
THE GOLDFINCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVIESS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

MARCH 2003

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

A Man for All Seasons and for Good Reasons

Obbie Todd is a human dynamo. It is said that just watching him direct traffic each Sunday morning between services in his church's parking lot is cause in itself to get out of bed and go to church. Same thing when Obbie leads a field trip; his flock of nature lovers needs to come prepared. It is a good idea to fuel-up with a big bowl of Wheaties and a mug of strong coffee after a good night's sleep because when Obbie is waving his arms at flora and fauna, you dare not let your mind wander because *You snooze, you lose!*

Obbie Todd is a biology teacher and football coach at Apollo High School. He will be the program presenter at our meeting on Monday, March 10. His topic will be about his experiences as a hiker on the Appalachian Trail and his work last summer laying out new hiking trails at Ben Hawes Park. Wherever his program takes us, you won't want to miss this meeting. It is guaranteed to be fun and informative.

If we ask him nicely, he might favor us with his traffic directing techniques. I'm told bullfighters have nothing on his moves, except that he doesn't use a cape with the 4-wheeled wild ones he tries to control on asphalt. Ole, Obbie!



Visit our chapter's Website <http://www.wku.edu/audubon/daviess.html>

MARCH FIELD TRIPS

It is likely that the high water over the banks of Rough River will be down by Saturday March 22 when we return to the L.B. Davidson Wildlife Management Area in Ohio County. The trip is planned to look for early migrants as well as salamanders. It is also possible that a few of the earliest wildflowers will be in bloom. Everyone should remember that the terrain is verrrry steep and good hiking shoes are needed. We are a friendly and helpful group that will gladly push-you, pull-me up the hills. However, we are not compassionate enough to break your fall over those rock outcroppings. If you tumble down an embankment, you're on your own.

To carpool or drive in caravan formation to the field trip's trailhead, meet at 8 AM at the Ace Hardware store on Highway 54 near the entry to Thoroughbred East subdivision. The hike is expected to end between 11 AM and noon.

The second field trip this month is planned to Steve Hahus's old stomping grounds in Perry County Indiana. Half or more of seeing birds, is knowing the territory. Steve is like Brer Rabbit in the briar patch in Perry County. So come prepared to see a lot of birds and wildflowers. The trip will depart from the McDonalds at Highway 60 East and the By-Pass (near Rural King) at 8 AM on Saturday, March 29th. It is expected that driving time to Perry County will be about 50 minutes. The trip is expected to end in the early afternoon. Pack a snack, sack lunch, drinking water, and use sun block.

Believe It or Not, IT'S TIME! RIGHT NOW!

It was an awful, terrible, horrible no good weather day on the last Saturday in February. That is the day every year that Dr. Chuck Price of the University of Southern Indiana faculty hosts a group that gathers to check about 50 Bluebird boxes that make-up a trail on the Evansville campus. It was Ken Hurm's first experience with the effort to help the Eastern Bluebird with nest boxes needed to augment the places nature used to provide for cavity nesters in rotted tree trunks and by farmers in hollow wooden fence posts.

As the icy rain pelted the volunteers and the wind bit hard into faces and hands, Ken was one of three checking the first 3 or 4 boxes. The group found one new Bluebird nest with no eggs but lots of ants that will need to be controlled before the eggs are laid and hatched. The other boxes were empty and not in need of repair. A vote was unanimous to take an S.U.V. approach to as many as possible of the remaining dozen or so boxes yet to be checked.

Ken ventured up to box # 29 alone as his fair weather friends huddled near the car's heater. When he came back to report his findings, eyes quite wide open, his words were, "I don't know which of us was the most scared, her or me. There is a Bluebird sitting on eggs in that box and she didn't move when I opened the box." Ken decided in his surprised state, to leave the Bluebird alone, not lifting her to count eggs, because she was stressed enough by the weather beating down on the roof and walls of her house.

Later that day and into the wee hours of the morning, the wind howled and the mercury plummeted. All of us thought about that poor little bird so valiantly and tenaciously trying to keep her eggs from freezing solid.

Dr. Price told the volunteers; a student Biology major, a grounds crew member, a

contingency; that there is essentially no chance for survival of the chicks that are now being incubated. Price related statistics indicating that eggs laid much later than the last part of February have failed to survive the region's late winter and early spring harsh weather. More information is at www.usi.edu Type 'Bluebirds' in the search box. Then click *Trail Summary* to see data in spreadsheet format.

