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# THE GOLDFINCH

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVIESS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 2003

MEETINGS EACH 2<sup>ND</sup> MONDAY SEPTEMBER THRU JUNE  
AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 7<sup>TH</sup> & J.R. MILLER BOULEVARD

## Just Because It's Green Doesn't Mean It's Healthy

There's a reason that the guy seen tugging a hose from a tank truck across lawns wears rubber boots, gloves, and sometimes a mask. There is a reason small warning flags are stuck into the ground after the spraying of the lawn by the man wearing the protective clothing. Because of legal liability, parents of innocent (or not so innocent) children and pets are advised to keep their kids and critters a respectful distance until the potency of the chemicals returns to a less toxic level.

A high price is paid for the perception of perfection in our outdoor living rooms. We've been sold a concept, a bill of goods, the equivalent of an advertising coup. People will buy almost anything. Why, there was a time when women had a rib or two surgically removed in order to have waspish waists and for centuries, women in the Orient submitted to foot binding in order to appear delicate and dainty.

On Monday April 14<sup>th</sup>, Eric Williams will present a program for our club about how even small areas of outdoor space can be made wildlife friendly. Patios and expanses of turf outside the windows of our homes, workplaces, and commercial buildings hold vast potential. We will learn how to restore or improve habitat for birds and small mammals with the beauty of native plants and water sources needed to sustain a myriad of life as it was meant to be here in Kentucky.

You won't want to miss this presentation which has been planned for the time of year when the primordial urge to get outside and dig in the soil is almost too much to bear. Before listening to Eric's ideas for good ways to give-in to spring planting urges, you are invited to meet him one-on-one. Come have supper with Eric at the MoonLite before the meeting, 5:30 Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.

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### MARCH FIELD TRIP REPORT

If Audubon were only about birds, the field trip to L. B. Davidson Wildlife Management Area last month would have been almost a complete bust. Audubon is more than an ornithological organization, however, it embraces the entire web of life. Many Audubon members are quick to say that their favorite part of 'The Big Picture' is the bird part, but it is not their exclusive interest. The birds were scarce as along the steep bluffs rocks were lifted in a search for salamanders. More common than bird calls were shouts of the names of wildflowers that had begun to bloom .

The wildflowers and salamanders were both worth the effort of the club's Saturday morning excursion. Beautiful specimens of the Slimy and Spotted salamander were found. Rob Rold reported that he had recently identified Wood frogs calling on one of his salamander study trips to the area. Wood frogs are not common in this part of Kentucky.

Steve Hahus gathered some of the jello-like clusters of salamander eggs from a spring pond to take to an aquarium in his classroom for his students' study and enjoyment. All the wiggling inside the eggs indicated that hatching was not far in the offing.

Returning to L.B. Davidson WMA this spring felt good, like coming home. There is comfort in knowing the turf and its features.

*The LBDWMA ticks judged Brenda Little to be 'The Tastiest of Them All'. **Five** of them chose her for their lunch.*

# Bluebirds of Happiness Worm Their Way into Many Hearts

The Kentucky Bluebird Society met at Kenlake Resort Park in Land Between the Lakes the last week-end in March. The accomplishments of this young organization are amazing. Working with a very small budget, they have rapidly grown their membership and they are busily recruiting schools to monitor nest box trails located outside their classrooms. The Society will provide 5 nest boxes for any school that has grounds suitable to host a trail and that agrees to follow the prescribed weekly monitoring of the boxes.

Bluebird Society volunteers build the boxes that are donated to schools. A KBS volunteer also has studied the best ways to contain the cost of a camera and cable while achieving the best transmission of photos from inside nest boxes. The Bluebird Society has a goal of placing cameras into nest boxes all across Kentucky for the classroom study of birds in their nesting activities.

Bluebird Nest Box Trails as Core Curriculum was a featured portion of the KBS meeting. Teachers brought their students to the meeting to show video from cameras that transmit pictures from their nest box trail to monitors inside their classrooms. A teacher from Heath Elementary reported to KBS that in all her 19 years of teaching, she does not recall a project that has garnered the 100% interest and enthusiasm of her students the way the Bluebird Nest Box study has done. The interest of her students has spread from the school grounds into their homes and has even infected several of the students' grandparents who have volunteered to construct nest boxes for placement at students homes and elsewhere.

Wayland Alexander Elementary School in Hartford, Kentucky was quick to climb onto the nest box trail bandwagon the first week in

April. The Wayland students have completed their orientation session and proudly put up the 6<sup>th</sup> box near the school's front door in the line of sight from the window in their Principal's office. They will be on Spring Break this week, but they plan to stay on schedule with weekly monitoring of their trail.

Both Owensboro and Daviess County Schools were on Spring Break the first week of April and therefore none of their classes have yet had the opportunity to join in the trans-Kentucky nest box trail venture being sponsored by KBS.

