



# Greater Mohican Audubon News

YOUR LINK TO TOMORROW'S ENVIRONMENT

www.gmasohio.org

WINTER 2007/2008

## GMAS CALENDAR

**\*Sat. Dec. 8** 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. Holiday Get Together will follow the walk at Malabar Inn.

**\*Sat. Dec. 15** Ashland & Mansfield Christmas Bird Counts. Call Tim Leslie at 419-289-2626 for more information about the Ashland CBC. Call Steve McKee at 419-884-3764 for information about the Mansfield CBC.

**\*Sat. Dec. 22** Wooster Christmas Bird Count. For more information, call Roger Troutman at 419-884-3529.

**\*Sat. Dec. 22** No bird walk at Byers Woods this month. Merry Christmas!!

**\*Sat. Dec. 29** Mohican Christmas Bird Count. For more information, call Roger Troutman at 419-884-3529.

**\*Jan. 1-31** Ohio Winter Bird Atlas 2008. See article in this issue.

**\*Sat. Jan. 5** Millersburg Christmas Bird Count. For more information, contact Dennis Kline at 330-567-3432.

**\*Sat. Jan. 12** 9AM-11AM. Beginner's Bird Walk at Secrest Arboretum, 1680 Madison Avenue, Wooster, Ohio. Meet at Visitor Pavilion.

**\*Sat. Jan. 12** 3PM. GMAS Young Birders winter eagle watch at Pleasant Hill Lake (see article in this issue for more information).

**\*Sat. Jan. 19** 10AM. Winter Bird Walk at Crall Woods at Pine Hill Park in northwest Ashland County. Meet in the parking lot. See article in this issue for more information.

**\*Sat. Jan. 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.

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## A FOWL OBSESSION

What is a Big Year and what would it take to accomplish one? Greg Miller, a native son of nearby Sugarcreek, ably answered those questions and more during his Greater Mohican Audubon Society program hosted by Robert Hershberger and Time and Optics of Millersburg, Ohio, on Oct 20th, 2007.

The sunny fall weather and corn shocked in the fields provided the perfect backdrop to enjoy the charm of the rural atmosphere. Many bicycles, cars and a few horse drawn buggies gathered at the shop located deep in the heart of Ohio's Amish country. Sixty-four people filed into a new building next to Time and Optics, where a generator provided the power for Greg's Power Point based program.

Greg attained some notoriety in the birding world when Mark Obmascik wrote a book, *The Big Year*, on the tales and travails of three birders who each saw over 700 species of birds in North America in just one year—1998. This incredible accomplishment takes a great deal of commitment, stamina, and a bit of money as well. Greg, who accomplished the deed on a relative "shoe-string" budget, is the only person to have done so while having employment demands on his time.

Greg humorously related the stories of difficult-to-find birds and bicycle rides in frigid weather, courtesy of Attu, Alaska. Incredible "life" sightings were rendered by pelagic trips, helicopter rides and frequent flier miles, which played an important role in this race to see the birds. It was a "Winner Take Nothing" event, where Greg pulled off the impossible and kept his sense of humor. GMAS thanks Greg and Robert for their willingness to bring programs on birding to our friends and members in Holmes County.

—Cheryl Harner, Crestline



Greg Miller by Cheryl Harner

## UPDATE ON GMAS YOUNG BIRDERS

GMAS Young Birders had an outing on November 13th at Jack Savage's farm in McCay. Their next outing will be the Mohican Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 29.

For their January outing, they will be meeting at Pleasant Hill Lake for a winter eagle watch on Saturday, January 12 at 3:00PM. If you or anyone you know is interested in joining GMAS Young Birders, please contact Lisa Durham at 419-886-2120.

## GMAS CALENDAR

(continued from page 1)

**\*Sat. Feb. 9** 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 be held following the walk at the Malabar Inn.

**\*Feb. 15-18** 11th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. See article in this issue.

**\*Sat. Feb. 23** 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. Feb. 23** 3PM. *The Birds of the Galapagos Islands*, a program by Paul Barding at the Ashland Public Library, 224 Claremont Ave., Ashland. For more information, contact Pam Jordan at 419-289-8188, Ext. 17.

**\*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, see article in this newsletter.

**\*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. See article in this issue.

**\*May 2-4** Mohican Wildlife Weekend (more info to follow in the Spring issue).

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

## RESULTS OF GMAS BIG SIT 2007

The results are in for the Greater Mohican Audubon Society's (GMAS) Big Sit. Although the 24-hour period on October 14th was cold and overcast, the team of 17 participants saw or heard 46 species of birds from their 17-foot circle.

The Big Sit is a non-competitive birding event; it is hosted by Bird Watcher's Digest and the results can be viewed at [www.birdwatcherdigest.com](http://www.birdwatcherdigest.com). The Big Sit was founded by the New Haven, Connecticut Bird Club and is sponsored by Swarovski Optik and Eagle Optics. Hundreds of teams from around the world participate in the Big Sit every year.

