

THE GOLDFINCH



Daviess County Audubon Society

www.daviessaudubon.org

January 2009

Upholding a time-honored tradition



From left, counters for the southern Daviess County Christmas Bird Count included, bottom row: Bill Little, Scott Harp, Kenny Lin, Ken Hurm; top row: Brenda Little, Tony Eaden, Mike Henshaw, Henry Connor, Jill Flachskam, Carolyn Williams, Mary Kissel, Judy Adams, Winny Lin and Steve Hahus. Joe Ford and Steve Anderson also helped. (Winny Lin photo)

Drear can't dull zeal on southern bird count

Skies may have been gloomy, but that didn't dampen the enthusiasm for the "official" Daviess County Audubon Society Christmas bird count, held in southern Daviess County Jan. 3.

Sixteen counters compiled data that will be used by the National Audubon Society in their study of current bird populations. Skies which darkened during the morning brought challenging conditions, as activity dwindled throughout the morning, and lack of coloration made it difficult to spot colors in the plumage.

Fifty-three species were noted, with a total of 9,919 individuals. As

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Bounty of larks greets west counters

Sunny, but chilly skies greeted 2009 as 15 participants toured western Daviess County for a Kentucky Ornithological Society Christmas Bird Count Jan. 1.

Forty-five species and 4,159 individuals were recorded. It was a bumper crop for horned larks, particularly in the northern fringe of the count area, where Charles Morris, Donna Hanley, Carolyn Williams and Mary Kissel tallied 75 flushed from the fields, and Jan Howard and Pat Augustine had several in the roads around the Owensboro-Daviess County Airport.

On the other end of the area, Justin Rosemier, Henry Connor, Jill Flachskam and Ken Hurm had both species of kinglets, a Cooper's hawk, a pileated woodpecker and two northern harriers in the West Louisville-Maple Mount area.

"It was miserably cold on the Greenbelt," said Tony Eaden,

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Donna Hanley looks for birds at a church on the West Daviess County CBC.

Vulture expert Lynch will speak at January DCAS meeting

A noted expert on turkey vultures will discuss their nesting behavior in central Kentucky at the Jan. 12 meeting of the Daviess County Audubon Society.

Bill Lynch, a Kentucky Department Fish and Wildlife Resources privatelands wildlife biologist, has studied vultures for 26 years. His presentation will focus on the parent's role at the nest, nesting behavior, growth data and ways telemetry (wireless communication) has helped his studies. Currently, he is studying vocalization of adult vultures as they arrive at their nests and tabulating vulture nests. He's president of the Turkey Vulture Society and subscribes to the Vulture Study Group.

As a state biologist, he said his main role is provide habitat guidance to private landowners in an eight-county area, helping



with management from everything from butterflies to white-tailed deer. He also has helped landowners establish more than 5,000 acres of native grasses and forbs throughout central and western Kentucky and worked closely with Natural Resource and Conservation Service District officials and cattle producers in order to help establish eastern gama grass (a native grass) on their properties.

He also teaches part time at Western Kentucky University.

The club will meet at 7 p.m. at First Christian Church, Seventh and J.R. Miller Blvd. Anyone wishing to meet Lynch before the meeting may dine with him at Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn at 5:45 p.m.

Sophomore CBC effort impressive in Ohio County

The young Ohio County Christmas Bird Count was a wonderful success, thanks to adult support of a couple of young Junior Audubon counters.

Scott Harp enlisted support of three Fish and Wildlife biologists, who spotted a merlin (considered an extremely rare bird for the count date) and bald eagle among 59 species. Charles Morris and Jan Howard answered Brenda Little's plea for help to give the count "official" status with the National Audubon Society.

The teams snagged one more species this year and tallied 49,581 individuals Dec. 29. Along with the merlin, Harp noted the groups found 10 other species new to the Ohio County CBC ranks: belted kingfisher, black vulture, cedar waxwing, greater white-fronted goose, pied-billed grebe, ring-necked duck, ruby-crowned kinglet, wild turkey, American robin and purple finch. The goose and grebe are considered rare sightings for this time of year.

