

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

# HOOT



# OWL

Inside...  
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KELLEYS ISLAND AUDUBON CLUB NEWSLETTER FOR

YOU AND ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORS • SPRING 2002

## President's Message

"Birds of a feather, always flock together" does not describe the Kelleys Island Audubon Club. Diversity has always been our forte. Like the many unique habitats that comprise our island, our Audubon Club has persevered by the great people who complement it. From innkeeper to architect, we all have a common goal of being good stewards of Kelleys Island's many natural treasures.

When you read this, Kelleys Island will be on the National Audubon's Important Bird Area List. This honor came about from years of observing birds and bird behavior on and around Kelleys Island. Thanks to the monthly census and biannual bird banding, we now have documentation to show how important Kelleys is to bird populations and migration patterns. And a special thanks goes to **Tom Bartlett** and **Vic Fazio** whose efforts in these endeavors we truly appreciate.

As Spring beckons many of us back to Kelleys Island, be glad you don't have to build a house, raise a family and then move to South America in six months! Put your feeders out and always look up for eagles!

**Pat Hayes**

## KI Snowbirds Meet for Southern Field Trip

By **Lori Hayes** and **Judy DuShane**

Kelleys Island Audubon members go to great lengths to get together - sometimes meeting as far as 1,500 miles away! On February 13, **Judy DuShane** organized an ecological boat tour through Estero Bay, near Fort Myers Beach, Florida.

Besides the two of us, **Pat Hayes**, **Lois Giles**, **Mary Hartwick**, **Betsy Walcott** and **Gye Landis** all came along for a fun-filled adventure through the "real" Florida.

The boat trip started from Lover's Key in Lover's Key State Park. We went out into Estero Bay on the *Estero Explorer*, a pontoon boat, and explored the many islands and the nooks and crannies of the bay. We then went out briefly into the Gulf of Mexico. We learned that several of the islands are important bird rookeries - or nurseries. They are mixed rookeries because different species of birds nest together. There were pelicans, herons, egrets and anhinga all over the place. Soon they will be building their nests in the mangrove trees.

We were also taught the importance of the bay as an estuary and fish hatchery. Much like our own North Pond. Our naturalist guide, Randy, stressed the importance of preserving the bay and surrounding mangroves for present and future generations.

Afterwards, we all went back to Judy's rented "condo in the sky." It was on the 9th floor overlooking the beautiful Estero Bay and surrounding Lover's Key State Park. We saw an eagle soaring in the distance. A little later Lois spotted an eagle flying right by Judy's balcony! Pat set up his scope and we followed it right to its nest in the heart of Lover's Key. Not long after, we saw its baby stretch its wing in the nest. What a thrill and what a perfect ending to a perfect day!

The following day, the two of us along with Pat and Lois, visited the Ding Darling National Refuge on Sanibel Island. We saw mixed flocks of White Pelicans and Roseate Spoonbills. What a treat! Now the KI snowbirds are slowly wending their way back to "The Rock." Hope to see you there and share your winter birding stories at the first meeting on March 21, 6 p.m. Potluck at Campbell Cottage.

Upon returning to Kelleys on Feb. 19 Judy heard reports of a Robin and Redwing Blackbirds returning to the island. Spring is in the air!

## Kelleys Recognized by Audubon as Important Bird Area

Kelleys Island was among several more Audubon Important Bird Areas approved recently, bringing the Ohio total to 92. One of the reasons for the designation of Kelleys Island is the remarkable concentrations of Bufflehead. Several years of census work by Tom Bartlett have routinely produced counts of 5-600 in fall and spring migration, with peak totals in excess of 1000.

