

March 2012



The Goldfinch

Daviess County
Audubon Society

www.daviessaudubon.net



Breakfast as two, can.



Do you see it?



March's Program: Costa Rica

Chestnut-mandibled Toucan

DCAS BIRDERS TRAVEL TO COSTA RICA

Ten Audubon birders ventured on DCAS's first ever international field trip. The itinerary included hot spots of birding. On the itinerary were San Gerardo de Dota, the best place to spot a Resplendant Quetzal, the Cano Negro Wildlife Reserve and La Selva Biological Station. In all, we spotted over 146 species, most of them lifers for the group.

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Resplendant Quetzal, through the spotting scope.



Left to right are, Janet Howard, Brenda Eaden, Donna Wilson, Edna Murphey, Tony Eaden, Christian (our guide at LaSelva), Bob Adams, Merry Miller, Jeff Murphey, Winny Lin and Judy Adams.

March's Calendar:

Mar. 7th- DCAC meeting: 7 p.m., First Christian Church
(- Don't forget-- at 5:30 p.m., "Moonlite supper with the speaker" where that evening's speaker, guests and audubon members meet at the Moonlite to eat, talk, and eat some more.)

Mar. 13- DCAC Board Meeting, 11:30, Judy's House

Mar. 24-"field trip to Ben Hawes Park"—We'll meet at the entrance—8:30 a.m..

VOLES

VOLES PROGRAM TURNS HEADS

If someone had invited me to a program about voles, I might just have opted to stay home and watch basketball. Supper at Moon-lite with Mike and Cheryl Stokes affirmed that I'd made the right choice. Those of us at the table learned of their many trips to South Africa and Kenya, even garnering an invitation to stay at their home in Kenya and go birding in South Africa!



Mike's program about Voles, Prairie Voles in particular highlighted his research into the habits of these primarily nocturnal creatures. Each of us found ourselves both fascinated and entertained as Mike assured us that these creatures are not the tunneling moles that tear up our gardens. They are grassland creatures who may burrow, but don't tunnel. Research on Prairie Voles is assisting us in understanding the neurobiology of human behavior, primarily in areas such as social attachments, monogamy and nurturing behaviors. And Mike even brought along some caged examples for us to see.

The Voles Program proved that it is possible to have fun while learning. Our members were so engrossed by Mike Stokes' program that when he invited us to come along to Africa next summer where he will be doing research, heads turned and eyes opened wide at the prospect. He is such a great teacher that some of us might follow him anywhere.

For those who missed the program, DVD's are available for checkout at each meeting.

SCHOOLYARD BIRDS



These schoolyard feeders are Dennis Millay's at Eastview Elementary School.

Where'd They Go?

In the past couple of months, DCAS members have scattered in all directions, some on DIY field trips, one flying solo, one on the Polar Express, and a couple went for an Eagle watching weekend. Here's their story...

David Ayer's Journey: My trip took me with 3 other birders, guided by Chuck Mills, to Duluth, MN. Duluth was experiencing [record highs](#) with temps in the forties. I had a wonderful trip. Highlights included Spruce Grouse, Northern Hawk Owl, and a Snowy Owl which was seen across the border in Superior, Wisconsin. There is definitely a Snowy Owl invasion going on. The Snowy Owl prefers wide open spaces. There is really no secret to finding one. Just check every white blob that you see out the middle of a field. Most of them will probably be trash, but eventually you may get lucky. I am not aware of any sightings in Kentucky this winter, but there have been a couple in southern Indiana and Illinois.

Mad Hatter Pat Augenstein's Travels

HEARING MANY REPORTS OF SNOWY OWLS COMING SOUTH INTO KANSAS, MISSOURI (SMITHVILLE), NEBRASKA AND OHIO (AROUND LIMA); SAID TO BE THE BEST IN YEARS; ANYONE GOING TO TAKE A LOOK?

