



The Hushwing **HERALD**

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Volume 47 Number 2

November/December, 2011 and January, 2012

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

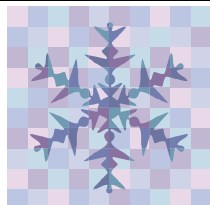
UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: TUESDAY, NOV. 15, 2011
PROGRAM: "A Virtual Tour of
Stebbins Gulch"
SPEAKER: Pat Biliter
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Holden Arboretum
Visitor's Center
(9550 Sperry Road in Kirtland)

Stebbins Gulch is one of the crown jewels of the 3,600-acre Holden Arboretum. This 200-foot-deep ravine harbors its own microclimate, plant and animal communities more characteristic of Canada than Ohio, old growth forest with 400-year-old trees, and the most extensive rock outcrops in all of northeast Ohio. An 800-acre piece of wilderness only 25 miles from downtown Cleveland, it was designated in 1967 as a National Natural Landmark by the Department of the Interior. This presentation is an armchair tour of the Gulch for those who would rather not risk struggling over the two miles of algae-coated rocks, waterfalls and rushing water that characterize this strenuous hike. Come join us to hear about the natural and human history of the Gulch, with emphasis on the geology, rocks and fossils of this amazing and beautiful place.

Continued on page 3.

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



DATE: TUESDAY, JAN. 17, 2012
PROGRAM: "Freedom's Journey- the
Authentic Story of the Underground Railroad "
SPEAKER: Kathie Purmal
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Lake County History Center
(415 Riverside Dr., Painesville)

"Freedom's Journey" takes guests on a trip back through time and geography to the beginnings of the slave trade, through its arrival in the New World, and into the Western Reserve. Details of the UGRR are revealed from codes to trails and the authenticated conductors and safe houses in Lake County are revealed. Our visit will include a short tour of the building.

Kathie Purmal has served the Lake County Historical Society as Executive Director since 2000, prior to that she acted as Youth Education Director. During her tenure as education director, the Society received three "Outstanding Museum Awards" from the Ohio Museum Assoc. for educational programming. Her biggest challenge as Executive Director has been the move of the Society from its home of 23 years in Kirtland Hills at the Shadybrook site to the new location in the former Lake County Home in Painesville Township. Since 2008, the Society has operated from this new site giving them 30,000 square feet of exhibit, research, office and collection storage. She directs a staff of 8, but Kathie says much of the day to day work is done by the committed LCHS volunteer corps. The Society supports a full calendar of school programming, field trips, special events, adult programs, workshops, speaker's bureau, and tours. Event space can be rented at the Center and group tours with meetings and a meal can be arranged.



NOVEMBER ACTIVITY

DATE: Sunday, November 20, 2011
 ACTIVITY: Presque Isle State Park, Erie PA
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
 PLACE: Meet at the Nature Center parking lot

Another of the “great” places to bird, that is not too far away from us, is Presque Isle State Park. We are choosing this site because it is not only an area rich in diversity but because we have had many requests to repeat this adventure. The last time we ran into some foul weather but still had a delightful day of exploring and locating many species of birds. Waterfowl is on the move and there still are many late “stragglers” migrating south. There have been many rare sightings at this location including a Wood Stork several years back. Please come prepared for the weather and bring your scope as some of the waterfowl can be a little distant. The Nature Center is on the left shortly after you enter the park. DO NOT meet at the new Tom Ridge environmental center before entering the park.

Directions: Take I-90 east and in PA take Exit #18 PA Rte 832 toward Presque Isle/ Sterrettania. Turn left onto Rte 832/Sterrettania Rd and follow it to the park. It is about a 90 minute trip and approx. 78 miles from Mentor. If you need more information call Jim McConnor at 440-257-2507

DECEMBER ACTIVITY

DATE: Sunday, December 18, 2011
 ACTIVITY: **MENTOR XMAS BIRD COUNT**
 TIME: all day!
 PLACE: Lake County, Ohio

It will be time once again to get involved in the oldest citizen-science project in North America. Our annual Christmas Bird Count will take place on Sunday December 18th 2011.

