



Birds of a Feather Flock Together

Wayne National Forest celebrates International Migratory Bird Day with an art exhibition and book release event.



This green heron carved by Ora Anderson was one of nearly 20 of his bird carvings on display at the International Migratory Bird Day event.

Those of similar taste congregate in groups. Forty-five nature enthusiasts and bird watchers did just this on May 12th for an unique International Migratory Bird Day event, hosted by the Wayne National Forest. The event celebrated the release of Ora E. Anderson's book, "OUT OF THE WOODS: A Bird Watcher's Year", a compilation of 59 of his essays and poems.

Ora Anderson, a well-known Athens, Ohio resident and friend of the Wayne National Forest, passed away in August 2006 before the book was published. He was a birder, a naturalist, and an author, and has been described as "the Thoreau of the Appalachian woods" for his essays and poems about nature. Over the years, people in Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky came to look forward to Ora's weekly readings of his essays on WOUB, the National Public Radio affiliate.

During the event, family, friends, and the editor of the book shared personal stories about Ora and what it was like working on the book. The book takes the reader through nature's seasonal cycle. Not all the writings are solely about birds; many speak to the plants, animals and Appalachian landscapes of which Ora was so fond.

Ora Anderson was equally known as a fine carver of North American birds. He reportedly carved over 1,000 birds during his lifetime, which are collected and treasured by people throughout the United States and other countries. Ora's family and friends selected several carvings from their personal collections for a one-day viewing at the event.

International Migratory Bird Day celebrates the journey many species of birds take part in each spring as they travel from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds – sometimes traveling several thousand miles between the two areas. Ora's carvings are so realistic that one person thought they were "stuffed birds". People attending the event were able to get a close-up look at some of the birds that are migrating through the area, and some that stop and nest in the Wayne National Forest.

Ora Anderson witnessed the purchase of the first Wayne National Forest tract of land in 1934, and has since followed the growth of the Wayne. His stories of how the Wayne

National Forest has changed since the 1930's is chronicled in Jean Andrew's award winning documentary, "A Forest Returns".

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