



# The Goldfinch

Daviess County  
Audubon Society

[www.daviessaudubon.net](http://www.daviessaudubon.net)

## READY FOR A TUNE UP?



“Did you hear that? Who’s that?” I’m constantly asking my birding friends to identify birds by their calls...much to their dismay, I’m sure. Recognizing my backyard birds is getting easier, but put me in the woods and I’m in trouble again. If you’re like me and would like to improve your listening skills, then our December program is for you!

### December’s Program:

Scott Harp is an avid birder, outdoorsman and conservationist. He will present a birding-by-ear program on Tuesday, December 6. He’ll focus

on those species we can expect to see during our Christmas Bird Count (Dec. 17), as well as some rare possibilities. He also plans to cover some common vocalizations and birds to expect in specific types of habitat.

Scott has been with the KY Dept. of Fish & Wildlife for almost ten years. He’s spent the last three years “cleaning up” after his former boss (our own Mike Henshaw), so we could witness some good-natured repartee during the evening.

Mark your calendars and plan to tune your ears and have some fun!

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

We would like to welcome one and all to this year’s Christmas Bird count to be conducted on December 17th. We will meet at 8:00am at our house to divide and go forth. We are at 11201 Fields Road South which is off or Redhill/Maxwell road.

As before we will be covering the same circle and the more people who participate the better our coverage will be. We will be divided into teams, to get opportunities for different levels of bird identification in each team. It’s a good time for people to spend some time together during the holiday season and the data goes to National Audubon as part of the international efforts.



This will be the 112th count National Christmas count and last year there were 2215 counts with 62,624 people who tallied over 60 million birds.



We will have lunch at our house around noon as people return from the morning activity.

Directions: come out HWY 231 to PleasantHill firehouse at the intersection of 231 and 140, and turn left onto hwy 140- a right turn. Go ~ 2

miles to the intersection with Redhill/Maxwell Rd. it’s the first cross road you come to turn left and go ~ 1 mile to the first road on your right-Fields road.

The third drive on your left-#11210 on mail box.



### December’s Calendar:

Dec. 6th- DCAC meeting: 7 p.m., Owensboro Christian Church  
(- Don’t forget-- at 5:30 p.m., “Moonlite supper with the speaker” where that evening’s speaker, guests and audubon members meet at the Moonlite to eat, talk, and eat some more.)

Dec. 13- DCAC Board Meeting, 11:30, Judy’s House

Dec 17- 8:00 a.m. Christmas Bird Count @ Mike and Sherry Henshaws

Jan 1- 8:00 a.m. KOS Christmas Bird count at Janet Howard’s

# HELP GIRL SCOUTS BUILD BIRD FEEDERS

Here's an opportunity for a Saturday project. On December 10th, 13-15 Girl Scouts from Louisville and Owensboro will converge at Camp Pennyroyal to build feeders from coffee cans. They'll also take a bird walk and learn about the various creatures that abound in this woody habitat. Site Manager, and DCAS Board Member, Lisa Leonard needs "a few good folks" to assist these 8-11 year olds and their leaders. If you're available and would like to spend part of your Saturday amongst an enthusiastic group of girls, call (929-2642) or email [leonard@kyanags.org](mailto:leonard@kyanags.org). The program is scheduled to start at 10:00 A.M. and end at 3:00 P.M.

# PROJECT-FEEDERWATCH

Do you participate in Cornell Lab's Project FeederWatch? If so, we'd like to hear from you. If not, it isn't too late to register. Just go to [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org), pay \$15 and sign up! You can watch 2 days a week and enter your data online weekly, or every two weeks if you choose paper entry via snail mail. The program is designed to involved birders everywhere to observe birds which have been attracted by feeders and plantings in backyards. You choose a site that is accessible and easy to observe. Then choose your own two days and spend as little as 30 minutes for each day's observation. Several of our DCAS members have been keeping watch for years... others are just starting. It might be fun to post some of observations in this newsletter. So...if you are participating, send an email to [jadams11\\_2008@yahoo.com](mailto:jadams11_2008@yahoo.com). We'll see what interesting sightings or trends we log.



a costa-rica bird-plane.