Prior to this work, the highest recorded fall total in Ohio was just 275 (*Peterjohn's 1989 Birds of Ohio*). This is one more example of how little we know vs. what we think we know of Ohio's bird life. January's 577 Bufflehead were concentrated within the usual 5 coves around Kelleys Island; 70% off the southeast shore of Long Point. In the spring-like temperatures of late January, the birds were far more interested in matters of courtship, including these short flights, than to take notice of a stranger on the beach photographing them. (See more on the Bufflehead as our featured bird in this issue of your *Hoot Owl*—Page 3.)

To learn more about the Ohio Audubon Important Bird Area Program visit: [www.audubon.org/bird/iba/oh.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/oh.html)

*Reprinted from Vic Fazio's Newsletter that can be seen in its entirety on his website at [www.aves.net](http://www.aves.net)*



## DUES REMINDER—2002 DUES WERE DUE IN JANUARY

# KELLEYS ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY FINANCIAL REPORT

**Beginning Balance as of January 1, 2001 \$1079.86**

<u>Income</u>	
Dues	1085.00
Lake Erie Protection Grant	1920.00
Raffle Ticket Sales	300.00
50/50 Raffle	88.00
Merchandise	811.00
Donations	331.50
Interest	43.29
Miscellaneous	24.00
Pape Memorial	75.00
Navorska	30.00
Calendars	1009.95
Transfer from Pape Memorial Fund	1000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6717.74</b>

<u>Expenses</u>	
Travel/Lodging	279.00
Lake Erie Protection Grant	1677.10
Newsletter Printing	245.40
Postage	360.69
Raffle Expense	135.00
Donations to Other Organizations	590.00
Supplies & Materials	419.51
Transfer to Memorial Accts	100.00
Nest with the Birds	349.95
Feathers & Foliage	162.00
Cost of Goods Sold	728.08
Nature Camp	407.78
Membership Dues	260.00
Liability Insurance	225.00
Conferences/Seminars	117.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$6056.51)</b>

**Balance as of December 31, 2001 \$1741.09**

Checking Account	\$1741.09
Pape Memorial Savings Account	229.56
Pape Memorial CD	1557.89
Navorska Memorial Savings Account	487.47
DuShane Memorial Savings Account	753.24
Petty Cash on Hand	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4819.25</b>

## KELLEYS ISLAND—2002 NATURE EVENTS

**May 12 - 18**

Nest With the Birds

**June 29**

KIAC Annual Picnic

**August 7**

Junior Nature Camp

**August 24**

KIAC Coastweeks Hike

**Sept. 7**

Butterfly Festival

**Sept. 14**

Kayak Poker Paddle

**Sept. 28**

Feathers and Foliage Festival

## KELLEYS ISLAND AUDUBON POTLUCKS, MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

**Thursdays: March 21**

**April 18, July 18, Aug 15,**

**Sept 19, Oct 17, Nov 21**

Potlucks are held at 6 p.m., with meeting following at 7. March meeting at **June and Bill Campbell's** home, Campbell's Cottage, April meeting at St. Michael's Church Hall on Chappel.

This year's June meeting is being scheduled for Saturday, June 29 at as the KIAC Annual Picnic to give islanders and visitors who aren't here during the week, an opportunity to attend.

The July, August and September meetings will be held at the Pavilion on Addison, and the October meeting will most likely be held at St. Michael's Church Hall. The November meeting will held at **Pat and Lori Hayes'** home, The Inn.

You do not need to be a member of the KI Audubon Club to attend meetings.

## Buffleheads (*Bucephala albeola*)

### Submitted by Delores Cole

Buffleheads are compactly built birds, males averaging 9 to 21 ounces in weight and females about 8 to 17 ounces. They are the smallest diving duck. During their migrations they are much heavier with stored fat as fuel for their travels. These are the fat birds hunters call "butterballs." Adult males are black above and white below, with bright pink feet. They wear a white "shawl" around the back of the head, and a broad white band extends from front to back across each wing. The females and first-year males are drabber, with the dark areas sooty-grey or brownish rather than black, and the white areas duller and smaller in size than in adult males. Like their near relatives, the goldeneyes and mergansers, Bufflehead males do not attain adult plumage until their second winter, and first breed when nearly two years old.