On the Ohio County Park trail, the Wayland Alexander students and seven helpers found a crow, Carolina chickadee, three downy woodpeckers, 422 European starlings, four northern cardinals, two red-tailed hawks, a song sparrow, an eastern towhee, and two white-throated sparrows.

Ohio County journeys by these teams and Howard and Morris and Bill and Brenda Little tallied: 77 crows; 24 American kestrels; 17 American robins, 156 blue jays, 23 Carolina chickadees, six Carolina wrens, 40 cedar waxwings, two Canada geese, 10 downy woodpeckers, 118 eastern bluebirds, 37 eastern meadowlarks, 10 eastern towhees, 12,440 European starlings, 20,716 grackles, a Cooper's hawk, six great blue herons, a greater white-fronted goose, three hairy woodpecker, 24 horned larks, three house finches, 27 house sparrows, 153 dark-eyed juncos, 12 field sparrows, 75 mallards, 45 mourning doves, seven northern bobwhites, 52 northern cardinals, 13 northern flickers, a northern harrier, 32 northern mockingbirds, six northern shovelers, two pied-billed grebes, four pileated woodpeckers, a purple finch, 17 red-bellied woodpeckers, 3 red-headed woodpeckers, three red-shouldered hawks, 26 red-tailed hawks, 15,125 red-winged blackbirds, a ruby-crowned kinglet, 15 ring-necked ducks, 16 rock doves, a rough-legged hawk, 43 song sparrows, 50 tufted titmice, 31 turkey vultures, two white-breasted nuthatch, six white-crowned sparrows, 11 white-throated sparrow, 18 American goldfinches, a tree sparrow, a bald eagle, two belted kingfishers, 34 black vultures, two killdeer, a merlin, 13 wild turkeys and eight yellow-rumped warblers and seven Savannah sparrows.

All of the tallies will be included in the NAS CBC report.

Sandhills highlight holiday season in Maceo; KOS CBC count includes 43 species

Fourteen sandhill cranes near the Maceo home of Tony and Brenda Eaden kicked off the holiday birding season Dec. 17.

Although, they opted not to stick around for the Kentucky Ornithological Society Christmas Bird Count Dec. 20, they entertained onlookers for two hours in a field across from the home. Present during count week, they are included in final totals.

Pat Augustine, the Eadens, Janet Howard and Marilee and Wendell Thompson recorded 43 species and 784 individuals as they drove 62 miles around eastern Daviess County and walked one.

Other totals included: great blue heron, 4; Canada goose, 20; ring-necked duck, 4; northern harrier, 2; red-shouldered hawk, 1; red-tailed hawk, 8; American kestrel, 10; wild turkey, 35; rock dove, 25; mourning dove, 6; belted kingfisher, 1; red-bellied woodpecker, 11; downy woodpecker, 9; hairy woodpecker, 3; northern flicker, 5; blue jay, 21; American crow, 5; horned lark, 55; Carolina chickadee, 18; tufted titmouse, 16; red-breasted nuthatch, 1; white-breasted nuthatch, 2; Carolina wren, 3; golden-crowned kinglet, 2; eastern bluebird, 10; robin, 4; northern mockingbird, 10; European starling, 292; cedar waxwing, 43; yellow-rumped warbler, 5; song sparrow, 6; white-throated

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Goldfinch to be available only through e-mail

Faced with rising costs, the Daviess County Audubon Society has opted to discontinue the physical publication of its newsletter, *The Goldfinch*.

That doesn't mean it's flying away. Beginning in February, members will still be able to get the newsletter by e-mail.

