

The Goldfinch



Daviess County Audubon Society

www.daviessaudubon.org

January 2007



Eric Miller will present a raptor program Jan. 8.

Miller returns for Jan. 8 program

Falconer and raptor rehabilitator Eric Miller returns to the Daviess County Audubon Society this month to discuss falconry and the Western Kentucky Raptor Center.

The meeting will be 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, at First Christian Church, Seventh and J.R. Miller Boulevard.

As he discusses the four facets of falconry, he will introduce his red-tailed hawk, Aurora, to the club members.

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From left are: Steve Rogier, Henry Conner, Cathy Rogier, Jill Flachskam, Janet Howard, Carolyn Williams, Mike Henshaw, Rob Rold, Ken Hurm, Steve Hahus, Steve Anderson and Scott Harp.

61 species found on east count

Mild temperatures and 61 species greeted the end of 2006 for the eastern and southern Daviess County Christmas Bird Count held Dec. 30.

Information from this count was sent to the National Audubon Society for their use in monitoring bird populations.

This year, the count included a surprise among more than 13,380 birds ... an indigo bunting. Cathy Rogier looked in disbelief, then confirmed the finding in her guide, matching the winter plumage perfectly.

"It's just like those whooping cranes in Indiana," she said. They're not supposed to be there, but there they are." Although they've done bird counts in places like

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40 species spotted in windy west

Eleven counters had a gray, windy start to 2007 by tallying 40 species and more than 2,400 individuals during the western Daviess County Christmas Bird Count.

Counters lamented the lack of waterfowl for the day. Five mallards and 65 Canada geese were the total duck count for the day, even including River Road, where Pat Augustine and Janet Howard still found a northern harrier, to their delight.

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West

From Page 1

However, other traditional west county favorites made their presence felt, such as huge flocks of horned larks which would appear above the plowed horizon, then disappear almost as quickly. Even the gray clouds couldn't completely obscure that soothingly familiar golden wash. The total of 146 swamped last year's total of 28 horned larks.



Rose Ann Radzelovage and Carolyn Williams look for birds at the Joe Ford Nature Center Jan. 1.

Tony and Brenda Eaden were thrilled to count the always-hard-to-spot brown creepers in their area. And regal pileated woodpeckers made an appearance at Joe Ford Nature Center and Panther Creek Park, where Joe Ford said the birding was particularly poor.

In the Sorgho area, the Wilson farm proved to be a big disappointment for Carolyn Williams, Rose Ann Radzelovage and Mary Kissel. But a nearby subdivision revealed a trio of cedar waxwings.

After a morning of counting, participants returned to a delicious bounty at Howard's house.

Other counters included Ken Hurm, Jill Flachskam and Dr. Henry Conner.

The species counted included: Killdeer (2), great blue heron (3), Canada geese (65), mallard (5), red-tailed hawk (13), northern harrier (3), turkey vulture (3), kestrel (45), crow (2), Eurasian-collared dove (28), rock dove (123), mourning dove (31), hairy woodpecker (1), red-bellied woodpecker (14), downy woodpecker (10), northern flicker (18), pileated woodpecker (2), blue jay (40), Carolina chickadee (26), robin (346), Carolina wren (8), eastern bluebird (24), mockingbird (21), eastern towhee (2), tufted titmouse (21), white-breasted nuthatch (11), red-winged blackbird (58), cedar waxwings (3), American goldfinch (21), horned lark (146), starling (494), cardinal (62), song sparrow (11), eastern meadowlark (29), dark-eyed junco (57), white-throated sparrow (7), grackle (459), house finch (6), house sparrow (186) and brown creeper (3).

These totals will be sent to the Kentucky Ornithological Society for their records.

Miller

From Page 1

He hopes other falconers will discuss their birds at the meeting.

Since Miller's last appearance with the club in December 2005, he also has been part of the launch of the Western Kentucky Raptor Center. Part of his program will focus on plans for the center, which include a raptor hospital at Yellow Creek Park, expected to open during the first quarter of 2007.

Miller notes the WKRC received its federal permit and nonprofit status this winter and has only been operational on a limited basis for a few months. About a dozen volunteers have worked with the organization, and many others have expressed an interest in joining the effort. In the limited time the organization has operated, he said they have received turkey vultures, great horned owls, red-tailed hawks, screech owls and Cooper's hawks and a sharp-shinned hawk. He said they try to save as many as they can, but most come to the organization "in really bad shape." He hopes the group can have a few public releases early this year. Those birds that heal but are unable to return to the wild will remain at the center and used for educational purposes.