## GOT 'em PASSPORT.

Thanks to our president, Judy Adams, a birding trip to Costa Rica is being organized for January, 2012. The group in the photo includes (from left to right) Charles Morris, Janet Howard, Donna Wilson, Winny Lin, Brenda Eaden, Tony Eaden, Bob Adams, Jeff Murphey, Edna Murphey, and Judy Adams. (Merry Miller and Laura Morris are not in this photo.)

This will be the first overseas birding trip of Daviess County Audubon Society. Members of the group are very excited!

# THE SLOUGH

## It Took Money, Sweat, and a Lot of Luck



November's program ranks amongst the toughest to arrange our chapter has ever known. The powers that be in Frankfort with the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife absolutely would not budge in allowing anyone to do a program for us about our desired topic, Sandhill Cranes. Even when we agreed that the program content would be about the birds, not about the controversial hunting season that will happen this month, everyone associated with the Department was under a gag order until after the hunt takes place.

During our deliberations with a series of presenters, we talked about how it is actually loss of habitat and not what sportsmen call "harvesting" that puts many birds in perilous survival situations today. Because we have a restored wetlands almost in our backyard nearby Henderson, KY, we decided to offer a program about The Slough and all that went into making it what it is today, a birder's and a sportsmen's paradise.

We went through 3 different speaker candidates before we landed Thomas Young, a private lands biologist from Madisonville, KY. Thomas turned out to be the perfect speaker with his easy going manner and his knowledge as a waterfowl specialist. We had a bonus because Thomas brought his charming wife Lisa and the fun began during supper at the MoonLite as Lisa teased, "Yeah, I want to know about Sandhill Cranes, too".

Thomas presented a PowerPoint put together by Connie and Mike Morton, Manager and Office Manager of the Sloughs WMA. The presentation detailed the largest hardwood bottomlands forest restoration in our state at 11,000 acres consisting of 6 tracts along the Ohio River. The tracts were purchased separately a few years apart. It is fortunate, a stroke of luck, that the land was available for purchase and now benefits thousands of people, and hundreds of thousands of birds, and wildlife. The land that makes up The Sloughs is owned 65% by the

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and 45% by the Corps of Engineers which leases the land to KDFW.

90% of the land in The Sloughs is in a floodplain. Approximately 65% is forested, 1500 acres are in crop land because of the revenue it produces for the WMA and as food for wildlife, and 1500 acres are permanent wetlands. The slides showed us how heavy equipment has been used making depressions and ridges to mimic the contours in the land that the river's repeated flooding and draining left behind before the Corps of Engineers built a series of dams along the waterway. Some of the wetlands are natural and permanent, and some are manmade, artificial impoundments. Thomas spoke of the importance of beavers in the health and stability of wetlands. Thousands of trees have been planted in an effort to restore the hardwood bottomlands forest's to restore Mother Nature bountiful feast from White oak, Overcup oak, Red oak, Willow oak, Cypress, and Walnut.

Images of notable species that have been recorded at The Sloughs included: Barnacle Goose, India Bar Headed Goose, Dusky Canada Goose, White Faced Ibis, Ruff, Cinnamon Teal, Mallard/Pintail Hybrid, Great Blue Heron Rookery, Copper Belly Water Snake, and 6 active Eagles' nests.

It is commonly known that the licenses purchased by hunters are a great part of the funding of WMA's, but audience members reminded everyone that purchasing a Nature License Plate at an added cost of only \$10 provides funding that the Department of Fish and Wildlife uses for conservation rather than hunting.

# GONE TO THE KINGFISHER

by Winny Lin,

Close to 20 members of our Daviess County Audubon Society visited eastern Daviess County area by the Kingfisher Lake for our monthly birding field trip at the invitation of Tony and Brenda Eaden. It was the largest group in recent years.

We spotted many different species of birds, including white-throated sparrow, chickadee, titmouse, red-bellied woodpecker, red-wing blackbird, robin, bluejay, junco, cowbird, mockingbird, song sparrow, horned lark, pied-billed grebe, starling, bluebird, turkey vulture, northern flicker, Cooper's hawk, house finch, nuthatch, red-tailed hawk, myrtle warbler, black vulture, and harry woodpecker.

