



# Ohio Wetlands Association

Newsletter - August 2013

## Our Mission

**The Ohio Wetlands Association will work to protect, enhance and restore Ohio's wetlands by providing public education, promoting sound public policy, developing a network of citizen science volunteers and sharing the joy of wild places.**

A non-profit organization

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### Upcoming Events:

- Great Lake Erie Boat Float September 7
- Wetlands Summit at Grange Insurance Audubon Center December 7
- Sawmill Saturdays (see page 5)

**“The smallest shorebirds like the sandpipers may double their weight in just a few days...”**

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## Winous Point Shorebird Research

by Ray Stewart

On August 17th OWA organized a visit to the research station of Keith Norris, OSU graduate student who bands and color-marks migrating shorebirds. Starting before sunrise, Keith and his assistant Justin Bosler set up a data station and walkout onto a mudflat where migrating shorebirds are likely visit. They deploy nearly invisible mist-nets that harmlessly snare passing birds. As day breaks they recover these birds from the nets, place them in cloth bags to calm them and return to the data station. Birds are identified by species, gender and age. Measurements are taken of wing length, tail length, beak length and weight. Target species are marked on the chest with a color that indicates the location where they were found. A tiny band with a unique ID number is place around an ankle. If a bird is recaptured, this ID lets researchers compare data and helps establish the bird's age.

The smallest shorebirds like the sandpipers may double their weight in just a few days as they pause to refuel. Many of these migrants leave the shores of the Arctic Ocean to winter in the Gulf Coast states and the Caribbean. Stopping in the marshes of Lake Erie's western basin is critical for their long journey.

Good shorebird habitat has been scarce this year. Exposed mudflats and water depths less than 2 inches are very desirable. Since

rain has been abundant this year many of our marshes are too deep. For many decades the wetlands along Lake Erie have been diked and managed in response to fluctuating Lake Erie water levels. Deeper waters favor migratory waterfowl. We didn't know until the night before where Keith would be setting up his data station. Two other options were under consideration. Some parts of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge are suitable and good reports have been coming in from the Middle Harbor next to East Harbor State Park. We were all delighted that we would be visiting Winous Point Shooting Club, a private duck hunting club with a history that reaches back more than 150 years and has been a pioneer of scientific wildlife management and conservation.

Winous Point is the oldest, continuously operated duck shooting club in the United States, founded in 1856. It was conceived by some of the industrial pioneers from Cleveland and other lake shore entrepreneurs who cherished their time in the wild places around Sandusky Bay. Even as early as the late 1800's members noticed a decline in waterfowl numbers and in habitat. Agricultural expansion preceded the erosion that muddied the waters of the bay. Introduction of carp further increased



**Keith Norris at Winous Point**  
photo by Delores Cole

*Continued on page 3*

## Urban Green Spaces: Cleveland's Puritas Wetlands

By Liz McQuaid

In a west side neighborhood that is a mix of industrial and residential, which Cleveland calls Bellaire-Puritas, lays a hidden gem. Officially, it is a storm water detention basin for Cleveland's Division of Water Pollution Control.



Open Water and Phragmites photo by Liz McQuaid

**“But to me it is my beloved neighborhood birding hot spot.”**

But to those of us who live in the area it is the Puritas Wetlands.

With a little over 80 acres, it is a lowland that collects storm water from parts I-480, W 150<sup>th</sup> St, the Industrial Parkway that runs along two sides, the retail area on Puritas and W 140<sup>th</sup>, and the residential neighborhoods that lie on the west side of the basin. The west branch of Big Creek runs through it before going under-

ground for several miles, and eventually meeting up with the east branch and flowing into the Cuyahoga River, and out into the lake.

Bill Oatey, chairman of plumbing supplies manufacturer Oatey Co. brought the diversity of wildlife to the attention of the Wildlife Habitat Council. Soon after the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (CMNH) did a survey there and found over 130 species of birds, and over 60 species of plants including sundrops and whorled milkweed. They are currently working on a plan to try to eliminate the invasive species.

