



The Goldfinch

September
2011

Davless County Audubon Society, www.davlessaudubon.net

SEPTEMBER MEETING PREMIERES DCAS DVD

On Tuesday evening, September 6, our chapter will gather to reflect on and celebrate the success of the past year. This is the time to review the activities, programs and projects of 2010-2011. This year, we're very excited to be able to premier our first ever DCAS DVD. Thanks to Ken Hurm and a host of members who captured the year in pictures, we'll be able to revisit (or maybe visit for the first time) many of the events of the past year. These include Green Wing Day, Urban Birding at Girls Inc., both Christmas Bird Counts, Falls of the Ohio, Goose Pond and many others. So join us at 7:00 P.M. at First Christian Church. We'll have refreshments and plenty of time to socialize both before and after the program. We'll even have a sneak peak at some of the exciting activities planned for this new year.

Audubon Museum Monarch Butterfly Migration Mysteries

Saturday, Sept. 17 and Sunday, Sept. 18,
7:30-11 a.m. and 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on both days.

Bid a farewell to the Monarch Butterflies migrating south for the winter. To participate meet at the Audubon Museum for a 45-minute introductory indoor presentation. Next, we will carpool to the Sloughs Wildlife Management Area for some outdoor Monarch tagging. The outdoor portion (2-3 hours) is weather dependent.

Please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes and prepare for weedy and potentially marshy conditions. Tags and nets will be provided.

Staff Contact: Julie McDonald at 270-826-2247 or juliea.mcdonald@ky.gov

Cost: \$5 per person, Family rate \$15;
FOA Members - \$4 per person

Daviness County Audubon Society Celebrates Annual Picnic

Daviness County Audubon Society(DCAS) celebrated its successful 2010-11 year with a picnic at Panther Creek Park and voted Judy Adams as its new president and David Stratton as its vice president. In the photo seated are Rose Ann Radzelovage, Brenda Little, Donna Hanley, Kenny Lin and Bill Little. The ones standing are Sherry Henbshaw, Henry Connor, Tony Eaden, Judy Adams, Ken Hurm, Charles Morris, Bob Adams, David Stratton, and Laura Morris. Not in the photo are Jan Howard, Steve Hahus, and Winny Lin.



This month's calendar

Meeting: September 6, 7 p.m., First Christian Church.

Board Meeting: September 12 11:30 a.m.

Family Birding Walk: September 10, 8:30 a.m.,
Yewell Landing parking lot (off Brookhill subdivision)

On Goose Pond

By Jill Flachskam

On June 25, Tony Eaden and Charles Morris made the trip up to Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area in Greene County, Indiana. Goose Pond is a restored wetland spanning over 8000 acres, including 4000 acres of open water and 1400 acres of prairie. I had been working there for a couple of months as a Land Steward Intern, so it was nice to see some friends from back home.

As they arrived in the main parking lot, another birder reported a family of King Rails in one of the property's northern units. We quickly rushed over to the reported location and saw an adult female standing right beside the road, with four fluffy black chicks beside her! The King Rail is a rare bird and a target of the property's Bird Conservation Plan, so it was a great find.

After this fabulous start, we made a circuit around the property, stopping at various parking areas and also birding along the roadsides. Seeing chicks and juvenile birds turned into a theme for the day, as we also saw little Wood Ducks, Canada Geese, Pied-billed Grebes, and Common Moorhens trailing after their parents. We even found a family of Orchard Orioles vocalizing loudly in a streamside tree.

It was a beautiful day, and numerous birders from surrounding counties had come out to enjoy it. It was nice to talk to them and get tips on bird sightings. A Neotropic Cormorant had recently been seen in the Main Pool, the first ever record for that species in the Indiana, but numerous scope-wielding birders were unable to find it among the many Double-Crested Cormorants within view. You can't win them all!

Other species seen included Great Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Black-necked Stilt, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Willow flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, American Robin, American Crow, European Starling, House Sparrow, Warbling Vireo, American Goldfinch, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Field Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Baltimore Oriole.



Alan Bruner of Indiana Audubon Society shot this pix ... David Ayer is wearing the binocs at center at Lincoln State Park July 9; Charles Morris is seated in the background.

Lincoln State Park Evansville Birding Hotspot Visited

Birding hotspots around Evansville took center stage during the weekend of July 9 as part of an event sponsored by Indiana Audubon Society.

Ken Hurm and Charles Morris attended the Saturday morning and afternoon trips featuring a hike at Lincoln State Park led by superintendent (and DCAS member) David Ayer. They saw one of the famed Mississippi kites which nest at the Spencer County park. Morris said it put on an aerial show for about 10 minutes.