### Some Identification Tips:

- Length: 10 inches
- Wingspan: 24 inches
- Very small compact diving duck
- Very active duck

### Male:

- Light brown body plumage heavily spotted with dark brown.
- The head is blue-black with a white crescent curving in front of the eye.
- The inner forewing is light blue and the speculum is green.
- The underwing is white.

### Female:

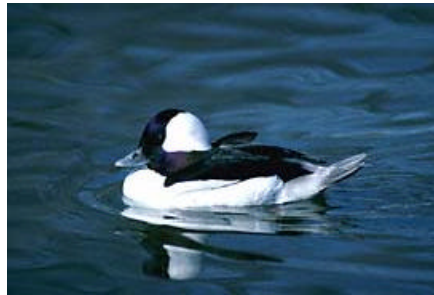
- Light brown body plumage heavily spotted with dark brown.
- The head is also brown with the crown being a dark shade and the sides lighter.
- A dark brown stripe runs across the side of the head and through the eye.
- The inner forewing is light blue and the speculum is very dark brown.
- The underwing is white.

### Habits and habitats

Buffleheads are constantly active. They seldom rest on the water in flocks as do the *Aythya* diving ducks (scaup, Redhead, Canvasback). Buffleheads alternate periods of feeding with preening bouts or courtship displays. Feeding is always by diving, even in shallow water, the dives being longer in deeper areas as

most food is picked from the bottom. Their main foods are arthropods, mostly insect larvae in fresh water and small crustaceans (shrimps, crabs, amphipods) in salt water. In fall many seeds of aquatic plants are eaten, and in winter small marine snails or freshwater clams are taken in their respective habitats.

In winter they frequent the shallow, sheltered waters of coves, river mouths, and lagoons, which have a muddy or gravelly bottom, and they often feed around old pilings of wharves or log booms. Their breeding habitat is small ponds, usually in wooded areas. They seldom nest by rivers and larger lakes, possibly because these waters are inhabited by northern pike, a large fish which readily feeds on small ducklings.



Buffleheads are not gregarious, and typically occur in groups of 10 or fewer birds. When both sexes are present, displays are frequent, but females do not respond to displays by first-year drakes. Courtship is characterized by rapid, jerky movements, most frequently a head-bobbing action by the drake. The most striking display is a short flight over the female in which the male flutters its wings below the level of its body, and also keeps head and tail lowered, finally landing in a "water-skiing" posture so as to display the feet as well as the plumage. The upwards stretch with wing flapping, common to most ducks and some other water birds, terminates most bouts of displaying. The males often try to drive away other drakes displaying at the same female, either by rushing over the surface or by diving so as to come up under the intruder, and the vigorous splashing that results may be seen at a considerable distance. Even when too far away to be recognized by appearance, Buffleheads can often be identified by this splashing. Both sexes are normally silent,

and the only sound commonly heard from Buffleheads is the "grrk" call of females alarmed near nest or brood.

### Breeding

Courtship occurs through the winter, becoming more intensive as spring approaches, but most pairing seems to take place during the spring migration, and the birds are paired by the time they reach breeding areas. Males outnumber females, as in most diving ducks, so an appreciable proportion of adult males remains unpaired.

In most areas Buffleheads start nesting soon after their arrival. The female Bufflehead lays her eggs in a tree cavity, usually the former nest of a Flicker (woodpecker). The related goldeneyes and mergansers are also tree-nesters, and some people refer to any duck nesting in a tree as a "wood duck." The true Wood Duck, however, is a more southern species and is not at all closely related to the tree-nesting diving ducks.

The clutch is as few as 5 or as many as 14 eggs. Sometimes more than one female lays in one nest, leading to sets of 15 or even 20 eggs. Incubation lasts about 30 days, and the hatch occurs in mid to late June.

