

September 2009

www.daviessaudubon.org



DAVISS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE GOLDFINCH

Chart our course for future

What direction do you want the Daviess County Audubon Society to take?

That will be the focus for the September meeting, set for 7 p.m. Sept. 14 at First Christian Church, 7th and J.R. Miller Blvd.

When the club broke for the summer, it did so without anyone stepping forward to be the new president. So, there will be plenty of issues to discuss at the meeting.

1. The leadership void. We need someone to coordinate all of the aspects of the Daviess County Audubon Society, someone to deal with all of the demands/paperwork required of being affiliated with a national organization.

2. Speakers for the year. Put on your thinking cap: What sort of programs would you like to see during the year? There's never been a

more exciting time to be interested in the environment. By putting our heads together, we can surely come up with seven people from Kentucky and southern Indiana who will teach us about challenging topics and help us become

better stewards of the Earth.

3. Field trips for the year. With gas prices settling down, perhaps we can venture farther this year. Who's up for a return to Louisville-area hot spots

like Falls of the Ohio or Bernheim Forest? Or southern Indiana's Hovey Lake or Harmony State Park?

Thinking more outside of the box, would you like to take an overnight trip somewhere? The Goldfinch staff was enthralled this summer by a report of a roseate spoonbill at Goose Pond WMA near Linton, Ind., about 2 1/2 hours north of Owensboro. This relatively new wildlife area also has had whooping crane sightings. Perhaps we'd like to brave an Eagle Watch

weekend down at Land Between the Lakes, or venture to southern Kentucky's Cumberland Falls or Big South Fork National Recreation Area, which are filled with dazzling songbirds each spring.

4. Getting educated. How can we make the most of the personnel we have? We have established partnerships with Girl Scouts of Pennyrile Council and Western Kentucky Botanical Garden. Can we do more to provide after-school programs for local schools and kid-oriented organizations such as Girls Inc.? Do we want to continue funding Audubon Adventures kits? What can the chapter do to assist with Joe Ford Nature Library activities?

5. Boosting membership. How can we stay viable if we don't grow our active membership? If you've got ideas on how to bring more people into the fold, let's hear them.

Along with this month's Goldfinch, you are receiving a questionnaire to solicit ideas for this year. Even if you can't attend the September meeting, we'd love to hear from you.

What would inspire you to become more active in Daviess County Audubon?



September Calendar:

Work weekend at Powell Bird Blind, 10 a.m. Sept. 10, 11 and 12

Fall birding classes at Western Kentucky Botanical Garden, 9 a.m. Sept. 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25 and 30

Daviess County Audubon meeting, 7 p.m. Sept. 14 at First Christian Church, 7th and J.R. Miller

DCAS display at Western Kentucky Botanical Garden's Scarecrow Festival, 1 to 3 p.m. Sept. 19

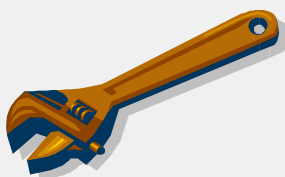
Brownie Adventure Day at Camp Pennyroyal Girl Scout Camp, 3 to 5 p.m. Sept. 26

A Way to Commemorate 9/11



Something for Everyone

- * Cut underbrush back from paths.
- * Plant wildflowers.
- * Repair and augment rock edges of frog pond.
- * Repair roof damage from ice storm.
- * Rebuild and repair bird feeders and get them filled with bird food.
- * Sweep floors and wash windows.
- * Finish final coat of adobe walls.
- * Serve lunch and refreshments to workers.



Rekindle sense of service by helping repair bird blind at Camp Pennyroyal

By Brenda Little

Everyone remembers where he or she was that fateful day in 2001. For a team of Audubon Society "mud doblers," that crystal clear morning found us mixing sand, lime and water at the Powell Bird Blind at Girl Scout Camp Pennyroyal near Pleasant Ridge as the news went around the world about the attack on the World Trade Center. Now, eight years later, our chapter will gather at the blind beginning Sept. 11 at 10 a.m. to prepare the blind and the environs for a Brownie Scout birding program on Sept. 26. The work weekend continues Sept. 12 and 13. In case of rain or for chores wrap-up, the following day(s) would be used.

Lunch will be provided each day so that our volunteers will not need to worry about packing a lunch. The hours that we plan to work at the blind are from 10 AM until after lunch with quitting time to meet each person's needs — between 1 and 3. There will be jobs for everyone from sweeping floors and washing windows to using a chain saw and dragging limbs. This is a great way to do something positive on 9/11!

We will have a preparation team meeting Sept. 4 to gather supplies for the work weekend.

Bill and Brenda Little and Winny Lin have volunteered to teach beginning birding classes for Brownie Adventure Day from 3 to 5 p.m. Sept. 26 at Camp Pennyroyal. Come enjoy a fall afternoon of fun. Call Brenda at 298-4237 if you're interested in helping.



Ken Hurm shows some of his pictures in the James D. Veatch Camp Breckinridge Museum gallery in Morganfield.

