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# THE GOLDFINCH

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVIESS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2004

MEETINGS EACH 2<sup>ND</sup> MONDAY SEPTEMBER THRU JUNE

AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 7<sup>TH</sup> & J.R. MILLER BOULEVARD

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## SEEING THE FOREST TREES AND ALL

KATY WILDING, THE SPEAKER AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING, IS SOON TO BE A MEMBER OF OUR AUDUBON FAMILY

Several of us have met Katy since she and Eric Williams began dating several months ago. Katy and Eric plan to marry next June. Eric is the Webmaster for our chapter, in fact for The Kentucky Audubon Council as well. He has helped with youth educational efforts, he has presented programs for our club, and he has been the leader on several of our field trips.

Katy is employed by the Forestry Service and will discuss trees, Kentucky forests, the Forest Service and related topics at the meeting on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. Trees are so important to our environment as a food source, providers of wood, a renewable natural resource, shelter for many forms of life, and cleansers of the pollutants from the atmosphere. No other plant has such a vital role in cleaning the air as trees.



You will want to attend this meeting not only to hear Katy's program presentation but to meet someone whom we hope will be as important in the events and activities of our club as Eric has been. Join Eric and Katy at the MoonLite for Supper with the Speaker at 5:30. It is your chance to meet the gal who has captured the heart of our most eligible bachelor.

## Radzelovage Farm will Host Outing February 28<sup>th</sup>

Walt and Rose Ann Radzelovage enjoyed week-ends at their 100 acre farm in Hancock County for many years. Since Walt's death, Rose Ann has wished for others to visit the wooded hills and valleys that are abundant with birds and other wildlife.

On Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, at 8 AM everyone is invited to meet at the parking area behind McDonalds, in the last row of Rural King's parking lot, on Highway 60 West. From this meeting place we will carpool and caravan to the farm. The drive is expected to take about 45 minutes and the field trip is expected to last about 2 hours, ending around noon.

During the past several months, Rob Rold has used the wooded area for bird photography. He has been luring birds with suet and seeds so that it is expected that there will be some good winter birding awaiting us. Bundle up and pack a snack.

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# February Calendar

Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup>

10:30 AM **Education Committee**  
Meeting at Joe Ford Center

Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>

7 PM Regular monthly meeting at First Christian Church, 7<sup>th</sup> & J.R. Miller Boulevard. We'll be **Talkin' Trees** with Katy Wilding.

Friday-Monday, February 13-

16<sup>th</sup> The Great Backyard Bird Count  
<http://www.birdsource.org>

Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>

*TV Worth Watching*, a program about **Turkey Vultures** by Bill Lynch will be Evansville Audubon Society's topic beginning at 7 PM at Wesselman Nature Center.

Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>

7 PM **Directors' Meeting** at First Christian Church

Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>

8 AM to Noon. **Field Trip** to Hancock County for winter birding. For more information phone Rose Ann Radzelovage at 683-5972

8 AM to Noon. Annual clean-up and repair of the nest boxes on the **Bluebird Trail** at the University of Southern Indiana. Dr. Chuck Price will provide donuts and hot cocoa for the volunteers at Grimes Haus.

[www.usi.edu/bluebird/cleanupday.html](http://www.usi.edu/bluebird/cleanupday.html)

Thanks to all who sent messages of support after the death of my father. He always felt he was a long-distance member of the Daviess County Audubon Society. I feel blessed to have friends like you as part of my extended family.  
Mary Kissel

## DCAS is Awarded

### a \$400 Grant

### by *Together We Care*

In December our chapter was thrilled to learn that we had been successful in our first attempt to garner a funding grant for one of our educational projects. We applied to an organization in Hartford, Kentucky that is dedicated to asset building in the youth of the community. We asked their support of our plans to install a video camera into a nestbox on the campus of Wayland Alexander Elementary School.

Since being awarded the grant, we have met with the staff at Wayland to lay out plans for the location of the nestboxes. Two boxes will be equipped with cameras for transmission of images into a 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classroom, and from there, to any and all of the other classrooms in the school whenever desired. Mr. Bill Freels of Paducah continues to serve as our mentor and as the giver of camera boxes and other supplies. If the birds will choose the boxes with cameras, they will have an audience of over 700 young people plus excited faculty and staff. During the past 2 years, Eastern Bluebirds, Chickadees, a House wren, and a Tree Swallow pair have successfully fledged young from the nestbox trail on the school grounds.

While the Eastern Bluebird is our most desired species for the awaiting cameras, the students will be happy no matter which species selects their boxes next month.

