
THE GOLDFINCH

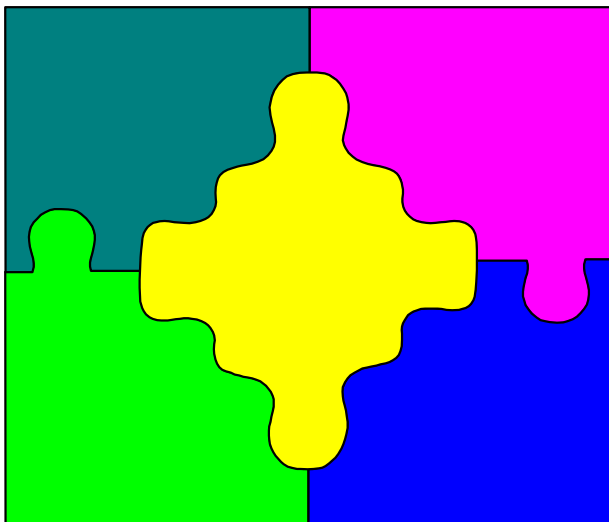
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVIESS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

JANUARY 2004

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

In January We Will Learn About Fixing Some of the Things We Have Broken

It is likely that the Daviess County Audubon Society's members know more about fresh water mussels than any other Audubon Society chapter. That is something to be proud of because it indicates that we see the big picture. Often one hears it said that birds are the principal interest in our club, and that may be true, but the beauty of the Audubon Society is that we embrace the entire realm of nature. We realize that the web of life, its food chain and the environment are like a huge puzzle with interlocking pieces. When a piece of the puzzle is missing it is not a pretty picture and it also means that other pieces are certain to go missing because each one depends on others.



Our chapter's study of fresh water mussels has taken place both indoors and beside the Ohio River. We've had speakers from the Department of Fish and Wildlife and we've taken a field trip to observe the Department's divers as they took census of the mollusks in the river near Hawesville, Kentucky. We have learned what the button industry did to this lowly animal in the last century and what dams and chemical runoff has done in the past 60 years. We've learned why not to say, "Who cares?" **The program at our meeting** next Monday night will feature what is being done to attempt to reestablish mussels, not yet extinct, that are almost universally becoming rare and endangered. Kentucky has state-of-the-art facilities, really cutting edge, up and running, in our efforts to undo a century of wrongs.

The Ballard WMA **field trip**, scheduled for Saturday, January 31st is for the purpose of observing the Bald eagle, a bird that has come back from the brink of extinction. Following World War II a chemical with the initials DDT became used in agriculture. What we did not know then is that this chemical stayed in the environment long after its application. It washed into rivers and streams and was taken up by the fish that are the food for Bald eagles. DDT caused the eggshells of the eagles to become thin and reproduction fell drastically. Xnay DDT et Voila! The eagles are back!

Corps of Discovery was for The Birds

It was in October, 200 years ago, that Meriwether Lewis and William Clark wrapped up their recruitment of men to staff the Corps of Discovery in the area of the Falls of the Ohio. Clark was a native of the area and knew that there were many men thereabouts with the rugged constitutions and survival skills that would be needed on the arduous journey ahead. President Thomas Jefferson had enlisted Lewis and Clark to explore and map a path that turned out to be about 4000 miles in length beginning at the Missouri River all the way to the Pacific Ocean. The official launch of the project happened in May 2004 at the site of present day St. Louis, Missouri. However, Kentuckians see the journey as truly beginning from our state just across from present day Louisville, a round trip distance of 9000 miles.

On their journey, Lewis and Clark did more than just map the path they traveled. Along the way they made a meticulous study of the flora and fauna they encountered. As they blazed their trail they were gathering specimens, keeping a journal, and documenting the relevant details for posterity. Two birds later named for Lewis and Clark, Lewis's Woodpecker and Clark's Nutcracker, were identified in 1805, for the first time by people of European descent.

Lewis's Woodpecker It was on July 20, 1805 as the Corps' dugout canoes navigated a river canyon which Lewis called "the gates to the rocky mountains" where a mostly black bird that glimmers dark green in certain light was spotted for the first time by Meriwether Lewis. His description: "Around the base of the beak including the eye and a small part of the throat is of a fine crimson red". The 1" beak is also black. The neck and upper breast is gray. The belly and lower breast are

a mix of white and blood red "artificially painted". A band of silver gray encircles its neck. Several were killed, preserved and taken to a museum in Philadelphia where pioneer ornithologist Alexander Wilson named it "the woodpecker with a necklace". It shells acorns and hoards them along with other foods in the bark of trees near its nest.