The object is to count all the bird species and number of birds in our 15 mile radius in one 24 hour period. This means we need as many eyes and ears as we can find to help us get as accurate a count as possible. All the data is turned in to

ACTIVITIES

National Audubon for a full tally from across, not only our state, but all of North America. We will assign our volunteers to specific areas, in teams, to cover as much of our territory as we can with the resources we have available.

We also need volunteers to be “feeder” watchers. This is an important part of our count, as it covers many backyard birds that we don’t see while we are out in the “bush”. This also is an excellent way to become involved in this annual activity if you cannot physically do the “leg” work and have a feeder in your yard. Please consider this option and call us. We know the weather can be a factor, but those of us who have been doing this for several years tend to think of it as a day of “FUN” and we usually meet somewhere for a warm lunch. We hope you will consider becoming a part of this important project by calling either Anders Fjeldstad at 440-257-7611 or Jim McConnor at 440-257-2507 to get your assignment to a team. Keep in mind you do not have to be an expert “birder” to enjoy this outing..... just a lover of birds.

JANUARY ACTIVITY

DATE: Saturday, January 21, 2012
 ACTIVITY: Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
 PLACE: Parking lot south of Chardon

It is time once again for our annual trek to one of our favorite winter areas in Geauga County. This is when we go to the “Amish” country to look for wintering raptors and other visitors to this area. In years past, we have always been fortunate enough to find Rough-legged Hawks and a few other species of raptors that spend their time in the fields of our friends of the country. Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs have also been located on most of these trips and hopefully will be here this year too. There usually is a surprise or two as we have also seen Wilson’s Snipe and Eastern Meadow Lark. Come prepared for the weather and bring your scope. Need more info? Call Jim at 440-257-2507. **Directions:** Take Ohio RT.44 south out of Chardon Ohio. The entrance to the preserve is on the west side of the road.

A virtual tour of Stebbins Gulch

Continued from page 1.

Coming from a long line of eastern Kentucky coal miners, Pat Biliter broke family tradition and became a geologist instead.

After completing his undergraduate and graduate studies at the Ohio State University and UCLA, and after enduring Airborne and Ranger training at Fort Benning, Georgia, Pat spent the next 30 years overseas in various assignments with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Pat's geological experience includes (1) using gravity meters to map ancient river valleys of Ohio, now buried in glacial till, (2) mapping strange stretched-pebble conglomerates in the high Mohave Desert of southern California, (3) mapping groundwater pollution plumes in Germany to determine the best remediation technologies, (4) drilling secure, on-base water supply wells for U.S. military installation in Croatia and Bosnia, and (5) drilling deep wells in Turkey to install early-warning seismographs in earthquake-prone regions.

In his last job with the Corps he served as the Deputy District Engineer of the Europe District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, headquartered in Wiesbaden, Germany, where he was responsible for military construction, humanitarian relief and host nation assistance projects in an area spanning 90 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and southwest Asia.

After retiring from federal service in 2001, he settled near his wife's home town of Cleveland, Ohio, and within a year became a school guide at the Holden Arboretum. Having been inspired in high school by the writings of John Muir, Rachel Carson and Sir Charles Lyell, he soon realized that the Holden Arboretum was a perfect setting to share his lifelong love of natural history and conservation with the next generation of young Americans.

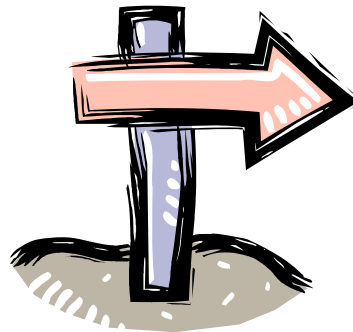
Answers to the Bird quiz:
Boston Celtics, Tippi Hedron, Free Bird, Charlie Parker



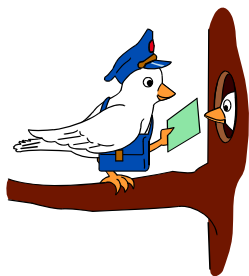
MEETINGS OR HIKES CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER

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; and 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.



