



The Hushwing **HERALD**

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Volume 46 Number 2

November/December, 2009 and January, 2010

*Spreading the Love of Nature in Lake,
Geauga and Ashtabula Counties*

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: TUESDAY, NOV. 17th, 2009
PROGRAM: "Bluebirds"
SPEAKER: Mike Watson
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Holden Arboretum
 Visitor's Center

PROGRAM: "Indians of Lake County"
SPEAKER: Ann Dewald
TIME: Museum opens 6:30 p.m.
 Program starts at 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Indian Museum of Lake County
 Willoughby, Ohio

This presentation will provide some basics of bluebird ecology and conservation. It will also address Holden's role in the successful recovery of this species in Ohio, including an overview of how Holden volunteers track bluebird nesting activity and current information on the status of bluebirds at Holden. Finally, tips for providing safe and attractive nesting options will be discussed.

Mike Watson works on conservation issues involving wildlife, including a deer browse project designed to measure the impact of deer on Holden's forests. He is also the coordinator for Holden's Bluebird Project, a volunteer-based program

monitoring the nesting activity of bluebirds and other species using Holden's 200+ nestboxes. Mike earned his bachelor's degree from The College of Wooster and a master's degree from the University of Michigan.



Have you ever wondered about the people who inhabited Lake County before the European settlers arrived? If so, join us on Jan. 19th at the Indian Museum of Lake County. Ms. Ann Dewald, director of the museum, will speak to us about the various Indian groups that have lived in this area from 10,000 BC to 1650 AD. We will learn about the local villages and the discoveries made at Reeves Road. She will also be able to explain the changes in the signage at Indian Point.

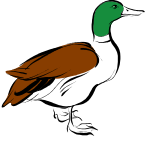
Ms. Dewald has been at the museum since its start in a variety of positions, becoming director in 2002. She has acquired an extensive knowledge of both the local Indians and other Indian cultures in North America. The museum, which began in 1980, contains collections of local artifacts including items from Fairport Village and Reeves Road. There is also a permanent display of South American artifacts and a special presentation on Plains Indians for visitors to view.

The museum will open at 6:30 p.m. for those who might wish to view the exhibits or visit the gift shop prior to the start of the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

**Continued on Page 3.
(with directions)**

NOTE: There is no meeting in December! Why not take part in our Xmas Bird Count instead?

DATE: TUESDAY, JAN. 19th, 2010



ACTIVITIES

NOVEMBER ACTIVITY

DATE: **Sunday, NOV. 15th, 2009**
 ACTIVITY: **Lake Erie Watch**
 TIME: 8:00 a.m.
 PLACE: Perry Township Park
 Perry, Ohio

Once again we will be heading to one of Lake County's best Lake Erie overlooks. We have made this trip several times and have been treated to many unusual sightings. Rarities such as Pomarine Jaeger, Parasitic Jaeger and one year Ohio's first record of Cave Swallow. Many wintering gulls have started to move into our area and waterfowl are migrating as well. We will also travel to Arcola Creek Park to watch for land birds that frequent the area.

Come join us for a Lake Erie adventure. Dress for the weather. We will meet at the waters edge parking lot. Need more info? Call Jim McConnor at 440-257-2507

Directions: Take Ohio Rt 2 to Perry Park Road and follow to the park entrance. The road only goes north.

DECEMBER ACTIVITY

DATE: **Sunday, DEC. 20th, 2009**
 ACTIVITY: **MENTOR XMAS BIRD COUNT**
 TIME: all day!
 PLACE: Lake County, Ohio

The date for our **Christmas Bird Count** will not be on the 'normal' day we always try to have it: **the "4th Saturday in December"**. Because that is so close to Christmas we decided to conduct it the week before to enable everyone to be able to bird all day Sunday. At least we hope so.

Christmas Bird Counts have been an Audubon tradition since 1900, when some Birdwatchers in Massachusetts and a few other states decided to count birds on that day rather than shoot them.

But Blackbrook and the folks in Lake County have only been doing the Christmas Count since the 1940's, and not even every year. But since the late sixties, Blackbrook has regularly gone out in the field for both fun and counting. This year, our chapter will do it once again; why don't you come with us?

If you'd like to join one of the happy (but usually cold) groups that are going out in the fields and forest to count birds, **call Anders at (440) 257-7611 OR e-mail him at deneb59@hotmail.com** !! Even if you'd like to help for a few hours or all day!

JANUARY ACTIVITY

DATE: **Sunday January 17th 2010**
 ACTIVITY: *Geauga County Amish Areas*
 TIME: 9:00 A.M.
 PLACE: Meet at Best Lake parking lot

This is our annual jaunt to our favorite winter area in Geauga County. This is when we go to "Amish country to look for wintering raptors and other winter visitors to our area. This adventure has usually been a "real" trip, as the weather plays a great part of the "fun", but has produced some of our best views of our friends from the tundra such as Rough-legged Hawks, Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs.

