
THE GOLDFINCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVIESS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2002

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

West Nile Virus

*Is November 11 program and if you think that's not appealing,
we'll toss in some Chronic Wasting Disease as a bonus.*

Speaker, Danny Watson, is Kentucky's foremost expert on West Nile Virus. Bird populations are being drastically affected by this plague. Preposterous suggestions have been made by public officials such as returning to the use of DDT as a method of controlling the virus. The more you know, the safer you are both from the virus and the jerking of knees. Maybe this program is not glamorous, but it is very important information.

FeederWatch Begins this Month

If you are too busy to watch birds, YOU ARE TOO BUSY! You owe it to yourself to set aside some time this winter to watch the birds at your feeders and then to submit the species and their numbers to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. The cost is \$15 and you may sign-up and submit your counts either on paper or via the Internet. To request a brochure phone toll free 1-800-843-2473 (BIRD) or go to

<http://birds.cornell.edu>

An entire classroom can participate in FeederWatch for a cost of \$99. Isn't it great to think of a teacher encouraging kids to look out the window! The students receive a large amount of bird education materials for learning to identify the birds that visit their feeders. They also produce their own bird research newsletter and work with the scientists at Cornell.

You need to start the enrollment process now because the count begins later this month. If you wish to sponsor a class, our Education Chair, Carolyn Williams (270) 683-5863, will match you up with a room full of excited and enthusiastic future birders.

Teachers, to apply, contact Carolyn.

In this Issue:

- Holidays are For the Birds
- Field Trip Plans
- Environmental Education Report
- Forest Service, Friend or Foe?

Owensboro Community College Count Nears the End of Year Three

The group of bird counters on campus for the October count reported seeing a large flock of Kinglets. The majority of the flock were Golden's along with a few Ruby-crowned's. It is believed that the birds were migrating and chose areas of tall grass and wildflowers for their "fall out" spot.

What I Did on My Summer Vacation

Galapagos Gals

This is the third and last of a series article. Pat Connell worked in Haiti. Mike Kavolus took a Safari to Africa. And now, Doralee St. Clair and Joyce Porter tell us about their month in Equador and on the Islands of The Galapagos.

Goldfinch: How did this trip come about?

St. Clair: I saw a notice in the newsletter of The Native Plant Society. It was a botanical study trip led by professors from Eastern Kentucky and Morehead Universities.

Goldfinch: Did you expect the number and species of birds?

Porter: I went without any preconceived ideas. It was only when I saw the 2.5" thick, 3.5 lb field guide with 47 species of New World warblers crammed on one page that I realized birding in Ecuador would be a formidable experience.

Goldfinch: Did you find the landscape to be beautiful?

St. Clair: There were very few beaches and the scenery is not like Hawaii. I'd have to say 'No' the Galapagos is not spectacular for sightseeing.

Goldfinch: It has been said that The Galapagos is being loved to death. Did you see evidence of man's impact on the environment there?

Porter: Actually I thought the accommodation between humans and other animal species was quite good. There is a self-imposed limit on the people population. The locals are very protective of the animals. I was told by more than one resident that it was illegal to touch or harass birds and other animals. Yellow warblers were everywhere. At the Darwin Center one had to practically step around them on the paths. On Santa Cruz, the bus driver was committed to slowing down and blowing the horn causing the birds to fly off the highway.

St. Clair: Man has brought in dogs, cats, and alien plant materials. 20,000 people inhabit

the island and that has to impact wildlife. We did not see the tourists. For the most part, they live on the cruise ships and come ashore for day trips, shopping, and sight seeing.

Goldfinch: Was this trip just for fun or was it serious study?

St. Clair: This was a college level study trip. We had tests that were mainly essay type. We got college credit for our efforts.

Goldfinch: What was the most interesting of the animals (non bird) you saw?

St. Clair: The Giant Tortoise, especially an old fellow about 125 years old. He is named Lonesome George and lives at the Darwin Center where our classes were held. The scientists have not been able to find a mate for the poor guy.

Goldfinch: Your favorite birds?

Porter: The Black-tailed Trainbearer (*Lesbia victoriae*) was certainly the most shocking. It's a hummingbird, with the male measuring 9.5 inches long. They are small iridescent green birds, the long black tail, accounting for most of the length, is deeply forked with green tips.

My favorite bird was the Rufous-collared Sparrow. I first heard its melodious song in Quito. It was everywhere I went after that in the highlands of the Inter-Andean Valley of mainland Equador. The bird shows a ruffed crest when disturbed, has a gray head with black striping and a conspicuous rufous collar on the hind neck. Such a cheerful bird!

Goldfinch: Would you compare your experience with other trips such as Ecology Camp?

Porter: In the Galapagos there seems to be a peaceful co-existence between humans and the birds and other animals. On Hog Island (Maine) it seems the birds and other animals exist in spite of the humans. In the Galapagos the birds and animals exhibited little or no fear. North American birds are very skittish, even though they have a whole
(continued on next page)

continent in which to range. The course of evolution no doubt accounts for this anomaly in behavior.



Did you know that at the holidays The Audubon Society offers its members the possibility of giving a gift membership to a friend, neighbor, or loved one for only \$15? What a great idea this is for a favorite teacher, someone new in town, or a neighbor who feeds the birds. Our chapter receives the entire dues amount for use locally. All you do is send name and address of your gift recipient to Brenda Little, Membership Chair, 306 Hoover Hill Road in Hartford, KY 42347. We'll send a gift card and do the rest. Just like that. one or two names can be off your shopping list. Wasn't that easy?

Calendar

Monday November 11

7 pm Monthly meeting at First Christian Church

Saturday November 16

Field Trip Ben Hawes Park

Sunday November 17

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

Monday November 25

7 PM Directors' Meeting at Joe Ford Nature Center

Sniff Test

The U.S. Forest Service, USFS, plans to swap 2 pieces of Daniel Boone National Forest land with a coal mining company. USFS's Mike Rock has been quoted as saying the reason for the swap is to get rid of isolated and hard to manage parcels. The coal company owns mineral rights but can only remove the mountaintop if the land trade goes through. The draft environmental impact study finds harm to Buckhorn Lake's water and the State Resort Park's tranquility due to blasting. Duh? Somebody needs to define **Service** for USFS.

Hike the new Trail at Ben Hawes Park with Obbie Todd and associates

Ouch, ugh thud and other sounds of the struggle of Homo Sapiens versus Ma Nature's vines, thorns, saplings, and poison ivy were heard along the path that was cut by Obbie Todd and his helpers this summer through the new part of the park at Owensboro's western border. On Saturday morning, November 16th, you will have a chance to walk the trail with Obbie and his friends. Please meet at the new addition entrance by the old coal mine at 9 AM. For more info: Steve Hahus 733-0342

Apple Festival

Our chapter made an attempt to publicize our organization, its purpose, and its activities at Reid's Orchard during the two-day festival last month. We used a board game for matching bird photos with the correct species name to lure visitors to our booth. We also gave away posters and bags of bird seed containing our Website URL.

The weather was abominable on Saturday with relentless rain. We estimate that we talked with 300 to 400 people about the Audubon Society during the Sunday hours.

Beginning Birding

Last month volunteers taught 200 students plus about a dozen adult teachers and chaperones the basics of bird watching at the Girl Scout Camp. Classes in The Powell Bird Blind, binocular basics, bird identification, and how to keep a nature notebook were this year's topics.

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