

The Goldfinch

January
2011

Daviess County Audubon Society, www.daviessaudubon.net

Panel to discuss options for native grasses project

The chapter's efforts to establish a small native grasses plot along the David C. Adkisson Greenbelt Park take center stage at the Jan. 4 meeting. A panel of experts will provide guidance on establishing this habitat at 7 p.m. at First Christian Church, 7th and J.R. Miller Blvd.

The panel is scheduled to include Margaret Shea of Dropseed Native Plant Nursery in Goshen; Anita Arends, Nature Resources Conservation Service of the USDA; and David Stratton, art professor at Brescia University.

It was Stratton who initiated the pursuit of collaborative funding from the national organization for an area that returns the well-groomed area back to Mother Nature. This area would be enhanced with educational signage and outdoor sculptures.

President Brenda Little said the idea is a "win, win, win situation."

"First, the local government by way of

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Fran and Lynn Tichenor, Henry Connor and Jill Flachskam search for birds along the Horse Fork Creek Trail during the southern Daviess County Christmas bird count.

Hunting them down

South Daviess CBC tallies 57 species, 8,710 birds

Blanketing the southern and eastern parts of Daviess County, the Daviess County Audubon Society tallied 57 species and 8,710 individuals during its Christmas Bird Count Dec. 18.

Counters were pleased with the weather conditions – sunny, but not frigid – as they drove and walked in pursuit of birds. In the days before the count, president

Brenda Little and CBC chairman Mike Henshaw stressed the importance of participation – no matter the level of expertise. The keenest eagle eye is important, but so are those members willing to keep the count.

"Every time they're writing something down, they're losing time," Little said.

Time was of the essence from Pleasant Ridge to

Reid's Orchard and all parts in between. Surprises were around several corners. At Camp Pennyroyal Girl Scout Camp, Bill and Brenda Little and David Stratton spotted a cedar waxwing at the home of board member Lisa Leonard.

"I've never seen any there!" Leonard exclaimed.

In their area, they also

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January 2011 calendar

*Christmas Bird Count, West Daviess County, Jan. 1, 8 a.m. Jan Howard's residence, 3534 W. Parrish Ave.

*Meeting, 7 p.m. Jan. 4, First Christian Church, Seventh and J.R. Miller Blvd.

*Board meeting, 11:30 a.m. Jan. 17, home of Judy Adams, 2245 Canonero Loop Drive.

*Field trip to Peabody Wildlife Management Area, TBA.

Grasses

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the Parks Department wins because they can eliminate the cost of mowing. Second, the wildlife wins because they have habitat that nurtures them with food and shelter. Third, the human element of wildlife wins because we have cleaner air to breathe (fewer mower fumes), lower taxes to pay, and better birding to watch.”

But is it feasible to launch this project this year? Board members were disappointed to only receive \$550 for the project from the national organization – half of what was requested. Matching money is still being sought, so she hopes that Arends can help direct the club about finding money and supplies.

What should be planted? How should it be planted? Little said Shea has indicated that the chapter can plant a larger area and at a lower cost by using seeds. However, it would be much more labor-intensive. Plugs or grass in a smaller area would be more costly but require less labor.

The panel’s advice will be used for other decisions, including the use of other natives (i.e. wildflowers), location of the plot and the project’s emphasis – public education or wildlife habitat.

Dine with the panel at 5:30 at Moonlite.

Give a hoot

The 2011 Hooters calendar featuring owl photos is now available. Net proceeds benefit the Orphaned Wildlife (OWL) Rehabilitation Society for Birds of Prey. Full-sized wall calendars (\$12.95) and e-mailed single-sheet PDFs (\$5) may be purchased at hootersowlcalendar.com.



From left are CBC participants Fran Tichenor, Ken Hurm, Henry Connor, Mike Henshaw, Charles Morris, Jill Flachskam, David Stratton, Bill Little, Brenda Little, Pat Augenstein, Brenda Eaden, Lisa Leonard, Laura Morris, Judy Adams, Tony Eaden and Lynn Tichenor.

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spotted a black vulture, which was coaxed into lifting his wings, showing off the telltale white wingtips.

Charles and Laura Morris and Judy Adams had a nice variety of woodpeckers at birding hotspots on the eastern side of the circle, ranging from downies to a red-head at The Summit.

A huge flock of red-winged blackbirds caught the eyes of Henshaw, Pat Augenstein and Leonard, and Henshaw also noted the group counted two savannah sparrows.