But to me it is my beloved neighborhood

birding hot spot. Even though it is in a fenced off area, in the spring when the water is high and the cattails and the phragmites are low the bird watching there from the edges is incredible. Seen this year are species like Virginia Rail, Least and American Bittern, Black Crowned Night Heron, Sora, Green and Blue-winged Teal, Marsh Wren, and about 90 more. I am hoping for more this area to retain more water to keep it attractive to water birds all year long.

For more information:

<http://bpdc.org/planningdevelopment/puritas-wetlands/>



Coyote and Mallards at Puritas Wetlands

photo by Liz McQuaid

Winous Point Shorebird Research continued from page 1

the turbidity of the waters. Market hunters were harvesting waterfowl for a growing colonizing population. Fluctuating Lake Erie water levels impacted local marshes and contributed to an already declining duck diversity and abundance. As the Great Black Swamp of Northwest Ohio was drained and converted to farmland, wildlife habitat declined throughout.

Members of Winous Point were determined to take action and ensure that their favored pass-time and recreation would endure. At a time when science was still young, they launched scientific enquiry into sustainable harvesting of ducks and recognized the need to manage the timing and techniques employed by both commercial and recreational shooters. Decades would pass until science impacted public policy and enforcement but many of the most damaging practices were halted. Ducks would not be hunted during the breeding season. Baiting techniques were banned. Wildlife populations were stabilized. What had become policy within Winous Point became statutory law in Ohio and grew to become nationwide practice in the 20th century.

Along with these policy initiatives investments were made in the physical environment of Winous Point.



**Solitary Sandpiper** photo by Delores Cole

Dikes were built to control water levels. Pumps were used to raise or lower water levels. These management practices helped create the open water and vegetation that would bring the desired ducks and provide suitable shooting positions for the members. In the 21st century, the Winous Point Marsh Conservancy (founded in 1999) has been established to manage the roughly 5000 acres including some



**Snipe** photo by Delores Cole

of the waters of Muddy Creek that initiates the greater Sandusky Bay. Included in the Conservancies mission is the maintenance of habitat for shorebirds. It's not just about ducks anymore.

For a more detailed history consider reading a new book published in 2010, *Winous Point, 150 years of Waterfowling and Conservation* by Todd Sedgwick and Roy Kroll. A hefty book that would be at home on a coffee table gives detailed accounts of the people, policy and practices that has led to an exemplary institution that respects wildlife and finds a balance in sport shooting, harvesting and sustainability.

On this day more than 40 birds were processed and gently released. 4 of them were recaptures, an exceptional event in terms of preferred data. Hoping to learn how long these migrant shorebirds stay to refuel and how successful they are at gaining weight is important for future land management decisions. The chest painting is important to understand their foraging range. When not netting birds, Keith and Justin cruise the likely areas where shorebirds could be, hoping to spot their marked birds and map the range where they feed. If you are out there birding for shorebirds and see blue or red markings on the front of an otherwise buff and beige peep, it must be one of Keith's recent captures. These marks fade within a few weeks and do no harm to the bird. It only serves to help the research on range and distribution of this migrating population of shorebirds that find refuge in the limited and rare wetland habitat that they depend upon.

## Donations Large and Small

**Time to renew your membership!**

**All membership dues and donations are fully tax-deductible.**

We usually count our donations in terms of total dollars. When not looking at those dollar signs we soon visualize the membership base. Who are those generous people that support OWA? They are friends, neighbors and those who have seen us tabling for outreach and support. Three years ago we abandoned our decades-long presence at the

Lo-



rain County Fair. Similar practices in the past garnered a regional membership with lasting support. Recently our number of members with current dues has faded. We hope to turn that around. You can help by renewing your membership now. Go to <http://ohwetlands.com/Membership.html>

If you are receiving this by mail, complete the form on the outside fold of this newsletter, enclose a check at your preferred membership level and mail it.

While the number of donors has seen a decline, the total support is increasing. Don't let this sound like an excuse to put your checkbook away. The fact that we are getting the word out of our non-profit status has loosened some purse strings. Yes, we are a federally recognized 501(c)3. Donations to us are recognized like any other tax exempt organi-

zation. We are not lawyers or accountants so check with yours to be sure about your tax advantages.

