



The Hushwing **HERALD**

Blackbrook Audubon Society

Volume 51 Number 2

November/December, 2016 and January, 2017

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE: Tuesday, November 15, 2016
PROGRAM: "Who Keeps Changing
My Field Guide?"
SPEAKER: Dr. Andy Jones
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: The Holden Arboretum

DATE: Tuesday, January 17, 2017
PROGRAM: "Life on the Rock –
San Miguel Island"
SPEAKER: Greg Orr
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Penitentiary Glen Nature Center

Not only is the market flooded with field guides by many authors and publishers, but existing field guides are constantly being "updated" and sold as new editions, forcing birders to spend more money to stay on top of changing names and identification techniques. But this isn't a conspiracy by the field guide publishers! Instead, field guides are being updated to capture the changing worlds of identification and, particularly, taxonomy in ornithology. This talk will highlight several major reasons for why the common and scientific names of the birds are not the same today as when you first started birding (remember the Rufous-sided Towhee, the Slate-colored Junco, and the Northern Oriole?). The talk will also cover some of the prospects for future changes.

Dr. Andy Jones has worked at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History for more than a decade. He was hired in 2006 as the William A. and Nancy R. Klamm Endowed Chair of Ornithology, thanks to a donation from the Klamms to the museum. In 2011, he was also named Director of Science, overseeing all activities in the Collections & Research Division.

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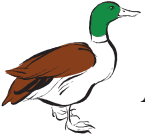
NOTE: There is no meeting in December! Why not take part in our Xmas Bird Count instead?

So far we've examined local points within the Chagrin River Corridor IBA (Important Bird Area): Chagrin River Park and Frohring Meadows. Tonight, we'll travel out west to an island off the California shore brimming with wildlife. San Miguel Island is the westernmost land mass of Channel Islands National Park as well as a global IBA. Greg Orr, an environmental scientist with Ohio EPA, will be our guide.

For about 15 years, Greg has been doing research projects with seals. He will share with us what it's like to be among the seabirds and pinnipeds (seals and sea lions) of San Miguel.

National Audubon designated this island an IBA for the Brandt's Cormorant. Surveys in 2005-06 found 30 breeding Brandt's. San Miguel Island and its associated islets support one-third of the breeding seabirds in the Channel Islands. The island hosts Ashy Storm-Petrels, Cassin's Auklets, Xantus's Murrelets, Least Storm-Petrels, Double-crested Cormorants, Pelagic Cormorants, Western Gulls, Pigeon Guillemots, Rhinoceros Auklets, and Tufted Puffin. About a mile off Cuyler Harbor is Prince Island, where the Island Loggerhead Shrike, Channel Island Song Sparrow and Snowy Plovers nest. Audubon also bestowed global IBA status to the whole set of islands as the Channel Islands North IBA.

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ACTIVITIES

December Activity

DATE: Saturday, December 31, 2016
 ACTIVITY: Mentor Xmas Bird Count
 TIME: all day!
 PLACE: Lake County, Ohio

117th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It is time once again to get involved in the oldest citizen-science project in North America. Blackbrook Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 31, 2016.

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 into 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 Dan Donaldson, our Christmas Bird Count Chairman, via email at danook57@yahoo.com or call Mary Ann Wagner at 440-255-0961 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 !!!

12/31/2016

November Activity

DATE: Sunday, November 20, 2016
 ACTIVITY: Sandy Ridge field trip
 TIME: 8:00 a.m.
 PLACE: ***Sandy Ridge Reservation,
 Lorain County***

Sandy Ridge is reclaimed farmland that includes wetlands, wet woods, and meadow habitats. We'll be searching for winter raptors (including resident bald eagles) and a variety of waterfowl. Dress for the weather. The trail is flat but long. Bring binoculars and spotting scope if you have one. Follow I-90 west beyond Cleveland. Exit on Ohio 254, turn left; turn right on Case Rd.; turn left on Otten Rd.; the park is on the right.

For more information, call Pat at 440-256-1404 x2101



January Activity

DATE: Saturday, January 21, 2017
 ACTIVITY: Mosquito Reservoir field trip
 TIME: 8:00 a.m.
 PLACE: ***Mosquito Reservoir,
 Trumbull County***

Join us at Mosquito Reservoir to search for returning waterfowl. We will tour around the lake stopping at different spots to view ducks, swans, grebes and geese, and also search for Northern Harriers, Bald Eagles and other birds that this diverse area has to offer. Dress for the weather! It can be as cold and windy as Lake Erie. From the north: Go south on SR 534 or SR 45 to SR 88 and head east. Cross over the lake; meet in the parking lot on the south side of the causeway.

For more information, call Pat at 440-256-1404 x2101

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“Who Keeps Changing My Field Guide?”