Coming off knee surgery earlier in the week, Tony Eaden was crestfallen not to see the familiar flock of Canada geese at Owensboro Community & Technical College. However, he and wife Brenda caught up with more than 100 of them at Hillcrest Country Club. They also saw two of the six red-headed woodpeckers tallied during the day.

Finding the most species – 36 -- were Steve Hahus and



Charles and Laura Morris show off one of the new auto magnets that promote the chapter. (Judy Adams photo)

Ken Hurm, who traveled the southeastern part of the circle and found seven purple finches, a pileated woodpecker, a red-shouldered hawk, a swamp sparrow and a dozen American kestrels, Hahus said.

This year marked the first time the entire three-mile Horse Fork Creek trail was covered – from Heartland subdivision to the red-tailed hawk banner at the Higdon Road parking lot. Jill Flachskam, Henry Connor, Lynn and Fran Tichenor and

Mary Kissel were entertained by the antics of the day’s lone belted kingfisher, which is a frequent visitor behind Brushwood Apartments, as well as one of two great blue herons of the entire count.

The entire counting team -- which also included Shelly Hammonds and Teresa Matthews -- put in 86.5 hours during the day, driving 153.5 miles and walking 16.5.

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Light display raises funds for chapter

Week raises \$1,192 for nonprofit pool

Thanks to a spirited effort and a break in the weather, the Daviess County Audubon Society had a stellar week of fundraising at Christmas at Panther Creek Dec. 3-9. The club raised \$1,192.75, which goes into the coffer to be split with the county and four other nonprofit organizations.

"I think the most outstanding thing is how everybody just stepped up to the plate. I think that's just great for our club," president Brenda Little said.

The volunteer sheet was practically full by the end of the December meeting, and several others volunteered to be on-call and were tapped when unavoidable scheduling conflicts and health issues arose during the week.

The annual light show was plagued by rounds of bad weather, starting with the wettest Thanksgiving weekend in memory and working its way through a snowy and cold December.

"We should send a sympathy card to the people who are working tonight," Little said Dec. 13, when single-digit lows were predicted.

The busiest night was Dec. 4, when board members Donna Hanley (practically a former neighbor of Santa Claus up in Alaska) and Mary Kissel welcomed almost \$400 worth of business, which would translate to about 125 cars.

It has been a few years since the club worked the light show, and members were pleased to see all of the new lighted entries along with pathway for cars. Members were asked to work from 5:15 to about 9:15.

Volunteers for the event included: Ken Hurm, Rose Ann Radzelovage, Donna Hanley, Mary Kissel, Pat Augenstein, Jan Howard, Judy and Bob Adams, Winny Lin, David Stratton, Henry Williams, Mike Henshaw, Jill Flachskam and Henry Connor.



Donna Hanley was one of the volunteers who braved the elements at Panther Creek Park.



Tony and Brenda Eaden enjoy soup after the morning count.

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The day also marked the debut of car magnets for the car trunks and doors. Designed by Stratton and produced by Nick Murray of C4 Designs of Thomaston, Maine, the 16 x 16 and 3 x 16 magnets feature the chapter name and goldfinch logo, and the larger ones feature the web site. They are designed to identify the group as it wanders roadsides or conducts a wildlife activity and to alert fellow drivers. The eight sets included small and larger magnets to accommodate everything from SUVs to sedans.

Species sighted included: Canada goose, 318; mallard, 3; wild turkey, 114; great blue heron, 2; black vulture, 4; turkey vulture, 3; northern harrier, 2; sharp-shinned hawk, 1; Cooper's hawk, 4; red-shouldered hawk, 3; red-tailed hawk, 25; American kestrel, 58; killdeer, 1; rock pigeon, 95; Eurasian collared-dove, 18; mourning dove, 218; great horned owl, 1; barred owl, 1; belted kingfisher, 1; red-headed woodpecker, 6; red-bellied woodpecker, 41; yellow-bellied sapsucker, 1; downy woodpecker, 25; hairy woodpecker, 3; northern flicker, 3; pileated woodpecker, 4; blue jay, 236; American crow, 63; horned lark, 14; Carolina chickadee, 42; tufted titmouse, 40; white-breasted nuthatch, 19; Carolina wren, 20; golden-crowned kinglet, 1; eastern bluebird, 50; American robin, 60; northern mockingbird, 45; European starling, 3,198; yellow-rumped warbler, 12; eastern towhee, 6; chipping sparrow, 13; field sparrow, 7; Savannah sparrow, 2; song sparrow, 31; white-throated sparrow, 8; white-crowned sparrow, 6; dark-eyed junco, 60; northern cardinal, 99; red-winged blackbird, 350; eastern meadowlark, 63; common grackle, 2,605; brown-headed cowbird, 253; purple finch, 11; house finch, 50; American goldfinch, 91; house sparrow, 302.