Hurm, Fraize share images of their travels

A handful of Daviess County Audubon members traveled to Morganfield this summer to look at a photo exhibit by fellow members Ken Hurm and Therese Fraize. Olio II was featured at the James D. Veatch Camp Breckinridge Museum from late May through July.

The 53-photo exhibit featured dazzling sights from around the region, as well as sites from travels across the western United States.

A good photographer finds beauty in the most mundane of places, so there

were shots of aging buildings in Owensboro.

One landscape shot was breathtaking by the clarity of the cloud-filled skies over the countryside. Fraize's butterfly shots looked like they were about to fly off of the print.

One of the stellar pieces of the exhibit was a series of shots from the 1850 Homeplace at Land Between the Lakes. From the quiet reflective nature of a costumed presenter to still-life shots from inside, it made you want to hop in the car and travel south ... immediately.

Hurm's work often put the viewer in unusual perspective, looking down from precipitous heights.

Some of the pictures from the western journey included shots at Yosemite National Park, Point Reyes National Seashore and one of the world's most photogenic churches, San Xavier del Bac Mission in Tucson, Ariz.

Beauty isn't only found in nature, it also can be found in people too.

A shot of a young man and a new canine friend stirs the emotion of any animal lover.

Going Green

The DCAS was one of several organizations which manned a booth at the recent Go Green event at the Farmers Market July 18 on New Hartford Road. Club materials and tattoos were distributed, and birding identification questions were fielded to various degrees of success.



Birding expertise needed for Brescia class

Brescia associate professor Conrad Toepfer is looking for someone to help with a field trip Oct. 12 or 19 with his vertebrate biology students, assisting with bird visual and audio identification. Up for the challenge? Contact him at conrad.toepfer@brescia.edu for details.

Camp speaks international language of birding

Volunteers needed for jam-packed fall at garden

Summer didn't mean the end of the year for members of the Daviess County Audubon Education team. Judy Adams, Winny and Kenny Lin and Mary Kissel led two birding sessions at the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden summer camp.

The camps gave kids in migrant families a chance to use binoculars and bird guides as they learned about some common birds in Kentucky's back yards. Thanks to Larry Lowing's wife, Katie, a new element was introduced ... audio. She lent the club the use of a bird call book, which added a new dimension to the lessons. Team members hope to get such a book for the club to enhance future lessons.

The sessions broadened the club's reach, because about 60 kids from migrant families came as far away as Henderson and Webster counties for the June programs. The groups were well supervised by adults who helped bridge any language barriers they were. It proves, once again, love for nature is an international language!

It's just a prelude for six weeks of fall birding classes in the garden as part of the Budding Biotech Program involving the garden and

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Winny and Kenny Lin and Mary Kissel helped with the migrant student camp. (Winny and Kenny Lin photos)

Audubon Adventures 2009 puts its focus on student activism

Should the Daviess County Audubon Society opt to continue funding Audubon Adventures kits, this year's program focuses on environmental activism. The 2009 edition, to be released this month, is Action for Planet Earth. The units for standards-based supplements will focus on water, energy and habitats: all causes near and dear to the hearts of western Kentuckians. The topics are introduced through newspaper publications filled with stories, puzzles and ideas for activities.

The fourth unit focuses on a new national school program, Pennies for the Planet. Begun earlier this year in a partnership with Toyota, Pennies for the Planet encourages students to tackle conservation projects in their own schools, efforts which are recognized on the Pennies for the Planet Web site.

They also may opt to raise money for targeted national conservation projects. During its initial launch, Pennies for the Planet kids raised money for Project Puffin and the Seabird

Restoration Project off the Maine coast, Four Holes Swamp/ Francis Beidler Forest, an ancient swamp habitat that is home to otters, owls and rare plants in South Carolina; and Wyoming's sagebrush "sea," an endangered habitat for pygmy rabbits, sage grouse and pronghorn rams.

And kids who raise money can also earn a Pennies for the Planet wristband to show that they took part in the program. The grand prize, awarded to the school or group that raises the most Pennies for the Planet, will be an Audubon Adventures Biodiversity Blitz. National Audubon Society staff will visit the prize-winning school or group to create a great program about wildlife and wild places.

Each classroom kit will include AA and Pennies for the Planet teacher and students materials, including a Pennies for the Planet classroom poster and a guide, "Nature Journaling for Everyone," which provides advice for students on how to keep a naturalist journal.



Muir Woods

Flachskam goes California dreaming

Jill Flachskam accepted The Goldfinch's "What I Did on My Summer Vacation" challenge, noting she went to California with the Sierra Club.

"I think I prefer a rocky shore to the beach ... we went to two lighthouses, one of which was closed to the public. To get to it, we had to go through a tunnel built into a mountain and over a suspension bridge. The shore was also great for birds – we saw a colony of penguin-like murrelets, cormorants and pigeon guillemots, which have a cool black-and-white pattern on their wings. There were even seals and sea lions basking on rocks (tough life!)."