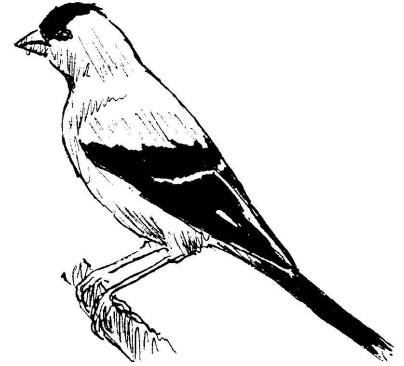
Part of the problem has been a good one, an interest in environmental news. The Goldfinch is made available to anyone who is a member of the National Audubon Society in the Owensboro region. When members join, they receive an invitation to get the Goldfinch. Several people have opted to do so, and the mailing list has soared to about 60. However, the cost of automated copying for 11x17 paper has jumped, not to mention postage, which will increase again in 2009.

Unfortunately, increased interest has not translated into increased attendance at meetings, which remains between 15 and 20 people monthly. Most – albeit not all -- of the regular membership have already opted to get the newsletter by e-mail. At the end of the day, the club was receiving little benefit from its \$40+/month investment.

"I just don't think it's being a very good steward of the club's resources," said editor Mary Kissel, who notes that many nonprofit organizations have already gone this route. While computers have become ubiquitous in most homes, she notes with regret this decision may shut out those who do not own computers.

A digital format will allow *The Goldfinch* to expand beyond its four-page format on months of heavy club activity, Kissel notes. She received a digital camera for Christmas, which should enhance the newsletter.

Attached to this month's newsletter is a post card for e-mail subscriptions. If you wish to continue getting *The Goldfinch*, please jot down your name and e-mail address and drop the self-addressed card into the mail. There also will be a space for comments. If the negative feedback is overwhelming, Kissel said she may bring the matter back before the club to be reconsidered.



West

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where he and Roseann Radzelovage went as well as Ben Hawes State Park and Joe Ford Nature Center. They were pleased to find two yellow-bellied sapsuckers at the park and several eastern towhees. The other western park, Panther Creek Park, was notable for the 200-plus robins, Joe Ford reported. Bill and Brenda Little reported little activity at the Wilson farm.

However, waterbirds were few and far between on the Ohio River and regional ponds and lakes. There also were a disappointing number of winter feeder birds, like Carolina chickadees and tufted titmice.

Species spotted included: Blue jay (33), eastern bluebird (9), cardinal (29), Carolina chickadee (12), cowbird (1), crow (11), great blue heron (9), turkey vulture (2), northern harrier (2), sharp-shinned hawk (1), Cooper's hawk (2), golden-crowned kinglet (1), ruby-crowned kinglet (2), American robin (285), northern mockingbird (16), European starling (1,857), eastern towhee (4), tree sparrow (1), Savannah sparrow (1), song sparrow (21), white-throated sparrow (13), white-crowned sparrow (10), dark-eyed junco (12), eastern meadowlark (7), grackle (609), house finch (57), American goldfinch (25), house sparrow (79), red-tailed hawk (17), American kestrel (33), killdeer (3), ring-billed gull (1), rock dove (297), Eurasian collared dove (5), mourning dove (304), red-bellied woodpecker (11), downy woodpecker (5), northern flicker (6), pileated woodpecker (1), horned lark (282), Carolina wren (8), Canada goose (51), mallard (10), yellow-bellied sapsucker (2), tufted titmice (12).

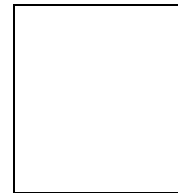


Pat Augustine samples lunch at Jan Howard's home after the western Daviess County count.

Maceo

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sparrow, 10; white-crowned sparrow, 4; dark-eyed junco, 7; northern cardinal, 29; eastern meadowlark, 1; rusty blackbird, 1; common grackle, 10; brown-headed cowbird, 3; house finch, 13; American goldfinch, 41; house sparrow, 14. These results will be forwarded to the KOS for their records.



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Drear

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in the Jan. 1, count, no ducks outside of mallards were tallied, and feeder bird sightings were sluggish. In his area with Mike Henshaw, Steve Hahus said he was surprised to run across a bunch of Eurasian collared doves “out of nowhere,” and they were the only ones to note cedar waxwings. After lunch prepared by Sherry Henshaw, Mike Henshaw went back out with Scott Harp, and they tallied the day’s lone northern harriers, Cooper’s and red-shouldered hawks. Steve Anderson counted on his father’s land after he got off work and found the day’s lone owl, a barred owl, brown creepers, field and tree sparrows.

