
THE GOLDFINCH



Daviess County Audubon Society

September 2005

Bring ideas to Sept. 12 meeting

The leaves have yet to turn, but the first real sign of autumn will take place at 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 12, when the Daviess County Audubon Society begins its 2005-2006 year. The meeting will be held at First Christian Church at Seventh Street and J.R. Miller Blvd.

The first meeting will be a chance for members to offer feedback on some preliminary ideas for the year. At an August 2 planning meeting, organizers outlined a tentative field trip schedule for the year and tossed around some program ideas. At press time, speakers on various environmental topics are being scheduled.

There will be a slight schedule change this year. Out-of-town speakers are traditionally invited to eat at Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn prior to the meeting. Those "meet-and-eat" sessions will take place at 6 p.m., but social time will still begin at 7 p.m.

One item up for discussion will be fundraising ideas for the year. It has been two years since the club held its last bird-a-thon, and its treasury is dwindling. Another bird-a-thon is a possibility. The planning committee also pondered making and selling bird houses at a large community gathering in 2006. Which would you like to do? September's meeting will give you a chance to be heard.

Help Audubon secure greener future

As Daviess County Audubon begins its 2005-2006, organizers hope to continue the efforts which have made a difference in shaping the next generation of environmental activists. The cost of failure? An Owensboro in 2025 with waste-filled waterways, littered roadsides and diminished green space for our children's children to enjoy.

That price to pay tomorrow would be staggering. But educating young people today also comes with a cost. During 2004-2005, the chapter's education costs alone from last year topped \$700. These monies were spent on everything from Operation Feeder Watch and Audubon Adventures classroom kits to cameras mounted in nest boxes, giving students a bird's-eye look at the incubation process.



Considering more than 1,000 students were reached through DCAS education programs, \$2/ student to help secure a green future for the Owensboro region seems like money well spent. Education also comes from being better informed about local, state and national environmental issues, and roughly \$200 was spent to continue publication of The Goldfinch newsletter.

For many years, the National Audubon Society sent a portion of national dues back to local chapters. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. When you pay national dues directly to the National Audubon Society, you are given free membership to your local chapter. While your dues contribute to

conservation efforts on the national level, none of those dollars filter down to the local chapter. In recent years, the Daviess County Audubon chapter has established a \$10/year "local-only" membership level. These members don't receive the National Audubon magazine, but do receive the local newsletter (if desired) and the knowledge they are contributing to local programs. However, of the 90-odd members recognized by the National Audubon Society, only about 20 are "local-only" members. Additional revenues are needed to continue the level of programming we desire -- and the Ohio Valley deserves.

Check your newsletter label to see when your dues are up for the year. When renewing your national membership, please consider sending an additional \$10 in local dues. If you wish to become a local-only member, that membership level is just \$10. Thanks for your support!

Williams excited about new duties

Carolyn Williams' tenure as the new president of the Daviess County Audubon Society may have had its roots in her "tween" years.

"I was in a little Audubon club in the sixth grade. We made a bird book which I still have," she notes.

However, her real classroom was the great outdoors.

"My dad was a fisherman, and we had a place on Lake Cumberland. We fished there a lot as I was growing up," she said.

When it came time to start her own family, that same spirit endured. Her husband, Henry, shares her love of nature and enjoys hunting and fishing. When they sought free time from their careers as teachers, they opted for lake-filled summers.

"We started tent camping at Barkley Lake when our oldest son, Eric, was a few months old. After



Charles Morris and Carolyn Williams discuss plans.

Matthew was born, we all enjoyed camping, and fishing and water skiing as they got older. I'm not a hunter, so Henry taught the boys how to hunt, and they spent a lot of time in the woods."

Eric recently was named manager of one of Kentucky's prime birding destinations -- Peabody Wildlife Management Area.

Williams taught school for 30 years, the last few as a 4/5 grade science teacher.

"The last year I taught I started an Environmental Club. I just wish I had done it sooner. I also started an outdoor classroom.

Hopefully, some of my students will be better environmentalists," she said.

Williams has been in the Daviess County Audubon Society for about six years. Rather than rest on the laurels of her teaching career, she used those experiences to become a stalwart member of

the chapter's education committee.

"I enjoy the work that our Education Committee does for the students in the area," she said. Whether it's pointing out visitors to the Powell Bird Blind or preaching the merits of recycling, Williams has the ability to command students' attention.

Involving more children in these programs is one of her goals for the upcoming year, but she would also like to see greater involvement by people of all ages. Her one regret about the chapter is the small attendance at club meetings. She hopes to increase awareness of the organization's Web site (www.daviessaudubon.org) so it can become a greater promotional tool for the organization.

Anyone with ideas for the year may contact Carolyn at cs.williams@omuonline.net.

Bluebirds, swallows, heartache visit nest boxes

By Brenda Little

Charlie Dickens said of the era he depicted in one of his novels:

"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." That's the way it was on our nest box trails this season.

It was the best of times. Bluebirds were again this year the dominant bird at both the schools we mentor. Only bluebirds used the seven boxes at Southern Elementary near Cromwell. They had six nestings this year and, to the delight of the hard-working faculty and staff, the bluebirds chose the camera box they'd placed in a flower garden with a birdbath and steppingstones made by the children in art class. Twenty-seven bluebirds fledged at Southern this year. On the outskirts of Hartford, at Wayland Alexander Elementary, seven boxes housed seven bluebird nests, two tree swallows, and one house wren. Two pairs of bluebirds chose the camera boxes at Wayland this year and ... Lights! Action! Camera! We had our first family of tree swallows 'performing' in one of the camera boxes.

