



Greater Mohican Audubon News

YOUR LINK TO TOMORROW'S ENVIRONMENT

www.gmasohio.org

SPRING 2008

GMAS CALENDAR

***Sat. Mar. 8** 9AM-11AM.
Beginner's Bird Walk at Secrest Arboretum, 1680 Madison Avenue, Wooster, Ohio. Meet at Visitor Pavilion.

***Tues. Mar. 18** 7PM. Join leader Gary Cowell Jr. at Malabar Farm for a Woodcock Walk. Meet at the Visitor's Center. For more information, contact Gary Cowell Jr. at Gcowelljr@yahoo.com.

***Sat. Mar. 22** 9AM-11AM.
Beginner's Bird Walk at Byers Woods, located 4 miles south of Ashland, just east of State Route 60 on CR 1754. Meet in the parking lot.

***Sat. Apr. 5** Shreve Migration Sensation. For more information see <<http://www.valkyrie.net/~rehmje/migration/>>.

***Sat. Apr. 12** 9AM-11AM.
Beginner's Bird Walk at Malabar Farm, located near Pleasant Hill Lake on Bromfield Road in Lucas. Meet at the Visitor's Center. GMAS Board meeting will follow this walk at 11:30 at the Malabar Inn.

***Sat. Apr. 26** 9AM-11AM.
Beginner's Bird Walk at Byers Woods, located 4 miles south of Ashland, just east of State Route 60 on CR 1754. Meet in the parking lot.

***Sun. Apr. 27** 1PM. Wildflower Walk at Fowler Woods in Richland County. For more information, contact Gary Cowell Jr. at Gcowelljr@yahoo.com. ☺

***May 2-4** Mohican Wildlife Weekend. See article in this issue.

***Sat. May 10** 9AM-11AM.
Beginner's Bird Walk at Secrest Arboretum, 1680 Madison Avenue, Wooster, Ohio. Meet at Visitor Pavilion.

***May 16-18** Ohio Ornithological Society Conference at Mohican State Park (see OOS website at www.ohiobirds.org for more info).

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IN THE STEPS OF DARWIN:

BIRDS & OTHER WILDLIFE OF THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Twenty of us got a real treat when we visited the Ashland Public Library to watch a presentation by Paul Barding of his April 2005 trip to seven of the Galapagos Islands: Espanola, Genovesa, Isabela, Fernandina, Santiago, Bartolome, and Santa Cruz. Paul took us on an island by island tour, showing photos that he and his daughter, Erin, took of the landscape and wildlife.

Paul began with a brief history of these unique islands and showed us a photo of the small ship, aptly named "Evolution", where they spent six days (and nights) and on which they traveled 385 miles around the islands. The weather was warm and sunny, and it didn't rain the entire trip.

Paul explained that much of the wildlife on the Galapagos is found no place else on earth and that many of the plants and animals are named Galapagos *something* and Lava *something* such as Galapagos Hawk, Galapagos Penguin, Galapagos Tortoise, Lava Heron, Lava Lizard, and Lava Cactus.

Other photos were of birds such as Nazca Booby, Red-footed Booby, Blue-footed Booby, Flightless Cormorant, and Waved Albatross. Other creatures included Sally Lightfoot Crab, Giant Tortoise, Land Iguana, and Marine Iguana. He and Erin were able to go snorkeling off one island and took wonderful underwater photos of Green Sea Turtles while White-tipped Sharks watched nearby. And he was nuzzled by a Sea Lion.

Paul's favorite bird during his trip was the Swallow-tailed Gull. And he told us his only disappointment was not being able to photograph all 14 of Darwin's finches. For more information about Darwin and the Galapagos Islands, he recommends the book *The Voyage of the Beagle* by Charles Darwin.

He ended his presentation with a photo of a footprint in the sand, a take-off on the saying "take only photos, leave only footprints". Though he reminded us that the "footprints of man" have already taken their toll on these islands by such actions as the introduction of destructive plants and animals.

Thanks to Paul for sharing his wonderful memories of a warm place near the equator, on a chilly February 23rd here in Ohio. —Su Snyder, Wooster



Photo of Nazca Boobies by Paul Barding.

NOMINATIONS FOR GMAS BOARD

Nominations for GMAS Officers, Committee Chairs, and County Representatives are currently being taken for terms beginning June 1, 2008. The GMAS Board meets at least 6 times a year. If you would like to volunteer for a position or would like to nominate someone, please contact GMAS President, Cheryl Harner at harner1@bright.net on or before May 15, 2008.

GMAS CALENDAR

(continued from page 1)

***Sat. May 24** 9AM-11AM. Beginner's Bird Walk at Byers Woods, located 4 miles south of Ashland, just east of State Route 60 on CR 1754. Meet in the parking lot.