East

From Page 1

Trinidad and Belize, the comforts of home were no less thrilling, as she and husband Steve marveled at the coloration of a red-shouldered hawk.

Team Kentucky Wesleyan – Jill Flachskam and Henry Conner traveled with Steve Anderson southwest of Whitesville and were delighted to spot both ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers and swamp and tree sparrows greeted Rob Rold and Steve Hahus, and Jody Jones saw his first northern harrier in about five years

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Outdoor enthusiasts asked to help stop threats to state's environment

Kentucky's bird watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts have been asked to become environmental watchdogs for the state.

STOP-- Sports Men and Women To Oppose Pollution -- was recently unveiled by Attorney General Greg Stumbo.

The 24-hour STOP hotline (1-866-749-STOP or 7867) will take information from anyone who comes across environmental threats, such as open dumping and blackwater discharges. The Office of the Attorney General has broad environmental duties and authority under the law. This includes preventing or remedying damage to the environment caused by any person, group or agency -- whether state or federal. The office can bring public nuisance actions to protect private citizens who've been harmed by pollution.

Upon receipt of the complaints, the Attorney General's Office of Civil and Environmental Law will investigate and determine the best course of action to take. When appropriate, agents from the KBI may be asked to take over the matter or it could be referred to the agency of authority such as the Division of Water, Waste Management, Fish and Wildlife or the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet or the United States EPA Criminal Investigation Division. If a particular business is determined to be at fault, the Office of the Attorney General will take them to court and hold them accountable for their actions. "By law we counsel all environmental agencies and cooperate with them in carrying out our environmental duties," Stumbo said.

The STOP hotline directs callers to leave their contact information, as well as details about the particular environmental threat to Kentucky's natural resources they have encountered.



Winter prime time for seeing eagles in Kentucky

During January and February, four state resort parks will be participating in the "Eagle Watch Weekends," a chance to see the American Bald Eagle in the wild. The tours take place on an excursion yacht, barges, pontoon boats and by van, depending upon the location and tour. Ticket prices for the tours range from \$20 to \$50 a person.

The parks, phone numbers and dates for the Eagle Watch Weekends are:

Dale Hollow State Resort Park (800-325-2282): Jan. 19-21, Jan. 26-28, Feb. 16-17.

Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park (800-325-0146): Jan. 19-21.

Lake Barkley State Resort Park (800-325-1708): Jan. 26-28.

Kenlake State Resort Park (800-325-0143): Feb. 2-4.

Guests should bring warm clothes, rain gear and binoculars.

These trips can take place under extreme weather conditions. These resorts offer lodges, cottages and restaurants. Registration is required for the Eagle Watch Weekends. Call the parks for details and fee information.



Goldfinch illustrations by Kirsten Munson; other illustrations from Microsoft and U.S. Fish and Wildlife (hunter)

Peabody trip Jan. 20

The January field trip will be to Peabody Wildlife Management Area, one of the premier birding spots in Kentucky.

Holiday observers note a resurgence in short-eared owls this winter.

The group will meet at 8 a.m. Jan. 20 at Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Thank-you corner

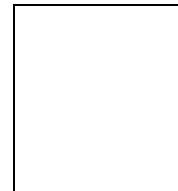
Thanks to all who volunteered time for Christmas at Panther Creek light display, showing a concern for the wildlife community by aiding the Western Kentucky Raptor Center and Joe Ford Nature Library.

Thanks to Jody Jones for his recent \$85 donation to the Daviess County Audubon Society.

On The Web

Miss a meeting? Minutes from each month can be found at the Daviess County Audubon Society's Web site, www.daviessaudubon.org. Click on "events," and go to the previous month.

The Goldfinch/January 2007
c/o Mary Kissel
3440 New Hartford Road, Apt. 1
Owensboro, KY 42303



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

January events

Meeting, 7 p.m. Jan. 8, First Christian Church, Seventh and J.R. Miller.

Field Trip, Peabody WMA, 8 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 20. Meet at Owensboro Community & Technical College parking lot.