[www.daviessaudubon.org](http://www.daviessaudubon.org)

# As Good As It Gets

January's Field Trip Report Thank you, Mike and Charlie

'We must be crazy' was a line of thought that crossed the minds of 8 stalwart bird watchers last Saturday morning. The thermometer hovered, shivered, [if it had teeth they would have chattered] around the 0 degree-mark even after the sun rose above skies that were only partly cloudy. The people who ventured out for almost a 3-hour drive down to Ballard Wildlife Management Area did so because they have dreamed of a winter field trip to watch Bald Eagles for a long time. Mike Henshaw led the trip and the preparations he made with the Management Area's Manager, Charlie Wilkins, made the day rewarding for everyone who dared to go out into the very cold, but very beautiful world of the Wildlife Management Area.

When we arrived, Charlie had an old school bus revved up, rumbling, pumping warm air inside, ready to roll. The bus is painted in a camouflage pattern and it is a noisy old chitty chitty bang bang vehicle, but it really made our attempts at Eagle watching comfortable. For the first quarter hour as no Eagles were sighted, Charlie muttered, "Maybe they're over the river fishing?" Fears of having endured the cold and the commute for nothing began to creep across everyone's mind except for the undaunted 5.5 year-old who was our youngest birder that morning. Charlie wrestled the steering wheel left and right guiding the metal box full of eager eyes down rutted lanes, through standing water, beside corn fields planted for the critters, finally stopping at the high banks of the river. No Eagles anywhere, in either direction. The only birds to be seen since we boarded the bus were Red-tailed hawks, the first 2 of a dozen Great blue herons, Ring-billed gulls, and mixed flocks of water fowl: Pintails, Shovelers, Mallards, and Gadwalls sitting on the ice.

Skillfully, Charlie backed the bus up, manhandled the steering wheel to keep the back tires out of mud that could keep us stuck, and headed for another part of the huge tract where he thought the Eagles might be. "There's an immature", Charlie nodded and made a quick wave of his arm toward the top of a tree about a hundred yards away. He slowed, then stopped so we could fix our binoculars on the stoic bird paying us no heed whatsoever. The bus had not bounced and weaved, careened actually, much farther when Charlie cheerfully announced, "There's two soaring. No there's four, five!" We watched as two of the five Eagles went through their high altitude diving, spiraling, and free falling mating ritual. One of our birders described it as looking like mortal combat.

Charlie then guided the bus near a flock of Snow geese and Blue geese resting near a cornfield. He told us that they would soon "Get up" as the roar of the engine got too close for comfort. You have never seen such a sight as approximately 20,000 big birds out of a flock of 75,000 take flight all at once and then begin a graceful aerial ballet with groups in the hundreds soaring in unison in every direction above you. It was truly awesome.

From that point on the, for most of the next half hour, shouts came from all over the bus, "There's 2 over here." "I see 3, no 4." "Look at the deer. Must be a dozen of 'em." "Did you see the Wild turkeys?" "Was that a Coyote on the ice?" "Look there go 5, 4 with 1 immature, taking off. They were eating a dead duck out on the ice." "There's more deer. May be 20 this time."

Charlie took us to see one of the two active nests in the Management Area and to our delight there sat one of the Eagles in the nest. Kim Long-Ewing had brought a pair of binoculars so large that they have to be steadied atop a tripod. She was able to focus on the Eagle in the nest, as well as some on the wing, to such a fine magnification that we could see individual feathers.

Charlie says there are about 30 Eagles in residence at Ballard now. We think we saw 25.

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Hartford, Kentucky 42347

February 2004

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**Please check the address label above to determine the expiration date of your membership. To renew your membership, please send a check for \$10 to Charles Morris, Treasurer 1400 Woodbridge Trail, Owensboro, Kentucky 42301. Include this page with your check so that your old address label can be used to update your newsletter subscription which is part of your local membership dues. Thank you.**

**No longer does a portion of the dues you pay to the National Audubon Society either as a new member or as a renewing member come to our chapter. Therefore we strongly urge you first to keep your membership current on the local level and then if you wish you may renew your membership in The National Audubon Society as well. Our chapter is actively conducting fundraisers to maintain our treasury, but we need the income of local dues in order to finance the printing and mailing of The Goldfinch. Thank you.**

**Officers 2003-2005**

President	Rob Rold 684-3209
Vice President	Carolyn Williams 683-5863
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Steve Hahus
Secretary/Treasurer	Charles Morris

daviessaudubon.org

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