
THE GOLDFINCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVIESS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2003

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

Terns are the Topic of November's Meeting

Right across the river, one good tern truly does deserve another. The father of Indiana's Least tern program, Charles Mills of Newburgh, Indiana, will discuss the history of the program at the November 10th meeting, set for 7 PM at First Christian Church, Seventh & J.R. Miller Boulevard.

Mills first identified Least terns at Gibson County, Indiana's Cinergy power plant on the Wabash River in 1986. In 1993, he began work with a wildlife biologist for the Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife. From four or five birds, as many as 100 adults have been found at colonies in Gibson County, Rockport's American Electric Power Plant and River Island near Grandview, Indiana.

Although the U.S. Least tern population has increased in later years, both man and nature harmed these birds. For years, terns were shot for the millinery trade, and high tides often wipe out entire colonies along the coast, according to the *Audubon Society Guide to North American Birds*.

Mills also has traveled extensively to watch birds, with journeys taking him to Europe, South America, Central America and Latin America. He's also a longtime participant in the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count.

Mills has taught for 39 years, the last 29 at Gibson Southern High School in Ft. Branch, Indiana. He currently teaches Organic Chemistry, Chemistry I and II and is chairman of the school's Science Dept.

November Meeting.....

He also has taught World History in summer school. His enthusiasm for teaching and his rapport with students have inspired many to pursue science-related careers.

Members are invited to a no-host dinner with Charles Mills before the meeting November 10th at the MoonLite at 5:30 PM.

Field Trip November 15th is to Higginson- Henry Wildlife Area

The wildlife area in Union County that will be visited next month offers a great deal of potential for studying a variety of birds. If the water level is adequate in the impoundment areas, there may be waterfowl and some shorebirds this year.

Native grasses have been planted and provide excellent habitat for several species of sparrows. There are walking trails through a stand of hardwoods and bridges have been built across streams.

To caravan or carpool please meet at the Joe Ford Nature Center at 8:00 AM. Parking will be permitted at the GRADD lot, which is adjacent. The trip is expected to conclude around noon. More information

hshahus@aol.com or 733-9342.

www.daviessaudubon.org

Education Programs Saw Three Firsts Last Month



Ms. Sangalli's First Graders go birding

Our Education Committee volunteers were delighted to experience completely new facets of our efforts with Beginning Birders last month. We used our own set of binoculars for the **first** time. We hosted Deer Park Elementary's 3rd and 4th graders at the Powell Bird Blind located at the Pennyroyal Girl Scout Camp. Each child had his own pocket field guide of Kentucky birds along with his own pair of 4 X binoculars.

Another **first** was that one of the students came to the Beginning Birding classes on an electric cart due to a walking disability. Although the young girl opted to walk the short distance from the shelter down the incline to the bird viewing blind, it was gratifying to us to know that the blind is not off limits to people with handicaps. In the planning stages of the construction of the blind, we worked to make the path and entry to the blind wheelchair accessible.

The third **first** for our classes last month was that we geared our presentation to Whitesville Elementary's first graders. Ms. Sangalli's students are the youngest group we've ever worked with. They really amazed us with their enthusiasm, their ability to use the pocket field guides, and their artwork illustrating the observations they made on

their field trip to Yellow Creek Park. The students used tools such as kitchen spoons and spatulas to study the mechanics of different birds' beaks. It was a great day at the park.



First Graders study Binoculars 101 at Yellow Creek Park.

Joe Ford, one of the founders of our Audubon chapter, led walking tours pointing out plants along the way for the students who followed in his steps. He gave them a guided tour of the one-room school that has been refurbished for display at the park.

The predominant bird observed by the first graders was the Turkey vulture that glided overhead in large lazy circles. A dead tree, 'snag', near the parking lot gave the kids a perfect place to focus their binoculars. A woodpecker had drilled a hole for a nest near the top and the youngsters delighted in getting a close-up view of the bird's domicile.

The students followed-up their Beginning Birding experiences using watercolor pens to sketch their memories and impressions. Their drawings of the woodpecker's nest in a snag and the Turkey vulture circling above their heads show clearly that the lessons taught were well understood and retained.

November Calendar of Events

Tuesday, the 4th Election Day.
Please vote. Think of the future and vote Green if you can find a strong environmental candidate.

Monday, the 10th 5:30 PM Supper with the Speaker at the MoonLite.
7:00 PM Regular Monthly Meeting featuring Charles Mills presentation about Least Terns at First Christian Church.
Entry is at the J.R. Miller Portico.

Saturday, the 15th 8:00 AM meet at the Joe Ford Nature Center to begin drive for Field Trip to Higginson-Henry Wildlife Area in Union County.

Monday, the 24th 7:00 PM Directors' Meeting at First Christian Church.

Tuesday, the 25th
Tentative program, time and place yet to be arranged at press time, The Public's Right to Know about Genetically Engineered Foods. Members will be notified by e-mail when the details are solidified. If you do not have e-mail, you may contact Tom Hicks by mail at 5304 Highway 56 Owensboro, KY 42301 or by phone at (270) 684-1548.

Frankenfoods. Now that's scary!

By Brenda Little

I studied nutrition in college and prided myself on following a healthy diet as I morphed from co-ed to homemaker. As the years went by, I realized that foods I trusted to be healthy, wholesome and ummm! good were not always necessarily so. I learned that many packaged foods were loaded with fats, sodium, and chemical preservatives. It was a very long time before our government forced the listing of ingredients and their nutritional make-up on food labels.

In the past 5 years I developed a weight problem for the first time in my life. I met with a nutritionist to layout a healthy eating and exercise plan. I intensified my label reading and the attention I paid to fast food's make-up. One of the facts about how I and others had become overweight that I learned is a bad habit termed "mindless eating". I had to face the fact that like hundreds of millions of people from all walks of life, I was ingesting food without facing the music about what I was doing to my body.

It is because I believe that many of us eat mindlessly as we snack and shop that I am writing this editorial. There is a movement afoot to require the labeling of foods so that consumers can know when they are ingesting genetically engineered foods, in Europe dubbed *genetically modified or altered foods or organisms [GMO's]*. The 11th edition of Merriam Webster's Dictionary has included a term for foods created by recombinant DNA splicing that is *Frankenfoods* and they're not for me.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a form letter that you may sign, fold, stamp and mail to our Representative asking that the foods we buy tell us completely and honestly what we are eating. I encourage you to consider joining me in taking a stand about being able to eat mindfully. You may learn more about GMO's at www.thecampaign.org or by reading Seeds of Deception by Jeffrey M. Smith.