Kimberly Clark closed to birders

A visit was made to Kimberly Clark in early winter by Ken Hurm, asking for permission to include their property in our Christmas Bird Count. Citing liability concerns, the company refused.

The company discourages casual visitors wandering the property. Intruders are politely but firmly escorted off. We are asking our members be good neighbors and respect this policy.

Their environment has developed into a haven for many species. It's only natural we would enjoy birding it. However, trying to do so at this time will only work against our good relations with this company and defeat future efforts to effect a change in policy.

Sabine's gull spotted

Steve Anderson was one of the lucky Kentucky birders to get a glimpse of the Sabine's gull that appeared at Honker Bay at Lake Barkley in late December and has stayed into 2007.

East

From Page 2

on the far eastern segment of the count.

Joe Ford and Ron Taylor, Grace Ford's son, manned Yellow Creek Park and were thrilled most not by birds, but by the sight of new mistletoe growing --- the perfect way to end Christmas week.

There are many birds ... and many different types of habitat within the count circle. At the Girl Scout camp, Bill and Brenda Little saw a red headed woodpecker and yellow-billed cuckoo.

Other counters included: Ken Hurm, Carolyn Williams, Mike Henshaw, Scott Harp. Sherry Henshaw's cooking talents concluded Saturday festivities on a high note.

Also added to the count were Monday stops on the Horse Fork Trail portion of the Greenbelt Park, Elmwood Cemetery and Hillcrest Country Club. On the trail, Rose Ann Radzelovage and Mary Kissel spotted a brown thrasher.

The 61 species spotted included: Killdeer (18), great blue heron (6), Canada geese (75), mallard (5), pied-billed grebe (4), red-tailed hawk (26), northern harrier (6), red-shouldered hawk (3), kestrel (47), crow (56), Sora rail (1), American coot (7), Eurasian-collared dove (15), rock dove (50), mourning dove (83), barred owl (1), belted kingfisher (2), red-headed woodpecker (2), yellow-billed cuckoo (1), great horned owl (2), hairy woodpecker (1), red-bellied woodpecker (41), downy woodpecker (15), northern flicker (13), pileated woodpecker (3), blue jay (196), crow (56), Carolina chickadee (60), robin (272), Carolina wren (41), winter wren (1), golden-crowned kinglet (1), ruby-crowned kinglet (3), eastern bluebird (90), mockingbird (49), eastern towhee (9), tufted titmouse (31), white-breasted nuthatch (22), red-winged blackbird (164), cedar waxwings (29), American goldfinch (30), horned lark (40), starling (7,134), cowbird (35), cardinal (178), indigo bunting (1), American tree sparrow (13), field sparrow (21), Savannah sparrow (1), song sparrow (70), swamp sparrow (5), eastern meadowlark (82), white-crowned sparrow (11), dark-eyed junco (112), white-throated sparrow (23), grackle (4,029), house finch (48), house sparrow (33), purple finch (7), American woodcock (2), yellow-bellied sapsucker (2) and brown thrasher (3).

For news and dues

The Goldfinch is printed on 100% Postconsumer Recycled Paper. Please notice the expiration date on the mailing label above. Your newsletter subscription is included in your local dues of \$15 a year. Please keep your local chapter dues current by mailing this page with your check to: Charles Morris, treasurer, 1400 Woodbridge Trail, Owensboro, KY 42303. If you have a news item or Goldfinch question, contact editor Mary Kissel at 926-3321, or mjkisselchirp45@bellsouth.net.

Officers

Carolyn Williams, president, 683-5863, cs.williams@omuonline.net
Steve Anderson, vice president, 273-9747, stevoander@peoplepc.com
Sherry Henshaw, secretary, mikesherry@vci.net, 275-4250
Charles Morris, treasurer, 926-8803, wanderingtattler@yahoo.com
Eric Williams, field trip coordinator, shrike@apex.net
Mary Kissel, education chair/newsletter editor

threatening to eventually turn the region back into a Plains habitat.

Residents have to be hardy to adjust to the extreme environment. In the

summer, they cope with 20 hours of sunlight, which help trigger massive growth in some vegetation. For example, one can see 99-pound heads of cabbage. “In a matter of two

days, you can literally watch leaves grow in your house,” she said. Height in growth is limited by permafrost three to five feet below the surface.