***Jun. 6 & 7** Council of Ohio Audubon Chapters (COAC) will present a workshop at Ashland University on fundraising, membership databases, and website building. Other activities include a nature walk at Byers Woods. Open to all Audubon members. For more information, contact Louise Fleming at lfleming@ashland.edu.

***Sat. Jun. 14** 9AM-11AM. Beginner's Bird Walk at Malabar Farm, located near Pleasant Hill Lake on Bromfield Road in Lucas. Meet at the Visitor's Center.

***Sat. Jun. 28** 9AM-1PM. Bobolink and Butterfly Festival at Byers Woods in partnership with Ashland County Park District. Nature walk starts at 9AM. Spotters with scopes and food vendors will be set up in the parking lot from 11AM-1PM. Byers Woods is located 4 miles south of Ashland, just east of State Route 60 on CR 1754. ♿

***Sat. Jul. 5** Bio Blitz at Audubon Wetland Preserve in Ashland. For more information, see article in this newsletter.

KILLDEER PLAINS TRIP—FEBRUARY 17TH

Gloomy weather predictions did not dampen the spirits of the fearless 40 gathered for a field trip to Killdeer Plains on Feb 17th, 2008. A joint trip by Greater Mohican Audubon, Greater Akron Audubon, and the Ohio Ornithological Society provided opportunities to make new friends among our birders.

Early signs of spring were evident, the first of the migrants and light rain. We had a number of Killdeer passing over, and scattered flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds, as well as a few Rusty Blackbirds. Killdeer Plains was teeming with waterfowl trying to push their way on north, and among the masses of Canada Geese we found nine Greater White-fronted Geese. Thirty or so Tundra Swans were also seen, as were a smattering of Ring-necked Ducks and Lesser Scaup, as well as a Canvasback and a few American Wigeon. That earliest of dabbler migrants, Northern Pintail, was present in good numbers. Mallards and American Black Ducks were plentiful.

The grasslands were thick with Northern Harriers; smaller numbers of Rough-legged Hawks are also there. Four or five Bald Eagles were also observed. At least a dozen Lapland Longspurs were along Washburn Road, and 150-200 Snow Buntings whirled in briefly, making for quite a show. Several members report seeing Short-eared Owls hunting by the car headlights, as we drove out.

For many, the highlight of the trip was four cooperative Long-eared Owls in a pine grove. Thanks to the keen eyes of one birder, we were able to spot the owls at a distance, and everyone could admire them from afar without disturbing or flushing the birds.

Thanks to the Division of Wildlife for allowing us the use of the Sportsmen's Center, where we were able to enjoy good company and food while gathering in the morning and again at lunchtime.

—Cheryl Harner, Crestline



Short-eared Owl at Killdeer Plains.
Photo by Cheryl Harner.

MOHICAN WILDLIFE WEEKEND—2008

Don't miss Mohican Wildlife Weekend, **May 2-4**. Get back in touch with nature at Friday night's keynote presentation, "Plugged In, But Tuned Out: The Need to Reconnect with Nature" by Dr. Herb Broda. Longtime advocate of outdoor education, Herb is on faculty at Ashland University and just published *Schoolyard-Enhanced Learning: Using the Outdoors as an Instructional Tool, K-8*. Herb will also be leading two workshops on Saturday: a presentation on how to turn your schoolyard into an outdoor classroom; and a "hands-on" session of activities for parents and grandparents to use with children in the outdoors.

GMAS will be leading two birdwalks this year. Saturday's walk is at Malabar Farm and led by Gary Cowell. Meet at the flagpole in front of the Visitor's Center. Sunday's is at Ohio Bird Sanctuary, led by Tim Leslie. Both walks are from 9-11 a.m. Saturday afternoon Louise Fleming will be presenting "School Gardens for Wildlife", offering tips for wildlife gardens to teachers, parents, and community groups.

Other highlights include animal encounters at Gorman Nature Center, nature crafts, a chicken BBQ at Mohican Outdoor School, and square dancing. The schedule will be posted at <http://mohicanwildlifeweekend.com/>. Finally, be sure to see the new brochure. Birdman Tim Leslie is pictured inside!

—Louise Fleming, Ashland

ROGER TROUTMAN RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE TO CBCs

Bob Evans Restaurant in Wooster has been the meeting place for the Wooster CBC (Christmas Bird Count) for many years, and early on Saturday, December 22, 2007, it was where Roger Troutman was recognized by the Greater Mohican Audubon Society for his 51 years of participation and coordination of both the Wooster and Mohican CBCs. **Thank you, Roger, for all your years of service to the birding community.**

After the presentation, 29 participants went out into the field and watched their feeders to break a number of Wooster CBC records including the highest count ever for the Wooster CBC with 86 total species. Unusual birds found on the Wooster CBC were 3 Cackling Geese, a very cold insect eater--a Least Flycatcher, a Pine Warbler, a Dickcissel, and an amazing find of 5 Pine Grosbeaks.

