

"Promoting the study of wild birds and the conservation of natural resources on Kelleys Island."

HOOT



OWL

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2001 Wing Watch Info
Nest With Birds Schedule
Harbinger of Spring
Membership Renewal &
Application

KELLEYS ISLAND AUDUBON CLUB NEWSLETTER FOR

YOU AND ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOR • SPRING 2001

SEASON KICK OFF—Thursday, March 15

Help kick off the Kelleys Island Audubon season by attending our first Audubon Pot-Luck and Meeting. It will be held March 15 at the home of June and Bill Campbell, 932 W. Lakeshore Drive. Our second meeting will be on April 19 at The Inn.

This is a fun way to renew old acquaintances, meet new friends and/or emerge from hibernation!

The potluck will be followed by a business meeting.

After the April 19 meeting we will be heading outdoors into the night in the search of the elusive owl or owls. Pat has been practicing his screech owl call.

Funny, it's usually when he wants to get my attention!

Plan on attending these fun evenings.

Lori Hayes

Audubon Grant and KIAC Update

By **Judy DuShane**

New calendars were designed by **Delores Cole** with pictures she and KIAC President, **Pat Hayes** have taken of the island.

The Fall printing of the 2001 edition promptly sold out. Perhaps, if enough are interested, we could print some more. Let Delores know at Delores_Cole@cmvc.com or call her at 440-461-1084.

There will be another calendar next year.

Bird Sitings

On and around Thanksgiving several islanders were treated to visits by two or three Snowy Owls. One was sited at the airport and the others near Campbell's Cottage. We know there were at least two because one was a juvenile.

During the Lake Erie Islands Christmas Bird Count at Kelleys four eagles were spotted. Other species seen were Hermit Thrushes (21), Golden-Crowned Kinglets(49) and one Northern Shrike. The birders endured bitter cold and a shortened visit

because of airplane schedules. **Sandy Tkach** was the island "hostess with the mostest" who kept them warm and provided transportation. (Continued on page 2)



One of the visiting KI Snowy Owls

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have found that one of the best ways to see friends and neighbors is hiking along one of the island's beautiful nature trails. Of course I see many of you at the Post Office too, but it seems more and more of us are exploring our own Kelleys Treasures.

The new Kelleys Treasures Brochure is an exciting and needed island guide. It features seven treasure spots. Each spot is unique and has its own allure. Perhaps you will discover a plant new to you and will want to look it up at our new Pape Natural History Library located in the Kelleys Island School. Or you may encounter one of our Kelleys Island Audubon Ambassadors along the trail. They are trained volunteers who are more than happy to share their knowledge and answer any of your questions

Make sure to check out our new Kelleys Island Website at: www.kelleysisland.ws.

Delores Cole, our webmaster, has developed a creative and comprehensive website that will knock your socks off! Exploring the website is not only a lot of fun but includes a great deal of the bird data we have compiled over the years. Once you visit the site, be sure to go back and look at it often, Delores is continually updating it with new information, sightings, and interesting and fun facts.

I look forward to sharing another exciting Kelleys Island Audubon season with you!

Remember, look up for eagles - they're there!

Pat Hayes

DUES REMINDER—2001 DUES WERE DUE IN JANUARY

Red Winged Blackbird

By Delores Cole

Harbingers of Spring!

Red-winged Blackbird

Agelaius phoeniceus

Which bird species is the best har-binger of spring in North America? No, it's none of the dozen or more species of warblers moving out of the tropics; the waves of warblers moving north come too late (the middle of April or later). One of the truly continent-spanning harbingers of spring is the Red-winged Blackbird. He is one of the earliest to leave the island in the Fall and one of the earliest to arrive in the Spring.

Distribution: The red-winged blackbird breeds from Alaska east across Canada and south from northern Baja California to Florida. Wintering grounds range across the USA north to British Columbia. They inhabit marshes, swamps, pastures and wet and dry meadows.

Length: This blackbird averages about 9 inches in length.

Male: The male is jet black, except for the shoulders, which are scarlet edged with yellow; the plumage is mottled in winter and the upper parts are edged with rusty brown; the bill is long, sharp-pointed, and black; the legs and feet are black; and the eyes are dark.

Female: The head and the back are blackish, rusty brown, and buff. There is a light streak over and under the eye; the throat is yellowish; the under parts are streaked with black and white; the wings are brown and edged with buff; the tail is brown. The plumage is inconspicuous, but attractive on close inspection.

