

November 2012



The Goldfinch

Daviess County
Audubon Society

www.daviessaudubon.net

November's Program: Goose Pond



“FOUR SEASONS OF GOOSE POND” FEATURED ON NOVEMBER 6TH

Your vote has been cast and counted, now relax with fellow birders at 7:00 P.M., First Christian Church, 700 J R Miller Blvd. Join us for a showing of the Indiana Public Television production highlighting the 8,000 acre restored wetland known as Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area. The 30 minute documentary takes us from the area's glacial beginnings to its current status as a prime location for environmental science education and, of course, birding. Following the film, member Charles Morris will lead a discussion, including highlights of his birding trips with DCAS members Tony Eaden, Mike Brown and Ken Hurm. This area is so rich in birding experiences that we've decided to include it as a regular field trip destination each year.

GOOSE POND FIELD TRIP... NOVEMBER 17TH

This year's trip to Goose Pond will be Saturday, Nov. 17th. We will meet at the Kroger parking lot on US 60 East at 8:00 a.m., or (should you wish to go on your own) at the “big white barn” sign-in area at 10:30 a.m. The meeting place is just beyond the junction of US 59 and County Rd. 200S. To access a map, google Goose Pond FWA Waterfowl Draw Map. There will be copies available at the meeting. Since this trip involves a 2 ½ hour drive each way, plan to set aside a full day. If you have questions, contact Charles at wanderingtattler@yahoo.com.

TRASH FOR CASH NOVEMBER 3RD

Get out your work gloves and help us clean up litter...while earning cash for DCAS. We'll meet at the south parking lot of Southern Oaks School on US 431 South at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 3rd (rain date Sunday, Nov. 4th at 1:00 p.m.). The Daviess County Fiscal Court (solid waste disposal) is once again paying non-profits \$100 per mile of roadway cleared of litter.

Carolyn Williams will have waivers for us to sign and reflective vests to keep us visible (and safe). Let's have a good turnout...this is our only fundraiser this year as we were not picked in the Christmas Lights lottery. Since this will be before or Nov. 6th meeting, please contact Carolyn (cs.williams@att.net) if you plan to help.

October's Calendar:

Nov. 3, 2012 Trash for Cash. Southern Oaks School on US 431 South at 8:30 a.m. (rain date-4th at 1 p.m.)

*Nov. 6, 2012 DCAS Meeting at 7 p.m. at First Christian Church 700 JR Miller Blvd
Supper with the Speaker 5:30 p.m. at Moonlite BBQ*

Nov. 17, 2012 Field Trip to Goose Pond: meet at Kroger on US 60 at 8 a.m.

Nov. 18, 2012 OCTC Bird Survey: meet at OCTC South parking lot at 3 p.m.

Nov. 19, 2012 Board Meeting at Judy's 9:30 A.M.

we hope to see you at one or more of these events....and have a Happy Thanksgiving!

PROJECT FEEDER- WATCH SIGN UP



Would you like to participate in Cornell Lab's Project FeederWatch? It's a great way to "bird" from the warmth and comfort of your own home all winter long.

To register, just go to www.feederwatch.org, pay \$15 and sign up! You can watch 2 days a week and enter your data online weekly, or every two weeks if you choose paper entry via snail mail. The program is designed to involve birders everywhere to observe birds that have been attracted by feeders and plantings in backyards. You choose a site that is accessible and easy to observe. Then choose your own two days and spend as little as 30 minutes for each day's observation. Several of our DCAS members have been keeping watch for years...others are just starting. It might be fun to post some of our observations in this newsletter. It's also a great way to get children or grandchildren involved.

So...if you are participating, send an email to jadams11_2008@yahoo.com. We'll see what interesting sightings or trends we log and keep you informed in the "Goldfinch"

BirdBond

OCTOBER MEETING FORGES A BOND

Our October meeting on Chimney Swifts helped forge a bond between DCAS and the Evansville Audubon Society. EAS President, Brian Taylor gave a presentation on their Chimney Swift project and wound up leading our October field trip! At the October 2nd meeting, Taylor's talk emphasized the Chimney Swifts' role in controlling the flying insect population

(especially mosquitos that could be carriers of West Nile virus). He shared their positive experience of working with the Boy Scouts, Toyota, and Alcoa, as well as private individuals, on this project. The death from West Nile this year, coupled

with an increase in infected mosquitos in bait stations (8 out of 10 in Gibson county), prompted the city to consider wholesale spraying. EAS offered the Chimney Swift tower project as a more environmentally friendly alternative. To date, there are three towers in Vanderburgh County, two at Mesker Zoo and one at the Bluegrass FWA. We were able to check out the Bluegrass tower on our Oct. 6th field trip. Chimney Swifts are seen in this area from mid-April until the first major cold front of the fall (likely October). They use the towers for nesting and roosting and, once identified by the birds, hundreds can be seen flying in and out. For the most part, each tower supports only one nest, but many more will roost there. Because of the loss of old, dead tree cavities for nesting, these swifts are highly dependent on man-made structures for

nesting. Taylor is working on a resource for swift-friendly chimney caps that building owners can use on existing chimneys. We may want to consider checking out possible sites for these caps in older buildings in downtown Owensboro.

