

The Hushwing **HERALD**

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Volume 48 Number 2

November/December, 2012 and January, 2013

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: TUESDAY, NOV 20, 2012
PROGRAM: **“Little Mountain – Past,
Present and Future”**
SPEAKER: Pat Biliter
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Holden Arboretum
Visitor’s Center
(9550 Sperry Road in Kirtland)

This “mountain” may not tower over Lake County as its name suggests, but the slopes and cliffs that lead up to Little Mountain’s 1,266-foot summit offer a unique tapestry of human and natural history.

There are few traces left of the 300-room hotels, woodland cabins and recreation facilities that once covered the peak, serving as a summer playground for the rich and famous of Cleveland for almost a century. The bustling activity of a resort has been replaced by a silent, towering forest of white pines and eastern hemlocks that one might expect to find in the wilds of upstate New York or eastern Canada, but not in Ohio.

In fact, almost everything about this area suggests a northern source, from the forest over our heads, to the quartz pebbles within the outcrops of Sharon conglomerate, to the soil under our feet, to the rare, delicate and sometimes inconspicuous ferns and wildflowers growing in joints and crevasses of the outcrop. Come and hear how this beautiful climatic, botanical and geologic outlier continues to delight visitors, and to endure despite almost two centuries of environmental challenges.



DATE: TUESDAY, JAN 15, 2013
PROGRAM: **“Trinidad and Tobago”**
SPEAKER: Dan Donaldson
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Holden Arboretum
Visitor’s Center

Trinidad and Tobago are on the bucket list of many birders and with good reason. Trinidad and Tobago are the southern-most islands in the Caribbean archipelago with Trinidad being only 7 miles from mainland Venezuela. Because of their close proximity to the South American continent, these islands provide the widest range of habitats of all the Caribbean Islands. Trinidad (35 by 50 square miles) offers savannah lowlands, mangrove swamps, tropical rainforests and drier mountain ranges. Here we see up to 430 species of birds, 108 mammals, and 2,300 flowering plants. Tobago (26 by 7.5 square miles) is situated 20 miles northeast in the Atlantic Ocean and is drier and windier. It offers typical Caribbean habitats and is home to 200 species of birds including 12 not found on Trinidad.

Dan Donaldson will share with us the photos and stories of his birding travels in Trinidad and Tobago. He is the Director at the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District. He has been a Naturalist at Lake Metroparks and at the Holden Arboretum for nearly 20 years.

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

Continued on page 3.



NOVEMBER ACTIVITY

DATE: Saturday, November 17, 2012
 ACTIVITY: Perry Township Park
 TIME: 8:00 a.m.
 PLACE: Meet at the water's edge parking lot

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 then travel to Lake Metroparks newest park named Lake Erie Bluffs for more lake watching and some new trails for any land birds that may be in the vicinity. If time and weather permit a visit to Lakeshore Reservation may be on the agenda.

Come join us for a Lake Erie adventure. Dress for the weather. We will meet at the water's 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: Saturday, December 15, 2012
 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. 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 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

ACTIVITIES

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 19, 2013
 ACTIVITY: Geauga County's "Amish" country
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
 PLACE: Best Lake parking lot south of Chardon OH on Rt 44

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

Directions: Take Oh Rt. 44 south from Chardon Ohio the entrance is on the west side of the road.



Little Mountain

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.

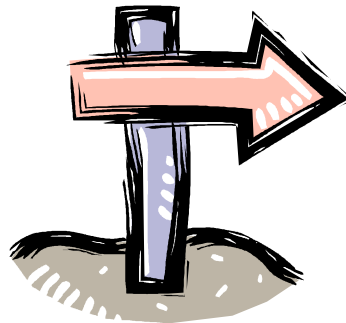
After retiring from federal service in 2001, he settled near his wife's home town of Cleveland, Ohio, and within a year became a school guide at the Holden Arboretum. Having been inspired in high school by the writings of John Muir, Rachel Carson and Sir Charles Lyell, he soon realized that the Holden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



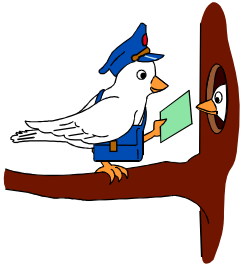
MEETINGS OR HIKES CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER

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 Blackbrook Audubon Society programs at the Holden Arboretum.



