



The Hushwing **HERALD**

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Volume 51 Number 2

November/December, 2015 and January, 2016

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: Tuesday, November 17, 2015
PROGRAM: "Flightless Birds in an
Astounding Environment - Penguins of Antarctica"
SPEAKER: Dave Roberts
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: The Holden Arboretum

As our half of the world falls further into autumn, the southern hemisphere ascends into spring. The extreme cold and wind on the continent at the bottom of the Earth, Antarctica, are diminishing, allowing the sea ice to melt and release trapped phytoplankton. Nutrients churned up from deep water currents and a greater amount of sun allow the phytoplankton population to "bloom," providing food for krill and ultimately the rest of the food chain, including penguins, seals and whales. Dave Roberts has visited Antarctica and will share with us which penguin species survive and even breed on what is essentially the largest desert on Earth.

Dave and his wife, Helen, traveled to Antarctica in February, 2013. "We've been very fortunate to experience many incredible moments on every continent and been able to explore and appreciate the beauty of all 50 states. At this stage in our lives we hope to continue doing so until either time or money runs out," he said.



DATE: Tuesday, January 19, 2016
PROGRAM: "Discover a Refuge
in Your Backyard"
SPEAKER: Dave Pretnar,
Wild Birds Unlimited
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: The Holden Arboretum

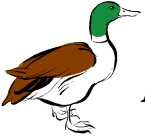
The average backyard may be visited by 15 or 20 different bird species. However, a bird-friendly yard can attract up to 60 or more different species. To attract the greatest number of bird species, just provide one or more of each of these habitat elements: food, water, cover and places to raise their young.

Dave Pretnar, owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited stores in Willoughby (2014) and Mayfield Heights (2009), will discuss the essentials of water, food and shelter. He will bring different feeders, houses and food samples for us to view. "Last winter, I was ready to replace a birdbath heater which stopped working. Dave gave me several tips to troubleshoot the problem, and I was able to resolve the problem at zero expense" said Blackbrook's president, Mary Ann Wagner. For a few years now, Dave and Jodi Pretnar have donated a "bird seed every month for a year" prize package to Blackbrook Audubon's November ticket raffle. All Wild Birds Unlimited stores donate a portion of proceeds to the Pathways to Nature conservation fund.

Dave will also bring along some binoculars and talk about different points to consider.

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

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ACTIVITIES

December Activity

DATE: Saturday, December 26, 2015
 ACTIVITY: Mentor Xmas Bird Count
 TIME: all day!
 PLACE: Lake County, Ohio

116th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It will be time once again to get involved in the oldest citizen-science project in North America. The annual Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 26, 2015.

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 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 contacting either Dan Donaldson at Danook057@yahoo.com 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.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR !!!
 12/26/2015**

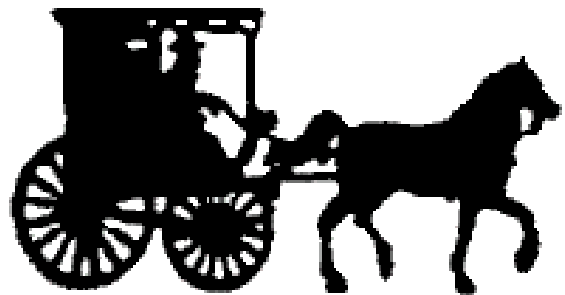
January Activity

DATE: Saturday, January 16, 2016
 ACTIVITY: Geauga County Amish Birding
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.
 MEET: Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve parking lot south of Chardon, Ohio

It is time once again for our trek to one of our favorite winter areas in Geauga County. This is when we go to the “Amish” countryside 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 Meadowlark.

Come prepared for the weather and bring your scope. Need more info? Email Pat Morse at pmorse@lakemetroparks.com.

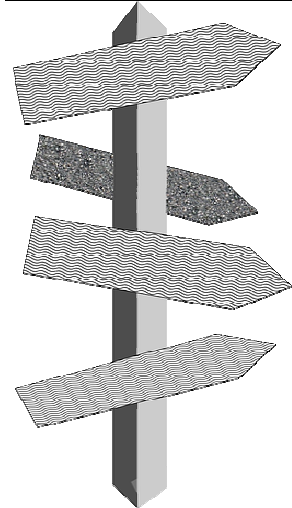
DIRECTIONS: Take Ohio Route 44 south out of Chardon, Ohio. The entrance to the preserve is on the west side of the road.



