



Behind The Scenes of Wildlife Rehabilitation

Mary Meixner, Curator of Birds

“Animals are unpredictable things, and so our life is unpredictable. It’s a long tale of little triumphs and disasters and you’ve got to really like it to stick with it.” ~James Herriot

Summer is coming and we are just beginning our busiest season at the Sanctuary. Our busiest season seems to get busier every year, too! Between caring for the extra birds that “baby season” brings and educating hundreds of children and adults through outreach programming, I think I can speak for my fellow staff members when I say this is when we realize our passion for this work.

We are one of the few rehabilitation centers that is open to the public. However, even though you are able to visit and witness many of the aspects of bird care, there is still quite a bit that goes on behind the scenes that most people do not see or understand. Wildlife rehabilitation is just as Mr. Herriot says: “a long tale of little triumphs and disasters.” You have to be passionate about it to stick with it through all of its twists and turns.

There are struggles. I remember going on an eagle rescue with Gail. We drove for over an hour to a tiny town where a few men were keeping an eye on an eagle that appeared to be in trouble. These men even had a kayak ready for us in case we needed to carry out a water rescue. After off-roading in the OBS minivan through a corn field, we located the bird, scooped it up, loaded it into a crate, and prepared for the long drive back to the Sanctuary. The eagle was notably distressed, so the quiet, dark, warm hour-long ride was a good start for treatment. When we got back to OBS, we did some initial diagnostics and then set things up for the bird for the night. Then, she died in our arms.



This is the reality of wildlife rehabilitation. Sometimes it just means giving a bird a safe, warm, quiet place to pass on. You give it your best, you drive 2-3 hours to rescue an eagle in need, investing yourself mentally, physically, and emotionally, you get off work 4-5 hours later than you normally would, and now you have nothing to show for it. Yet you will do the same thing tomorrow if a bird is in need.

On the other hand, there is triumph. “Hero” was an eagle who was admitted to OBS with a broken leg; he had been hit by a car. We weren’t overly optimistic about saving the leg, but we splinted it with half of a clothes hanger (it was the only thing big enough and strong enough) and sent the bird into surgery to have the bones pinned. Hero would be with us for over 6 months. When the cast was finally removed, the leg was deemed sound enough to try for release. Hero was moved into our Flight Complex for conditioning. We cringed every time he landed on a perch, but the leg held. Hero came to us in the fall, and in the spring of the following year we released him back into his home territory and watched him fly free again.

There are many more stories like these two. We do our best to give individualized care to each bird as its needs dictate. Sometimes things go well, and sometimes they are out of our control. Whether it be triumph or disaster, the proof of passion for this profession is being ready to get up and do it all over again tomorrow.



From the Desk of the Director

The arrival of summer at the Sanctuary brings about exciting changes. For the first time in its history the Sanctuary will have a full-time Program Coordinator. Emily Smith will be taking on this role filling the spot of what was previously carried out by three part-time staff members. Emily is a graduate of Mt. Vernon Nazarene College and has been involved in the Sanctuary's educational programs and bird care for over 2 years. Sadly, this means we are losing our current coordinator Julie Schwartz. Julie has accepted the position of Head of School at Discovery School here in Mansfield. We are all so appreciative of the creative ideas, enthusiasm and professional leadership Julie brought to OBS. She will be greatly missed but she has assured us that this is not the last we will see her.



The Board of Trustees have been working with consultant Cindi Phallen to chart the Sanctuary's future. Surveys were sent to members and donors to gather insight into what is considered the Sanctuary's strengths and weaknesses and the areas that should be focused on to ensure its future. This phase is complete and information from the surveys has been compiled and analyzed. The initial results reaffirmed much of what we already know about the organization and how OBS is filling an important role in the community but the bonus was finding that we have 99.8% approval rating. Definitely a feather in our cap! Over the next three months the board will start to develop a strategic plan for the organization and succession of leadership. The plan will incorporate a blend of creating sustainable resources for operations, expansion of services and development of board and staff leadership skills.