The GMAS circle was held at Malabar Farm in front of the Bailey Farm Bicentennial Barn. A Canada Goose was the first species detected at 12:55am-- a new early time for our sit. The last bird sighted at was an American Kestrel at 5:35pm.

For more information about the Big Sit, contact the team leader Tim Leslie at 419-289-2626, or write to GMAS at P.O. Box 907, Ashland, Ohio, 44805. You can also visit the GMAS web site at [www.gmasohio.org](http://www.gmasohio.org).



*Dark-eyed Junco by Dave Snyder.*

## SPECIES LIST FROM 10/14/07 BIG SIT

Canada Goose	American Crow
Wood Duck	Carolina Chickadee
Mallard	Tufted Titmouse
Great Blue Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch
Turkey Vulture	Carolina Wren
Bald Eagle	Eastern Bluebird
Northern Harrier	American Robin
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Northern Mockingbird
Red-tailed Hawk	European Starling
American Kestrel	Yellow-rumped
Killdeer	Chipping Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	Field Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Song Sparrow
Mourning Dove	White-throated Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	White-crowned Sparrow
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Northern Cardinal
Downy Woodpecker	Red-winged Blackbird
Hairy Woodpecker	Common Grackle
Northern Flicker	Brown-headed Cowbird
Pileated Woodpecker	House Finch
Eastern Phoebe	American Goldfinch
Blue Jay	House Sparrow

## WINTER WALK AT CRALL WOODS ON JANUARY 19TH

Join leader Gary Cowell Jr. on Saturday, January 19, 2008 at 10:00AM for a winter walk at Crall Woods. Part of Pine Hill Park, Crall Woods is a 146 acre wooded area with a 45 acre old growth forest, in the northwest corner of Ashland County. It is located on the southeast corner of S.R. 224 and Greenwich East Town Line Road (T.R. 1601). Please meet in the parking lot. Dress for the weather. For more information see [www.ashlandcountyparksdistrict.com](http://www.ashlandcountyparksdistrict.com) or email Gary Cowell Jr. at [Gcowelljr@yahoo.com](mailto:Gcowelljr@yahoo.com)

## GMAS MOVIE NIGHT AT GORMAN NATURE CENTER

A crowd of 80 plus people was in attendance for the movie *An Inconvenient Truth* on a Tuesday night, Sept 11, 2007. Door prizes were awarded to several attendees as the folks gathered in, and Sam Weyrick worked overtime popping hot popcorn for the crowd. An especially grateful Boy-scout Troop 101 attended the program and many pitched in with the clean up after the event.

National Audubon has made Global Warming awareness a priority item this year. This was the first GMAS event to raise awareness, and "Help Combat Global Warming" handouts with suggestions of everyday things that can be done to make a difference were given to attendees. The crowd intently listened to the information presented by the movie, and many were in awe of the severity of our current climate changes and glacier melting. A generally subdued and reflective audience spoke quietly among themselves as they left the Nature Center. If you were unable to attend, below are some highlights from the National Audubon's materials:

Global Warming: Be a part of the Solution

1. Drive less- try walking, biking and taking more public transportation
2. Switch your light bulbs to energy-efficient compact fluorescents
3. Reduce excessive use of home heating and cooling
4. Buy and use "energy star" energy efficient appliances
5. Use less hot water with "full" loads of dishes and laundry
6. Plant leafy trees to provide windbreaks and shade to your home
7. Purchase organic vegetables, reduce pesticide use
8. Think globally, eat locally- reduced shipping benefits
9. Consume less- Americans tend to use far more than others
10. Do an energy audit of your home.
11. Calculate your carbon footprint- reduce your carbon footprint
12. Be an active citizen, stay involved and lobby for political action

—Cheryl Harner

## OHIO WINTER BIRD ATLAS 2008

January 2008 represents the final field season for Ohio's Winter Bird Atlas (WBA). The first WBA in the country, we hope to wrap up field work and begin writing and publishing the Atlas in the next year. Actually, 2008 is an extra year to try and fill in the holes that still exist in the state. There are still a few blocks that have had no activity and a larger group that are below the speciation we believe the areas offer. It is our belief that every block in the state should hold at least 20 species of wintering birds.

Black Swamp Bird Observatory is looking for organizations to adopt blocks for this January to fill in the gaps. A list blocks that are in dire need of work in your area is attached. Atlas materials can be acquired on the website and you can contact us if you have questions. Thank you for your help.