**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.

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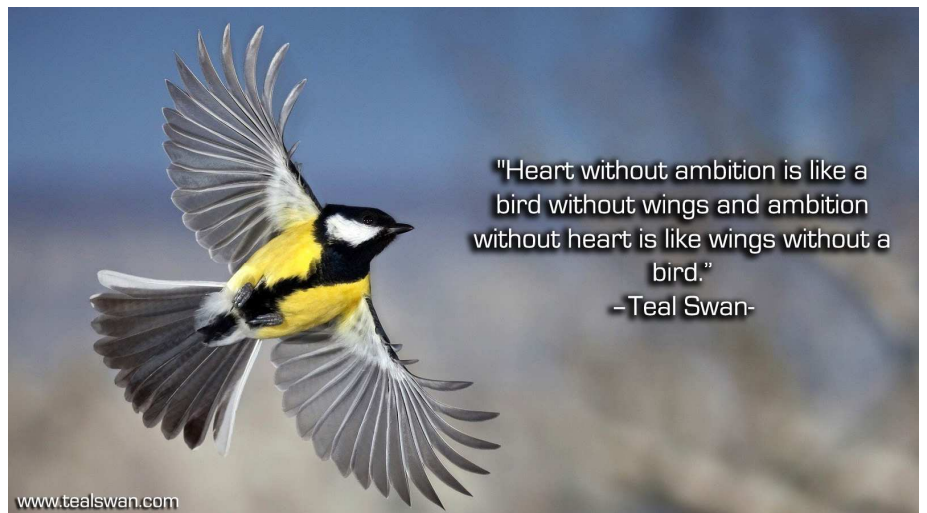
- Dave Roberts

Highlights from their many travels include sharing a liter of freshly-tapped palm wine with the village chief in Mbongo, Cameroon; fishing for piranha in the Amazon; biking the Canadian Rockies, and singing a Schubert Mass in Salzburg Cathedral. Their timing was off to see puffins in Iceland.

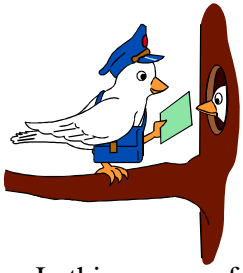
Dave worked in Pepper Pike in career transition services and retirement life planning. Of all their trips, the one to Antarctica was their favorite. Come hear the details of their exploration.



Adelie Penguin Feeding Young
photo credit: www.zutrition.com/penguin-nutrition-guide/



"Heart without ambition is like a bird without wings and ambition without heart is like wings without a bird."
-Teal Swan-



FROM the DESK of the PRESIDENT

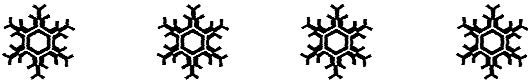
by MaryAnn Wagner
maryannelizabeth@aol.com

In this season of gratitude, I'd like to thank all of the people who are so generous with their time and talent behind the scenes of Blackbrook Audubon. These people contact program presenters and research locations for our programs and field trips, run errands, write stories for our Hushwing Herald, manage our electronic presence, set up displays and staff Blackbrook Audubon tables at various eco-fairs.

Thank you to the people who lead our field trips and monthly bird walks and the spring bird walks. There are a lot of people behind the scenes who volunteer quite a bit of their time to keep Blackbrook running so smoothly.

Thank you to the people who come early to programs to get the coffee started and to those who sign up to bake and bring goodies. And thank you to our loyal members who come to programs and field trips in all kinds of weather, when there are a dozen different things you could be doing.

Finally, thank you to everyone who supports Blackbrook Audubon by donating items for our raffles, or money to our spring Birdathon, or who have joined the Friends of Blackbrook group. Your support is very much appreciated!



What are some of your tips for "embracing" winter? I came up with three things that helped me last winter:

- 1) After getting stuck in the snow in my driveway in November after a two hour commute home from work, I hired a snowplow service for the rest of the winter.
- 2) After suffering through many winter bird walks and field trips over the years, I finally invested in a pair of heavy duty winter boots that are rated to

-20°F. My toes have been cozy and warm ever since!

3) We had so much snow last winter, I had trouble walking through the snow to fill my birdfeeders. I resolved the issue by buying snowshoes.

This year, I plan to buy a heavy duty pair of gloves. Not only do we need a positive attitude to make it through the winter, the right equipment goes a long way toward that positive attitude!

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 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 2015-16 season of **Project FeederWatch extends from Saturday, November 14 to Friday, April 8.**

Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants now exceed 20,000 during the 2012-13 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

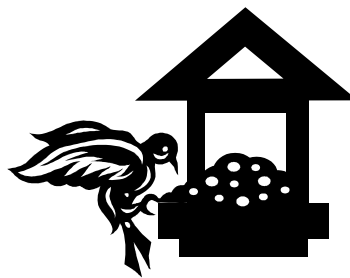
rarely seen species. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project-part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record 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 \$18 fee (\$15 for Lab members) participants are sent a Research Kit with complete instructions for participating. You provide the feeder(s) and seed. In addition, U.S. participants receive a subscription to the Lab of Ornithology's newsletter, Living Bird News.



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.

Saturday, Nov14 8:00-10 am, Lake Erie Bluffs

Saturday, Jan. 30, 8:00-10 am, PG Reservation

And many others! Check the web page for all your options. <http://www.lakemetroparks.com/programs>

The WILD Days of Winter game — Candy Land has gone WILD!