So bundle up and join us for this "wintry" adventure. Let's go! Let's have fun!! Call Jim McConnor for more info at 440-257-2507

Special note: This trip could be cancelled due to VERY inclement weather. Check iAlert on your

local NBC channel Sunday morning



Directions: Take Oh Rt44 south from Chardon Ohio the entrance is on the west side of the road.

Indians of Lake County

Continued from page 1

The museum is located in Building B of the Willoughby Tech Center on River Road close to downtown Willoughby. Enter the museum through the white door B3 that is clearly marked Indian Museum. There is well lighted off street parking adjacent to the museum entrance.

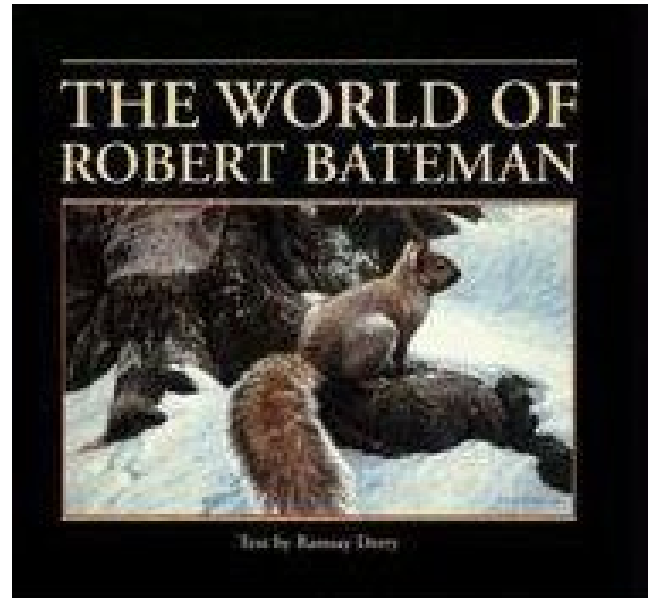
Directions: From the intersection of Euclid Ave. and Erie St. in downtown Willoughby, proceed along the east side of the park on Center St., Rt. 174. Bear slightly left on River St. and the entrance to the parking will be on your right. For those of you who attend Burroughs meetings, the museum is across from and just down the road from the front of Willoughby Methodist Church where that group meets. If anyone needs further directions, please contact Nancy at (440) 257-1090.



MEETINGS OR HIKES CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER

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

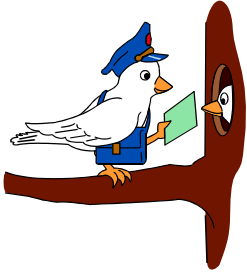
Please check one of these sources if the weather is bad or it is extremely cold outside. We do not want any members making a trip to a meeting or hike only to find out that it had been cancelled.



The World of Robert Bateman

Beulah Shanks, a long-time member and former officer of Blackbrook Audubon, has donated a first edition 1985 copy of “The World of Robert Bateman”. This hardcover book is in excellent condition, and as an added bonus, it is signed by Robert Bateman! A book similar to this is listed on Amazon.com for \$95, but you have the opportunity to purchase a ticket to win this book for just \$1 or 6 chances for \$5.

We’ll begin selling tickets in January, with the drawing to be held at our June picnic at The Holden Arboretum. The winner need not be present to win. All proceeds from the ticket sales will be used to purchase Audubon Adventures for the classrooms sponsored by Blackbrook. If you are able to help sell tickets, we would appreciate your help. Please see any board member for details, send an email inquiry to blackbrookaud@aol.com or call Mary Ann at 216-990-4245.



FROM the DESK of the PRESIDENT

by Becky Thompson
btkingfisher@yahoo.com

Last winter while I was looking out the window at my snow covered bird feeders, I remember thinking about my feeder birds amazing ability to adapt to the cold weather.

Their little feathers fluffed up to reduce the amount of heat loss, their constant shivering to maintain their body temperatures and their unique circulatory system in their legs help them cope with the extreme conditions. All those adaptations plus the dreaded word to humans, FAT, allows the birds to make it through a winters day and night.

As I start to think about my own ability to make it through yet another winter, I wonder if bad driving conditions, cabin fever and lack of sunlight will be my biggest problems. I can't imagine worrying about finding food, a warm place to sleep at night and which predator is lurking about ready to attack me. Over 100 birds in North America supplement their natural diet with suet, birdseed, nectar and fruit from feeders. Arguments on the pros and cons of bird feeding are substantial. However there is no definitive answer. My personal feeling is I owe the birds! I have expanded my habitat, home, yard and community, on to what was once their territory. The least I can do to pay them back is put food out, grow plants that are bird friendly and provide a little water in my own yard. In turn they provide the opportunity of observing wild birds up close and personal. Consider giving back to your local bird population whichever way you feel works for you.