Unfortunately, the flip side comes in the winter. In Barrow, Alaska, they have 65 days of darkness in the winter. The night has its own beauty, thanks to the Northern Lights.

Mesmerized by its present, Hanley wonders about Alaska’s future. She noted that global warming is melting the permafrost, draining moisture into the Earth and

Vandals strike, cleaners needed

Sometime during the week of Oct. 20, the Joe Ford Nature Center was vandalized. Apparently, the vandals were more interested in ransacking the place than taking the materials inside, a mix of educational materials and paperwork from the past.

Rose Ann Radzelovage and Mary Kissel cleaned up the broken glass, then opted to use the incident as a way to clear out two of the storage areas in the center. However, the one with most of the DCAS materials is still full. Options for cleaning and storage will be explored at the November meeting.

Welcome Sutton!

Linda Gillis' fourth-grade classroom at Sutton Elementary has signed up to be a 2006-2007 Audubon Adventures classroom, tapping into resources provided.

Sr. Amelia Stenger has opted not to order any new materials for Mount St. Joseph, so money is still available for another school to have a classroom kit. If you know of anyone who's interested, contact Mary Kissel.

Join the fun at the Sloughs

The Daviess County Audubon Society will join nearly 30 Heritage Christian students for a Nov. 4 trip to the Sloughs Wildlife Management Area. The students will be there as part of a continuing program with the Joe Ford Nature Library. Members are to meet at the West Parrish Avenue Kroger at 9 a.m. for carpooling.

Butterflies – more than meet the eye?

WKU's Jeffrey Marcus to discuss species, genetics

Everyone enjoys the beauty of butterflies, but what makes up their complex pattern of colors? That study is part of the life of Western Kentucky associate professor Dr. Jeffrey Marcus, the October 9 guest speaker for the Daviess County Audubon Society.

Marcus will be presenting work that he has been tackling since he arrived in Kentucky. This includes both laboratory research that has provided additional insights into how Lepidopteran color patterns are formed and also fieldwork he has done in collaboration with the Society of Kentucky



Lepidopterists and Mammoth Cave National Park to assess the total number of species of butterflies and moths found in the national park. He plans to make land-use recommendations on their preservation, based on his findings.

Current grant-funded projects include Butterfly Transposon Mutagenesis Screen for the Study of Wingless Signal Transduction and changes in gene flow patterns in butterflies associated with altered land use.

Marcus grew up in the Hudson Valley of New York. He became interested in nature as a child, with much of his enthusiasm being directed towards fish and other aquatic organisms. Marcus did his undergraduate work in ecology and systematics at Cornell University.

Then he received a Churchill Scholarship to attend graduate school at Cambridge University in England, where he received a master's degree in genetics.

Marcus began to seriously study the Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) as a Ph.D. student at Duke University. His work at Duke combined zoology, genetics and molecular biology, trying to understand how butterflies and moths make the color patterns that are found on their wings. When he received his Ph.D. in 2002, Marcus did a short post-doctorate stint at State University of New York, Buffalo, before moving to Bowling Green and becoming an assistant professor of biology at Western Kentucky University in 2003.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at First Christian Church, Seventh Street and J.R. Miller Blvd.

Local dues now \$15

What's the cost of promoting the environment? For members of the Daviess County Audubon Society, it's going to go up a little bit. At the September organizational meeting, members voted to raise the cost of a local-only membership to \$15.

Daviess County residents who are national members automatically become local members with the cost of a national membership. However, there's no longer a revenue-sharing program, so the local club sees little, if any, of those funds. Members expressed concern over rising postage costs for the Goldfinch, and they would like to be able to have money to fund other educational programs. Pay the new fee on your anniversary date.

The club also is entertaining ideas for fundraisers. Steve Anderson noted that a Subway contract with Wal-Mart limits the number of food vendors during a calendar year. He has not ruled out the possibility of cooking and selling to employees only at the Kentucky 54 store. The club also has birdhouses

Birders escape floodwaters to see migrants

The Sept. 23 deluge was no match for a trio of Daviess County Audubon birders who traveled almost to Lake 9 in Fulton County. Charles Morris reported he, Steve Anderson and Donna Hanley were within 10 miles of the lake when "the water on the road came over the front bumper, and fumes were bubbling up from the exhaust pipe from underwater. I was very lucky and was able to back out to shallow water with out the car cutting off."