The Sanctuary and the people who make it special never cease to amaze me. This spring the 90 acre preserve is alive with over 50 species of nesting birds, a multitude of singing amphibians and a burst of color from native flora that are only found in this part of the county. The new Nature Scape and Little Explorer's room are a big hit with families offering areas to play, create and investigate. Talented and dedicated staff have been providing care to the influx of young songbirds and raptors and finding new and innovative ways to enrich the lives of our avian ambassadors.

A buzz of saws and thud of hammers have added to the burst of activity as **Woody Woods, Chris Blankenship Excavating and Pioneer Vocational** Home remodeling class donate their time and talents to prep the location, set posts and frame up a new eagle enclosure. Plans are for volunteers to complete the project through the summer in time for Tahoe, our new Bald Eagle to move in this fall.



It is truly a magical place. Take time this summer to come visit us!

Gail Laux

OHIO BIRD SANCTUARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President: Thomas Witkowski
Vice Pres.: Richard Thompson
Treasurer: Zachary Bramlage
Secretary: Jay Allred
Valerie Ashcraft
Preston Boyd
Nicole Lewis
Sheila Hummel
Alex Kulka

STAFF

Executive Director
Gail Laux
Operations Assistant
Abby Bramlage
Curator of Birds
Mary Meixner
Program Coordinator
Emily Smith
Youth Programming
Julie Schwartz

Naturalist

Jan Ferrell
Susan Kalkbrenner
Dawne Snyder

Bird Care

Stephanie Lewis
Tracie Stadelman





Come and Play at Our Nature Scape!

Emily Smith, Program Coordinator

One of our goals at the Ohio Bird Sanctuary is to create ways in which people can interact with nature. With a growing number of families, field trips, and campers that visit us every year, we decided to incorporate a nature themed play area as a part of the Ohio Bird Sanctuary.

In an area previously characterized by thick shrubs and fallen limbs, you will now find a cleared space with various activities for children. The activities found within the Nature Scape were designed to encourage open-ended play and exploration. We want children to use their imagination to come up with creative ways to play and interact with the activities. We also hope the Nature Scape will help children appreciate nature and learn about their environment.



Shaded by large pine trees, the Nature Scape is located near our Education Center. The area currently includes a Monarch caterpillar tunnel, slack line, eagle's nest, climbing logs, tic-tac-toe board, nature weaving frame, wingspans of various bird species, path of animal tracks, and table and chairs made of logs. Some elements that will be added soon include a rope spider web, library box, and whispering discs. We are very excited about this new play area, and we are eager to see it be used by families, field trip groups, and campers. We hope it will help connect children and their families to the great outdoors. So if you are looking for a way to spend some time playing outside this summer, come visit our Nature Scape!

The Nature Scape was made possible by Robert and Ester Black Family Fund at Richland County Foundation, Corpad, and J&F Construction.

Junior Naturalist Group Ready for the Summer

Have you ever noticed a group of youth in tie-dye shirts hanging out or helping at the Ohio Bird Sanctuary? If so, then you have caught a glimpse of our Junior Naturalists. The Junior Naturalists at the Ohio Bird Sanctuary are a group of students ages 13-18 years old. They meet throughout the year to learn about wildlife and the environment as well as engage in nature-related service projects.



This year, the Junior Naturalists have done an amazing job of helping with Ohio Bird Sanctuary events including the Valentine's Day event, "Love is in the Air," and Mohican Wildlife Weekend. They have also attended the Ohio Wildlife Diversity Conference, visited the Ashland University Wetlands Lab, and volunteered with trail cleanup and maintenance here at the Sanctuary.

This enthusiastic group is now gearing up for the summer. In June, the Junior Naturalists will go hiking and cave exploring. In July, the group will be working in collaboration with the Ohio Division of Wildlife on the lower Walhonding River to learn about mussels. Then, in August, they will be camping out to watch the Perseid Meteor Shower. Over the summer, members of the group will also assist with Ohio Bird Sanctuary camps. It will be a busy, but fun summer for the Junior Naturalists! I am certainly looking forward to adventuring and learning with them. They are a fantastic group, and their love for the outdoors is evident in everything they do.



Trade the SCREEN for some GREEN this summer!

See our website www.ohiobirdsanctuary.com for Nature Camp info and registration forms.

- June 6-8: Outdoor Survival Camp
- June 13-15 Critter Camp
- June 25-27 Critter Camp
- August 1-3: Creepy-Crawly Camp
- August 8-10 Outdoor Survival Camp



All camps run from 9am-1pm and are open to kids ages 6-12 years.