DIRECTIONS: The Holden Arboretum is located at 9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland, OH 44094. Take I-90 to the Route 306 exit. Head south on Route 306 to the bottom of the hill. Turn left on Route 615. At the first traffic light, turn right on Kirtland-Chardon Road. Travel 3.6 miles to Sperry Road. Turn left on Sperry Road. Travel 1.4 miles, turn left on main drive to reach the Warren H. Corning Visitor Center. There is no admission charge to attend this Blackbrook Audubon Society program at the Holden Arboretum.



**FROM the DESK of the
PRESIDENT**

by Julie Dougherty
julieodoc@gmail.com

I would like to apologize to any member who did not receive their Hushwing in time for not only the September bird walk, but also the members' meeting later in the month. Utilizing a new service with our printer to not only print and collate, we also asked them to address and mail them via bulk mail service. When the printer captured our address labels for our Friends, his program did not pick up your names and therefore you received them as "current resident". National members, who are on a different list and have bar codes, received theirs with names on them. The printer had the Hushwing at the Post Office within 5 days as promised. The issue for delivery was with the Post Office. Two of our Board members met with Post Office representatives to discuss why some people received their Hushwing in just a few days while others took up to 3 weeks. They were unable to explain why there was such a delay in delivery. We are making some changes in the way we handle the Hushwing. We once again will be doing our own labeling and mailing of the Hushwing and this will ensure that Friends will have their names on the address labels. Unfortunately, we cannot do anything about the Post Office and delivery via bulk.

At our next Board meeting in November, one item on the agenda will be possibly electronically emailing members their copy of the Hushwing. This will certainly ensure that you have the Hushwing in a timely manner. If we went this route we would continue to bulk mail paper copies to those members who would prefer a hard copy. Please let your officers or any board member know how you feel about these options. We will keep you informed regarding this at future member meetings. Keep in mind our calendar of events is posted on our website:

www.blackbrookaudubon.org

A Holiday Gift Idea

Do you have someone on your holiday gift list that is difficult to buy for? Is this person interested in nature? Then why not consider giving 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 2011-12 season of **Project FeederWatch gets underway November 12** and runs through April. 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.



Great Backyard Bird Count

October, 2011—

The 15th annual [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) (GBBC) is coming up February 17-20, 2012. The four-day event is free and is open to bird watchers of all ages and skill levels. Participants watch birds for any length of time on one or more days of the count and enter their tallies at www.birdcount.org. The results provide a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species. The GBBC is a joint project of the [National Audubon Society](#) and the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) with Canadian partner [Bird Studies Canada](#).

The 2010 GBBC was another record-breaker with more than 97,300 bird checklists submitted by an estimated 63,000 volunteers from across the United States and Canada. These volunteers found connecting with nature to be great fun.

“I enjoy being outdoors and birding is a source of relaxation and stress relief!” wrote one participant. “Looking and listening for birds forces me to focus on the environment around me at a higher level of intensity, and notice things I might otherwise miss.”

From reports of rare species to large-scale tracking of bird movements, the GBBC provides insight into the lives of bird populations.

Mid-February is chosen as the time for the Great Backyard Bird Count because it offers a good picture of the birds typically found throughout the winter months. It also coincides with migration for some species, such as the Sandhill Crane. That window of transition affords an opportunity to detect changes in timing for northward migration.

On the www.birdcount.org website, participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators.

GBBC participant surveys have shown that people really enjoy exploring the data and say they learn more about their local birds. “I looked at data with my 9-year-old son to help him learn about birds in our area,” wrote one parent. “We talked about migration, bird flyways and compared bird counts

for our area (coastal South Carolina) with where his cousins live (Wisconsin and Alabama). We found out our area has a much greater variety of birds in February than either of the other two.”

Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website’s [photo gallery](#). All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great birding products.

For more information about the GBBC, visit www.birdcount.org. Or contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473, gbbc@cornell.edu or Audubon at (202) 861- 2242 ext. 3050, citizenscience@audubon.org. In Canada, participants may contact Bird Studies Canada at 1-888-448-2473 ext. 134 or gbbc@birdscanada.org.



