



# *The Hushwing* **HERALD**

*Blackbrook Audubon Society*

*Volume 44 Number 4*

*April/May/June, 2009*

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

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**DATE:** TUESDAY, APRIL 21st, 2009  
**PROGRAM:** "OHIO GOVERNOR'S  
RESIDENCE & HERITAGE GARDEN"  
**SPEAKER:** Guy Denny  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Penitentiary Glen

**PROGRAM:** "Dragonflies and Damselflies  
of Northeast Ohio"  
**SPEAKER:** Judy Semroc and  
Larry Rosche  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Westwoods, Geauga Park

The Heritage Garden at the Ohio Governor's Residence originated with First Lady Hope Taft. Except for the traditional horticulture plantings around the Residence itself, most of the 3 acres of yard was historically maintained as mowed lawn. Mrs. Taft who has always loved native wildflowers decided to incorporate plantings of wildflowers into the gardens located on the south side of the mansion. Hope was very pleased with the results, which clearly demonstrated that native plants could be successfully utilized in formal garden settings, even in the exclusive community of Bexley, Ohio.

For a number of years, school groups and community organizations have toured the Governor's Residence to learn about the historical significance of this site. Building on her success with the Ohio wildflower garden, Hope Taft thought that it would be nice for visitors to the Residence to also be exposed to and learn about the natural history of Ohio during their visit. To that end, she came up with the idea of creating numerous small ecological plantings throughout the yard surrounding the Residence that represented some of the most significant ecosystems found throughout Ohio in each of the five physiographic regions of our state.

**Continued on page 3**

The program will emphasize the distribution, behavior and identification of Ohio's dragonflies and damselflies. It will feature many of Judy's dazzling photos and will be sure to entertain.

Judy Semroc currently works in the Natural Areas Division for The Cleveland Museum of Natural History as a Conservation Specialist. She is the founder of Operation Botanic Rescue (a volunteer plant-rescue group), Quail Hollow Land Conservancy and Chrysalis in Time, the first Ohio chapter of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). As a former Petroleum Geologist and science teacher, Judy loves to learn about and share her passion for the natural world through hikes, interpretive programs and photography.

Larry Rosche's first edition of *Dragonflies and Damselflies of Northeast Ohio* paved the way for a variety of new field guides and enabled naturalists and citizen scientists to identify dragonflies and damselflies in life. A longtime birder, Larry penned the *Birds of the Cleveland Region* in 2005. Currently a field researcher for the Conservation Outreach Program of The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, he is also employed as the range distribution mapmaker for Houghton Mifflin Company's Peterson Field Guide Series T.

**Continued on page 3**

**Don't forget to check out our June picnic  
Activity- information on page 3!**

**DATE:** TUESDAY, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009



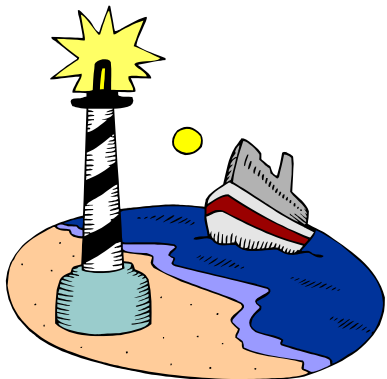
## ACTIVITIES

### APRIL ACTIVITY

Date: **Saturday April 18th, 2009**  
 Activity: **Conneaut Harbor and vicinity**  
 Time: **8:30 AM**  
 Place: **Conneaut Harbor parking lot  
 in Conneaut, Ohio**

Hopefully the weather has warmed a bit and the migrants will be arriving in earnest. The "wintering" species have probably left by this time but a "new" flock is arriving to take their place. Conneaut harbor is a good area to watch for shorebirds and waterfowl as they make their way to northern breeding grounds and in their "Sunday best". We will be scouting the mudflats as well as the reeds and open water for these eager arrivals. We will then proceed to a more inland area to look for early land birds such as Hermit Thrush, kinglets and swallows to mention a few. We then have been invited to go to Becky Thompson's new home, that has about fifty acres of pristine area, for these migrants. So won't you join us for an exciting day in the field to watch for these new arrivals. Remember to dress for the weather as this is a "rain or shine" event. See you at the harbor. Need more info? Call Jim McConnor at 440-257-2507

**DIRECTIONS:** Take I-90 EAST to exit #241 Conneaut OH Rt 7. Turn left(north) into town, turn RIGHT (east) at RT 20 and go to traffic light, past the Post Office, and turn LEFT (north) onto Broad St. Follow to the end, go down the hill to the boat ramp entrance on the left. Park at the far north end (right in front of the water) and we will go to beach area in fewer cars from there. It is approximately 55 miles from Mentor and takes an hour or so to arrive.