Our professional staff will incorporate games, hikes, animal encounters, activities, and snacks around a central theme.

Pre-registration and payment is required.

OHIO BIRD
SANCTUARY

FREE PUBLIC PROGRAMS!



Saturday at 1pm @ OBS
Bird Encounter

An informal presentation to meet one of our Avian ambassadors and learn about its species.



Saturday at 7pm @ Mohican Resort, Perrysville
Bird of Prey Presentation

Staff of the Sanctuary will present an educational and up close program with two of our birds of prey. Program is free and open to the public.



Spring at OBS: Its not just baby bird season.. It's big yellow bus season too!

Julie Schwartz, Youth Program Coordinator

Everyone has a field trip memory. They are the highlight of the school year for many children and they have the potential to provide students with stimulating experiences. Field trips may also inspire action or continued learning and can bring what is taught in the classroom to life. A visit may even provide a child with the inspiration for career choices and encourage them to strive for a higher level of achievement. This spring the Sanctuary hosted over 1,500 students providing the benefits of the field trip experience.

Field trips can:

- ◆ Provide real experiences related to subjects of study
- ◆ Enrich and expand the curriculum
- ◆ Strengthen observation skills by immersing a child in sensory activities
- ◆ Expand a child's awareness of their own community
- ◆ Make them more aware of how things in the world work
- ◆ Provide much needed time outdoors



We're very proud of the field trips we offer at the Ohio Bird Sanctuary and are thrilled that so many schools choose to bring their students here year after year. The numbers of field trips are growing as the word spreads and new schools are finding us. Our field trips range from 1.5 hours to 4 hours and include guided tours, bird shows, animal encounters in the aviary, hikes, and educational activity stations. The months of April and May are what we call, "the best kind of busy," with anywhere from 100-200 bright-eyed & boot-clad students passing through here each week. After all, our passion for sharing an appreciation of nature with kids is dependent upon having kids here to share it.



There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children.
One is roots and the other WINGS."

~Goethe



NEWSLETTER OF THE OHIO BIRD SANCTUARY

NEWS HAWK

Non-profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mansfield,
Ohio
Permit # 114

Or Current Resident

Ohio Bird Sanctuary

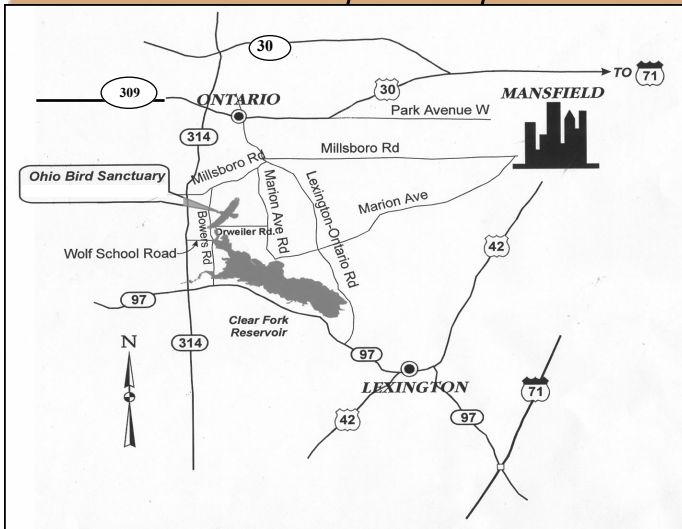
3774 Orweiler Road
Mansfield, OH 44903
(419) 884-4295

www.OhioBirdSanctuary.com

www.OhioBirdSanctuary.com

OPEN
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Sunday 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

CLOSED: Mondays and Holidays



For more directions, Please see our Website.

Membership

Your membership supports our programs and the care of the education birds.



Owl \$25

Annual newsletter and free admission to bird display area.

Hawk \$50

Owl member benefits plus free admission for two guests

Falcon \$100

Owl member benefits plus free admission for unlimited number of guests and a OBS mug

Eagle \$500

Eagle member benefits plus a OBS t-shirt and free admission to OBS special events.



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Member of



Earth Share
OF OHIO