Julie Shieldcastle, Ohio WBA Coordinator

Black Swamp Bird Observatory, 419-898-4070

[julieshieldcastle@bsbo.org](mailto:julieshieldcastle@bsbo.org)

[www.bsbobird.org](http://www.bsbobird.org)

## GREATER MOHICAN AUDUBON SOCIETY AREA

### BLOCKS IN DIRE NEED OF ATLASING

Delorme's Block	# of species already found
48A1	6
48A2	3
48A3	15
48A4	13
48B1	10
48C1	10
48C3	15
48C4	16
48D1	11
48D2	12
49A5	14
49B5	19
49D5	19

**11TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

Greater Mohican Audubon Society (GMAS) calls on volunteers in our area to help count the birds. During the weekend of February 15-18, people across the North American continent are urged to look at the birds in their backyards and report them over the Internet as part of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), one of the world's largest volunteer efforts of its kind. This count allows people to celebrate their birds, and whether counters are novices or experts, their participation is vital in helping North America's birds.

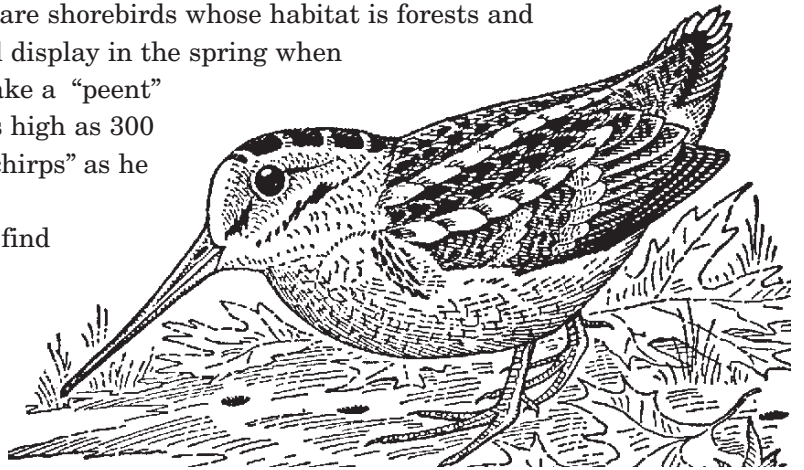
Instructions for participating can be found at <[www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc)> there's no fee and no registration is required. Those who would like to participate but who aren't online can try their local library, and many Wild Birds Unlimited storeowners who are online will be accepting observations made by their customers. Libraries, businesses, nature clubs, scout troops, and other community organizations interested in promoting the GBBC or getting involved can contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800)843-2473, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850, or the National Audubon Society at [citizenscience@audubon.org](mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org) or (215)355-9588, Ext. 20, Audubon Science Office, 545 Almshouse Road, Ivyland, PA 18974.

—Tim Leslie, Ashland

**WOODCOCK WALK AT MALABAR FARM MARCH 18TH**

American Woodcock, also known as Timberdoodles, are shorebirds whose habitat is forests and open fields. Male woodcock perform an elaborate aerial display in the spring when attempting to woo a female. Males will repeatedly make a "peent" noise on the ground and then fly upwards in a spiral as high as 300 feet or more. Going up, the male "titters", and then "chirps" as he zig-zags his way back to the ground.

Join leader Gary Cowell Jr. for a Woodcock Walk to find these unusual birds at Malabar Farm, located near Pleasant Hill Lake on Bromfield Road in Lucas, on Tuesday, March 18 at 7:00PM. Meet at the Visitor's Center. Dress for the weather. For more information, email Gary at [Gcowelljr@yahoo.com](mailto:Gcowelljr@yahoo.com).

**WORDS FOR THE BIRDS**

Recently my wife and I discovered the delights and challenges of birding. Among the delights is most certainly going into the field to locate and watch birds in their many environments and niches. Among the challenges is the vastness of the birding and ornithological vocabulary. A birder needs to master words and concepts in categories ranging from avian anatomy to the optical nomenclature of binoculars, then on into botany, entomology and even meteorology. There is so much to learn in birding-related activities that we've found we have had to make a list of terms and expressions we should be familiar with, to keep our heads above water so to speak. We'd like to share some of our new vocabulary with our fellow-birders, so many of whom have encouraged and helped us get started in our new adventure. Here are twenty items we've taken a particular liking to, selected at random from our ever-growing list. Have fun with them – we sure do: 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 Riedner, Wooster

*Editor's Note: We'll publish the answers in upcoming issues of this newsletter.*

## GRID GIFT TO OLD WOMAN CREEK RESERVE

Richard M. Tuttle of Delaware has long been one of America's leading authorities on Eastern Bluebirds. Most of his work with this species has been done at Delaware State Park. For the past ten years or so, he has also worked extensively with Tree Swallows, American Kestrels and Ospreys in that part of Ohio. Dick is a charter member of the Ohio Bluebird Society and currently serves as a member of the board of the North American Bluebird Society. His special interest in Tree Swallows has included the promotion and placement of precise geometric nest box grids (NBG) in open areas for this species.