**MAY**

### ACTIVITY

Date: **Saturday May 23rd, 2009**  
 Activity: **Frohning Meadows Park**  
 Time: **8:00 AM**  
 Place: **Frohning Meadows parking lot  
 at Katydid Picnic Shelter**

**HEY EVERYBODY-- A NEW PLACE !!**  
 We are excited to explore the newest Geauga park, Frohning Meadows, in southeast Geauga County near Chagrin Falls Ohio. The abandoned farm fields are being transformed into a tall grass prairie. The Geauga Park District has planted several species of warm season grasses which make a perfect habitat for grassland birds, such as Bobolink and several species of sparrows. There also is a low lying sedge meadow for use by migrating shorebirds, such as plover and sandpipers (they probably have already been and gone by this time, but there are always stragglers) and a woodland area for many other species of birds on migration or even to nest here for themselves. So please join us for our initial outing to this exciting "new place". The trails are improved and the walking should be easy. If birds aren't your thing, try showing your expertise on the dragonflies which abound. Need more info? Call Jim McConnor at 440-257-2507 Mark your calendar...See you there!

**DIRECTIONS:** Take OH RT 306 SOUTH to Washington St. Turn RIGHT(north-west) to Savage Rd and turn LEFT (south). Follow until the park entrance on your right. Follow to the shelter.



### Continued from April Event:

In addition to the spring wildflower garden, Mrs. Taft orchestrated the creation of a cranberry bog, fen, alvar, prairie, meadow community, pond, Unglaciaded and glaciaded Ohio landscapes, cedar barrens, and much more.

Guy Denny, a well-known naturalist and author, is the retired chief of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Natural Areas and is a current board member of the Ohio Environmental Council. He is one of Blackbrook's perennial favorite speakers (pun intended!) and for the past few summers, Blackbrook members have enjoyed personally guided tours of his prairie.

### Continued from May Event:

Larry received the prestigious 2007 Ohio Biological Survey Naturalist Award in recognition for his role e in advancing the appreciation of Ohio's Natural History. In 2008, he was presented the Ohio Cardinal Award for his many years of dedication to Ohio's natural areas and his long-term commitment to educating and encouraging others to pick up the baton and carry on the cause.

A limited number of books will be for sale from Geauga Parks. Larry and Judy will be available to sign books after the program.

#### Directions to West Woods Nature Center:

From the North: Travel I-90 to Route 306. Travel south on Route 306 for approximately 12.7 miles to Route 87. Turn east on Route 87, and travel 1.9 miles to the park entrance on the south side of the Road. From the South: Travel I-422 to 306 exit. Turn north onto Route 306, travel approximately 5.3 miles to Route 87. Turn east on Route 87, and travel approximately 1.9 miles. Park entrance on the south side of Route 87.



Date: **Tuesday June 16, 2009**  
 What: **Annual Potluck Picnic**  
 Time: **Arrive 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.**  
**Eat 6:30 p.m.**  
 Place: **Picnic Shelter – Veterans Park**  
**Hopkins Rd. Mentor**

It's time again for our annual picnic. Everyone is welcome; bring a guest if you wish.

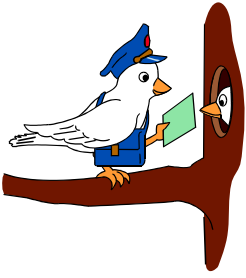
We will start gathering around 6:00 p.m. and we will begin eating around 6:30. Please bring your own table service and a dish to share. Blackbrook will provide lemonade, spring water, iced tea and ice.

Following the meal, we will take a final walk along the IBA route which we have been monitoring for the past year. We may even stop to check out an interesting plant or two along the way.

This is an almost all weather event. We will cancel only if it is raining and blowing so hard that we cannot stay dry under the shelter or if there is severe lightening around. Check the I-Alert sites or our web site for cancellations. Or if you do not have access to the Internet, call Nancy at (440) 257-1090 after mid-afternoon to check.

**Directions to Veteran's Park.** Take Route 2 or I-90 to the Center Street exit. Travel north on Center Street to the intersection with Plains Rd. (Stop sign). Continue north. The road name changes to Hopkins. Veteran's Park will be on your left and the picnic shelter is located next to the main parking lot.