It was an exciting morning for three newcomers to the CBC madness. Kenny and Winny Lin paired with Brenda and Bill Little and made their first journey to the Powell Bird Blind at Camp Pennyroyal Girl Scout camp. She left marveling about the up-close look she got at feeder birds and with her mind full of possible after-school activities for city school kids. She wondered if the club could pursue grants to transport the kids out to the Pleasant Ridge hotspot.

“You can be loud, the kids can be loud, and the birds keep their activities. So, you can observe what they do, and you can talk and teach,” she said.

In the southwest corner of the count area, Judy Adams was picking up valuable binocular tips from Tony Eaden. She was thrilled to get long looks at American kestrels, really taking in their features and their unique markings. Even in plumage-muting weather, she said the rufous-vested eastern towhees were “gorgeous.”

Others counting were: Mary Kissel, Jill Flachskam, Henry Conner, Ken Hurm, Carolyn Williams and Joe Ford.

Totals included: blue jay (100), eastern bluebird (62), brown creeper (2), northern cardinal (102), Carolina chickadee (59), cowbird (9), crow (76), mourning dove (135), Eurasian collared dove (13), house finch (15), northern flicker (5), goldfinch (48), Canada goose (108), grackle (6,963), great blue heron (2), northern harrier (3), Cooper’s hawk (1), red-shouldered hawk (2), red-tailed hawk (24), sharp-shinned hawk (2), horned lark (9), dark-eyed junco (117), American kestrel (51), killdeer (4), belted kingfisher (2), mallard (21), eastern meadowlark (19), northern mockingbird (36), white-breasted nuthatch (14), barred owl (1), rock dove (17), American robin (20), field sparrow (31), house sparrow (82), song sparrow (47), tree sparrow (2), white-crowned sparrow (35), white-throated sparrow (22), starling (1,466), tufted titmouse (39), eastern towhee (17), wild turkey (16), yellow-rumped warbler (5), cedar waxwing (13), downy woodpecker (26), hairy woodpecker (5), pileated woodpecker (1), red-bellied woodpecker (41), red-headed woodpecker (4), Carolina wren (21) and winter wren (4).



Judy Adams looks for birds at Greenbriar Baptist Church.

Ice disrupts fundraising at Panther Creek

Icy roads scuttled part of the week of fundraising at the Panther Creek Park Trail of Lights, Dec. 12-18. However, the club managed to make the best of the nights they had. Final revenue totals won’t be available until next month’s edition, but the first three nights netted between \$600 and \$700, which will be put into a pool that is divided among all participating organizations, a format which is fair to those who make the effort to participate, but without the cooperation of Mother Nature.

A big DCAS thank-you goes to all who volunteered to give up a night during a shortened pre-Christmas season, whether or not weather permitted you to complete your task: Charles and Laura Morris, Mary Kissel, Ken Hurm, Carolyn and Henry Williams, Mike and Sherry Henshaw, Jill Flachskam, Henry Connor and Steve Anderson and Winny and Kenny Lin.

Powell tree planting pushed back

It will be spring before a yellowwood tree is planted on the grounds of Boardwalk Pipeline in memory of DCAS co-founder Bert Powell.

Charles Morris said that Powell’s daughter Bonnie Terrizzi said it would be fine to wait until she returned from a post-retirement trip. The date for the ceremony to honor the late Texas Gas retiree will be announced.

Ready for another round of trash pickup?

County officials have notified the DCAS chapter that it is eligible to apply for the next round of Trash for Cash program. On Aug. 9, 11 members removed more than 25 bags of garbage off Fisher and Keller roads southwest of Owensboro. For three hours’ work, the club made more than \$340. Project signup will take place at the January meeting. The deadline for applying is in mid-February, Carolyn Williams said.