This summer, beyond my wildest dreams, a friend and neighbor paid for my wish list. She made the donation deliberately to improve her own federal tax obligation. She also has sincere compassion for natural areas and the work we are doing. Gifts at the 'contributing' levels are very helpful as they quickly beef up our bottom line. But basic standard membership levels are just as important. Having large numbers of members gives us more clout. Please contribute at the highest level you are comfortable with knowing that whatever that amount is, your generosity inspires us.

## Sawmill Wetlands Updates

by Michelle Shinew

On September 7th, the Turtle Lady will bring some native and special species to share with our visitors

This summer has been a season for showing off the Wetlands as the incredible vernal pools disappeared. The mallard duck family as moved on. The red tailed teenage hawks were not happy during our visits, but their screech delighted visitors as they sailed above us. We've also had received pictures of the deer that enjoy the Wetlands when we are not around. Members of the Columbus Audubon Club have stopped by and found a variety of birds even during the time we are hosting our visitors.

Richard Moseley, Retired Chief of the Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves captured visitors attention and quizzed them

on the types of trees and plants along the boardwalk. Barbara Barbosa of Wild Ones of Central Ohio has joined our monthly programs with an incredible display of free materials to answer questions about going native in your backyard. We have also been visited by a red tailed hawk and kestrel from the Ohio Wildlife Center thanks to our new Friend, Darlene Sillick. Darlene was actually part of the group that originally worked in the Wetlands and she has joined us to maintain the bird boxes and bring us special visitors from the OWC.

Most important has been the news that the potential swap of the Sawmill property for another piece of land

along the Olentangy River was stopped. While the threat of **future** development remains unless we can get a preservation easement or other solution, the Friends continue to partner with the great staff at ODNR and area naturalists to provide our neighborhood with a unique opportunity to see what is going on in the woods behind the gates. Our goal is to make the Sawmill Wetlands an integral part of this area and a cool shady spot where visitors can learn more about the value of wetlands in our community.



## Visit the **Sawmill Wetlands**

to experience the natural seasonal changes....



Connect with the richness of Ohio's seasons in this mature 18-acre State Nature Preserve



wildlife and nature education displays  
booklets and posters for early birds!  
is beautiful 18-acre natural preserve, while  
e different flora and fauna seen each month  
t your unique close-to-home nature spot!

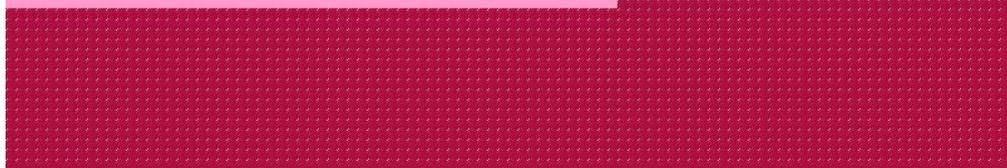
- ▶ Featuring local
- ▶ Free nature
- ▶ Tour and relax in the  
learning more about the
- ▶ Continue to support

### **Sawmill Wetland** **s State Wildlife Education Area**

LHmwc  
SawmillWetlands.org

Join us on  
**Facebook**  
Friends of the Sawmill Wetlands

**Sawmill Wetland**  
2674 Sawmill Place Blvd  
Columbus OH 43235  
Map: <http://goo.gl/maps>  
Web: [FriendsOfTheSawmillWetlands.org](http://FriendsOfTheSawmillWetlands.org)



## The Wetlands Initiative

**“...wetlands will reduce the impact of flooding by absorbing waters that would otherwise concentrate within a watershed and lead to floods.”**

A common misconception is that wetlands cause flooding, especially where residential areas are established near wetlands. There is often a correlation where heavy rains swell the boundaries of a wetland and basements flood nearby. The false logic occurs when you see two events and attribute a cause/effect relationship. In this case, the wetland is the cause and the result or effect is the basement flooding. Logical reasoning states that just because two things happen in rapid succession that one thing does not necessarily cause the other.