November 21, 2015 through January 3, 2016 • Noon to 5 pm

Exhibit closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Years' Eve

Penitentiary Glen Reservation

Northeast Ohio's "Wildest" holiday tradition continues this year. The Wild Days of Winter game is played just like the iconic board game CANDY LAND, but with a "natural twist" ...of course. This year's theme is Candy Land has gone WILD! On a life-sized game board, discover the many "natural" flavors that nature gives us as you play along and travel through the seasons in our indoor wonderland. Draw a card, move from space to space, and explore nature through the year. In addition, enjoy a craft, activity pages and scavenger hunts—it's fun for the whole family! Snacks and beverages are also available. Enjoy holiday shopping at The Nature Store. Snowshoe rentals are available, weather permitting. Join us on Saturday afternoons from 1 to 3 pm for special, free activities. Free to all; all ages welcome.



Breakfast and Lunch with Santa

Nov 28, 29, Dec 5, 6, 11-13, 15-20, 22, 23

Both 9 and 10:30 am start times

Lake Metroparks Farmpark

Lake County residents and Farmpark members may order tickets online or by visiting or calling Lake Metroparks' registration department. 440-358-7275. Out-of-county visitors may purchase tickets starting 8 am November 4.

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

Geauga Parks

Holly Days Artisan Boutique & Alternative Gift Fair

Saturday, November 14, 10 AM-5 PM, [The West Woods Nature Center](#)

This is the return of a classic: Geauga Park District's *Holly Days Artisan Boutique!*

Shoppers will revel in browsing a premier selection of juried Nature-themed holiday décor/gifts on display and for sale by 25+ regional artisans – the perfect place to find handmade items for everyone on your list – plus connect with giving at the new Alternative Gift Fair.

Within the festive, beautiful setting of The West Woods Nature Center, juried artists are set to feature heirloom-quality ornaments and holiday decor, all-natural bath and beauty products, gourmet food and snack items, unique jewelry and accessories, beautiful and functional pottery and glass items, gifts hand-turned from wood, indoor planters and terrariums, and much more, all in the company of live holiday music.

Geauga Park Programs: Please See www.geaugaparkdistrict.org for the latest great program information this fall and winter.

Congratulations Burroughs Nature Club

Congratulations to the Burroughs Nature Club as they celebrate their 100th program year in 2015-16.

The Burroughs Nature Club was founded in 1916 and named after John Burroughs (1837-1931), the famous Hudson River Valley author whose popular books inspired many a turn-of-the-century naturalist. The Burroughs Nature Club of Willoughby was founded by outstanding Cleveland area men (scientists, scholars, naturalists and photographers) who shared a common love of hiking, wildlife watching and other investigations of the natural world. They also enjoyed the camaraderie of a good hike together in the "wilds" of Lake County. Their Burroughs Nature Club remains one of the oldest such nature clubs in the nation.

Monthly meetings are held on Friday evenings September through April in the lower level reception hall of the Willoughby United Methodist Church in downtown Willoughby. For more information, visit www.burroughsnatureclub.org



Sixth Annual Ticket Auction

Blackbrook Audubon's ticket auction is a popular annual event. This year, our ticket auction will be held on Tuesday, November 17th during our November program at the Holden Arboretum.

People have generously donated very nice items. We have a bat box, a squirrel proof birdfeeder, owl figurines, books and other nature-related items as well as a birdseed-every-month-for-a-year prize package.

Tickets will cost \$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.

Gifts from the Heart of Nature at the Holden Arboretum

Friday, November 13, 2015 through Sunday, January 3, 2016

9 AM to 5 PM; open until 8 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Closed Nov. 27, Dec. 24, Dec. 25 and Jan 1.

***open 9am-12pm on Dec. 31

The beauty of Northeast Ohio provides the inspiration for handcrafted gifts by regional artists. Stop by the Corning Visitor Center at the Holden Arboretum and browse the wide selection of accessories, wood products, bath and beauty products, pottery, and more for nature-inspired original gifts. Finish your holiday shopping ahead of schedule while supporting The Holden Arboretum and local artists all at once.

Magee Marsh Boardwalk Renovation Update

Approximately 40% of the work replacing boardwalk decking, handrails and bridges is completed. Unfortunately, due to a miscalculation, more funds are needed to go forward with the renovation. The Friends of Magee Marsh estimate that \$294,000 is required to complete the work.

Please consider donating to this worthy cause. So many of us have spent many hours on the boardwalk with beautiful spring warblers all around us--and it didn't cost a dime. Help the Friends of Magee Marsh complete the project by sending a donation or contributing online with PayPal.

Friends of Magee Boardwalk
Boardwalk Renovation
PO Box 92
Port Clinton OH 43452

Online with PayPal:
friendsofmageemarsh.org
Click Updates then click Boardwalk Donor

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

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

Mary Ann Wagner - President
Bruce Roberts - Editor

“Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together ... all things connect.”

—*Chief Seattle*

And don't forget to use AmazonSmile instead of Amazon. AmazonSmile, then will automatically donate 0.5% of your purchases to the charity you select. It costs you (and the charitable organizations) nothing, and it's just like shopping on Amazon normally, but you get to do a world of good.