These totals will be submitted to the National Audubon Society for its records as they use the information to track population shifts.

Members also are invited to take part in the New Year's Day count at 8 a.m., starting at Jan Howard's home, 3534 W. Parrish Ave. These reports are sent to the Kentucky Ornithological Society for its records.

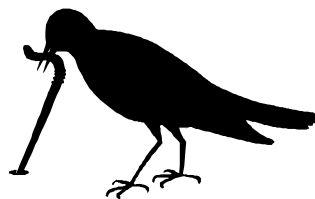
Project to promote kids' urban birding

Cornell mini-grant sought

In many Audubon activities, bird enthusiasts travel to lush woodlands to enjoy their feathered friends.

But what about the birds of the city?

The chapter is planning to pursue a Cornell University Celebrate Urban Birds mini-grant in order to work with Girls Inc. to help girls in grades 3-4 identify 16 urban birds through sight and sound.



President Brenda Little said the girls would be broken down into groups of a dozen or fewer for each class and would conduct each class a second time if there are more girls present than can accommodate with one session.

After-school birding classes will be conducted both indoors and outdoors using binoculars and bird guides. Volunteers – which include education chairman Winny Lin, Kenny Lin, Judy Adams and Little – plan to visit the campus to view the garden, which has a bird feeder and two nest boxes and see if additional feeders or plants are needed.

Little said the program will have an artistic component, too.

“Our program will incorporate hands-on learning about the targeted birds by using either clay or sketching using pastel colored pencils,” she explained. “We will study bird calls with the goal of taking the learning about birds into the daily lives of the children as they walk and play outside.”

The classes will begin in February in connection with the Great Backyard Bird Count and continue through mid-May. A celebration event will feature 10 minutes of bird watching. Gathered data will be submitted to Cornell University’s Lab of Ornithology.

If additional volunteers are found, organizers don’t rule out expanding the program to include grades 5 and 6.

The program will culminate around Mother’s Day with a celebration event featuring 10 minutes of bird watching from which the data gathered will be submitted to Cornell University’s Lab of Ornithology. If you’re interested in helping, contact Winny Lin at lin928276@bellsouth.net.

3 educators receive Audubon Adventures kits

Audubon Adventures kits are being made available to a limited number of local schools. This year’s topics include materials about bird migration, monarch butterfly and dragonfly migration, whales and sea turtles, and Action for Planet Earth, which talks about ways kids can work toward conservation. Kits have been sent to Grace Ford at Joe Ford Nature Center, Linda Gillis at Seven Hills Elementary and Lawanna Hodskins at Cravens Elementary.



Serving up appreciation

Sherry Henshaw, Mike Henshaw and Brenda Little examine a prototype of a platter that David Stratton is creating as a thank-you gift to Sherry Henshaw and Jan Howard for hosting this year’s Christmas bird counts.

DCAS board opts to donate to monument

The Daviess County Audubon Society board has voted to offer financial support for the John James Audubon monument.

About 1,000 pounds have been cut from the original sandstone rock, which has dropped the price to move the rock to Frankfort and set it in the Memorial Park on the Capitol grounds to about \$5,000. Its tallest edge is 11 feet and 2 inches. The Kentucky Audubon Council would like to put a likeness of Audubon’s wild turkey on an inset on the piece. State council members are trying to decide between bronze and granite for the inset, noting that bronze pieces in cemeteries have been a magnet for thieves.

This month, the KAC will be submitting a drawing to the state for its review.

Little is pleased with the site selected for the monument, noting it has good visibility from the road, conceding that there could be improved signage to direct people toward Monument Park.

While generally supportive of the concept behind the monument, board members were hesitant to offer a specific dollar amount for the project at this time. Lone dissenter Donna Hanley said she felt the Audubon mission could be better served if the chapter used those monies to hire a webmaster to increase its online presence on YouTube and other social networking sites. Judy Adams cautioned that the bulk of the DCAS money needed to stay with local education projects.

Others noted that Audubon needed to be promoted to tourists by the state because of his influence in art and conservation. For example, Winny Lin said when she has visitors, she takes them to John James Audubon State Park in Henderson.

One possibility being explored is making a donation based on a membership formula, with another fund set up for those wishing to make a donation as an individual. There are no plans to have a separate fundraising project for the monument.