Here is a tired example that you may have heard. A rooster crows in the early morning and then the sun comes up. Two events that happen, one right after the other, may be cause and effect, but in this case who would assume that the sun rose as a result of the rooster's crowing? This faulty line of reasoning was identified

by Socrates more than two thousand years ago and is known by the Latin phrase *Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc*.

According to fallacyfiles.org “The Post Hoc Fallacy is committed whenever one reasons to a causal conclusion based solely on the supposed cause preceding its “effect”. Of course, it is a necessary condition of causation that the cause precede the effect, but it is not a sufficient condition. Thus, post hoc evidence may suggest the hypothesis of a causal relationship, which then requires further testing, but it is never sufficient evidence on its own.”

So what really makes the basements flood? The same rain that added to the girth of the neighborhood wetland also seeped into the ground. The water table will rise where the basement has been built. If the house were a ship, it would rise with tide of

new water. But since the water does not lift the foundation of the house it applies pressure to the floor and walls, seeping in wherever there is a weak spot. If there is no sump-pump or other drainage mechanism, water will get inside.

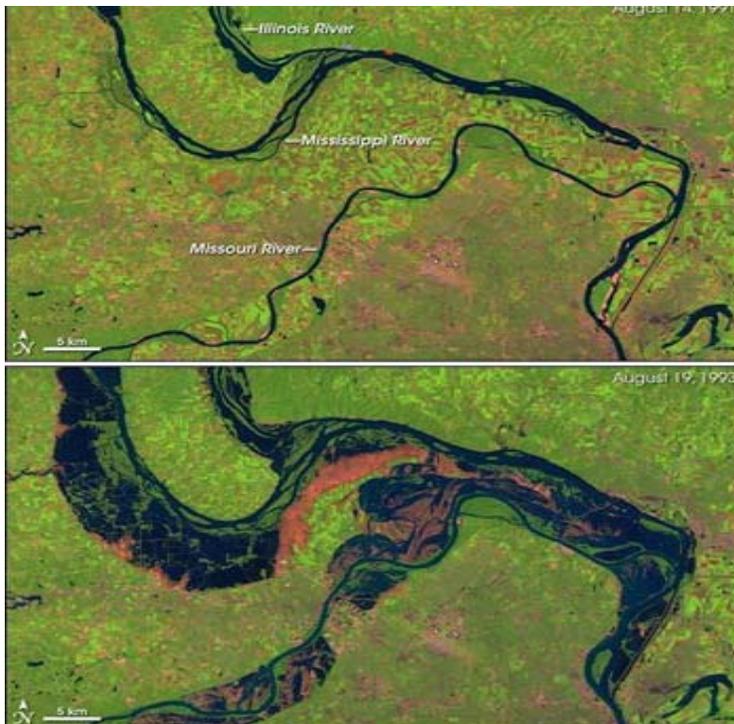
wards into basements. This is a tragic and disgusting mess that results from engineering faults rather than natural wetlands.

The Wetlands Initiative (TWI), dedicated to restoring the wetland resources of the Midwest to improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and reduce flood damages, is a nonprofit corporation. TWI has researched the impact of wetlands on flooding. Their conclusion is that wetlands will reduce the impact of flooding by absorbing waters that would otherwise concentrate within a watershed and lead to floods. They propose that areas within a 100 year flood plain should be returned to their basic functions and connectivity thereby holding floodwaters, improving water quality and supporting rich, biodiverse habitats. Much of this potential floodplain is rich agricultural land. It should be assumed that flooding is natural and normal. Development in these areas should be discouraged while existing farms should be compensated for receiving flood waters.

Their study estimated that such conversion would produce a net value of \$500 million per year provided by reconverted wetlands in the upper Mississippi drainage. For details of their study see <http://wetlands-initiative.org/what-we-do/reducing-flood-damage-study.html>. Another supporting article can be found Posted by Sandra Postel of National Geographic's Freshwater Initiative in Water Currents on May 3, 2011 in the [Mississippi Floods Can Be Restrained With Natural Defenses](#).

new water. But since the water does not lift the foundation of the house it applies pressure to the floor and walls, seeping in wherever there is a weak spot. If there is no sump-pump or other drainage mechanism, water will get inside.