I WENT JUST OUTSIDE ST LOUIS TO SEE THE SNOWY OWL REPORTED THERE---GONE; WENT TO KANSAS CITY TO SEE THE 4 OWLS SPOTTED AT THE SMITHFIELD DAM----GONE; LAST WEEKEND I WENT TO RED BUD, ILLINOIS TO SEE THE SNOWY THERE----BINGO!; THIRD TIME IS CHARM; SAW AN ADULT SNOWY OWL; VERY WHITE, ALMOST SEEMED TO GLOW!; VERY FAR AWAY WITH MY BINOCULARS ; THEN WITH MY SCOPE I COULD SEE IT TURN ITS HEAD, FLUFF ITS WINGS AND CLEAN ITS TALONS; FABULOUS AND IT WAS JUST WHERE THE FIRST SIGHTINGS WERE, EASY TO FIND; WOW, WHAT A DAY!

Charles Morris' and Recruits, Tony Eaden and Mike Brown were goosed by a crane. I understand there have been some great birds at the Goose Pond. They are a Hooded Crane (Asian Species) and plenty of Whooping Cranes. Feb. 16, 2012 early AM. saw 33, not a typo, 33 Whooping Cranes on our trip at the Goose Pond. There were thousands of Sand hill Cranes, too many to count, they were everywhere. There was around 35 species totally seen. I have to say it was a trip of a lifetime.

Fran and Lynn Tichenor did the Weekend Eagle Watch at Land Between the Lakes and followed close on the heels of our gang of 10 at Goose Pond. The weekend went well. Friday & Saturday speakers were very good. Saturday night a couple from Louisville who are certified to care for wounded raptors brought bald eagle, golden eagle, horned owl who hooted the entire time, turkey vulture, assorted other feathered creatures. They got each one out of its cage and told its history & answered any questions. We sat like 10 feet away!!!!!!!

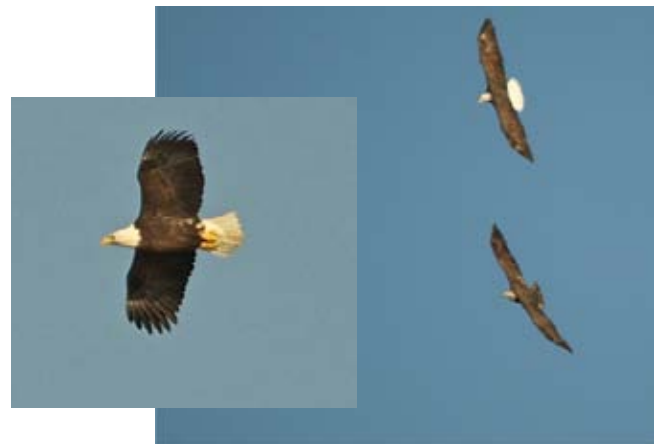
The van tour stopped 4 times and they set up scopes. A bald eagle sat on top of a phone pole & posed.

Saw lots of other birds and loons, fallow deer, ring billed gulls, hooded merganser, etc.

The boat tour was even better. We saw, 3 coyotes and 46 bald eagles.

We also went under the damaged bridge at Aurora and looked at the offending boat draped in steel and concrete. A weekend well spent (good weather helped). Fran

Editor's Note: Mandy, the world's best behaved Audubon Society Field Trip Dog spent Eagle Watch Weekend at a Doggie Resort and loved every minute of her mini vacation as a pampered pooch.



Eagle photos by Robbie Williams were taken at KY Lake Eagles Cruises aboard the CQ Princess.

As we moved into the week of our March field trip, we learned that the sandhill cranes had moved out of the Barren River Lake area. Being a flexible group, we changed our destination to Cecelia, KY, where thousands of cranes were reported. Thanks to Charles Morris, Ken Hurm, Mike Brown and Tony Eaden's urging, we made another change less than twenty-four hours before our departure time. These birders had trekked to Goose Pond WMA near Linton, IN. earlier in the week and counted 33 and 22 whooping cranes among the thousands of sandhills!

