

## OHIO BIRD



## CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

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### Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative Hires New Program Coordinator

OBCI is a diverse coalition of over 90 groups that seeks to more effectively conserve and manage birds in Ohio by fostering partnerships among state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, businesses, and the public. OBCI partners are voluntary, bringing their valuable time and energy to the table in support of the mission of integrated bird conservation. The OBCI Coordinator is a dedicated position with a directive to develop collaboration and provide guidance to OBCI partner organizations regarding the conservation of Ohio's birds.

OBCI was founded in 2004 through the efforts of the Ohio Working Group of Partners in Flight. In 2005 and 2006, individuals involved in OBCI established the organization, its bylaws, Coordinating Council and standing committees, and hired OBCI's first Program Coordinator, Suzanne Cardinal. After 2007, OBCI lacked funding to support a full-time coordinator, but members of the OBCI Executive Council continued to seek funding for the position. Recently, they secured funding from the USFWS and state wildlife grant funds from the Ohio Division of Wildlife to hire Amanda Conover as Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative Program Coordinator.

Before coming to OBCI in mid-September of this year, Amanda Conover received a B.S. in Environmental Resource Management from Penn State University in 2007 and a M.S. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Delaware in 2011. Her research at Penn State was in biogeochemistry, examining the impacts of urbanization on greenhouse gas emissions from soils. She also interned with the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to monitor invasive species. Before returning to graduate school, she researched soil carbon sequestration at the University of Pennsylvania. For her graduate work at the University of Delaware, she studied the impacts of non-native plants on bird populations in suburban forest fragments using occupancy modeling of point count and vegetation data. Since coming to Ohio this year, she worked as a research assistant for Ohio State University and surveyed birds in a variety of habitats across the state as part of the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II.

In the coming months, Amanda Conover will focus on increasing public awareness for OBCI and reconnecting with OBCI member organizations. With assistance from OBCI partners, she will identify possible collaborations and conservation projects across Ohio. OBCI has recently completed an All-Bird Conservation Plan for Ohio (available at [http://www.obcinet.org/plans/All-bird\\_Plan\\_Ohio\\_Oct\\_2010\\_final.pdf](http://www.obcinet.org/plans/All-bird_Plan_Ohio_Oct_2010_final.pdf)), and this document will be used to identify priority species and habitats on which to focus our efforts. Future projects are expected to include habitat restoration for a variety of target species, as well as assisting partners with acquisition of priority lands for both migratory and breeding bird habitat.

Amanda Conover hopes that, "By developing strong partnerships with a variety of organizations, OBCI can create the synergy needed to enhance and expand bird conservation efforts in Ohio." For more information on OBCI projects and events, contact Amanda Conover at 614-432-8489 or [obcicoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:obcicoordinator@gmail.com), or visit our website at [www.obcinet.org](http://www.obcinet.org).