"We went to Muir Woods, of course, to see the redwood trees. The trees are really tall, not wide, and they get half of their water from the fog! The first few days we were there it was remarkably clear, but the fog rolled in on day four. It's really cool, it sort of moves in waves, and it really does condense on the trees and fall down like rain."



Picnic time

The Daviess County Audubon Society ended its 2008-09 years with a picnic June 8 at Panther Creek Park, with food and fellowship for all. (Therese Fraize photos)

Camp

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Owensboro Science and History Museum. It's part of a communitywide effort to put more kids on a path toward math and science careers.

With the dual locations, the format for the classes will be different, according to Lowing. Each school will be divided into two groups, with half going to the garden and half to the museum in the morning. On most dates, there will be three 20-minute classes from 9 until 10:45 a.m. After a 45-minute break for lunch and transporting students, classes will resume at 11:30 and continue until 1.

It's a format that will permit teachers to work with relatively small classes of 10-12 students, Lowing said.

Two DCAS volunteers are needed for each of the following dates. Unless indicated, classes begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 1.

Monday, Sept. 14, Southern Oaks, 44 students. (Morning only: 9-10:30).

Wednesday, Sept. 16, West Louisville, 30 students. (Morning only: 9-10:30).

Friday, Sept. 18, Audubon Elementary, 63 students.

Monday, Sept. 21, Country Heights, 57 students.

Wednesday, Sept. 23, Newton Parrish.

Friday, Sept. 25, Foust Elementary, 49 students. (Morning only: 9-10:30).

Wednesday, Sept. 30, Whitesville Elementary, 61 students.

Friday, Oct. 2, Estes Elementary, 75 students.

Wed, Oct. 7, Sutton, 64 students.

Friday, Oct. 9, Deer Park, 80 students.

Tuesday, Oct. 13, Tamarack, 66 students.

Thursday, Oct. 15, East View, 73 students.

Friday, Oct. 16, Sorgho, 73 students. 8:30 a.m. start.

Wednesday, Oct. 28, Meadowlands, 57 students.

Friday, Oct. 30, Highland, 84 students.

To volunteer for fall classes, contact Mary Kissel at mjkissel-chirp45@bellsouth.net

Volunteers needed for Scarecrow Festival table

Anyone interested in manning a table at the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden's Scarecrow Festival?

The event will be from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 19, at the garden. If volunteers are available, Bird tattoos and DCAS materials would be distributed.

Other September events at the WKBG include the Big Botanicals Picnic from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 6 – bring big botanicals to be judged!

A Walk & Talk, "Biotech for Dummies," will be at 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8.

Resident raptors greet their public

Yellow Creek Park sessions raise visibility of local raptor center

One of the most dynamic corners of Daviess County's wildlife community spent the summer increasing its visibility.

The West Kentucky Raptor Center sponsored the "Hawks in the Park" series at Yellow Creek Park, letting visitors get to know their resident birds and learn more about the area's winged hunters.

During the Aug. 24 session, Jennifer Danhauer held on tight to Razor, a year-and-a-half-old screen owl. It flew into a car and injured its wing, limiting its ability to fly. In captivity, it could live up to 25 years. She said it eats a mouse a day and told visitors how indigestible food is regurgitated into pellets of fur and bones.

Along with the live birds, they also exhibited parts of birds. The silent wing of the owl felt almost cushiony to the touch.

It was compelling to see just the difference in legs within the raptor family ... from the tiny kestrel's to the stocky, thick-taloned great horned owl leg, needed to grab mammals such as opossum and skunk.

"Would you like that to grab you?" she asked a youngster, who quickly answered: "no."

She was quick to warn the kids that these birds are wild creatures, not snuggly pets. Razor was a little skittish as hikers and bikers rattled across the wooden bridge.

Among the current habitants in rehab is a barn owl, which will be re-released in Henderson County once it relearns how to hunt. It is much more vocal than the screech owl.



Jennifer Danhauer and Razor, an injured screech owl, greet visitors at Yellow Creek Park.



The difference between the foot of a red-tailed hawk, left, and great-horned owl is striking.

"You know those alien movies where they make that really scary scream? He screams like that, and it's really eerie," she said

Most of their patients are brought in by state fish and wildlife officials or law enforcement types. Other patients include a screech owl with head trauma, a great horned owl ("beautiful but mean"), Cooper's hawk, a resident red-tailed hawk and

resident turkey vulture named Spike for good reason.

"Someone shot him, and when he fell out of the sky, he dragged himself underneath somebody's porch. There was some food down there, and it was around some nails, and it got all tangled up, so he ate some food and nails." Danhauer brought along the bird's X-ray for proof.

Coupled with frequent visits to the Owensboro Museum of Science and History, the summer series was part of the raptor center's slow and steady push to become more visible in the community.

Director Eric Miller said they currently have 10 active volunteers, three trained rehabbers and 10 to 14 volunteer feeders. Eagle Scouts are building display muses which will be put near the picnic area off the main entrance to the park. There, the public will have a chance to view resident birds.