## FROM the DESK of the PRESIDENT

by Becky Thompson  
btkingfisher@yahoo.com

Happy Spring! Spring is my favorite season. I think because it is a time for new growth and new adventures. One of the new adventures this year Blackbrook will be undertaking is a new location for our IBA monitoring walks. Starting in May we will be monitoring The Holden Arboretum which was dedicated as an Important Bird Area in 2004. Holden is one of my favorite places to bird watch in Northeast Ohio because of the diversity in habitats. We will be monitoring every second and fourth Sunday from May 2009 – April 10 at 8:00 AM. In addition in the warmer months we will be monitoring every third Wednesday at 7:00 PM. No experience is necessary, and admission is waived for all people helping with the bird walks. One of the exciting parts of the walks during the summer will be the opportunity to regularly see and hear field nesting birds like Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark and field nesting sparrows. Much of the trail encompasses the Strong Acre fields off Kirtland-Chardon Rd. This area was used by Holden to display tree collection however for many reason the trees have not done well is the area. A new plan is being put together to manage Strong Acre. Our bird observations may directly impact the decisions that are made about the land. I look forward to seeing many of you once, if not more, at Holden for the bird walk!

### Birdathon 2009 is Coming!

Birdathon 2009 will be held from Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup> through Sunday May 17<sup>th</sup>. We had some new people participate in 2008 and we hope more will join us in 2009.

Birdathon is similar to other 'athons' – we see how many species of birds we can find during the allotted time period. It's easy to participate. First, if you prefer to bird with others, line up a friend or two to go with you (although solo is fine too). Then sign up a few sponsors – or if you are shy about asking others for money, just sponsor yourself.

Then pick when you want to bird: a maximum of 24 consecutive hours any time during Birdathon week. A lesser amount of time is fine – we're pretty flexible.

Our goal, like usual, is to raise as much money as possible. We use the funds to supply Audubon Adventures to school programs at Holden Arboretum and also to some individual classrooms. We will have some copies of Audubon Adventures at our spring meetings if you want to check them out to see where the money goes.

If you would like more information, please call Nancy at (440) 257-1090 or e-mail [angydy@earthlink.net](mailto:angydy@earthlink.net).

On Saturday, May 9, 2009, birders around the country will celebrate International Migratory Bird Day. In Lake County, Lake Metroparks will host, **CELEBRATING BIRDS**, a morning of birding activities with the help of Blackbrook Audubon at Chagrin River Park, 3100 Reeves Rd. in Willoughby. This FREE event from 7 a.m. to noon is open to everyone who birds or is curious about why birding is so appealing! We want birders of all ages and skills to appreciate the diversity of birds that use Chagrin River Park as a migration stopover, a year round dwelling place, and a summer breeding ground.

**CELEBRATING BIRDS** will begin at 7 a.m. with a Dawn Bird Walk led by John Pogacnik of Lake Metroparks Natural Resources Department. There will be educational displays and exhibits about bluebird monitoring, cat control, deer impact on songbirds, urban planting to attract birds, feeding birds, and other topics relevant to birding from local businesses and groups. The Nature Store from Penitentiary Glen will be selling binoculars and field guides.

Activities during the morning will include bird walks led by members of Blackbrook Audubon, a Big Sit on the deck at the top of the sledding hill overlooking the wetland, a family friendly game of scavenger bingo on the west side of the river, and a life size wingspan banner mounted on the pedestrian bridge over the river.

So bring a friend and join us to share our love of birding with other folks!!

## IMPORTANT BIRD AREA WALKS:

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the monitoring project at Veteran's Park, Lake Metroparks. We saw many wonderful and unique birds that live or visit the park. The project will end on April 26, 2009 with our last walk! All data will be sent to Lake Metroparks and Audubon Ohio for potential land management and historical records.

**GREAT NEWS!** Blackbrook Audubon has decided to conduct a fourth year of bird monitoring. We will be collecting data on **the birds that live or visit Strong Acres, The Holden Arboretum**. We will be conducting three Bird Walks there every month! These walks will take place on **the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays (at 8 A.M.) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (at 7 P.M.)** Admission is free. Everyone who is interested in lending their eyes and ears, meet at **8859 Kirtland-Chardon Rd., Kirtland, OH 44094**. The first bird walk at Strong Acres, The Holden Arboretum will start on **Sunday, May 10, 2009**.