BLUEGRASS FWA BIRDERS

Taylor and fellow EAS member L.D. Lloyd served as



our guides when we changed our October destination to the Bluegrass FWA. Eight DCAS members (Mike Brown, Winny Lin, Bob Broddle, Judy Adams, Ron and Cindy Bornander and Jim and Pam Kimsey) joined them for a full morning of birding (and a futile hunt for the Ruddy Ducks). Birds we did see included: Northern Harrier, Song Sparrow, Red-tail Hawk, American Kestrel, Pied-billed Grebe, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Merlin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Carolina Chickadee, American Coot, Killdeer, Swamp Sparrow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Crow, Red-wing Blackbird, Osprey, Turkey Vulture, Eastern Towhee, Canada Goose, Double-crested Cormorant, and the Brown-headed Cowbird. We finished the trip with lunch at (of course) Red Robin!

FIND YOUR PASS- PORT... AND FLY TO PANAMA!



Once again, DCAS is planning an international birding trip. This year's destination: Panama. Some species we might expect to see include Lance-tailed Mankin, Black-breasted Puffbird, White-necked Jacobin and Sulpher-rumped Tanager. We have a quote from Pam's Passport in Evansville for 8 days/7 nights in three locations in Panama, leaving Saturday, January 12th. The cost for the land portion (which includes hotel, most meals, transportation and a guide) is estimated at \$1400 per person if we have 8-10 people. Airfare from Evansville will be about \$750 round trip. So, remember how you felt when you didn't go to Costa Rica? Here's a second chance to travel with a like-minded group of birders. If you would like more detailed information, go to www.birdingpanama.com and click on the Isthmian Bird Route tour. You won't see our dates listed, as they will set this up specifically for DCAS. Or contact Judy at jadams11_2008@yahoo.com. We hope to have an informational meeting soon, so send Judy an email to get on the list!

At Last, Native Grass Garden's Plugs Are In Place

by Brenda Little

Only David Stratton has the patience required to hang in there with the city of Owensboro's Department of Parks to move forward with the finalization of what is hoped to be a demonstration garden showing what parts of Kentucky looked like before the Europeans came here.

It was twenty-two months ago that Margaret Shea of Dropseed Nursery made an in-depth presentation about native grasses and wildflowers. She pulled no punches and told us all the details about the care that must be taken in preparing the garden site, in mulching the plants, in keeping the plants well watered until they are established, and in periodically, about every 3 or 4 years, burning or cutting back the plants to keep the garden healthy. From the back of the room came lamentations and wailing, "Oh, no, that is too much work! Remember the bird blind."

Each year the National Audubon Society makes available to local chapters funding termed "Collaborative Funds" for projects that meet criteria such as serving the purpose of conservation and education. And so, in spite of the fretters and the nay-sayers, it was decided to apply for Collaborative Funds to be used to purchase plants called "plugs" for a Native Grass and Wildflower Garden to be located alongside the Greenbelt Park where it crosses the Old Hartford Road near the abandoned GE plant. The following year we applied once again for funding to help with the cost of signs, a series to be designed by David Stratton, for the purpose of explaining to the public the Native Grass Story: How it will take 3 years before the garden grows into the features that shelter and feed insects, birds, and other wildlife. How over 200 years ago Kentucky had vast swaths of such native grasses and wildflowers. How of the ten most endangered



birds, five are grassland species.

At last we are proud to announce that on a glorious autumn day a few weeks ago about a dozen of our people took on the challenge of putting 300 plugs in the soil. As Kenny Lin rapidly jumped over and over onto a bulb planter that looks like a pogo stick for grown-ups, others quickly stuck in the soil and roots of grasses and wildflowers into the holes that the bulb planter left in its wake.

And so, now, while we wait for the plants to take root, we hope that Mother Nature will be kind, that the city will follow through with its promise to water the plants, and that David Stratton's patience and perseverance will pay off. While we promise to keep you updated, do yourself a favor and use the Greenbelt Park to soak-up the wondrous weather this autumn is giving us and give a look at what looks like a plot of bare dirt ringed with red surveyor's tape but what holds great potential. Signs telling the garden's story are in the design phase by David Stratton in Brescia University's Art in Service to the Community and are planned to be put in place in the coming 6 months. Adjacent to the Native Grass and Wildflower Garden will be a Greenbelt Birds banner and Meadowlark sculpture that is to be provided by Bonnie Terrizzi in tribute to her parents, our chapter's founders, Bert and Millie Powell.

planted:

Little bluestem- grass
Gray Goldenrod
Smooth blue aster
Purple coneflower
Prairie dropseed

WKBG

by Mary Kissel

The Daviess County Audubon Society's education team participated in two sessions of the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden's Budding Biotech classes this fall.