As a curator, Dr. Jones is responsible for the Museum’s collection of avian specimens, which consists of more than 30,000 study skins from around the world plus a frozen tissue collection, skeletons, and nests and eggs. He is also responsible for specimen acquisition and preservation, maintenance of specimen records, and carrying out original research. His current research involves the evolutionary history of birds from the Appalachian mountains and the Philippines, as well as various other natural history topics. Dr. Jones was among 14 prominent American ornithologists to be named an Elective Member of the American Ornithologists' Union in 2009, and he was elected as Secretary of that organization in 2015.

He originally hails from east Tennessee, where his passion for natural history began at an early age (including field notes starting at age 5). Dr. Jones received his BS in Biological Sciences from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and his PhD in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior from the University of Minnesota. He lives in Cleveland Heights with his wife Michelle Leighty-Jones. Admission to the Holden Arboretum will be free of charge for people attending the Blackbrook Audubon program.

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.

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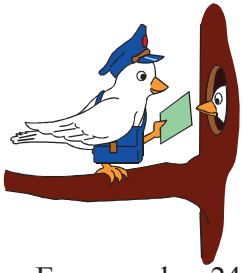
“Life on the Rock – San Miguel Island”

At Point Bennett, on the west end of San Miguel Island, northern elephant seals, California sea lions, northern fur seals and harbor seals all breed at varying times throughout the year. For much of their lives they haulout on islands and offshore rocks, either for breeding, to give birth or simply to rest. Their presence in large numbers can have significant impacts on terrestrial systems. For example, pinniped carcasses, particularly those of non-surviving pups, provide food for seabirds and Bald Eagles on the islands. When animals come farther inland away from the beaches and rocks, they can severely impact the vegetation in those areas.

Cetaceans are the other marine mammals found here. Pods of common dolphins and Risso's dolphins swim the waters surrounding the park. Pacific gray whales migrate through the Santa Barbara Channel. Humpback, blue and fin whales feed here as well as orcas.

Channel Islands National Park encompasses five of the eight Channel Islands. The Park is home to only four native land mammals: the island fox, the island deer mouse, the harvest mouse and the spotted skunk. San Miguel only has the island fox and deer mouse. The island fox, the size of a house cat, is the largest native terrestrial mammal on San Miguel. Descended from the mainland gray fox, island fox numbers are rebounding after a severe decline from predation by Golden Eagles. Bats are found on Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa.

Greg, our tour guide, has been with Ohio EPA for 27 years and a volunteer for Lake Metroparks and Franklin County Metro Parks for 25 years. His undergrad and graduate degrees are in the fields of biology and ecology. He teaches a stream ecology class at Kent State. Greg says his passion is "learning and teaching about nature and wildlife."



FROM the DESK of the PRESIDENT

by MaryAnn Wagner
maryannelizabeth@aol.com

Everyone has 24 hours each day to handle commitments to family, work, education, travel, pets, volunteer work, hobbies and a multitude of other interests, (it's amazing how many different activities people are involved in!) not to mention the necessities of daily living, such as grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, eating and sleeping. Thank you for your time, your efforts, and your monetary and tangible item donations to the Blackbrook Audubon Society.

At my request, as part of Blackbrook Audubon's Chagrin River Watershed IBA Initiative, people monitored birds more intensively at Chapin Forest and Chagrin River Park in Lake County during the month of September and the first half of October, then entered the results in eBird. I'm still working on pulling together how many hours were spent by Blackbrook volunteers as well as the number of species they spotted at those two parks during the peak of fall migration. We hope to repeat the more intense monitoring during spring migration.

The Blackbrook Audubon Society created a Chagrin River Watershed Important Bird Area committee to identify and form partnerships to work on education and conservation initiatives in the Chagrin River corridor. We've already met with officials at the Geauga Park District and Lake Metroparks, and everyone is excited to be collaborating for the benefit of the watershed. Bob Hinkle, retired Chief of Outdoor Education for the Cleveland Metroparks, has volunteered to write a nature blog for the Blackbrook Audubon website regarding our efforts and activities within the Chagrin River watershed. As of this writing, we were still working out the logistics, but Bob's blog should be up and running soon. Please check out our website at www.blackbrookaudubon.org.



Our IBA Committee is always accepting new members to help us plan and implement projects. We will need experienced birders to monitor birds during spring migration and to conduct breeding

bird surveys. We also have a need for volunteers to staff tables at various Earth Day and other events in various parks. No experience necessary! You just need the ability to set up a display and be willing to talk to people. I'm sure we will need other people once our projects get underway. If you are interested in helping with the IBA Committee or any other projects, please let me know.

Thank you again for your support, interest and participation in Blackbrook Audubon's programs, field trips, IBA bird walks and projects.

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 2016-17 season of **Project FeederWatch extends from Saturday, November 12 to Friday, April 7.**

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

Registration required. Call 440-358-7275 or visit lakemetroparks.com.

