

Black River Audubon Society

WINGTIPS

October 2012



KILLDEER/GREG PASEK

Editors: Harry Spencer, Cathy Priebe

Photographer: John Koscinski

Webmistress: Arlene Lengyel

Program

Tuesday, October 2, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

Carlisle Visitor Center

Dan Martin

Retired Director of the Lorain County Metro Parks

Wetland Restoration and Land Acquisition in the Metro Parks



In his 20 years at LCMP, **Dan Martin** opened nine new parks with new recreational opportunities, raised more than \$80 million in grants, donations and state and federal money, and tripled the size of LCMP. His first project was the Black River Reservation and the Bridgeway Trail running from Elyria to Lorain. Some of the many others include the wetlands of Sandy Ridge Reservation, the reservoir of Wellington Reservation, and the Rose Garden at Lakeview Park. Through partnerships with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club of Lorain County, TrueNorth Cultural Arts, Midview Soccer Association and others, Dan also provided many opportunities for educational, cultural and recreational activities for all.

While he was its Director, LCMP became the leading mitigation agent in Ohio and formed a regional partnership with five other counties to plan and restore wetlands.

He will examine the impact of the 1984 federal law requiring “no net loss of wetlands” including local implementation.

Field Trip

October 20, 2012 (Saturday)

Carlisle Reservation

Equestrian Center Parking Lot

9:00 a.m.

In Memory of Jack Smith

By Penny Brandau

My husband Fritz and I knew Jack for only two short years, but he had a tremendous impact on our lives. We are thankful to have called him a dear friend.

Last fall we went with Jack and others on an Audubon field trip to Brown's Bog. His wealth of knowledge enriched our experience that day, playing recorded bird calls, identifying responding birds, and naming plants and trees we discovered along our path. As we walked through the bog I asked Jack about a nearby plant that I had not seen before. He stopped, searched for more of the plants, identified them, and told me many facts about the pitcher plant.

The picture shown here illustrates many of Jack's wonderful qualities. On that field trip, I photographed Jack's open hand gently cupping a seed pod. I believe this photo shows the quality Jack had of not holding



tightly to things. Instead, he generously opened his hand for others to share in the beauty and wealth of whatever he had. He has given to others over and over in his lifetime.

As I look at the seeds in the photo I imagine all the seeds Jack has planted in his life. Some he harvested and some are now being cared for by others. There were so many projects, interests, and people in which Jack invested his time and resources. Some of those are still seedlings, some are maturing, and some have flowered. Because of Jack's care, hard work, and selflessness our world has been improved greatly. He will be sorely missed, but his legacy for good in our world continues as the fruition of his life and influence.

Fritz and I have had the privilege of tasting the sweetness of the honey from Jack's beehives, have admired the beauty of the dahlias and the garden he loved, and have walked with Jack as he offered advice on the improvement of a bluebird trail, which we now monitor. The seeds he planted in our hearts continue to flourish, and every time I see the brilliant flash of bluebird wings I know that more seeds from Jack's legacy live on to enrich our world. We were truly blessed to have known this man!

A Birder's Diary

By Carol Leininger

I'm sure you are familiar with Nemo, the cute orange and white clownfish that likes to hide among the arms of sea anemones. I believe that some birds qualify for membership in the clown club. As I see it, a clown is one who makes you smile or laugh. Usually this response is due to appearance or behavior.

Appearance: The auk family has several good examples of clowns—the common puffin with its white cheeks and triangular-shaped colorful bill, the tufted puffin with its long, backward-curving, straw-colored breeding plumes, the crested auklet with a forward-drooping crest, and the whiskered auklet with a curled forehead crest and long white wispy plumes on the sides of its face. The frigatebird, similar to many birds, appears more clown-like during breeding when it inflates its bright red balloon-like gular sac. South and Central American toucans seem to have bills longer than the rest of their bodies so that when they stretch to pick fruit it looks as if they will topple over. Then there are wild turkeys with blue heads and bright red, warty caruncles and roseate spoonbills that look as if they came from another planet.



