the (5) Lizards, the (12) Turtles, and the (30) Snakes. Now this includes both species and recognizable subspecies. So a workable total would be **(47) Reptile species** (and subspecies) in Ohio. As for Poisonous Snakes (and aren't we all interested in them!), there are three: the Northern Copperhead, the Timber Rattlesnake, and the Eastern Massasauga. None are really found in our area.

BIRDS: Fourthly, the number of Birds in Ohio. We talked about this number in the first paragraph of this article when we mentioned that there are **(420) species of Birds** in Ohio. A complete list as well as daily checklists are available at the OOS web site. Just google up "Ohio Birds" and click on the Ohio Ornithological Society. Lots of great information here besides lists of Birds.

MAMMALS: And lastly, the number of Mammals in Ohio. Once again, we can find this information online. The Mammal Society at mammalsociety.org has lists for Ohio and all the other states. When we look at Ohio's list and count all the mammals on that list that still live in Ohio we get **(63) Mammals** for Ohio.

CONCLUSION: So when we add up all these numbers we can answer our amended question: "How many different species of Vertebrate Animals live in Ohio?". And the answer would be --- there are **(732) Vertebrate Animals in Ohio!** Now if you're interested in knowing the number of ALL the other ANIMALS in Ohio, you'll have to do your own research!

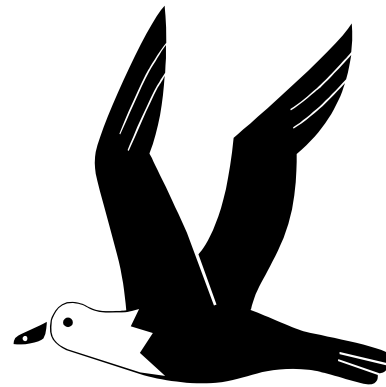


Living along the Lake, you gotta Love GULLS:

"Every time I drive down to the shore, or drive to the town dump, I meet our resident gulls, whose gray and white plumage fits any kind of weather. All my life, I have watched them as they have followed the fishing boats and larger vessels wherever I traveled on Atlantic or European shores. Their cries rang out over the sounds of human voices and the rattle and roar of machinery. They waited by the docks littered with refuse, and tracked the wake of ships for fish remains and garbage. I followed their curved and sinewy wings under the blue sky, feeling they had been there since the dawn of light. I wonder if we did not learn to fly by watching them, lifted by the envy of our dreams. "

JOHN HAY writes these words in his beautiful 1991 book " The Birds of Light ". This almost poetic portrait of Terns talks a little about Gulls too, since both groups of Birds are closely related and lead similar lives. Both of these avian shoreline dwellers go through an incredible struggle just to survive in a sometimes hostile environment and under repeated human assaults upon them and the places where they live. If you like your nature writing to sparkle with poetic insights, find and read this evocative and well written work of prose!

©Dqghuv Inm@rwdg ©©

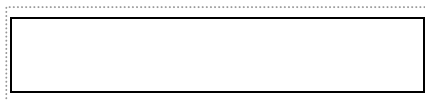


BLACKBROOK AUDUBON SOCIETY
PO Box 1306
Mentor, OH 44060-1306

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S.POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 539
PAINESVILLE, OH

**LOOK FOR BLACKBROOK ON THE WEB!
AT www.blackbrookaudubon.org**

Becky Thompson - President
Bruce Roberts - Editor



Welcome to our Ashtabula County Readers!

STOP! Don't throw this newsletter away without reading! As a member of the National Audubon Society, you are entitled to membership in a local chapter of Audubon. Until recently, Blackbrook Audubon served only Lake and Geauga counties and most people in Ashtabula County did not have a local chapter. Since some Ashtabula county residents had already elected to join Blackbrook and we already do field trips in Ashtabula County; it seemed like a perfect time to request that Ashtabula be added to our service area. The Blackbrook Board recently approved this addition and we look forward to seeing our newest members in the parks, on the birding trails and at some of our events! Again, welcome. – Editor