Young Males: The young males are similar to females, but with red and black shoulders.

Call-Note: A hoarse chuck resembling that of the grackle.

Song: A liquid, pleasant o-ka-ree.

Flight Displays: Male erects con-

tour feathers, especially epaulet feathers, spreads and lowers tail, and beats wings slowly and deeply so that he flies at minimum speed. Also erects epaulets in fluttering flight, but does not lower and spread tail, and wing beats are shallow and rapid. Flight displays are restricted to male on territory and are elicited by over-flight of non-specific male, arrival of female, or display of territorial neighbor near boundary.

Perched Displays: Head forward is the typical passerine threat. The bird thrusts out head, holds wings away from body with epaulet feathers erected as male or female perches. year.

Habitat: In meadows where a streamlet flows or sedges rim a pool.

Pair Bond: Pair forms rapidly on breeding territory, apparently as female settles. The female returning to previous season's territory pairs especially rapidly, but process by which new pair bond forms is poorly understood. The female settles quickly on territory without obvious pairing behavior, or prospects among several territories before settling on one. The male performs high-intensity song spread displays and full-intensity Crouches in response to new female.

Nest: A typical nest of this bird is a well-made cup of marsh grass or reeds, which is attached to growing marsh vegetation or in a bush in a marsh.

Eggs: The nest contains 3-5 pale blue eggs, spotted and scrawled with dark brown and purple.

Biology: This bird feeds on insects, small fruits, seeds, waste grain and small aquatic life. Often regarded as pests because they consume grain in cultivated fields, the farmer actually benefits because of the blackbirds' consumption of harmful insects.

Kinds and Manner of Predation:

Predation is most common cause of egg and

nestling mortality. In 8 studies, a mean of 41% of eggs and young were lost to predators. Predators vary over species' geographic range. Principal nest predators include raccoon, mink, Black-billed Magpie, and Marsh Wren. Marsh Wrens may puncture eggs or kill young without eating them. Hawks and owls take adults.

Response to predators: Both male and female respond to predators with alarm calls and mobbing, but the male is more likely than the female to mob. Intensity of mobbing varies with type of predator, and the male sometimes mobs inappropriately. The male also acts as sentinel and provides information about potential predators by switching among alarm calls. Clumped nesting dispersion within habitat may be an adaptation to reduce nest predation. Nests placed over deep water are relatively safe from nest predators, so placement of nests over water may also be a response to predation pressure.



**Kelleys Island Calendars
Featuring
beautiful
photos of our
island's natural sites.
Call Delores Cole
440-461-1084, to place an
order.**

KI February Bird Census

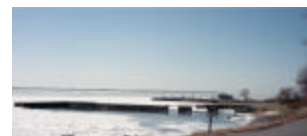
February 24, 2001—The island was surrounded by ice flows and beautiful formations with open areas for ducks and gulls. The wind was cold and out of the northeast, but all in all not a bad day. Participants included **Tom Bartlett, Grant Rettig** and **Sandy Tkach**. The survey started at 8:15 a.m. and concluded at 12:30 p.m.

89	Canada Goose	4	Ring-billed Gull	35	House Finch
2	Mute Swan	236	Herring Gull	3	American Goldfinch
6	Tundra Swan	42	Great Black-backed Gull	57	House Sparrow
14	American Black Duck	135	Gull species?	42 Species	
19	Mallard	3	Eastern Screech-Owl		See additional bird census information from other months, other years by visiting our website at www.kelleysisland.ws .
6	Greater Scaup	1	Great Horned Owl		
2	Block Scoter	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker		
87	Bufflehead	13	Downy Woodpecker		
1267	Common Goldeneye	2	Northern Flicker		
19	Common Merganser	5	Blue Jay		
135	Duck species? (divers)	61	American Crow		
1	Red-shouldered Hawk (adult)	2	Horned Lark		
1	Red-tailed Hawk (1st year bird)	147	Black-capped Chickadee		
		16	Brown Creeper		
		1	Winter Wren		
		18	Golden-crowned Kinglet		
		1	Hermit Thrush		
		12	American Thrush		
		10	European Starling		
		1	Yellow-rumped Warbler		
		14	American Tree Sparrow		
		13	Song Sparrow		
		1	Swamp Sparrow		
		27	White-throated Sparrow		
		38	Dark-eyed Junco		
		1	Red-winged Blackbird		
		1	Brown-headed Cowbird		
		61	Northern Cardinal		