The female tends the brood carefully for about a month before she departs to molt. On average only about half of the young survive to fly at an age of seven to eight weeks. Meanwhile, the adult birds retreat to favored lakes to undergo the annual molt of the flight feathers.

### Distribution and migration

Buffleheads occur from coast to coast, though they are seldom numerous. In spring and summer, most breed in British Columbia east of the coast ranges and in the northern half of Alberta, although small numbers occur east to Ontario or even Quebec, and north to the southern parts of Alaska, Yukon, and Mackenzie. In winter, they are common on Canada's west coast and regular in favored spots around Lake Ontario and the southern coasts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. However, the majority winter in the United States, from New Jersey to North Carolina in the east, and from Washington to central California in the west.

## Island Meanderings –Winter 2002

### **Penguins on Kelleys?**

**By Kelley Sanderson**

“Penguins! Penguins at West Bay!” the voice on the phone screamed at me. Not sure of what I was hearing, I responded, “Excuse me, what did you say?” “Penguins! There are six Penguins on the ice in West Bay!” the caller repeated. “Now, that would be highly unusual to see penguins in Lake Erie,” I explained, “but I will check it out.”

Um-m-m, I wonder what that is all about, I mused as I pulled on my warm boots, slipped my arms into the “good to minus 30 degree” parka, pulled the ear flaps down and tucked them under my chin. I made sure the long lens was on the camera, grabbed the binoculars and headed out for what could be an adventure.

As I drove west along Titus Road, I was reminded of the beauty of that very special path, now white with fresh snow, the bare branches heavy with last night’s snowfall. Rounding the corner onto West Lakeshore, the view changed to the open expanse of lake. Clear water out in the middle changed to 4-6 inch sheets of ice floating and bobbing in the waves. Along the shore was slushy-mush, and thick white ice chunks were piled on the beach.

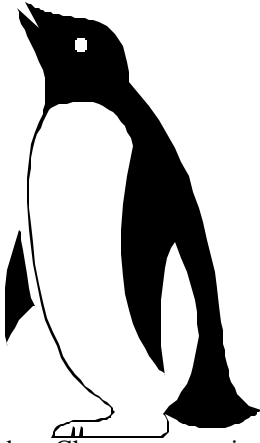
A large flock of seagulls soared and dived in the open water. Some rested on the ice sheets. No penguins here!

Continuing on, I passed the empty quarry dock, the gray clouds to the south heavy with snow. Waves and whitecaps confirmed the winter wind. Then, there they were! Out on the floating ice, about a football field away, 6 black spots sitting there. I pulled off the road, careful to not turn off the engine and the heater, and leveled my binoculars on them. A-ha! The “penguins” were Great black-backed gulls, apparently resting on their way south after flying into that cold wind. I sat for a while, just enjoying the view, the silence of the winter and the humor of looking for penguins in Lake Erie. Well, it did give me something to do this morning.

If you haven’t been here in the winter, you just can’t imagine how absolutely delightful are the quietness and isolation. A hike through the woods, a stroll along the shore, and a jaunt down Division Street are total joy.

Every car is familiar; every person greets you by name. After 9-11, the safety of Kelleys Island has become even more precious. The inconvenience of isolation is outbalanced by uninterrupted time to ponder, observe, breathe deeply of fresh air, listen to the birds and the surf, think and reflect on how wonderful it is to live on Kelleys Island. I hope you have an opportunity to enjoy a winter here, too.

Now, it is time for my trip to the Post Office. Then I think I will drive down to the beach for a stroll to the North Pond. After that I will go home for lunch and a nap.



## January Census Follow-up

**By Vic Fazio**

As a 16-day Atlas follow-up to the regular Kelleys Island census on the 12th, I repeated the transect route today from 8:45 am to 1:30 pm. The record heat, coupled with sunshine, and in the interior of the island no wind, made for T-shirt weather.