It was the worst of times. Lightning at Wayland zapped us. The strike took out both our cameras, and we were off the air while bluebirds raised their brood, followed by a tree swallow pair that moved in to raise six young. The cameras have been replaced with funding from Bill and Mary Ann Freels of Paducah. We've applied to the Kentucky Ornithological Society for help with the costs of replacing the damaged cameras, hoping to reimburse the Freels.

We lost a nest of bluebirds at Wayland when children disturbed the box. After analyzing the incident, we are hopeful that it was more curiosity than maliciousness. We've replaced the box with a more secure one, and true to their survivalist nature; the Bluebirds rebuilt and successfully fledged 4 young birds.

We now have a total of 14 nest boxes on the grounds at Wayland Alexander and Southern Elementary Schools. We have two boxes with cameras at Wayland and one camera box at Southern. Our nest box trails, especially the three boxes with

See Bluebirds, Page 3

Fight for Arctic

After 25 years of fighting, our last best chance to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will be in the House of Representatives on a vote on the budget reconciliation bill quickly approaching in September. All Audubon chapters and Audubon members around the country will be using this opportunity to ask their members of Congress not to include provisions for Arctic gas and oil drilling in the final bill.



Please make a point to call, write or e-mail your elected officials today! Every member of Congress will be voting on this measure and right now, it's too close to call. This spring, both area representatives approved a budget resolution which could lead to Arctic drilling.

Those who live in the Second District may contact Second District Rep. Ron Lewis by writing him at 1100 Walnut St., Suite P15B, Owensboro, KY. 42301, calling the Washington office at 202-225-3501 or his Owensboro office at 270-688-8858. His e-mail address is ron.lewis@mail.house.gov. Residents in Ohio or McLean County may contact First District Rep. Ed Whitfield at 301 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-1701. His Washington office phone number is 202-225-3115. His e-mail address is <http://whitfield.house.gov/contactform/>.

Log on to Audubon's special "Protect the Arctic" Web site – accessed via www.audubon.org, or contact Desiree Groves in Audubon's public policy office in Washington, DC at 202-861-2242, extension 3038 (dgroves@audubon.org) to find how you can help!

Bluebirds

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cameras, provide the opportunity to impact over 900 young hearts and minds each nesting season with vivid up-close images on the TV monitors in their classrooms. When the number of faculty and staff exposed to the beauty and wonder of avian family life is added to our target audience, this pushes the total to 1,000 people. Please note that this is only an opportunity, a project with potential, not a done deal. It takes patient, steady, support, training, retraining, encouragement and cooperation between faculty and our DCAS volunteers to make this marvelous project work. As to the best and the worst of times this year, 2005 was better than it was bad. We're looking forward to March 2006.

Visit DCAS online at www.daviessaudubon.org!
Meetings are 7 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month
(September to June at First Christian Church, Seventh
and J.R Miller Blvd.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR FIELD TRIPS

A tentative schedule for this year's field trips has been developed. They include:

* September – Falls of the Ohio. The fossil beds just west of Louisville are a shorebird haven, so this trip will give members a chance to catch a glimpse of migrating shorebirds. An avocet has been spotted at the falls this summer.

*October – To be determined by members. Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois is the site of impressive snake migration in the fall. However, organizers concede there are some members who despise snakes and won't go. At the September meeting, members will discuss whether to go there or to Patoka Lake National Wildlife Refuge for the end of fall migration.

*November – Henderson Sloughs, Sauerheber unit. This will be the first of two trips this year to one of the state's top birding sites for waterfowl.

*December – Christmas bird counts. During the holidays, field trips take a back seat to compiling statistics from the National Audubon Society's research.

*January – Peabody Wildlife Management Area, another of western Kentucky's prime birding locales.

*February – Back to Henderson for the height of the winter waterfowl season.

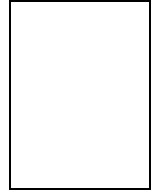
*March – Mammoth Cave. Explore Kentucky's natural wonder below ground while welcoming early migrants and early wild flowers above it.

*April – Perry County, Ind. Visit Audubon member Steve Hahus' little slice of heaven in the Hoosier National Forest for wood warblers and other spring favorites.

*May – Harmonie State Park, New Harmony, Ind. We'll make another return visit to the banks of the Wabash for spring migrants.

The group also plans to keep monitoring Ben Hawes State Park once a month.

The Goldfinch/September 2005
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Goldfinch illustration by Kirsten Munson

In memory

DCAS lost a member of the flock this summer when Joan Boggess lost her fight with cancer. From her long career in education to her DCAS days, she helped others develop an interest in science. In recent years, she melded the research and social sides of bird watching, being a faithful participant in Owensboro Community and Technical College counts and serving as co-hospitality chair of the DCAS.

Thompsons will share Peru experience

Marilee and Wendell Thompson of Owensboro will be in the spotlight this month when they present a program about their recent trip to Peru during the fall meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society, Friday, Sept. 23 through Sunday, Sept. 25 at Lake Cumberland State Resort Park near Jamestown.

The KOS meeting is open to nonmembers, and it's a great way to get connected to other birders across Kentucky, plus enjoy a little birding around southern Kentucky. Field trips will be conducted on Saturday and Sunday.

According to KOS vice president Mark Bennett, the Thompsons will be the second part of the opening night's look at South American birding. The Friday evening program will begin at 7 CDT presented by Dona Coates, who will detail her recent birding adventure to Bolivia. The Saturday evening program will be presented by Dr. Fred Aslop of East Tennessee State University. Dr. Aslop will present a program on wildlife and avian photographs. For more information about lodging, <http://www.biology.eku.edu/kos/calendar.html>