ROSEATE SPOONBILL photo by DANE ADAMS



WHITE PELICANS photo by DANE ADAMS

Behavior: Clumsy, awkward or strange behavior can be seen in waddling woodcocks, upside down feeding goldfinches, and pelicans that glide along without flapping their wings as if they will lose altitude any minute. The feeding activity of some birds is quite unusual—flamingoes filter feed with their head and bill buried upside down in the water and yellow-bellied sapsuckers drill holes like mathematicians using graph paper. I especially like to see burrowing owls standing in straight lines for family photos.

Some birds qualify as clown both in appearance and behavior—blue-footed boobies dancing and macaroni penguins hopping about.

Perhaps because few of these birds live in Ohio, they appear peculiar to me. One thing that I do know, however, is that grebes will never be clowns with their graceful ballet.

What bird makes you smile or laugh?

Northern Bobwhite

(*Colinus virginianus*)

By **Cathy Priebe**

The familiar and cheery call of the northern bobwhite is often heard first before one is lucky enough to see these very secretive birds of the quail family.

Primarily a southern bird, the bobwhite slowly made its way north as early settlers began clearing land for small farms that created the perfect habitat for these meadow loving creatures.

The bobwhite population reached its peak in Ohio in the mid 1930s when it was estimated that you could find 20 pairs every square mile, according to Jim McCormac, author of *Birds of Ohio*.

However, as man developed better farming techniques, the smaller farms became bigger and less bird-friendly, forcing the bobwhite to find new habitats which gradually caused their numbers to diminish in Ohio. Brutal winters also played a role in the reduction of these former southern birds as many perished due to the severe cold during the winters of 1976 through 1978. Add to this the constant building of new housing developments and other construction; man, who once led the birds to Ohio, has ultimately caused them to retreat.

Bobwhites are robin-size with a mottled, reddish-brown round body and a short tail and neck. The male has a white eyebrow and throat while the female has a buff eyebrow and throat. Their nest is a scrape in the ground (in a meadow, brushy field or open woodland), lined with grasses, pine needles and moss and usually placed within 50 feet of a clearing. The female lays 12-16 buff colored eggs that the pair incubates for 22-24 days. The family forms a tight flock, later joining other bobwhites to form a covey in the winter when they feed and roost together.

The best time to see a bobwhite is in the early spring and summer when unmated males are perched on fence posts, along farmlands or clearings, singing their signature “bob-white” to entice a female. My husband, as a boy, remembers hearing bobwhites calling in the fields around his home in once “rural” Westlake. Unfortunately, those days are long gone but there are still bobwhites in Ohio. You just have to know where to look.

References: *Stokes Field Guide to Birds* by Don and Lillian Stokes; *The Sibley Guide to Birds* by David Allen Sibley; *Birds of Ohio* by Jim McCormac.



Audubon Camp Scholarship Available

By **Dick Lee**

Part of the mission of Black River Audubon Society is to educate others about conservation of our natural resources. To accomplish this mission the chapter has annually awarded scholarships to educators and naturalists to enhance their knowledge and skills at the Maine Audubon Camp at Hog Island. The camper spends one week off the coast of Maine learning from some of the most respected naturalists and environmental educators in the nation.



Hog Island campers love its natural setting and rustic 19th-century buildings. Campers stay in rooms with twin beds, or a dormitory. Delicious meals are served family style in a communal dining room.

Past scholarship recipients include both secondary and elementary teachers, naturalists and individuals who just want to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching others in the community about conservation and restoration of ecosystems.

The scholarship pays tuition and fees plus room and board. The recipient pays transportation costs.

Anyone needing more information or interested in applying for the scholarship should contact Dick Lee at 440-322-7449 or leedck@windstream.net.

Clean-up and pawpaw tree planting at Black River Audubon Park

Saturday, October 6, 1 p.m.

By **Kate Pilacky**, Associate Field Director, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Firelands

On Saturday, October 6, the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Firelands will sponsor a clean-up and tree planting at Black River Audubon Park in Elyria. The late great naturalist Jack Smith recently donated to the city of Elyria land for a park along the east bank of the West Branch of the Black River. Jack Smith suggested the park's name. The park is located on West Bridge Street at the eastern end of the bridge. It lies between the southerly side of West Bridge Street and the West branch of the Black River.