Members helped 135 students from East View Elementary and Tamarack Elementary identify birds using fold-out guides. They also taught the basics of using binoculars, learning how distance requires changes in focus. Tamarack students also got a chance to look through a spotting scope, thanks to Mike Brown and Charles Morris.

EVES birding brought mixed results Sept. 26. A warm, windy day made bird watching difficult until the early afternoon, but some classes got great looks at hummingbirds in the edges of the garden and a noisy mockingbird near the old doctor's office.

Tamarack students – who saw an eagle last year – were lucky classes again Oct. 4. Brown spotted a red-headed woodpecker on the northern section of the property, and students saw a red-



breasted nuthatch on the old tray feeder near the gazebo. Both birds were first-time participants in the WKBG classes. The day also represented the climax of the hummingbird migration season.

They were spotted in flowers just outside of the playhouse, and one lit on the large fountain in the garden and posed for the students. The other large fountain on the property was a cardinal lover's paradise, with four males splashing at the same time, followed by three females.

Others helping with the fall sessions included: Judy Adams, Mary Kissel, Thelma Newman, Lavern Bush and David Stratton.

MEMBER PROFILE

Mary Kissel

CURRENT OCCUPATION: Copy editor, Owensboro pagination hub, Paxton Media Group

HOME TOWN: Fort Branch, Ind. That's where, inspired by the Evansville Press' Carl Ritt's "windowsill cafeteria," my late father made a bird feeder out of an old TV set and rigged it up in my bedroom window.

HOW LONG IN DCAS: 12 years

BEST BIRDS: Curlew sandpiper, Goose Pond, May 2012; red-cockaded woodpecker, November 1993 (during the star-crossed woodpecker wars in eastern Kentucky, won by the pine beetles that chomped a good portion of the woodlands).

FAVORITE BIRDS: Northern cardinal, prothonotary warbler, common yellowthroat, northern flicker, penguins.

MOST MEMORABLE BIRDING TRIPS: Hike up nearly 3,000-foot-high High Rock, Letcher County, Ky. Didn't see any ravens, but felt like I could touch the hand of God. It was followed by a drive over to Black Mountain to see breeding golden-winged warblers (which I have seen since a block from my apartment. Go figure). Any early May walk during the early years of the Greenbelt. The fallouts were spectacular ... Blackpoll and black-throated blue warblers sitting together! Five male Baltimore orioles on one tree!

HOW HAS DCAS IMPACTED YOUR LIFE? Helped me find my little niche here in Owensboro after I left the stellar birding country around Lake Cumberland. I hope we will be friends for life.

CHIMNEY VISIT



By Winnie Lin

Our DCAS took a field trip to Bluegrass Fish and Wildlife and enjoyed a tour of the new landscape of what used to be an area of strip-mining. New life and new vegetation. Brian Taylor also led us to see the chimney swift tower constructed by an Eagle scout to replace the diminishing habitat for the bird.

photo by Winnie Lin

FROM THE BACKYARD

It's hard to believe that we finally got the native grasses planted! Thanks especially to David Stratton and Brenda Little, who persevered through all kinds of non-responses and delays. Kudos to you both for making this a reality. The signs have been ordered and we hope to have a dedication before winter sets in...we'll keep you posted.

October was a busy month, with a great program that segued into a field trip, a workday planting native grasses, a proposal for our Panama trip and the completion of our annual report to national. It also brought to completion the Budding Biotech program at the WKBG. Thanks go to our new Educational Coordinator, Thelma Newman for scheduling and to new volunteers Lavern Bush and David Stratton.

November will be just as busy, starting on Saturday the 3rd with Trash for Cash. This is an opportunity to do something for the environment and the community, all the while raising funds for our treasury. Please let Carolyn know if you can help, even if it's only for an hour or two. It really has been a pleasure to see new faces at field trips and work days.... thank you all!

Our Bird Survey at the OCTC wetland habitat yielded thirty species on the afternoon of October 21st. These included Yellow-rumped Warbler, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Eastern Bluebird and Golden-crowned Kinglet, just to name a few. Charles Morris will be keeping files of birds spotted. Plan to come out on at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 19th (especially if you can't make it all the way to Goose Pond).

Please get to the polls early and join us for our Goose Pond program on Nov. 6th. This is a really special place and the video and discussion will whet your appetite for the field trip on Nov. 17th. And while you've got your calendars out...we've scheduled the Daviess County Christmas Bird Count for Dec 15th at Mike and Sherry Henshaw's and the Kentucky Ornithological Society's West Daviess County Count at Jan Howard's on Jan. 1st. So jump in and join the fun!

There's a lot going on...be a part of it!

Judy Adams, President

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(334-1391)



Ideas meeting at Moonlite Barbeque. Photo by Winny Lin.