



# The Hushwing **HERALD**

*Blackbrook Audubon Society*

*Volume 50 Number 2*

*November/December, 2014 and January, 2015*

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

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

DATE: Tuesday, November 18, 2014  
PROGRAM: "Birding Ohio's North Coast"  
SPEAKER: Jim McCormac  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Holden Arboretum

DATE: Tuesday, January 20, 2015  
PROGRAM: "Cute Chicks"  
SPEAKER: Chuck Jakubchak  
TIME: 7:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Holden Arboretum

To many people, Lake Erie is Ohio's greatest natural resource. It is certainly our most conspicuous feature, and plays an enormous role in influencing the Buckeye State's bird life. Lake Erie and its environs support greater numbers and species of birds than anywhere in Ohio, and most of the Midwest. To date, 396 species have been found in the counties bordering Lake Erie – 94% of all species currently known from Ohio. An incredible 30 species have only been found along the lake. This program will travel far and wide along the lakeshore, looking at the habitats and species that make Lake Erie a world-class birding destination.

Much of this program is based on the new Lake Erie Birding Trail guidebook, which features over 100 of the best birding locales from Conneaut to Toledo. The book is 232 pages, features several hundred color photos, numerous maps, and lots of information about Lake Erie's bird life and other natural history. It has become the go-to resource for those interested in exploring the natural history of our greatest lake.



See Jim McCormac's Bio on page 3.

You recognize the parents when you see them, but have you met their offspring? "Cute Chicks" overviews different species of familiar birds and provides interesting information about both parents and hatchlings. The most notable portions of this program are the beautiful photographs of young birds, some just recently hatched. Educational content, combined with entertaining photos, make this presentation enjoyable and memorable.

You may remember the other programs Chuck Jakubchak has presented for Blackbrook Audubon: "Sensational Birds, Sensational Observations" and "Nests (With a Side of Eggs)". Chuck, a birder for more than 19 years, is a graduate of the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program and has presented bird and nature themed programs throughout the state. He has written articles for Bird Watcher's Digest, Heart of Ohio Magazine and WildOhio.

In 2011, Chuck received the Continuing Excellence Award from the Ohio Volunteer Naturalists and is an advisor to the Ohio Bluebird Society. He and his wife Jeanne have lived in Strongsville for more than 28 years.

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



## NOVEMBER ACTIVITY

DATE: Sunday, November 16, 2014  
 ACTIVITY: Migrating Waterfowl  
 TIME: 10:00 a.m.  
 PLACE: Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge

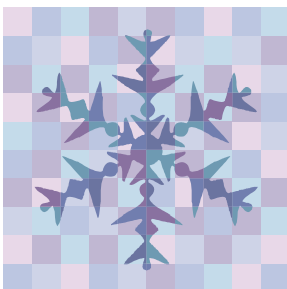
Join us for a self-guided driving tour along seven miles of refuge roads that are normally closed to the public. We can stop as frequently as we want to get good looks at the waterfowl and other migrating and resident birds in this vast wetland habitat.

Binoculars are a must and spotting scopes will be even better to see birds in the water at a distance. Bring a lunch or plan to eat at one of the very few local eateries, Blackberry Corner Tavern, following the tour. Dress in warm layers, as you'll be in and out of the car several times. Don't forget gloves! For more information, or if you would like to carpool, contact Pat Morse at [pmorse@lakemetroparks.com](mailto:pmorse@lakemetroparks.com) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 13.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take I-90 west to the I-90/Route 2 split west of Cleveland. Follow Route 2 all the way to Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. The entrance is just past the Magee Marsh entrance, on the right side of the road. Go to the big green, main building (Visitor Center). Ottawa is about a 2-hour drive from Mentor.

Ottawa address: 14000 West State Route 2, Oak Harbor, OH 43449

**SPECIAL NOTE:** This trip could be cancelled due to VERY inclement weather. Check your local NBC stations iAlert Sunday morning for this notification.



## ACTIVITIES

### DECEMBER ACTIVITY

DATE: Saturday, December 27, 2014  
 ACTIVITY: Mentor Xmas Bird Count  
 TIME: all day!  
 PLACE: Lake County, Ohio

### 115th 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 27, 2014.

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 calling either Jim McConnor at 440-257-2507 or Anders Fjeldstad at 440-257-7611 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 24, 2015  
 ACTIVITY Chase Day  
 TIME: 9:00 a.m.  
 PLACE: Where the Birds Are!