**FROM the DESK of the
PRESIDENT**

by Julie Dougherty
julieodoc@gmail.com

It is going to be a cold, snowy winter this year!
How many times have you heard this?

If you talk with people, because we had a very mild last winter, an unusually warm spring, drought this summer and recently cold and rainy couple of weeks, the belief is that we will pay for it this winter with more snow and colder than normal.

Anyone growing up in the Cleveland area is aware of the Woollybear Festival in late September early October. The Woollybear caterpillar (Isabella Tiger moth) is said to predict our winter. This year the prediction is a normal winter season for us. The Farmer's Almanac has predicted that we will be cold and snowy this winter. Accuweather winter forecast is for normal in our area.

Many people have noticed that there is a bumper crop of acorns and believe this is also a sign of a cold snowy winter. Truth is what the trees are doing is called masting. Masting by trees is caused by a variety of things, predicting a cold snowy winter is not one of them.

Truth is meteorologists make predictions, folklore creates predictions, and people make predictions. One thing we do know is that northeast Ohio will probably get more snow than last and no one or thing can predict how much we will get.

The birds last winter did not eat as much birdseed as normal because it was so mild they had access to their natural food sources. This winter might be different for them and they would appreciate our help in providing supplemental food source for them. Suet, oil sunflower, thistle and nuts are the most common and will provide you an opportunity to see a variety of birds from the comfort of your home.

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 _____

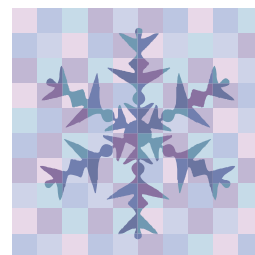
City _____ State ____ Zip _____

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

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

Email address _____

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 2012-13 season of **Project FeederWatch gets underway November 10** 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."

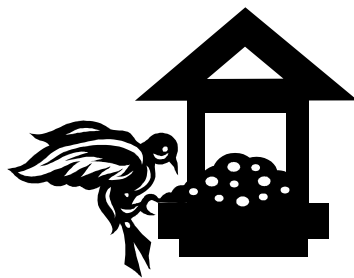
Scientists learn something new from the data each year, too, whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of

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.



Lake Metroparks Programs

Morning Bird Walks

Ages 12 and older, FREE

Lake Metroparks has a variety of habitats that offer the chance to see many species of birds. Bring binoculars and field guide if you have them.

Beginners welcome.

Thursday, Nov. 8, 8-10 am, Lakeshore Reservation

Saturday, Nov. 10, 8-10 am, Penitentiary Glen Reservation

Saturday, Dec. 8, 8:30-10 am, Penitentiary Glen Reservation

Saturday, Jan. 12, 8:30-10 am, Penitentiary Glen Reservation

Birders' Easy Chase Day

Ages 18 and older, Fee: \$40

East, west, north or south? Our quests will include hawks, songbirds and waterfowl. Our destinations will be "naturalists' choice" based on winds, weather patterns and reports of local hot spots.

Sunday, Nov. 18, 8 am-5 pm, depart from Penitentiary Glen Reservation



Birding Niagara Falls for winter Ducks, Gulls & more

Ages 18 and older, Fee: \$295 double occupancy, \$395 single occupancy, \$50 deposit

We'll explore Niagara Falls and River for loons, gulls and winter ducks. The Falls are beautiful this time of year. Lodging is within walking distance of other famous attractions.

Friday-Saturday, Dec. 7-8, depart from Penitentiary Glen 8 am

To register for Lake Metroparks programs, visit lakemetroparks.com or call 440-358-7275.