Thank goodness for email! Three of us left from the south parking lot of OCTC, six traveled from Madisonville, Morganfield, Henderson and Evansville to rendezvous at Beehunter number 1. And Jill Flachskam (remember that she interned at Goose Pond) met us there as well. Jill hopped into the lead car and we saw our first flock of sandhills within ten minutes. And there were seven whoopers among them! Scopes and cameras were set up and we thoroughly enjoyed the show.

Combined, DCAS birders saw Canada Geese, American coots, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Snow Geese, American Black Ducks, Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Coopers Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Red-wing Blackbird, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Rock Pigeon, American Crow, Horned Lark, Eastern Blue Bird, Northern Mockingbird, American Robin, European Starling, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Eastern Meadowlark and a partridge in a pear tree. Whew!

It was especially fun to share this day with our new friends who joined us as a result of our outreach program in Henderson. Welcome to Bob Broddle, Randy and Kathy Holley, and Jim and Pam Kimsee. If you haven't officially joined DCAS, please do...you're good birders and we'd love to have you on board. As a result of our successful trip, Fran and Lynn Tichener drove up on Monday and had a similarly satisfying day.

CRANES WHOOP IT UP FOR DCAS



MARY HOSKINS

When Maryann Hoskins' application for a local membership arrived in the mail, we all were amazed and curious; wonder why someone from New Orleans, so far away, wants to be a member of Daviess County Audubon Society?

The answer to our questions came on New Year's Day. We got to meet Maryann when she joined us for the KOS Winter Bird Count and stayed with us at Janet Howard's house long enough to explain how we came to her attention.

Maryann got into birding about 5 years ago. She grew up in Owensboro, left for college in New Orleans after graduating from Apollo High School and stayed to practice law in Louisiana. Her mom lives in Owensboro and clips items of interest from the Messenger-Inquirer to send to Maryann.

We should be very grateful to Winny Lin for her diligence in taking and sending pictures of our group's activities to the local paper. And we should be appreciative of the Messenger-Inquirer's Community Pages for running photos and stories about our club as well. Because as Maryann learned about us, she thought that maybe during her two brief visits to Owensboro every year, she might be able to join us in our activities.

If someone from almost 700 miles away can be attracted by the programs and events that we sponsor, does it not make sense that we are reaching the hearts and minds of others when we post news of our happenings to the Community Pages.

Just one short time with Maryann makes us hope that she will plan some of her visits home to coincide with events for she is a delight. She is energetic, enthusiastic, and thrilled when she sees birds such as the Eastern Bluebird that she rarely sees down around the Big Easy. We're invited to come down to bird with her at Grande Isle during migration when the birdin' is easy as exhausted birds fallout after crossing the Gulf.



Photo by Ken Hurm

What's Her Story?
Outreach as far as New Orleans, 700 Miles, Now That's Outreach!



After Winny did the presentation of "Calling All Birds", 30 some of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders made bird feeders with pine cone and crisco.

Winny Lin spoke to the Green Team of 30 third, fourth, and fifth graders at Tamarack Elementary School on Jan. 19th after school about "Calling all Birds", a powerpoint made by Mary Kissel. The intermediate students learned to identify the common birds in their neighborhood, different bird calls, and finally made their own calls using their names. They also had a lot of fun trying to make simultaneous and complex bird songs with a friend.

JOE FORD NATURE CENTER

The Joe Ford Nature Center welcomed Mary Hill of Owensboro to its second Great Backyard Bird Count, conducted Feb. 19.

Hill enjoys watching birds, but welcomed the opportunity to learn more about her feathered visitors. Using a backyard bird information sheet, Rose Ann Radzelovage and Mary Kissel helped build on her knowledge. Radzelovage encouraged her to watch for the winter coloration of the American goldfinch, noting that the Ford finches seemed to be very green and wondered if they were picking up the coloration of the wooded area surrounding them.