During the winter months, we often hear about rare and interesting bird sightings. We will keep our ears open for local news and travel to locations where waterfowl, raptors and other birds are being seen. Destinations will most likely include the Lake Erie shoreline and places in Ashtabula, Lake, and Geauga counties. However, if we hear of something really rare we may choose to travel a little farther. Be sure to bring your binoculars (and spotting scope if you have one). Dress in warm layers and don't forget gloves! Meet at Lakeland Community College, the parking lot on your left as you enter from Rt. 306.

For more information, or if you would like to carpool, contact Pat Morse at [pmorse@lakemetroparks.com](mailto:pmorse@lakemetroparks.com) by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 23.

**DIRECTIONS:** Meet at Lakeland Community College, 7700 Clocktower Dr., Kirtland, OH 44094.

### 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](http://wkyc.com); Newsradio WTAM 1100 AM, [wtam.com](http://wtam.com); and as well our website: [www.blackbrookaudubon.org](http://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.

## Continued from page 1.

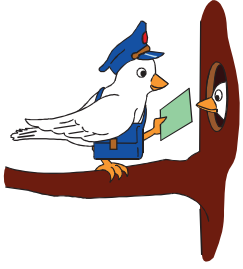
### Jim McCormac – Bio



Jim works for the Ohio Division of Wildlife, specializing in nongame wildlife diversity issues, especially birds. Prior to that, he was a botanist with the Ohio Department of

Natural Resources. He was inaugural president of the Ohio Ornithological Society, and was the 2009 recipient of the Ludlow Griscom award, given annually by the American Birding Association to individuals who have made significant regional contributions to ornithology. He is author of *Birds of Ohio* (Lone Pine 2004); *The Great Lakes Nature Guide* (Lone Pine 2009); and *Wild Ohio: The Best of Our Natural Heritage* (Kent State University Press 2009). The latter won the 2010 Ohioana Book award. Jim writes a column, *Nature*, for the Columbus Dispatch, and has authored or co-authored over 100 scientific and popular articles in a variety of publications. He authored the new Ohio Lake Erie Birding Trail Guidebook, released in 2013, published by the Ohio Division of Wildlife and Ohio Sea Grant.

**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 MaryAnn Wagner  
[maryannelizabeth@aol.com](mailto:maryannelizabeth@aol.com)

Congratulations to the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalists (OCVN) for their winning entry “Making Friends in New Places” at the Holden Arboretum’s Scarecrow Row in early October. Blackbrook’s entry, “Nuts About Birds” (a giant squirrel holding a birdfeeder), did not take a prize, but we still had fun working together to assemble our scarecrow.

As 2014 draws to a close, I am thinking of some of our adventures over the past year. Did you brave the cold and snow last winter to experience the Snowy Owl “invasion”? There were numerous sightings throughout Ohio. Many of us trekked out to the shores of Lake Erie, but some of the sightings happened during Blackbrook’s Christmas Bird Count. Immediately after lunch, we caravanned down Fairport Nursery Road and there were two Snowy Owls sitting atop telephone poles. We pulled over to hop out of our cars to take pictures. Other people driving by thought we were nuts!

Perhaps you visited Magee Marsh and saw the pair of Bald Eagles nesting in the parking lot. There were great views of the eagles from the boardwalk before the trees leafed out. You could even see their yellow beaks and talons without binoculars! Did you come to Blackbrook’s Big Sit at Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve in May and see the pair of juvenile Bald Eagles fly low directly overhead and perch in nearby cottonwoods?

What about the Yellow-breasted Chat at Lake Erie Bluffs? Some people stood in the rain for hours to catch a glimpse of this bird. Fortunately, their patience was rewarded and they were able to add Yellow-breasted Chat to their life list. And most recently, many people had a chance to see a rare Northern Wheatear at Headlands Dunes.

All in all, it was another exciting year of birding with Blackbrook Audubon. Thank you to the people who share their observations and expertise so the rest of us have a chance to see these birds in their natural habitat. Thank you to Blackbrook’s board of directors for putting together interesting

field trips and programs and to the volunteers behind the scenes who keep things running smoothly. Thank you to donors and Friends of Blackbrook for their financial support and to the Geauga Park District, the Holden Arboretum, Lake Metroparks and Mentor Marsh, for sharing their facilities with us.

Most importantly, thank YOU for your interest, attendance, enthusiasm and support of the Blackbrook Audubon Society.