The group's perseverance was rewarded with 44 species, including three new birds for Morris: herring gull, blackburnian warbler and black-throated green warbler. Others birds on the list were: mourning dove, northern cardinal, Carolina chickadee,

Joe Ford Library marking first anniversary

Joe and Grace Ford can't believe it's been 12 months since the Joe Ford Nature Library opened.



But nearly 2,000 library cards later, the treasure trove of knowledge has stirred the curiosity of young and old alike.

Physically, they have about completed moving Joe's treasures into the library collection. More important to them is the educational transformation the library has made in connecting with children.

In a bid to get a grant, they formed a partnership with Heritage Christian School. They didn't get the grant, but they did gain a willing partner for adventure. They will take four trips this year with fourth- fifth- and seventh-graders. On Nov. 4, they will travel to the Sloughs Wildlife Management Area, where they will meet members of the Daviess County Audubon Society. History also is part of this journey, so they will be going to Spottsville to see American Indian sites, then conclude with a wild flower session at Ben Hawes State Park. Subsequent trips to other points of regional interest will follow Jan. 6, Feb. 3 and March 3, again concentrating on natural and historical spots.

Follow-up activities will help students' writing skills. The group will produce a booklet with words and pictures about these area sites, Hugh Whitaker will videotape some of the activities. Both the booklet and tape will be presented to the school.

They hope to culminate the year by having students who completed all activities on the Fords' television show, "Trees, Bees and Dirty Knees on OCTV, Owensboro cable channel 51.

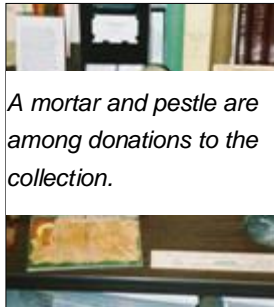
The anniversary month will include a week of activities. Obbie Todd will have a 2 p.m. Ben Hawes walk on Sunday, Oct. 22.

Weekday programs will be in the library, (Room 131 in Brescia's Science Building). Brescia's Steve Wood will have a session on earthquake research and education in the classroom at 3 p.m. Monday, Oct. 23. Joe Ford will present a program on ghost stores at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 24. On Wednesday, Oct. 25, Carol Mark will have a 4 p.m. program on bees. Bill and Brenda Little present a 6 p.m. bird program Oct. 26, Dennis Millay will give a 5 p.m. program on dinosaurs on Oct. 27, and Steve Hahus will discuss wild flowers at 11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 28, at the library, followed by a 1 p.m. Yellow Creek Park hike.

Joe's recent mild heart attack has curbed their schedule only slightly. Joe admits his stamina has

been affected. Still, the couple plan four sessions for Oct. 6 – two morning American Indian programs at Meadow Lands Elementary as they take kids from prehistoric tribes to the Mississippian tribes. At 1 p.m., they will present a program on the "Good Old Days," to wrap up Harvest Day, showing kids such items as school lunch pails to an ear trumpet. At 6 p.m., they will be with Buena Vista Baptist Church

Grace Ford shows off some of the library's first-year activities



A mortar and pestle are among donations to the collection.

On The Web

Visit the library on the Web at www.Brescia.edu. Click family and friends, then Joe Ford Library.

home schoolers to present a "Bird Blast" program on backyard birding. "I'd rather be doing, though, than just sitting. That would kill anybody, sitting,"

Joe said.

They are gratified by the community support. Through July, about 300 people had signed in at the library, about 100 had attended one of six hikes and more than 840 had attended programs on and off site. The list of participants is varied, from Boy Scouts to a KWC sorority.

One of those groups has responded with its own contribution to the library. The Younger Woman's Club recently brought a scrapbook filled with clippings from the 1950s, giving insight to yesteryear's Owensboro,

Individuals have brought their own items for inclusion. Charles Massie found a pestle and mortar on his farm. Many people look to them to help identify critters. On this day, Grace was toting an annual guide. Because it's a spider season, they have

Old landfill offers exciting habitat for October trip

The old city landfill, and property belonging to Steve Anderson's father, will be the site for the October field trip.

Anderson notes the Masonville property is a real mixed bag of habitat, grasslands, hardwood forest and swamp, with a beaver dam and heron rookery. The date will be announced at the meeting. If interested, contact him at 273-9747.