In some cases a rain event can cause sewer backup. In many municipal drainage systems, overloaded storm drains overflow into sanitary sewers to drive the system back-



Where the Missouri River joins the Mississippi comparing normal waters above and the flood of 1993 below. Photos courtesy of NASA.

## Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*

By Delores Cole

I call this little, secretive, songbird the gymnast of the reeds. When you do get a chance to actually see the bird, usually in spring, check out how it is perched. When it sits up to see who the intruder is, it can be straddling two reeds.

The Marsh Wren is found throughout much of North America. It breeds from British Columbia, central interior Canada, Manitoba, and Nova

distinct eyestripe.

BirdJam describes the wren's song as a series of reedy, gurgling warbles followed by a dry, rattling trill. It also says that individual males have many song patterns, ranging from about 40 in eastern populations to nearly 150 in some western regions. If you are in a marsh and hear this bird, you will probably continue to hear him the entire time you are in the marsh.

The female incubates the eggs for 13-16 days, and the young fledge between 11-16 days after hatching. The males are singing by the time they fledge. Marsh wrens usually hatch two broods per season. Both male and female Marsh Wrens, destroy neighboring wren nests that have eggs when given the chance.

These birds eat mainly invertebrates, especially spiders and insects including bees, ants, wasps, beetles, dragonflies, damselflies, and moths. Marsh Wrens spend most of their time foraging on or near the marsh floor, gleaning insects from stems and leaves of vegetation and from the water's surface. Some wrens may also forage in thickets or shrub patches near the marsh.

So the next time you visit a marsh in the spring, you will know where that gurgling warble you are hearing over and over comes from!



Marsh Wren photo by Brian Zwiebel

Scotia south to Mexico, the Gulf coast and Florida. It is a migrant in Ohio.

It is a thin-billed small (4 – 6 inches) brown bird whose tail is often held upright. It has a dark cap, whitish eye-line, bold black and white streaks on the back, buffy flanks and a whitish chest. Males and females are similar in appearance, but only males sing. The juvenile is similar to male adult features, but lacks the bold striping and only has an in-

The male wren is not a faithful partner and has a habit of building up to fifteen dome-shaped shells in his territory, lashing together cattails and reeds. These shells are called "courting" nests. While sitting high atop a perch in the marsh, he sings, trying to

entice a female to select a nest in his territory. Once the female has chosen one of his shells, she completes the nest by lining it with cattail down, feathers, and leaves and lays her eggs. Sometimes a second female chooses a nest on the opposite end of his territory. Two to three females can pair with one male in the same timeframe. I guess all those extra nests come in handy!

Typically Marsh Wrens lay five to six eggs which are dull brown with dark brown spots.

Ohio Wetlands Association

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*Wetlands for a Better Ohio*

Issue

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	<p align="center"><b>JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!</b> <b>OHIO WETLANDS ASSOCIATION</b> <i>Wetlands for a Better Ohio</i> <a href="http://www.ohwetlands.org">www.ohwetlands.org</a></p> <p>We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your membership and donation is fully tax-deductible.</p> <table border="0"><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$20 - Individual</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$30 - Family</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$100 - Heron</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$10 - Student</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$40 - Organization</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$250 - Rail</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$10 - Senior</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$50 - Business</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> \$500 - Swan</td></tr></table> <p>Donation: _____</p> <p>Total Enclosed: _____</p> <p>NAME: _____</p> <p>ADDRESS: _____</p> <p>CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____</p> <p>PHONE: _____</p> <p>EMAIL: _____</p> <p>Email is the default newsletter delivery method. Contact us for US mail delivery at 440 225-1279.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Contact me, I would like to volunteer with Ohio Wetlands Association.</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 - Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30 - Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 - Heron	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10 - Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40 - Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250 - Rail	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10 - Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 - Business	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 - Swan
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<p><b>MAIL TO:</b> OWA PO BOX 3 AMHERST, OH 44001</p>										
<p>Save the date <b>Saturday December 7th</b> Ohio Wetlands Association Second Annual Wetlands Summit at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, Columbus, Ohio</p>										