After lunch in Dale, they birded extensively by car at Bluegrass Fish and Wildlife Area, looking for grassland birds. That was highlighted by at least three Henslow's sparrows and five Bell's vireos, three of which were spotted after the group's leader heard them as he hung his head out of the car window. Both the Bell's and the kite were life birds for Morris.

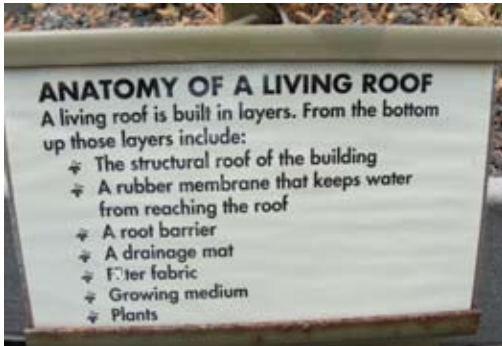
Morris jotted down 43 species for the day. Other sightings included: summer tanager, scarlet tanager, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, great crested flycatcher, eastern towhee, eastern bluebird, American robin, northern mockingbird, black-and-white warbler, Kentucky warbler, blue grosbeak, indigo bunting, dickcissel, grasshopper sparrow, eastern meadowlark, red-winged blackbird, Baltimore oriole, orchard oriole, red-eyed vireo, blue jay, American crow, horned lark, northern rough-winged swallow, tree swallow, purple martin, barn swallow, white-breasted nuthatch, eastern kingbird, red-bellied woodpecker, mourning dove, turkey vulture, black vulture, wild turkey, American kestrel, northern bobwhite, northern cardinal, northern flicker, downy woodpecker and white-eyed vireo.

Their Hoosier counterparts got raves from Hurm for their birding skills and endurance.

"These guys are excellent birders, both by sound and by sight," he noted. "They are also inexhaustible. At 5:30 Charles and I bid them adieu, and they were still going strong. I think they probably birded until dark and then went listening for Whip-poor-wills, Chuck-wills-widows and owls."

According to the Indiana Audubon Society website, the group traveled next to such spots as Hovey Lake, Twin Swamps Nature Preserve and the least tern nesting area at Cane Ridge Wildlife Management Area. In all, 97 species were recorded.

MEMBERS IMPRESSED BY BERNHEIM VISITORS CENTER



On June 11th, seven DCAS members ventured to the Bernheim Forest and Arboretum to seek out Bobwhite Quail and Barn Swallows. Bill and Brenda Little, Tony Eaden, Kenny and Winny Lin and Bob and Judy Adams were met by volunteer guide, Kathy Dennis.

Kathy, you may remember, led our field trip through the fossil fields at Falls of the Ohio in October 2010. What makes Kathy outstanding as a birding trip guide is what she lacks. She lacks an overly inflated ego! When she is uncertain of a bird's identification, she resorts to field guides and a small recording device she carries in her fanny pack. Quietly she steps aside to listen to the call of a bird to confirm her belief about its identity before she calls out its name to the group. When one of us locates a bird, she praises our accomplishment. She really knows the area all around

Bernheim where her husband, Dennis, serves as a volunteer. Kathy went so far as to cancel an engagement for later in the day in order to linger over lunch with us at the Café in the Visitors' Center.

The Visitors Center was impressive to this group of tree huggers. Just imagine a building that creates oxygen, provides a home for animals, stores energy, cleans the air and reproduces itself! The Visitors Center was built of recycled wood, reuses its roof water for toilets and purifies the runoff through a peat-based treatment system. Both passive and active solar energy, as well as geothermal heating and cooling strategies were used for state-of-the-art energy efficiency. Most obvious is the green and growing roof! There were many examples of these green rooftops on the grounds...we even found a killdeer egg in one!

Finally, we dragged ourselves away from this fascinating building to search for our objective for the day—Bobwhite Quail. En route, we observed red-eared slider turtles (thank you, Amy Krzton-Presson!), a variety of songbirds, and dozens of purple martins playing a game of catch or keep-away with a leaf as they soared upward, dropped the leaf, swooped, swirled, and passed it from beak to beak. After a few thoughts of giving up, we spotted a pair of Northern Bobwhites. They must have enjoyed their celebrity status, as they posed and showed off for our cameras for close to half an hour.

The heat was getting to us, and to some nesting Barn swallows, too. We noticed them attempting to cool off by splaying their wings on the concrete walk (?!). After spotting a Ruby-throated Hummingbird amongst the flowers, we opted for the cooler Canopy Walk and were rewarded by the song of Red-eyed Vireo.

Although peaceful and green, the birds all appeared to be hiding from us. It was a good thing that Kathy's good birding ear was there to guide us. In total, we tallied 33 species, 19 by ear. We all vowed to improve our "birding by ear" skills.



The Thanksgiving Surprise

Last Fall, we nearly didn't get our lemon trees brought in before the first hard freeze. It was about the same time in mid- November that our Daughter, Anne Marie and Husband, Jim McAllister came from Oregon for a holiday visit.