### 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 2014-15 season of **Project FeederWatch extends from Saturday, November 8 to Friday, April 3.**

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](http://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, Dec. 6, 8:30-10 am, Lake Erie Bluffs

Saturday, Dec. 27 8-10 am, Penitentiary Glen Reservation (Xmas Bird Count)

Saturday, Jan. 17, 8:30-10 am, PG Reservation

Saturday, Feb. 21, 8:30-10 am, Lake Erie Bluffs

### The Wild Days of Winter

November 22 through January 4

Noon to 5 pm • Free admission

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas & New Year's Eve - Penitentiary Glen Reservation

On a life-sized indoor game board, discover the many flavors that nature gives us as you play along in our *all new* winter wonderland. Draw a card, move from space to space and explore nature through the seasons.

### Breakfast with Santa

November 29 through December 23, 2014

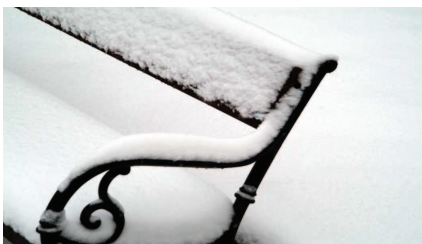
Both 9 and 10:30 am start times

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](http://www.lakemetroparks.com) or call 440-358-7275.



## Geauga Area Programs

A special ONAPA program:

**Saturday, November 22, 2014 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

***Upper Cuyahoga Waterfowl Watch, Geauga County***

**Leader: Geauga County Chief Naturalist Dan Best**

We will carpool and caravan along La Due Reservoir for diving and dabbling ducks, grebes, loons, Bonaparte's Gulls and Bald Eagles with the possibility of Tundra Swans and Sandhill Cranes. Lunch stop (on your own) at the Auburn Inn will be followed by a stop at Burton Wetlands State Nature Preserve to scan Lake Kelso for waterfowl along with an explanation of the Ice Age origin of Lake Kelso and other glacial lakes in this kame/kettle region of Geauga County.

Visit [www.onapa.org](http://www.onapa.org) for driving directions. Please email [info@onapa.org](mailto:info@onapa.org) to let us know you are joining us. List the tour in the subject line of the email and include your name and phone number.

**Geauga Park Programs: Please See [www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org) for the latest great program information this fall and winter.**



## Protect Wildlife and Preserve Habitat -Buy a Duck Stamp-

When you purchase a \$15 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (“Duck Stamp”), you are contributing to an important method of conserving habitat. Ninety-eight cents of every dollar generated by the sale of duck stamps goes directly to purchase or lease habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. In addition, the stamp serves as an entrance pass for National Wildlife Refuges.

Since 1934, the stamps have generated over \$800 million, which has been used to purchase or lease over 6 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the US. Currently, there are over 550 National Wildlife Refuges in the United States providing habitat for more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 reptile and amphibian species and more than 1,000 species of fish. More than 380 threatened or endangered plants or animals are protected on wildlife refuges, and each year millions of migrating birds use refuges as stepping stones while they fly thousands of miles between their summer and winter homes.

Duck stamps can be purchased at your local post office or online at

<http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/stamps.htm> .



### Sixth Annual Ticket Auction

Blackbrook Audubon’s annual ticket auction will be held on November 18<sup>th</sup> at our November program at the Holden Arboretum. There are several books available including the “Encyclopedia of North American Birds”, “Bird Watching for Dummies” and a copy of the “National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America”. There are Lennox bird figurines, decorative vases, hand-made quilted coasters 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.

### GIFTS FROM THE HEART OF NATURE AT THE HOLDEN ARBORETUM

Saturday, November 15 – Sunday, January 4, 2015

The beauty of Northeast Ohio provides the inspiration for handcrafted gifts by regional artists. Celebrate nature's splendor and browse each artisan's creativity for original gifts. This event promotes regional artists with nature-inspired works and crafts from environmentally responsible materials. Watch for Tuesday Night Trunk Shows featuring select artists, as well as the Holiday Shop and Drop where we provide activities for your kids while you shop! A portion of each sale supports The Holden Arboretum.

The first Tuesday Night Trunk Show will be Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 5-8 pm. Come early to the Jim McCormac talk at our member's meeting at The Holden Arboretum at 7 pm to shop.

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

**LOOK FOR BLACKBROOK ON THE WEB!**  
**AT [www.blackbrookaudubon.org](http://www.blackbrookaudubon.org)**

Mary Ann Wagner - President  
Bruce Roberts - Editor

“I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape - the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show.”

Andrew Wyeth