Professional ornithologists have used grids for swallow research since the mid 1980's. Tuttle's first grid work was done at the Delaware County Sewage Treatment Plant located just west of Highbanks Metropark, north of Columbus. He has installed eight of these grids at other central Ohio locations, as well. Dick has long been keen in making an NBG at a suitable site on the south shore of Lake Erie. Early this fall, we talked about the possibility of developing the grid system at Old Woman Creek Preserve (OWC) which is an Ohio Natural Area administered by the Division of Wildlife/ODNR.

Plans for the Tuttle system were reviewed, in detail, by Frank Lopez (OWC manager) together with Dick Boyer of the OWC staff. An open field prairie just east of the permanent weather station was selected for the NBG. The grid design called for the installation of 16 nest boxes on T-posts laid out in four rows with 4 boxes spaced 22 yards (20 meters) apart within each row. The distance between the rows is 20 meters, as well. The entire prairie grid layout occupies about 9/10 of an acre. Each post is fitted with a PVC predator guard which is loosely fixed just below the nest box. The boxes are the well-known Dick Tuttle box design for Eastern Bluebirds. These boxes are very attractive to Tree Swallows in this "colonial" grid configuration. The boxes are all faced in a southeastern direction some distance away from brushy understory. After mowing and site preparation, the NBG was installed on October 29th at Old Woman Creek on Cleveland Road East just east of Huron in Erie County.

**Don and Diana Plant** provided technical advice and work assistance in the project. They have a very successful NBG at their conservation area near Perrysville just "down the road" from Malabar Farm. The Plants are founding members of the Ohio Bluebird Society and the Greater Mohican Audubon Society. The entire undertaking was directed by Dick Tuttle who, generously, provided all of materials as a gift to OWC. His expertise was invaluable. This NBG, the first along Lake Erie, will be an excellent educational resource for organized school visits to OWC where feather tossing will be an important activity to bond school children with wild birds. Additionally, it will be a constant source of interest and entertainment to birders and casual visitors to this unique estuarine community.

—*Dean Sheldon*, Ohio Bluebird Society and Firelands Audubon Society

## SHREVE SPRING MIGRATION SENSATION

The ODNR Division of Wildlife, Friends of the Killbuck Marsh, Inc., The Wilderness Center, Greater Mohican Audubon Society, Triway Local Schools, Shreve Library, and Shreve Business & Community Association present the eighth annual Shreve Migration Sensation on Saturday, April 5, 2008. Registration will open at 7:00AM at Shreve Elementary School, 98 N. Market Street (St. Rt. 226), Shreve, Ohio, with FREE MAPS to the Help Stations (located in the marsh and at three other sites, all near Shreve). Pancake Breakfast sponsored by Shreve School Relay for Life from 7-10 in the lower level of Shreve Elementary School.

Volunteers with spotting scopes will be stationed at each site from 8AM-noon. There will be a vendor hall and workshops. Scheduled speakers include:

8:30AM - 9:15AM – Jamey Graham - "Beyond the Bird Feeder"

9:30AM - 10:15AM – Tim Daniel - "Getting Better Wildlife Photos"

10:30AM - 11:15AM – Larry Hunter - "The Purple Martin"

12:30PM - 1:15PM – Doug Wynn - "Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake"

1:30PM - 2:15PM – Bruce Glick - "Birding the Bobolink Area"

2:30PM - 3:15PM – Carrie Elvy - "Macro-invertebrates of the Marsh"

Scheduled Children's Programs include:

8AM - noon – "Dip-Net for Marsh Creatures hosted by The Wilderness Center" at Cemetery Road

9AM & 1:15PM – "Spring Migration Story Time and Craft hosted by Shreve Library" in the School Cafeteria

10AM – "Amazing Marsh Animals hosted by the Wilderness Center" in Room 408

11:15AM-noon – "Animal Show hosted by Akron Zoo Mobile Live Animal Show" in the Speakers' Auditorium

10AM-2PM – Birdhouse Building hosted by Shreve Elementary School" in the Vendor Hall

Cost is \$10 per person—\$15 per family. For more information, please call Jacki Chamberlain at the Wayne County Convention Bureau at 1-800-362-6474.

### MEMBERSHIP

### GREATER MOHICAN AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Chapter Supporter plus National Audubon Society  \$30 – 1 yr. Introductory rate

Chapter Supporter  \$10 – Annual Fee

Chapter Supporter plus Donation  \$30 – Donation – get 1-year chapter supporter membership  
(Receive a free GMAS T-shirt Indicate Size: M L XL)

**Chapter Code S72**

*Make checks payable to Greater Mohican Audubon Society.*

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*Mail membership form to: GMAS, P. O. BOX 907, Ashland, OH 44805*

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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

# Greater Mohican Audubon Society