Geauga Park District Programs

Special Event: Winter Solstice

Candlelight Walk (Friday December 21, 7:30-9:30 pm)

Dress for the weather and bring some light into the longest night of the year on this popular evening walk. With costumed guides in the lead, you'll explore roots of our modern holiday celebrations derived from ancient traditions associated with the winter solstice along a luminary lit path.

Afterwards, warm up indoors with hot beverages and holiday music by the popular Pilgrim Brass Choir and a sing-along. This event is primarily outdoors so wear warm footwear and dress for the weather.

Grandparents in the Park: Happy "Bird Day"!

Grandparents and their Grandchildren are invited to register for a morning of indoor bird activities, complete with a craft and treats for human participants and your backyard birds. The session is slated for Friday, December 28 from 10-11:30 with pre-registration required. You can do so on-line or by calling 440-279-0880. The only "fee" is a snack to share!

Coffee with the Birds

Bring your bird feeding questions or suggestions to this "inside" look at bird watching as you gather around the bird feeding station window at The West Woods Nature Center between 9:30 and 11:30 am on Saturday, December 29. Warm beverages and snacks will be provided during this drop-in anytime session.

Observatory Park Sets Winter Hours

Check the website www.geaugaparkdistrict.org or call 440-279-0880 during business hours for more information and specific topics for programs.

Check www.geaugaparkdistrict.org for additional information and programs of interest.

Duck Stamps

If you attended our September Blackbrook program at Penitentiary Glen, you heard Jim McConnor mention Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly referred to as “duck stamps”.

President Herbert Hoover signed the Migratory Bird Conservation Act in 1929 to authorize the acquisition and preservation of wetlands as waterfowl habitat. However, the law did not provide a permanent source of funding to buy and preserve the wetlands. In 1934, Congress passed, and President Roosevelt signed, the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. The bill's purpose was to generate revenue designated for only one use: acquiring wetlands for what is now known as the National Wildlife Refuge System.

More than just a hunting permit, duck stamp dollars are used to acquire wetlands to ensure sustainable populations of waterfowl and other wildlife. Duck stamps are one of the most cost effective and direct investments available to ensure wetlands are nourished, protected, and benefit migratory birds and other wildlife, fish, plants and people. It has been proven that sales of duck stamps increase when the public has been informed of how the revenue generated through stamp sales are used. Every state has at least one National Wildlife Refuge.

You will have the opportunity to win a duck stamp in our November ticket auction or as a door prize at any Blackbrook program through May 2013. We also have extra duck stamps available for you to purchase for \$15. Although admission to many National Wildlife Refuges are free, the duck stamp can be used as a season pass to any National Wildlife Refuge that charges admission, such as J. N. “Ding” Darling NWR in Florida. Visit www.fws.gov/refuges/ for more information regarding the National Wildlife Refuge System.



Fourth Annual Ticket Auction

On November 20, 2012, we will hold our fourth annual ticket auction during 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.

Great Backyard Bird Count

What is the GBBC?

The 2013 GBBC will take place Friday, February 15, through Monday, February 18. Please join us for the 16th annual count!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual 4-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where

the birds are.

Beginning in 2013, GBBC checklists will be accepted from anywhere in the world!

Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It’s free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.



Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website.

Photo credits: **Snowy Owl, Jen Howard, ON 2012 GBBC; Northern Cardinal, Michele Black, OH 2012 GBBC**

BLACKBROOK AUDUBON SOCIETY
PO Box 1306
Mentor, OH 44061-1306

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

Julie Dougherty - President
Bruce Roberts - Editor

“What is more cheerful, now, in the fall of the year, than an open-wood-fire? Do you hear those little chirps and twitters coming out of that piece of apple-wood? Those are the ghosts of the robins and blue-birds that sang upon the bough when it was in blossom last Spring. In Summer whole flocks of them come fluttering about the fruit-trees under the window: so I have singing birds all the year round.”

— [Thomas Bailey Aldrich](#)