Backyard bird watchers should consider participating in the following citizen science programs:

Project Feederwatch (Nov- March)
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/>

Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb 12-15)
<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

I look forward to seeing everyone the next few months shivering at the upcoming meetings, field trips, and IBA walks.

Sincerely,

Becky Thompson

A Holiday Gift Idea

Do you have someone on your holiday gift list who is difficult to buy for? Is this person interested in nature? Then why not consider getting them a membership in Friends of Blackbrook. We will put them on our mailing list and send them the Hushwing Herald four times a year to keep them abreast of all the great activities that Blackbrook has planned.

Friends of Blackbrook Audubon

Blackbrook is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Friends of Blackbrook Audubon

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Amount: ___ \$25 ___ \$30
 ___ \$40 ___ \$50 and over

I do not wish to become a member of Friends, but would like to donate _____

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

Project FeederWatch Benefits Birds and People

Connection with nature promotes wellness

Ithaca, NY- More than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit may be just what the doctor ordered! For more than 20 years, that's what participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been doing-benefiting themselves and the birds.

"It is a great winter time activity for the whole family," says Alaska FeederWatcher Nancy Darnell. "If you have children, they will come to love watching the birds. All of this is fun and a chance to contribute to scientific studies, too!"

The 2009-10 season of **Project FeederWatch gets underway November 14** and runs through April 9. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges-a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

"Being a FeederWatcher is easy and fun, and at the same time helps generate the world's largest database on feeder-bird populations," says project leader David Bonter. "We are grateful for the contributions our participants have made for the birds and are proud of the joy they say it brings to their busy lives. Since we started in 1987, more than 40,000 people have submitted observations, engaging with the wildlife beyond their windows."

"Project FeederWatch opened up a whole new world for me," says participant Cheri Ryan of Lockport, Kentucky. "It's so interesting to watch the activities of the birds. I learn something new each time I participate."

Scientists learn something new from the data each year, too, whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely seen species. Highlights of the most recent

season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project-part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. Among the rare birds reported was a Streak-backed Oriole in Loveland, Colorado-the state's first report of this bird, native to Mexico. A December nor'easter deposited a Dovekie in Newton, Massachusetts, the first time this North Atlantic seabird has ever been reported to Project FeederWatch.

Long-term data show some species increasing in number, such as the Lesser Goldfinch in the Southwest. Other populations continue a downward trend, such as the Evening Grosbeak throughout their range. Once one of the most common species seen at feeders in the northern half of the continent, the grosbeaks are declining for unknown reasons.

Beyond the benefits to birds and science, however, is the benefit to participants. "Nature is not merely an amenity; it is critical to healthy human development and functioning," says Nancy Wells, Cornell University assistant professor of design and environmental analysis. Her studies find that a view of nature through the window or access to the environment in any way improves a child's cognitive functioning and reduces the negative effects of stress on the child's psychological well being. Wells also notes that when children spent time with nature early in life it carries over to their adult attitudes and behavior toward the environment.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights.



Top Ten Reasons To Purchase A Migratory Bird Hunting And Conservation Stamp

(Republished by permission of the Greater Mohican Audubon News.)

There are over 540 individual units within the United States. Each refuge is managed as a protected haven for birds and other wildlife. Since 1934 a huge proportion of the funds used to acquire these critical habitats in the lower-48 states were provided through sales of what is today known as Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps - commonly called "Duck Stamps". All outdoor recreationists who enjoy wildlife and natural landscapes can thank those who have already purchased stamps over the decades, for they have contributed over 700 million and protected 5.3 million acres of habitat for wildlife and future generations of people.

The stamp costs only \$15 and it's easy for everyone to purchase-nearly all Post Offices carry them. Even better, it is extremely cost-effective: fully 98 cents of our every dollar (14.70) goes directly to acquire land for the Refuge System. This \$15-purchase is perhaps the single simplest thing one can do to support a legacy of wetland and grassland conservation for birds.

The funds not only go to refuges, but since 1958, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has used a portion of the Stamp revenues to purchase wetland and grassland habitats within the Prairie Pothole Region of the upper Midwest and northern Great Plains. Through their Small Wetlands Acquisition Program, The FWS has perpetually protected and conserved nearly 3 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat for prairie wildlife. These small wetland and grassland complexes-commonly referred to as Waterfowl Production Areas or 'WPAs - include more than 29,000 permanent easements, covering 2.1 million acres, and approximately 7,000 fee tracts, totaling over 677,000 acres of habitat for wetland and grassland wildlife. All WPAs are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Every unit in this system provides important benefits to migratory bird species, other wildlife, water quality, aquifer replenishment, and

the environment in general.