Bluebirds that have selected boxes on the Hoover Hill Trail near Hartford began laying eggs the first day of the KBS meeting, March 28<sup>th</sup>. Hatching is expected beginning about April 10 to 15<sup>th</sup>. The 10 boxes on the Hoover Hill Trail have 5 active Bluebird nests as this newsletter goes to press. Like the Heath Elementary teacher, the neighbors on Hoover Hill have noticed that nothing has united them the way monitoring the nest boxes and watching the Bluebirds has.

Mary Kissel keeps an eye on the nest boxes that Daviess County Audubon put up last March along the eastern end of the Greenbelt Park. Mary reports that there has been some vandalism this spring to the boxes she watches. Sadly, a check of the nest boxes on the western end of the walking and bike path near Parrish Avenue revealed that there was vandalism at the opposite end of the park as well. The box where Bluebirds were incubating eggs, Box # 4, was destroyed sometime last week.

Although predators and vandals bring sadness to our hearts when the nesting activity of birds suffers a setback, already our chapter has plans to replace the damaged boxes and to try to set them in such a way as to make vandalism less likely.

# April Calendar

Saturday April 12<sup>th</sup> 9 to 11 AM  
Environmental Education planning  
session at Joe Ford Nature Center.  
Brunch will be provided.

Monday April 14<sup>th</sup>

8:30 AM to 1 PM Nature Day for  
Faust Elementary School at  
Owensboro Community College.

Monday April 14<sup>th</sup> 7:30 PM

Monthly meeting at First Christian  
Church. Backyard Wildlife Habitat  
Program will be presented by Eric  
Williams.

Saturday April 19<sup>th</sup>

7:30 AM- early afternoon Field  
trip to Perry County, Indiana. Meet at  
McDonalds/Rural King Hwy 60 East at  
the By-Pass

Sunday April 20<sup>th</sup> 2 PM Monthly  
bird count at Owensboro Community  
College [100<sup>th</sup> species guaranteed]  
Meet in the parking lot opposite Deer  
Park Elementary

Friday April 25<sup>th</sup> 8:30 AM to  
3PM Earth Day Celebration at  
Cravens Elementary School outdoors  
with Nature Study Stations

Saturday April 26<sup>th</sup> 1 to 3 PM  
Beginning Birding Classes at  
Pennyroyal Girl Scout Camp

Monday April 28<sup>th</sup> Directors'  
Meeting 7 PM at the Joe Ford Center

*Our sincere condolences to  
Carolyn and Eric Williams who have  
recently suffered the loss of a  
wonderful father and grandfather,  
Lawrence Scott*

We have had a crash of our Web site during the past month. The problem was first thought to originate with our host, Western Kentucky University. Then as matters worsened, it was learned that computer hardware was part or all of the lock-up. We are using the old tag line offered by many entities when they suffer a catastrophe: **We'll be back soon, better than before.** For now, we are out of commission and we ask your indulgence. We look forward to saying to you again very soon.....

Visit our Website

<http://audubon.wku.edu/audubon/daviess.html>

## **It's Time to Comb the Collie and Clean out the Hairbrush for the Birds**

**It would be a great kindness if you'd take the fur from your pet brushes, or from your own hair brushes for that matter, and attach the bundles of hair to tree branches in your yard. The lint from a clothes dryer filter would also be a good thing to place outside in some manner accessible to the birds. Some species search for softness to line their nests this time of year.**

**If losing one's mind, the way the folk legend warns, is worrisome, it may be comforting to know that many environmentalists are considered crazy to begin with.**

**Reminder to Birdathon participants: It is time to start signing-up your sponsors for next month's fundraiser. Ask for \$.10 to \$1.00 per species you identify.**

The Daviess County Audubon Society  
306 Hoover Hill Road  
Hartford, KY 42347-9522

**The Goldfinch**  
**April 2003**

DCAS New Membership Form Code J 52      Clip and Mail to 306 Hoover Hill Road, Hartford, KY 42347-9522

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I would like to subscribe to paperless membership renewal. Please send me one bill 2 months before my membership expires. 800-274-4201

For new members:      \_\_\_\_ Cost to renew a regular membership is \$35 per year. \_\_\_\_ \$15 Seniors & Students

- The cost for a new membership in the Daviess County Audubon Society,      (Newsletter subscription
- Kentucky Audubon Council, and      is included with
- The National Audubon Society is \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 per year or \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 for two years      membership)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Subscription \$10 per year      -----

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DCAS Officers, Chairpersons and Directors:    Mike Henshaw, President      Rob Rold, Vice-President  
Tom Hicks, Secretary-Treasurer      Carolyn Williams, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President and Education    Madeline  
Oettinger, Secondary Education      Bill Little, Publicity      Charles Morris, Community College Census  
Mary Kissel, Birdathon      Brenda Little, Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair  
Eric Williams, Webmaster      John Thacker, Registered Agent  
John Thacker, Registered Agent