*Photo by Kim Estep, OH, 2010
GBBC*



*Marbled Godwit by
Sharon Millgan,
MS
2010 GBBC*

A few highlights from the 2010 GBBC:

- A massive roost of nearly 1.5 million American Robins was reported in St. Petersburg, Florida. Will they be back in 2012?
- The invasive Eurasian Collared-Dove keeps expanding its range. It was reported in 39 states and provinces during the 2010 GBBC. Where will this hardy dove show up next?

SCARECROW PROJECT – A BIG THANK YOU!

Thank you to the members who helped build our Blackbrook Audubon scarecrow for The Holden Arboretum's Goblins in the Garden display. Our scarecrow was one of 24 that were submitted. We received many compliments on the scarecrow about how real it looked, how creative it was, etc. It also was an opportunity to get our name out for over 7,000 people to see that weekend.



Browns Ticket Raffle

Blackbrook will be holding a raffle for a pair of Cleveland Browns football tickets this fall. These are upper deck tickets for the December 4, 2011 game against the Baltimore Ravens, Sec. 510 (approx. the 25 yard line), Row 9, Seats 11 and 12. Game time is listed as 1:00 p.m. but this is a NFL flex game so the starting time could be moved late (for television reasons). Total value of the two tickets is \$110. The drawing will be held at our November 15, 2011 program meeting. The winner will need not be present at the meeting.

Tickets are \$5.00 each and are available until the drawing. If you wish to purchase tickets in advance of the November meeting you can mail payment to Blackbrook Audubon, P.O. Box 1306, Mentor, OH 44061-1306. Include your name and address so we can mail you the ticket stubs and your phone number so we can contact you if you are a winner. Please be sure to mail your request far enough in advance of the 15th so we receive it prior to the meeting. Or you can call Jim McConnor at (440) 257-2507 or Nancy Dilgren at (440) 257-1090 and we will work out a way to get tickets to you. In addition, most of the board members will have tickets available to sell.

All proceeds from the raffle will be used to fund Audubon Adventures and other educational programs.

Bird is the Word

1) Basketball player Larry Bird has been awarded every title and honor the game can bestow during his long career. He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1998. For which team did Bird play?

- New York Knicks
- Chicago Bulls
- Los Angeles Lakers
- Boston Celtics

2) Imagine huge, murderous groups of birds gathering together to dive-bomb schoolchildren and innocent ladies and peck their eyes out. This is the premise of "The Birds", a 1963 Alfred Hitchcock film based on a novella by Daphne du Maurier. As usual, Hitchcock's leading lady was an elegant blonde: what was her name?

- Tippi Hedren
- Grace Kelly
- Eva Marie Saint
- Janet Leigh

3) "If I leave here tomorrow, would you still remember me? For I must be traveling on, now 'Cause there's too many places I've got to see"

In 1973, the southern rock band Lynyrd Skynyrd released this "bird" song on their debut album. It's said that concert-goers will shout out requests for it regardless of whose concert they're attending. Name that tune

- Free Bird
- Black Bird
- White Bird
- Free as a Bird

4) This jazz musician was given the nickname "Yardbird", later shortened to "Bird". He was a brilliant saxophone player and composer who died early and became an icon for generations of jazz musicians and aficionados. Who was the musician they called "Bird"?

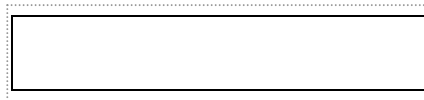
- Charlie Parker
- Charles Mingus
- Miles Davis
- Thelonious Monk

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Julie Dougherty - President
Bruce Roberts - Editor



Third Annual Ticket Auction

On November 15, 2011, we will hold our third annual ticket auction at Blackbrook's November program at the Holden Arboretum. The items available include books as well as other nature-related items that have been donated to Blackbrook Audubon.

Tickets will be \$1 each or 6 for \$5. All proceeds will be used toward the purchase of Audubon Adventures newsletters for the many classrooms Blackbrook Audubon sponsors in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula counties.