One afternoon as we all were in the den watching TV, chatting or checking e-mails, Anne called out, "Dad!, look at this!" She pointed to a spot low on the tree where three lemons were clustered together. There, sitting on top of a lemon which had half- turned from green to yellow, sat a little tree frog who was trying very hard to match the lemon color. All of us, but especially Zoey, our five-year-old Granddaughter, wanted to have a really good look and she named it Abigail.

The family consensus was that Abigail had been hibernating in the pot when it got cold outside and came back out when the tree got moved inside. We had had such a dry summer that we had kept the lemon trees well watered and the little frog had probably been seeking a damp place to live. Of course, we wanted to keep it from drying out in the heated house and so we set about finding a place she could live safely...there were a cat and a dog who likely would find her interesting if not delicious!

A container which had been used first to hold a Kroger cake and washed for a new use became her home for a few weeks. We cleaned some small branches and the frog and put them in the make-do terrarium and started looking online for what they liked to eat and how to keep them healthy. Crickets seemed the food of choice and we were able to find several in and about our place, but not nearly enough. So, we started our twice weekly trips to buy crickets for Abigail...and at \$1 for a dozen or less, and not knowing if we were feeding her enough, we watched to see how long a new order lasted...she wasted no



time, but went after them with gusto! It was fun just watching her spy, attack and devour one after another until they were all gone! Cleaning her home and buying crickets and giving her a bath in distilled water helped keep her healthy and we received a nice bigger home from Aunt Rose Radzelovage which gave her more room to move and jump about...we know she jumped because we found her outside her home a couple of times and the lid was bumped aside. Luckily, the dog and cat hadn't noticed!

For a few weeks in late Winter, we had trouble getting crickets... there was some sort of disease infecting breeders populations and the crickets we could get were very tiny.

We began thinking it was soon time to start planning to release her to fulfill her purpose in life. So, we watched and waited for frost-free weather and warming of the soil and most important, the songs of other tree frogs. Then, when there were many tree frogs calling, we took her down by the creek and let her crawl off on a tree where we said goodbye with a special blessing I remembered from an old Star Trek program:" Live long and prosper!" And then we added, "have lots of babies!" Then we left her knowing that for a brief time, we had been honored to be minor caretakers in a grand plan of caring for the Creation.

From The Backyard

As your new President and a relatively new DCAS member, I thought this would be a good time to tell you a little about myself. Born and bred as Yankees, my husband Bob and I were introduced to backyard birding forty-plus years ago when we lived in Maine. There was always a friendly competition among friends about who could lure the most interesting birds to their feeders. We've lived in Owensboro for twenty-five years and I've been retired for the last three. We joined DCAS two and a half years ago and enjoyed the programs, field trips and general camaraderie that comes with birding.

For the past two years, I've served as our chapter Secretary and have learned much more than I could have imagined about birds, turtles, salamanders, and protecting and cleaning up our environment. In June, you elected me as Chapter President. I agreed to serve one year, with the option of a second year if all goes well. As we are well aware, predicting the future can be a tricky game. There's one thing I need to make clear. I'm not an expert on birding, the environment or Audubon, but I'm willing to learn. I can facilitate a meeting and keep us organized, but will look to others for the expertise.

This year promises to be exciting, with most of the programs and field trips "penciled in" for the year. Several members spent two long meetings brainstorming and sharing their expertise to plan programs, field trips and educational projects for the coming year. My thanks to all of them...without such a committed group for support, I never would have considered this position. Special thanks go to our immediate past president, Brenda Little. She left me oversized shoes to fill!

Our focus for the year will be keeping the fun and birding in Audubon. To this end, the majority of our programs will be bird-oriented and our first field trip of the year will be a family birding walk on the Greenbelt. Our September meeting will celebrate the successes of the past year, with special emphasis on our educational outreach activities. We encourage everyone to get involved. You don't have to be an expert birder to help (trust me, I know). Each of us has talents to bring to these projects. If you like kids, want to learn about birds, or have an experience to share, there's a role for you to play.

Speaking of member-involvement, I'd like to emphasize that our monthly board meetings are open to all members. We're informal and welcome input from anyone with a pet project or field trip idea. Join us if you'd like to have a part in our planning and decision-making process. The date, time, and location of board meetings will always be posted in the "calendar" box on the front page of this newsletter. If the time is inconvenient, call (686-8302) or email me jadams11_2008@yahoo.com with your ideas. And don't forget that our "supper with the speaker" at Moonlite is open to everyone as well. This is a great opportunity to chat with our speaker (and other members) before the meeting. We're always happy to pull up some extra chairs!

So, here's to a great year...bring some friends to our September 6th meeting and introduce them to DCAS!

—Judy Adams