Christmas Bird Count at Lake Metroparks

Saturday, December 31, 2016

FREE, All ages (younger than 18 with an adult)

8 to 10 a.m. at Penitentiary Glen Reservation

8 to 11:30 a.m. at Lake Erie Bluffs-Lane Road

Join our friends from Blackbrook Audubon Society for this traditional winter hike. This is the longest running Citizen Science project in the world, providing info on bird population trends. It's fun, too! Beginners welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them, although loaners are available.

Bird Walks

Ages 14 and older (younger than 18 with an adult), FREE

These morning birding adventures are at Lake Metroparks' best birding locations, located along major migration corridors with histories of good migration days. New birders are welcome!

Saturday, December 10, 8 to 10 a.m. at Lake Erie Bluffs-Lane Road

Saturday, January 14, 8:30 to 10 a.m. at Penitentiary Glen

Saturday, January 21, 8 to 10 a.m. at Lake Erie Bluffs-Lane Road

Saturday, February 4, 8 to 10 a.m. at Lake Erie Bluffs-Lane Road



Breakfast and Lunch with Santa

Nov 26 through Dec 23 on various dates

Both 9 and 10:30 am start times available at

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 12 • 10 AM - 4 PM

at The West Woods Nature Center

Shoppers at Geauga Park District's

reinstated, ever-popular **Holly Days**

Artisan Boutique will revel in a premier

selection of juried Nature-themed gifts by more than 25 regional artists. It's the perfect place to find handmade items for everyone on your list!

Within a festive nature center setting, expect 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. There will truly be something for everyone.

All are welcome for this wheelchair/stroller accessible event free of charge. With questions, please call Teresa Runion, special events coordinator, at 440-279-0882.

Geauga Park Programs: Please See

www.geaugaparkdistrict.org for the latest great program information this fall and winter.



Seventh Annual Ticket Auction

Over the past few years, Blackbrook Audubon's November ticket raffle has become a popular tradition. This year's auction will take place during our Tuesday, November 15th program at the Holden Arboretum. There will be time to browse the selection of donated items before Dr. Andy Jones' talk (see program description on Page 1). Tickets will cost \$1 each or 6 tickets for \$5. We will have birdhouses and birdfeeders, books, pictures and decorative items available for the winners to take home that evening. Thank you to Dave and Jodi Pretnar, owners of the Wild Birds Unlimited stores in Willoughby and Mayfield Heights, who have once again donated one of the most coveted prizes - a bag of birdseed each month for an entire year! Prizes keep coming in until the very last minute, which makes the ticket raffle even more exciting!

Ticket Raffle proceeds help Blackbrook Audubon purchase Audubon Adventures, a quarterly nature-themed newsletter, for middle school classrooms in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula Counties.

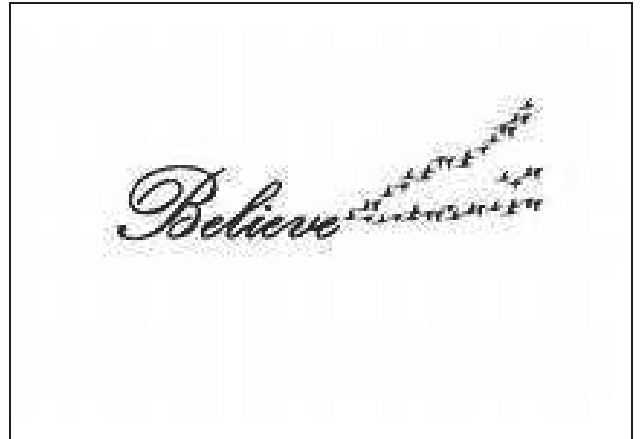
Holden Arboretum Event

Gifts from the Heart of Nature

Preview Party, 3 – 8pm, Friday, Nov. 18
Enjoy light refreshments and live holiday music, as well as the opportunity to meet the artists whose work will be available during the show.

Show and Sale 9am – 5pm, Nov. 18 – Jan. 8
(Closed Nov. 27, Dec. 24 and 25, and Jan. 1. Closes at noon on Dec. 31)

Shop for environmentally friendly and unique gifts for the holiday at our annual holiday show, featuring the nature-inspired work from regional artists. On Wednesday, Dec. 7, join us for Ladies Night, featuring wine, fun and expanded offerings from our artists.



Support CVNP with a new license plate

In September a new specialty license plate was made available at the Ohio BMV. \$15 of the \$25 extra fee for this plate will go to the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The plate features a picture of Blue Hen Falls. We have a new way to support the only national park in Ohio. For details, go to

<https://www.conservancyforcvnp.org/licenseplate> or
<http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/vr-sp-organization.aspx>.



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

Mary Ann Wagner - President
Bruce Roberts - Editor



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