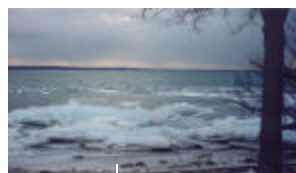
Feb. 24 KI Shoreline Views



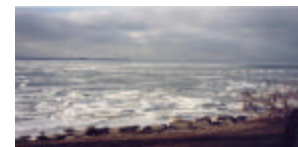
NORTH



SOUTH



EAST



WEST

Wing Watch Weekend

APRIL 6-8

Chelsea Clinton was sighted visiting Oberlin in February. Maybe she was bird watching?

An exciting time will be held again at the Annual Wing Watch Weekend, April 6-8th. It begins Friday evening with a "Welcoming Reception and Silent Auction" from 6:30 to 9 p.m., followed by the Keynote Speech. The reception is \$7.00 per person and will be held at the **Lorain County Joint Vocational School (LCJVS)**, 15181 State Rte. 58 in Oberlin.

Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. there will be seminars, workshops and displays at the LCJVS. Our Kelleys Island Audubon Club will have a display table. If you are interested in helping to "person" the table, please call **Delores Cole** at 440-461-1084, or just show up! We can always use another smiling face.

On Sunday morning, there will be guided bird hikes to some great locations in Lorain, Erie and Ottawa Counties.

For more information, call the **Lorain County Visitors Bureau** at 1-800-334-1673 or the **Erie County Visitors Bureau** at 1-800-255-ERIE. You can visit their website at www.lcvb.org.

"Wing" on over and join in the fun.

Lori Hayes

Meanderings (Continued from page 4)

of a bench, his fat rolls draped over his haunches. Can you imagine—a 2 pound animal eating 20 pounds of seed? He'd sure make someone a delicious meal!

And, speaking of delicious meals, Kelleys Island winters are filled with delicious meals. Every Sunday is the VFW's potluck, and you know what great potluck cooks islanders are.

By mid-February the ice is breaking up and melting. Large "puddles" appear among the ice chunks, and the migrating ducks are our first visitors. They mark the impending spring and encourage us to plan our gardens and sweep away the winter dust. Soon the air will be filled with a chorus of chirping and beautiful birds. And the roads will be filled with visitors. What a wonderful opportunity to "start again," the rebirth of nature and of our spirits. I'm reminded of a grade school ditty, with slight variation: "Spring is Sprung. The Grass is Riz. I wonder Where the Ferry Is?"

Hope to see you all soon!

Kelleys Island Audubon Club Membership Form

(For new members AND renewals. If your mailing label is highlighted in yellow—your 2001 dues are now past due.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Amount Enclosed:

_____ \$10 Individual Member

_____ \$25 Family

_____ Pape Memorial Fund Donation (Natural Science Library)

_____ Rosetta Navorska Memorial Fund Donation (Bird Census)

Send to: Kelleys Island Audubon Club
P.O. Box 42
Kelleys Island, OH 43438

Annual membership runs from January 1, through December 30, and should be paid as early in the year as possible. A membership card will be sent to you when your dues are received. Prompt payment will assure that you receive all issues of the *Hoot Owl* and other important member correspondence.

NW Ohio Land Saved

The Black Swamp Conservancy (BSC) was formed to encourage widespread private action to conserve our state's rapidly dwindling open spaces. BSC is a land trust, based in Perrysburg, OH, which takes its name from the Great Black Swamp, a wetland/woodland complex that once stretched 40 miles wide and 120 miles long in Northwest Ohio.

Land trusts, of which there are over 1,000 in the country today, are a way of protecting property for future generations; a means for charitable tax donation; an alternative to selling land for development. To contact the BSC write: Black Swamp Conservancy, 218 Louisiana Avenue, P. O. Box 332, Perrysburg, OH 43552-0332; 419-872-5263 or contact Dan Riedell by e-mail at bsc@wcnet.org You can visit their website at wcnet.org/~bsc

SPECIAL THANKS

To **Bill and Ann Toneff**
who paid to have the
KIAC's slide projector
reconditioned!

Kelleys Island Audubon Club

P.O. Box 42

Kelleys Island, OH 43438

www.kelleysisland.ws

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REMINDER:

*As a 501(C)(3), the
KIAC is a registered
charity, therefore, all
gifts and donations to it
are tax deductible.*