For the November trip, members are being encouraged to join Heritage Christian School kids on their trip to the Sloughs Wildlife Management area. The trip is being organized through the Joe Ford Nature Library.



Cravens' after-school students pose with an almost-finished Birdie.

Convert Goldfinch to online edition

Would you like to save a tree ... and the club a little money?

Members are being encouraged to have their Goldfinch newsletter delivered to them online instead through "snail mail." Only a handful of members have selected this option. Goldfinch editor Mary Kissel acknowledged she has been fielding complaints about the formatting of the online edition. Options are being explored to deliver PDF versions of the Finch to members, which should eliminate these problems. She notes that the online versions have much clearer photographs than those issues which are photocopied.

If you would like to convert your Finch to an online subscription, please contact Mary Kissel at 926-3321 or mjkisselchirp45@bellsouth.net

'Birdie' wows festival goers

Cravens Elementary's 21st-Century After-School students brought a new meaning to the phrase "watch the birdie" at this year's Western Kentucky Botanical Garden's Scarecrow Festival, Sept. 16 capturing the top prize for best scarecrow.

Their scarecrow, "Birdie," was a different kind of scarecrow, explained Lawanna Hodskins, after-school coordinator.

"After reviewing the judging criteria and discussing scarecrows in general, we decided to create a scarecrow to attract birds instead of scaring them away. Most of the materials used in the construction of our scarecrow were found in the school's outdoor classroom shed or in the science lab. In designing the scarecrow, the students were asked to provide everything birds needed for survival. The birdhouse head and umbrella hat provide shelter. Yarn and sheep's wool hair can be used for nesting materials. Bird feeders provide food, and the bird bath feet provide the birds with water. The PVC pipe body provides perching areas." She also wore pine cone feeder earrings.

Birdie originally had an umbrella, too, but it was damaged by heavy rain or a squirrel, she added.

The students earned a \$100 cash prize for their entry. The students will be asked to write a paper and the money should be spent on materials.

Cravens is an Audubon Society site. Charles Morris and Steve Anderson of the Audubon Society, displayed posters to passers-by.

Little to head KAC

Fresh off a triumphant push to get Sloughs Management Area named an Important Bird Area, Brenda Little was elected president of the Kentucky Audubon Council at its Sept. 16 fall meeting in Elizabethtown.

Bill Freels of Jackson Purchase, the godfather of the DCAS nestbox efforts, will be vice president, with Maggie Selvidge of Little River Audubon Society as secretary and Bertha Timmel of Louisville Audubon Society, treasurer.

Library

From Page 2

"We receive e-mails with pictures attached for us to see, things that they think Joe will be interested in," she said. "I'm pleased. They're doing with him here just what they did at the museum, using him as a resource person." They also are gratified by the support of the Brescia community. Their placement in the science building paid off recently when they enlisted the aid of faculty member Conrad Toepfer to help a high school biology student

Green thumbs wanted

Interested in creating a piece of nature heaven on J.R. Miller Boulevard? The Daviess County Audubon Society is exploring a partnership with Boy Scouts from First Christian Church to create a butterfly/hummingbird/flower garden across the street from the church.

A committee will be working with the Scouts to develop plans. President Carolyn Williams, Charles Morris and Steve Anderson were the first to volunteer, but more people are needed. Have a green thumb? Please contact Carolyn, 683-5863 or cs.williams@omuonline.net to see how you can help enhance the Germantown neighborhood.

Birders

From Page 1

blue jay, downy woodpecker, Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow, American crow, European starling, rock dove, red-tailed hawk, ring-billed gull, Canada goose, great blue heron, black-crowned night heron, great egret, double-crested cormorant, wild turkey, Carolina wren, turkey vulture, blue grosbeak, northern mockingbird, Cooper's hawk, killdeer, common grackle, tree swallow, northern rough-winged swallow, American kestrel, eastern meadowlark, barn swallow, belted kingfisher, red-winged blackbird, eastern bluebird, mallard, eastern phoebe, American goldfinch, northern flicker, white-breasted nuthatch, red-bellied woodpecker, tufted titmouse, American robin and house sparrow.

Alas, a stop around Lake Barkley failed to yield a glimpse of the scissor-tailed flycatchers that nest there during the summer.