Hill was unfamiliar with dark-eyed juncos. Kissel noted they are called by their “snowbird” nickname. She stressed the importance of looking for their distinctive white tail bands when they flit around.

Both points of emphasis were useful during the formal count. Four goldfinches crammed onto the feeders. Hill was fascinated by the goldfinches’ ability to eat upside down and wondered about the placement of perches on the feeders. It provided an opportunity to talk about the different types of thistle feeders at the bird sanctuary. Both traditional perches and upside-down feeders (designed to discourage house finches) have proven to be popular.

A junco also showed up, and Hill was able to identify with by its bright white belly. She was also delighted by a pair of Carolina wrens, one of which put on a concert for her. Other species found during the half-hour hunt were: red-bellied woodpecker, 1; downy woodpecker, 2; blue jay, 1; Carolina chickadee, 4; tufted titmouse, 2; northern cardinal, 2; common grackle, 10; and American goldfinch, 4.

A preliminary count Friday morning at the sanctuary had 13 species and was marked by a red-bellied woodpecker’s futile battle against starlings over its cavity.

The bird sanctuary will expand this spring when a screen owl box is installed. A screech owl was spotted by Mike Brown during the Jan. 1 Kentucky Ornithological Society Christmas bird count.

Both Radzelovage and Kissel submitted yard counts for the national survey. Radzelovage had 20 species and 64 species Feb. 17 in her yard – including hairy, downy and red-bellied woodpeckers. She surmised that the mild weather had reduced the ranks of winter favorites like white-throated sparrows, of which she still had a pair. Kissel’s best day was the 18th, when she had 24 species along the southern half of the Horse Fork Creek trail. It was marked by a busy West Byers Avenue pond day – 16 Canada geese, two mallards and a great blue heron -- and a GBBC personal record of 18 northern cardinals.



PRESIDENTS HONORED

As DCAS celebrated its forty-fifth birthday, we took time to recognize the leadership of those who have served as president. The combined energy and dedication of these men and women is what DCAS is all about. When we consider where we've been and what's been accomplished, we can't help but dream big for our future. From left to right beginning in the back row are: Bill Little, Mike Henshaw, Marilee Thompson, Wendell Thompson, and Janet Howard. In the front row are Carolyn William, Brenda Little and current president Judy Adams.



FROM THE BACKYARD

Well, 2012 has already been a banner birding year for this writer...a Resplendant Quetzal and Whooping Cranes...and that's just in the first seven weeks! You'll have an opportunity to witness the excitement at our March 6th meeting as our Costa Rica group shares its beautiful photos and adventures. The field trip to Goose Pond was memorable for the Cranes, but also because we were joined by several folks new to DCAS. We hope that all of them will bring their enthusiasm and birding know-how to future meetings, field trips and other ventures. March 15th marks the first session of our Urban Birds/Urban Girls project with Girls Inc. in Owensboro. The girls demonstrated their enthusiasm at the Backyard Bird Count and they're ready for more. If you're available, we'd be happy to have a few more "hands" at 4:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Check with any of the team (Mike H., Carolyn W., Lisa L. or Judy A.) or sign up at the meeting.

The board has been exploring the option of insurance to cover chapter members during field trips, volunteer activities and other chapter business. This insurance is in effect as of February 21, 2012. As a result, you may be asked to sign a waiver before participating in an activity (chainsaw sculpture?, climbing ladders at the Powell Bird Blind?).

We have exciting programs and field trips planned for March and April. Mark your calendar for March 24 as we look for spring birds and wildflowers at the new trail at Ben Hawes State Park. Our April program will be on the health of the forest with Brice Leech of Mammoth Cave State Park. We'll have ample opportunities for a variety of field trips...check the schedule for the Ohio Valley Birding Festival the last two week-end in April!--
<http://www.ohiovalleybirdingfestival.org>

It was an honor to join with DCAS past presidents as we celebrated 45 years of this chapter. Such big shoes to fill!

Judy
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