## Bird Banding

Tami Gingrich, Geauga Park District

Mentor Parks & Recreation is partnering with local birding expert and Licensed Bird Bander, Tami Gingrich of the Geauga County Park District to conduct bird banding on Saturday and Sunday, May 9 and 10 from 7 - 10 a.m. at the Mentor Lagoons Nature Preserve in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day, May 9. (Editor's note: the banding takes place at the far end of the marina road near the beach.)

In its fifth year, this event provides a unique opportunity to observe many species of neotropical migratory birds up close and with expert commentary. Last year, more than seventy-five birds of over twenty species were banded. Many of these are colorful warblers such as the Magnolia Warbler, which stops here before continuing on to Canada from its winter range in South America.

Bird banding is an important method used to collect data in migration, bird behavior, life span, and

population numbers. Those interested in watching and learning more about the importance of the Mentor Lagoons Nature Preserve & Marina in this process are welcome. This is a free program.

Saturday & Sunday 7-10 a.m.  
Mentor Lagoons Nature Preserve  
May 9 & 10  
FREE

## Mentor Marsh Spring UPDATE

### May-June 2009 Programs

Mentor Marsh is an interpretive nature preserve of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (CMNH) and the State of Ohio (ODNR) Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. Trails are open daily, year-round, dawn to dusk. The Nature Center is open to the public Saturdays and Sundays noon to 5 p.m., from April through October. Special programs are offered on Sundays, April through October at 2 p.m. There is no charge, and all are welcome. During the week, programs for groups are available by appointment at a nominal charge. For more information, contact the Nature Center at: 440.257.0777, by mail at 5185 Corduroy Rd., Mentor, OH 44060, or by email at rdonalds@cmnh.org

### MENTOR MARSH YARD SALE

Sat June 6, 9 AM to 2 PM  
5185 Corduroy Rd Mentor Headlands

Nature, home, guy & kid items

Silent Auction of Local Vendors' Certificates

Drop-off hours Noon-5 PM Sat & Sun starting April 3

For pick-up, leave message at 440 257-0777 or call 440 209-0634.

(No clothing or non-nature books, please.)



## Building an Osprey Nesting Platform



During the summer of 2008, Matthew Vendeville of Perry Boy Scout Troop 71 was in search of an idea for a project that was required for his quest to become an Eagle Scout.

The project criteria were very simple: it must be a significant contribution to benefit the cause and large enough to allow the Scout to demonstrate significant leadership. With the help of Mrs. Barb Kooser, a naturalist at the Mentor Marsh Visitors Center, Matt decided an Osprey nesting platform at the marsh would be a fitting project.

Matt became a Cub Scout at the age of six years old and always had a passion for nature. Throughout his scouting career, he visited the Mentor Marsh on many occasions for guided tours and hikes with his family. After the completion of a service projects for the Mentor Marsh, Mrs. Kooser suggested that Blackbrook Audubon Society had a wish for an osprey nesting platform to be built in the marsh and that it might make a good Eagle Scout project.

In July, Matt had a meeting with Mr. Jim McConnor and Mr. Anders Fjeldstad of the Blackbrook Audubon Society. Mr. McConnor and Mr. Fjeldstad educated Matt on osprey behavior and habitat needs. They used a satellite photograph that Matt brought to select the desired location for the platform.

Based on observations from the members of the Blackbrook Audubon Society, the ideal location would be on the east side of Shipman Pond, south of Headlands Road. In past years, osprey had been spotted in the spring at the Shipman Pond area. Shipman Pond has a good fish population, which is important because Osprey only eat fresh fish, and the east side of the pond is secluded and easily visible for observation from the bridge on Headlands Road and Zimmerman Trail.

The Blackbrook Audubon Society committed to fund the project and Matt began to research the appropriate nesting platform design. The only request that Mr. McConnor and Mr. Fjeldstad had

for Matt was that he complete the platform before winter so that it was ready for the spring Osprey migration.

Matt's first step was to gain permission from the necessary agencies. Since the Mentor Marsh is a State of Ohio nature preserve, he worked with Mr. Adam Wohlever, Northeast District Lakeshore Manager for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and Mr. Dave Sherman, osprey project coordinator for the ODNR Division of Wildlife to obtain permission to construct the osprey nesting platform within the marsh.

A visit to the Lake County website revealed that the land at the desirable location site for the nesting platform was owned by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Matt gained approval for the project from Mr. Jim Bissell, director of conservation for the museum. Mr. Bissell also directed Matt to Mr. Keith Moran. Mr. Moran is the Cleveland Museum of Natural History land steward. Mr. Moran led Matt into the unexplored area of the marsh, teaching him how to safely walk within the thick phragmites, a non-native plant species. The site visit confirmed that the soil conditions in the marsh would be acceptable for the construction of the nesting platform. It also revealed that bringing tools, building materials, and helpers into the rugged terrain of the marsh would be a very difficult endeavor.