Highlights included 4 Killdeer on the rock shelf of the east side. The presumed Laughing X Ring-billed Gull was still at the marina and ferry dock. The only ice was that within the marina and this is where the few gulls had gathered. The bird often sat on the ice, but several times made forays past the dock. One can eyeball the bird from 250 yards away - it is that distinctive. Photography was limited to distant shots while on the ferry 100 yards from shore when the bird suddenly made an appearance at the back of the boat.

Where the Horned Larks were making landfall from Canada just 16 days ago, today a steady stream of birds were lifting off from the Glacial Grooves heading north; one Snow Bunting among them.

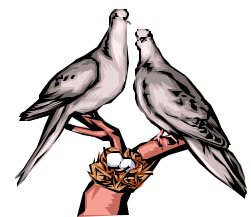
The other treat began with the detection of an odd silhouette flying in parallel with the ferry on its return to the mainland. Gradually narrowing the gap, the image resolved itself into an adult male Cooper's Hawk. For the next 16 minutes, the bird was almost in perfect unison with the boat, although just before making landfall, the bird crossed in front of the bow.

Accipiters crossing the water gap is nothing new; it is commonplace in migration. But here was an adult, with a head wind such that it barely outpaced a boat traveling at 9 knots, making a crossing in what is ostensibly still winter. And if a spring migrant, it should have been going the other way.

If you plan a visit, car & driver cost \$17.00 at the moment. Walk-on is cheaper.

### **Bird Census**

Canada Goose - 30	American Robin - 207
American Black Duck - 8	European Starling - 275
Mallard - 82	Yellow-rumped Warbler - 30
Common Goldeneye - 14	American Tree Sparrow - 4
Bufflehead - 577	Song Sparrow - 4
Common Merganser - 5	Swamp Sparrow - 1
Accipiter spp. - 1	White-throated Sparrow - 178
Cooper's Hawk - 2	Dark-eyed Junco - 24
Red-tailed Hawk - 1	Snow Bunting - 1
Killdeer - 4	Red-winged Blackbird - 2
c.f. Laughing X Ring-billed Gull - 1	Common Grackle - 2
Ring-billed Gull - 2960	Northern Cardinal - 96
Herring Gull - 480	Purple Finch - 1
Great Black-backed Gull - 47	House Finch - 116
Red-bellied Woodpecker - 5	American Goldfinch - 2
Downy Woodpecker - 1	House Sparrow - 65 cheers
Northern Flicker - 7	
Blue Jay - 5	
American Crow - 11	
Black-capped Chickadee - 96	
White-breasted Nuthatch - 5	
Carolina Wren - 9	
Golden-crowned Kinglet - 1	





**Nest With the Birds  
On Kelleys Island  
During our 9th Annual Bird Festival!  
May 12 - 18, 2002**

**Join us for a week and experience the natural world  
of Kelleys Island during spring migration.**

**Program Schedule**

**8:00 A.M. Guided Bird Walks**

Monday - Paul Sherwood      Tuesday - Kevin Metcalf  
Wednesday - Dave Horn      Friday - Marcus England

Explore the island with us and bring your mud boots!

**8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. "All Around the Island" Birdathon**

Meet at St. Michael's Hall to join a group.

**Prizes!**

**1:00 P.M. Nature Programs**

Sunday - Wildflower Walk - Allison Cusick at North Pond Preserve  
Monday - "Ducks 101", Paul Sherwood  
Tuesday - "Becoming a Better Birder", Kevin Metcalf  
Wednesday - "Bird Habitats", Dave Horn  
Friday - "Belize Birds", Marcus England

**All day Saturday, May 18, 2002**

"Bird Banding at Long Point" with Tom Bartlett

**4:00 P.M. Guided Bird Walks**

Sunday - Paul Sherwood      Monday - Paul Sherwood  
Tuesday - Dave Horn      Wednesday - Larry Rosche  
Friday - Setting Up Banding Nets at 5:00 P.M. at Long Point

**Woodcock Watch and Birds of the Night**

8:30 P.M. May 12 & 14 at Scheele Preserve on Monagan

**New Comet Discovered**

A newly discovered comet, now approaching the sun and Earth, could develop into a relatively bright naked-eye object in coming weeks, researchers say.