You can park on the lawns on either side of W. Bridge St. next to the eastern end of the bridge.

First we will have to clean up trash along the river at the bottom of the hill. Then we will plant the trees. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves.

At the center of the lawn along the southerly side of W. Bridge Street, a beautiful dawn redwood tree grows. It was donated in honor of Jack to the park by Dan Buttler of the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Firelands Chapter. Jack served on the board of Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Firelands and its predecessor Firelands Land Conservancy.

Pawpaw is the only fruit native to Ohio and is the official fruit of the state, and I promised Jack that I would plant pawpaw trees along the river's edge where they should thrive.



Jack Smith and Mayor Brinda of Elyria planting the memorial dawn redwood tree at Black River Audubon Park, May 22, 2012. Photo by Kate Pilacky.

Birding by Tram at Sandy Ridge

Every Thursday during October, 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Birding by tram will again be offered at Sandy Ridge this fall for experienced and beginner birders who have difficulty in walking the trail. Reservations are necessary as seating is limited and can be made by calling Tim Fairweather at **440-327-3626**. Birders who would like to walk along and help locate birds for tram riders are welcome and helpful, especially if they bring a scope.

Killdeer

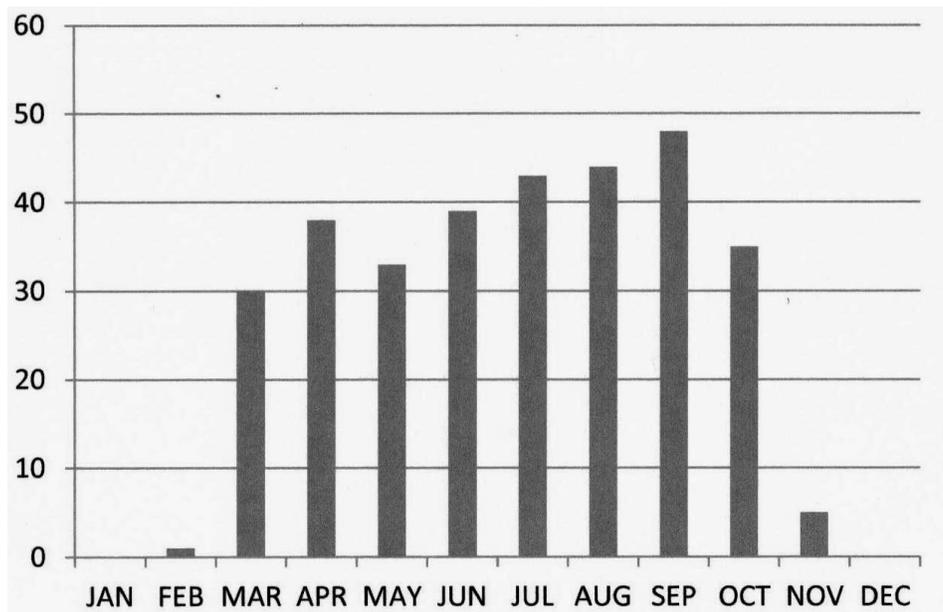
Charadrius vociferous

By **Harry Spencer**

On the first page in this issue is a photo of a bird that lives up to its scientific species name because it is vociferous with its repeated calls of *killdeer...killdeer...killdeer*. With a body about the size of a robin, the long legs of a typical shore bird, and the two distinctive black breast bands, the birds are relatively easy to identify visually. The bird's preferred habitats are many, including athletic fields, farm fields, and other open areas.

Killdeers often nest in gravelly areas, sometimes in the middle of trails. It is always fun to come upon a nest and have an adult killdeer suddenly develop a broken wing. The bird repeatedly attempts to lead the birder away from the nest. Young birds resemble their parents except the young birds only have a single breast band.

The chart below is based on data reported in eBird. The numbers are the monthly percentages of checklists that include identifications of killdeer in Lorain County.



Volunteers needed for — Conservation

— Education

— **WINGTIPS** writing and
assembly

Call: 440-225-7601