Roger also coordinated the Mohican CBC on December 29. The high species record was also broken for this CBC with 80 species by 45 counters. Three Evening Grosbeaks were unusual finds.

Three other CBCs are conducted in the GMAS area: Ashland, Mansfield, and Millersburg. The Ashland Count was conducted on December 15 and coordinated by Tim Leslie. 24 counters found 66 species. Three Horned Grebes were unusual for this count. The Mansfield CBC was held on December 15 and coordinated by Steve McKee. 23 participants found 78 species, including a Black Scoter and a Rufous Hummingbird. The Millersburg count was held on January 5, 2008, and is headed by Dennis Kline. An extraordinarily large group of 129 counters found 89 species.

For more information of these and other CBCs, see <<http://www.audubon.org/>>.

—*Su Snyder*, Wooster



Roger Troutman is recognized for his 51 years of service to the Wooster and Mohican CBCs by presenter Cheryl Harner. Photo by Jen Sauter

BIO-BLITZ AT THE NEW AUDUBON

WETLANDS PRESERVE

Birders, amateur and professional botanists, entomologists, and herpetologists! GMAS, in cooperation with Ashland County Park District, is hosting a Bio-Blitz on **July 5** at the Audubon Wetlands Preserve in Ashland. The Ohio Young Birders from Black Swamp Bird Observatory will put their birding skills to the test in this one-day biological survey. They will be joined by GMAS's Young Birders, along with their advisor, Lisa Durham. Rick Gardener, Ohio State Heritage Botanist, will be cataloging plants.

Stay tuned for further developments. We hope you'll lend us your expertise and put this exciting day on your calendar. Please contact me at lfleming@ashland.edu if you are able to help.

—*Louise Fleming*, Ashland

A VAN FOR BSBO AND

OHIO YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB

Several GMAS members got a nice surprise when they joined Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO) for their annual trip to Killdeer Plains on Sunday, January 20th. They learned that the 15-passenger van in which they were riding was donated by GMAS's own Lloyd and Norma Wygant. With tears in her eyes, BSBO Education Director, Kim Kaufman, explained how it all happened. You can read the whole, heart-warming story on the BSBO web site at http://www.bsbobird.org/dream_makers.htm.

Thank you Lloyd and Norma!!

WORDS FOR THE BIRDS

In the last issue of this newsletter, Erwin Riedner from Wooster, challenged us to learn the definitions of the following "bird" terms: Syrinx; Isotherms; Remiges; Polyandry; Bergmann's Rule; Archaeopteryx lithographica; Functional lateralization; Hallux; Malar; Lek; Barbules; Irruption; Cranial kinesis; Zygodactyl; Furcula; Columella; Reverse sexual dimorphism; Neotropical; Pipped and Pipping; Nictating membrane; and Zugunruhe.

Erwin supplied us with the answers, a few of which are listed below. Watch upcoming newsletters for more definitions.

Syrinx - The vocal organ of birds; it is a special modification of the lower trachea or of the bronchi, or of both. This bifurcated nature of the syrinx gives many bird species the ability for two-tonal singing. For example, the flute-like song of the Wood Thrush results from its use of its dual voice box.

Isotherms - Lines drawn on a weather map (or chart) connecting areas of equal temperature at a given time. Migrating birds often follow equal these temperature gradients, using the associated winds to boost them along.

Rectrices - The tail feathers of a bird; when not spread, each retrix overlaps with another. They are used for steering in flight, braking when a bird lands from the air, and in some species such as woodpeckers, braces for perching on tree limbs and trunks and the like.

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MEMBERSHIP

GREATER MOHICAN AUDUBON SOCIETY

The GMAS membership offers local newsletter and events and helps us to fund our programs. Each Chapter Supporter will receive a free nametag to wear at chapter functions.

Make checks payable to:

Greater Mohican Audubon Society,
P.O. Box 907, Ashland, OH 44805

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To join the National Audubon Society, please go to www.audubon.org

Chapter Code S72

bird348@ssnet.com

Su Snyder – Newsletter Editor

beam.10@osu.edu

Don Beam - Holmes County Representative

Representative - 419-289-2657

Louise Fleming – Ashland County

Representative – gcowelljr@yahoo.com

Gary Cowell Jr. – Richland County

ears5@aol.com

Erwin Riedner—Wayne County Representative

greenjean@neo.rr.com

Jean Taddie – Secretary

419-289-1062

Dick Stoffer – Treasurer

419-289-0463

Sam Weyrick – Vice President

harnet1@bright.net

Cheryl Harner – President

Greater Mohican Audubon Society (GMAS) is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of birds and other wildlife through environmental education and the conservation and restoration of habitat.

MISSION

P.O. BOX 907 • ASHLAND, OH 44805

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