**Matt and Keith Moran in an early site visit.**

The next phase of the project was to design the nesting platform so that it would be sixteen feet high. Matt turned to Kirk Dimmick, a Lake County bridge engineer for assistance. Mr. Dimmick was also Matt's Cub Master when he first joined the scouting program. Mr. Dimmick assisted Matt with the calculations necessary to build the platform to withstand 90 mph winds. He also told him that he would have to dig a five-foot deep hole that was three feet in diameter and fill it with concrete. Matt has previously dug a small hole in the marsh during his visit with Mr. Moran and he was reasonable sure that the hole would fill with water as he dug the hole. Typically, to be able to pour concrete into a hole full of water you would have to run a pump to remove the water. Due to the remote location of the hole, this was not an option.

A bit of Internet research led Matt to Mr. Fickes of Bigfoot Systems located in Nova Scotia. Bigfoot Systems has developed concrete pier forms that are ideal for use in wet areas. Mr. Fickes reviewed the plans that Matt developed with Mr. Dimmick and agreed with the plan. Bigfoot Systems was generous enough to donate a pier system for Matt to use to pour the concrete pier for his nesting platform.

A series of visits to local building supply centers provided enough information for Matt to develop an accurate budget to build his platform. This was the final item necessary for him to be prepared for his presentation to the Boy Scout Eagle Project Review Board. In spite of all the efforts Matt made to plan his project, the review board had some safety concerns and sent Matt away for another month to revise his plans to address their concerns. After a few moments of being discouraged by the rejection, Matt picked himself back up and went to work on revising his plans and gained the review board's approval at the end of September.



In October, while Mr. Moran and one of his coworkers from the museum volunteered to clear a path through Phragmites to the nesting platform site, Matt purchased the materials for the project. Lowe's was generous enough to donate half of all the materials that were available at their store, and Dale Babic of Boris and Babic Concrete was more than eager to donate the concrete and haul it to the project site.

With the help of 17 members of the Boy Scout Troop 71 of Perry, and guidance from Mr. Mike Ryan, an industrial arts teacher at Perry High School, the osprey nesting platform was built during five working sessions.

*"As I saw the completed osprey nesting platform being raised to its final resting spot, I felt a sense of relief that all my hard work and dedication paid off,"* Matt Vendeville said. *"With the assistance and funding of many volunteers, my finished Eagle Scout*

*project will make a difference in the osprey population.*

*"This experience helped me as a Scout to improve upon my leadership and project management skills. This project gave me more self-confidence and it taught me that I can achieve anything I put my mind to.*

*"I was impressed with how hard the adults and scouts worked together in order to make the project successful. I am very appreciative of their hard work and dedication. It was a positive experience that I will never forget.*

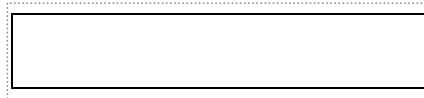
*"I hope an osprey pair makes a spring visit to the marsh this year. I hope people will be able to observe the family grow up, just as I grew up a little while making a good home for them."*

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**AT [www.blackbrookaudubon.org](http://www.blackbrookaudubon.org)**

Becky Thompson - President  
Bruce Roberts - Editor



**Now you can help the environment by saving energy and get a tax credit as a bonus!**

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed a stimulus bill (The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) that made some significant changes to the energy efficiency tax credits. The highlights are:

- The tax credits that were previously effective for 2009, have been extended to 2010 as well.
- The tax credit has been raised from 10% to 30%.
- The tax credits that were for a specific dollar amount (ex \$300 for a CAC), have been converted to 30% of the cost.

The maximum credit has been raised from \$500 to \$1500 for the two years (2009-2010). However, some improvements such as geothermal heat pumps, solar water heaters, and solar panels are not subject to the \$1,500 maximum and extended to 2016.

The \$200 cap on windows has been removed, but the requirements for windows has been increased significantly. Not all ENERGY STAR qualified windows will qualify. Doors, insulation, roofing, and more efficient furnaces are examples of things that qualify. Make sure your improvement qualifies before purchasing by checking online at government sites such as Energy Star.

See [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.pr\\_tax\\_credits](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.pr_tax_credits) for more details.