The import of the finding of a new nest and a Bluebird incubating eggs last week is that it is time for us to tend to our nest boxes **right now**. Bluebirds will usually only nest where old nests have been cleaned out. They have been called 'real estate snobs' because they will make a beeline for a new house, often within minutes of when it is put in place. This instinct of not reusing a tree cavity where an old nest still is in place has likely carried over to their choice of a clean nest box. It makes perfect Bluebird sense, new box = no old nest >>> nest box for rent first come first served. If anyone has a desire to put up new boxes, now is the time because we know that Bluebirds are scouting for homes right now.

Also, even though it is still terribly cold outside, it is time to start planning for migrants that will soon be passing through Kentucky. Red bandanas or other bright red colored cloth or plastic hung near the site planned for Hummingbird feeders will attract Hummingbirds as they travel from Mexico and South America in March, April and May.

And don't forget that the sound of water is a strong attractant to birds. The sound does not have to come from anything as expensive as a store bought dripper or mister; a pinhole in a bucket above a catch basin will work. The pinhole plan's downside is the frequent refilling needed to keep up the come hither drip drip drip sound. No matter, **it's time!**

Birdathon is Planned for April

Mary Kissel, the DCAS Birdathon Chair, is not a lady to rest on her laurels. At a recent planning session, Mary posed the question:...

March Calendar of Events

Monday March 10th

7 PM Monthly meeting at First Christian Church

Saturday March 15th

Kentucky Audubon Council meeting at Nolin Rural Electric, 411 Ring Road In Elizabethtown, KY
11 AM - 2 PM EST lunch provided.

Sunday March 16th

Community College Count at 2 PM
Meet in the parking lot across from Deer Park Elementary

Saturday March 22nd

Field trip to L.B. Davidson Wildlife Management Area will depart from Ace Hardware Hwy 54 at 8 AM

Saturday March 29th

Field trip to Perry County Indiana will depart McDonalds at Hwy 60 East and the By-Pass at 8 AM

March 28th-29th

Bluebird Weekend at Kenlake State Park

Monday March 24th

Directors' Meeting **7 PM** at the Joe Ford Center

"How can we get more people involved in our Birdathon?" In 2001, the year of our last species count fundraiser, we recruited about 10 people to line-up pledges, count birds, then collect and submit their per-species pledges to our club Treasurer. The 10 birders who took part represented about 10% of our membership. The fundraising effort was our most successful event that year bringing in over \$700 to our coffers.

We would like to entice between 12 and 15 people, stepping up to 15% or 18% of our membership, to count birds with us this year. A bird counter need not be a member of our chapter and participants can have a wide range of skills and mobility levels. It is possible to count bird species from the comfort of one's home and/or car, or it is even permissible to go far afield to garner a larger number of species. In 2001 pledges ranged from 5 cents to \$1 per species. Some donors set a dollar limit, a cap, in case the birder soliciting their pledge went to Belize or Arizona and stacked up several dozen different bird species then came back to collect megabucks from them.

The reason for conducting a bird count fundraiser every couple of years is that our club cannot make ends meet with only dues shares paid to us by the National Audubon Society. Our major expenditures each year are spent for Audubon Adventure kits and Newsletter costs.

The 2003 Birdathon will be held in April, but it is not too soon to begin talking it up. Ask friends if they will support your efforts with a per bird donation. Put on your thinking cap about someone you might recruit to count birds with us this year. I plan to ask members of other Audubon Chapters, who do not have their own Birdathon event, if they might like to count with us and for us

Visit our Website

<http://audubon.wku.edu/audubon/daviess.html>

The Daviess County Audubon Society
306 Hoover Hill Road
Hartford, KY 42347-9522

The Goldfinch
March 2003

DCAS New Membership Form Code J 52 Clip and Mail to 306 Hoover Hill Road, Hartford, KY 42347-9522

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

____ I would like to subscribe to paperless membership renewal. Please send me one bill 2 months before my membership expires. 800-274-4201

For new members: ____ Cost to renew a regular membership is \$35 per year. ____ \$15 Seniors & Students

- The cost for a new membership in the Daviess County Audubon Society,
- Kentucky Audubon Council, and
- The National Audubon Society is _____ \$20 per year or _____ \$30 for two years
- _____ Newsletter Subscription \$10 per year _____

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