In response to serious downward trends of many species of "prairie" nesting birds, the FWS began purchasing permanent grassland easements to conserve existing habitat for prairie nesting birds. The grassland easement program is integrally related to and compliments the FWS's fee acquisition programs.

The purchase of a stamp is not something that will just benefit ducks. Among scores of other bird species, numerous kinds of shorebirds, long-legged waders, and wetland and grassland songbirds are dependent on habitat derived from Stamp purchases. (Densities of grassland bird species such as Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, Clay-Colored Sparrow and Sedge Wren, are remarkably higher on Refuge System grasslands than on the landscape in general.)

You can say the same about that status of other wildlife - not only birds - and water quality as benefiting from the use of the Stamp. Reptiles, amphibians, fish, butterflies, all flourish through Stamp investments. Water quality is also

strengthened.

Some of the most diverse and wild-rich refuges in the nation have been acquired with Stamp funds. For example, see the following list of refuges and the percentage paid for by Stamp purchases.

Sacramento in California	99.6
Parker River in Massachusetts	99.3
Bosque del Apache in New Mexico	99.2
Pea Island in North Carolina	99.2
Quivira in Kansas	99.1
Horicon in Wisconsin	98.7
Muskatatum in Indiana	98.9
Monomey in Massachusetts	97.8
Bombay Hook in Delaware	95.1
Santa Ana in Texas	94.9
DeSoto in Iowa and Nebraska	90.8
Okefenokee in Georgia	88.2
Anahuac in Texas	87.5
Ottawa in Ohio	86.4
Laguna Atascosa in Texas	86.0
Edwin B. Forsythe in New Jersey	84.3
Blackwater in Maryland	77.6



Duck Stamp Continued.....

Birds



And if that isn't enough incentive, consider that 99.8% of all WPAs in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana were acquired through Stamp funding.

A stamp is a "free pass" for an entire year - for a vehicle full of people at all refuges that charge for admission - a real bargain if ever there was one.

Whether or not you're a hunter of any sort, you can appreciate the wise balance of activities ascribed through Congressional refuge legislation and Stamp application over the years. Basically all refuges established under the authority of the Migratory Birds Conservation Act with an "inviolable sanctuary" purpose for migratory bird conservation, can open up to 40% of the total acreage of said refuges to migratory bird hunting practice, and especially since the late 1970's, this 40% standard balance can be exceeded only when such migratory bird hunting activity is determined to be compatible with the purpose for which the refuge was established or if the Secretary of the Interior determines that it would be "beneficial to the species".

The Migratory Bird Hunting And Conservation (Duck) Stamp is probably the best-kept secret in all of bird conservation. And, by buying and displaying a Stamp you will show that you appreciate what long-term habitat protection for all birds and other wildlife is, and that you care!

Find and circle all of the birds that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional bird.

W	K	D	R	E	K	C	E	P	D	O	O	W	H
O	W	N	R	S	W	A	N	N	F	O	J	A	Y
R	A	O	U	I	G	M	I	N	G	I	V	M	T
C	H	E	R	L	B	T	B	N	O	U	N	U	I
P	T	G	E	R	R	K	I	U	L	C	R	C	M
E	E	I	O	A	A	M	C	T	D	K	L	O	H
L	E	P	M	S	A	P	U	A	E	G	C	A	U
I	K	O	W	L	T	R	S	Y	L	K	I	M	F
C	A	L	F	H	E	R	O	N	I	B	E	E	O
A	R	L	C	A	R	D	I	N	A	L	V	D	N
N	A	U	K	C	U	D	G	C	E	S	O	O	G
A	P	G	R	R	O	B	I	N	H	D	D	G	B
R	M	A	G	P	I	E	N	E	K	C	I	H	C
Y	N	E	W	R	E	N	T	O	R	R	A	P	I
E	R	S	D	D	R	A	V	E	N	A	N	Y	M

BLACKBIRD
BUDGIE
CANARY
CARDINAL
CHICKEN
CRANE
CROW
DODO
DOVE
DUCK

EAGLE
EMU
FALCON
FINCH
FLAMINGO
GOOSE
HAWK
HERON
JAY
MAGPIE

MARTIN
MOCKINGBIRD
MYNA
OSTRICH
OWL
PARAKEET
PARROT
PELICAN
PIGEON
RAVEN

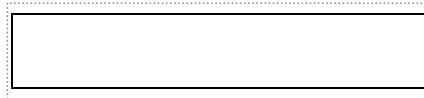
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SEAGULL
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VULTURE
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Becky Thompson - President
Bruce Roberts - Editor



Bird Talk:

A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song.
Chinese Proverb

Listening: A wise old owl sat in an oak. The longer he sat, the less he spoke. The less he spoke, the more he heard. Why can't we be like that wise old bird?

Source Unknown

I once had a sparrow alight upon my shoulder for a moment, while I was hoeing in a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished by that circumstance that I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn.

Henry David Thoreau