Clark's Nutcracker It was on August 22, 1805 in Idaho that Thomas Clark identified a robin-sized bird described as "a species of woodpecker which fed on seeds of pine". Then called Clark's Crow, it is a member of the same family as jays and crows, the family of Corvids. It feeds on the seeds of pine trees, the White bark and Limber pine. This bird has a prominent bill that it uses to pry seeds from pinecones. Under the bird's tongue there is a pouch that is used to hold seeds like a storage compartment. Then the nutcracker transports the seeds to the ground where it uses its bill to poke a hole for each pine seed. The length of the beak is perfect as a drill for planting seeds and the ones that are not later found and eaten by the bird sprout into pine seedlings.

Clark's nutcracker has a gray body with black wings and black central tail feathers. It is easily identified in flight by white outer tail feathers, similar to those of the Junco except in larger proportion, and by white on the secondaries, the back edge of the wing next to the body. The nutcracker lives in the far west of North America from New Mexico to Saskatchewan Province. It lives in mountainous terrain at high elevations near the treeline.

Of local interest, The Owensboro Area Museum of Science and History at 220 Daviess Street is featuring a Lewis & Clark Exhibit through January 18.

January Calendar of Events

Through January 18th

Lewis and Clark Exhibit at The Owensboro Area Museum of Science and History at 220 Daviess Street in downtown Owensboro.

Monday, the 12th

Regular monthly meeting will be held at 7 PM at First Christian Church

Tuesday, the 20th

The Evansville Audubon Society program *Saving our Giving Trees* by Evansville's City Arborist will begin at 7 PM at Wesselman Nature Preserve.

Monday, the 26th

Directors' meeting 7 PM at First Christian Church.

Saturday, January 31st

Field trip to Ballard Wildlife Management Area is planned to depart Owensboro at 9 AM. Travel time is about 3 hours and the Eagle watch is expected to have a 2 hour duration with the return trip planned for mid afternoon. Meeting place for car pooling will be determined at the January meeting. For more information contact Mike Henshaw at (270) 275-4250 or by email mikesherry@email.msn.com

Christmas Bird Count 2003

The results are in:

16 Homo Sapiens

51 Avian species Jan. 30th count

52 Avian species Dec. 20th count

19,800 individual birds counted

Janet Howard and Mike & Sherry Henshaw hosted our Christmas Bird Counts this year. We extend our thanks to them for their hospitality and generosity. Without the warm and wonderful lunch they provide, it would be a long and cold day for the volunteers who fan out across the countryside to count birds.

The very large number of individual birds seen this year is due to huge flocks of Red-winged blackbirds, European starlings and Common Grackles.

The consensus of the counters is that Bill Little spotted the most interesting species this year. It was his ears and not his eyes that caused him to look overhead while his team was counting birds at the Girl Scout Camp. The chattering from about 200 feet in the sky above was a V formation of 16 Sandhill cranes. Awesome!

Recycling Cards

If you will bring the Christmas cards that you'd like to recycle to the meeting next Monday night, the club will box them and pay the postage to mail them to St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Boulder City, Nevada. This charity uses the cards in their crafts program to raise money for the organization.

The Goldfinch
306 Hoover Hill Road
Hartford, Kentucky 42347

January 2004

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Please check the address label above to determine the expiration date of your membership. To renew your membership, please send a check for \$10 to Charles Morris, Treasurer 1400 Woodbridge Trail, Owensboro, Kentucky 42301. Include this page with your check so that your old address label can be used to update your newsletter subscription which is part of your local membership dues. Thank you.

No longer does a portion of the dues you pay to the National Audubon Society either as a new member or as a renewing member come to our chapter. Therefore we strongly urge you first to keep your membership current on the local level and then if you wish you may renew your membership in The National Audubon Society as well. Our chapter is actively conducting fundraisers to maintain our treasury, but we need the income of local dues in order to finance the printing and mailing of The Goldfinch. Thank you.

Officers 2003-2005

President	Rob Rold 684-3209
Vice President	Carolyn Williams 683-5863
2 nd Vice President	Steve Hahus
Secretary/Treasurer	Charles Morris

daviessaudubon.org