The best views of the comet may be reserved for those under dark skies far from bright lights, but even city dwellers should be able to spot it.

The comet is called Ikeya-Zhang. The latest orbit calculation indicates it will pass closest to the sun, a point called perihelion, on March 18 at a distance of 47.1 million miles. After rounding the sun, the comet will continue moving toward Earth, making its closest approach to our planet, called perigee, on April 28, when it will be 37.6 million miles away.

Ikeya-Zhang's expected path across the sky in the coming weeks will greatly favor Northern Hemisphere observers. During most of March on into early April, the comet will be visible near to the north-northwest horizon about an hour after sundown. Bright moonlight may hinder observations during the last week of March.

After the first week of April, with the moon no longer a factor, the comet will also be visible in the morning sky, rising earlier and getting progressively higher above the northeast horizon each night.

*Reprinted from an article on [www.msnbcnews.com](http://www.msnbcnews.com)*

**9<sup>th</sup> Annual Lake Erie Wing Watch Weekend April 12-14 in Oak Harbor, OH**

**By Mary Warren**

Friday night's guest speakers are Michael Male and Judy Fieth, the folks who did the "Watching Warblers" video. They are working on "Watching Sparrows." The evening includes food and a silent auction.

Saturday there will be field trips to Schadel Arboretum and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and sessions on a variety of topics including: Ad-

vanced Warbler ID (by Vic Fazio), Choosing Optics, Butterfly ID, Bats, Birding Hotspots, Grassland Birds, Through the Eyes of a Carver, Hummers, Owls (live birds from Back to the Wild) Warbler ID for beginners, and a two part Introduction to Birding for beginners. There will also be exhibits set up and lunch will be available. Saturday nite there will be a winery tour at Mon Ami and an

"Owl Prowl" at ONWR.

Sunday there will be field trips offered at Magee Marsh, Sheldon Marsh, and the Coupling Reserve.

Hotels will be offering discounts to birders. Call the Ottawa County

Visitors Bureau for additional info at: 800-441-1271 or email [mary.warren@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:mary.warren@dnr.state.oh.us)

We'd be happy to send you a program schedule. It should be a great weekend! Hope to see you there!

## Kelleys Island Audubon Club Membership Form

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.

## Winter Storm Devastates Monarch

By Lori Hayes

Each September, Kelleys Island celebrates the miraculous Monarch Butterfly migration to Mexico with a Butterfly Festival.



During the month of January, a freak, winter ice storm killed between 220 and 270 million butterflies in Mexico. They roost in several forest sanctuaries in the Sierra Madre mountains outside of Mexico City. Monarch biologists fear that this storm could be devastating to monarch populations. Fortunately, Monarch Butterflies west of the Rockies migrate to Northern California thus insuring continuation of the species.

Other factors that are endangering the species are: deforestation in Mexico, loss of milkweed habitat in North America and genetic engineering.

We certainly hope that this wonderful insect continues to thrive and future generations will continue to marvel at their fluttering beauty and mystery.

### Kelleys Island Audubon Club

P.O. Box 42

Kelleys Island, OH 43438

[www.kelleysisland.ws](http://www.kelleysisland.ws)

### Board Members

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President

**Peggy Cooney**

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**June Campbell**

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**Jean Kuyoth**

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**Lloyd Burns**

**Marvin Robinson**

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Events Coordinator

**Judy DuShane**

Grants Coordinator

**Delores Cole**

Program Coordinator

**Jacque Kranyak**

Hoot Owl Editor

### ***REMINDER:***

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