Later, Mike Brown also took all of us for birding on his property nearby, and showed us his purple martin houses. After walking for almost the whole morning, we came back to the Eaden's house, and Brenda had all the food ready for us to devour. It was a delicious and rewarding potluck. Some of us loved Fran's orange slice cookies, so here it is: Fran's cookie recipe.



photo: Mike Brown shows Jan Howard his purple martin gourd houses made from gourds with lids of Moonlite BBQ's discarded jugs.

In the below photo:

Back row: Jeff Murphey, Madeline Oetinger, Edna Murphey, Sherry & Mike Henshaw, Mary Kissel, Mike Brown, Kenny Lin, Jan Howard, Ken Hurm

Kneeling: Judy Adams, Brenda & Tony Eaden, Roaseanne Radzelovage with Tony's dog, Queenie.





This walk in nature photo is from the Eaden's field trip group by Winny Lin. She wished to have ya'll see the lush splendor.

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# KY CRANES

## We Lost Fair and Square The Sandhill Crane Hunting Controversy

By Brenda Little

It took hours on the phone and lots of inquiries to help me come to an understanding of why we seemed to be ignored in light of such a loud public outcry opposing the proposal to allow the hunting of Sandhill Cranes this month for the first time in a hundred years east of the Mississippi. There were dozens of letters to the editors in Frankfort, Lexington, and Louisville's newspapers; however the Messenger and Inquirer declined to print a letter submitted by one of our members. In print and on the Internet there were very few expressions of opinion in support of the hunt.

The reason Sandhill Cranes have not been hunted in several states including Kentucky for so long is that their numbers were dangerously decimated by hunting a century ago.

I learned that letters came to the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife in a 3 to 1 landslide of opinion. The reason that voices supporting the hunt outnumbered opposition 3 to 1, about 3200 to 1300, is that hunters, who call themselves "sportsmen", are organized and bird watchers are not. In Kentucky only 2 out of every 3 of the approximate 3,000 Audubon Society members belong to a local chapter, and of those who belong to local chapters, only about 25% take any kind of active roll in their chapters' programs and events.

I was appalled when email messages came to my attention alerting hunters to Speak-up! and Be heard! because "there is an effort afoot to take away your right to hunt". Even though I've never

heard anyone trying to take away this right, I am assured by those in the know that it is indeed a real, not imagined, threat. Leadership of the hunters has described the Sandhill Crane hunting controversy by saying "The crux of the matter is anti-hunting". This has caused sportsmen to "get out the vote". Obviously votes came in from far and wide because the ratio of hunters to birders in Kentucky puts bird watchers in a heavily weighted majority.

Even though we were under the false impression that our opinions opposing the hunt far outnumbered those in



favor, I doubt that any effort on our part would garner enough votes to tip the scales in our favor. It would have taken a nationwide effort which we did not attempt to mount.

Amongst our membership there are those who have no qualms with the hunt and see the cranes as no different from other game birds. One thing that makes our club's membership an interesting mix is our diversity. What those of us who oppose the hunt should learn from this experience is never to take anything for granted. We should assume the worst and approach any issue from that viewpoint.

I also learned that harvesting, a term used by sportsmen, is mind boggling in other countries, in South American countries for example. Birds are killed in the millions and though it sounds horrific to most of us, these birds are hunted for food for people who depend on them for their livelihood. It makes the 400 Sandhill Cranes that are the maximum that will be allowed to be killed this year seem insignificant in perspective.

Worse still is that BirdLife International reports that as birds migrate to and from Europe and Africa, the Maltese Archipelago is one of 3 flyways where they are illegally hunted, hosting "one of the highest densities of hunters and trappers in Europe and probably in the world". BirdLife Malta along with BirdLife International has been campaigning against illegalities for close to 50 years. A way that we can weigh-in on their campaign is to vote with our pocketbook and purchase music on the label Second Language that has just released "Music and Migration", songs by a group of international artists. We could even consider some of these songs as background music for our "Year in Review" of photographs next September.

**Informed sources give us assurance that our votes were counted and our voices were heard. Our Representative, Joe Bowen, who personally opposes the hunt, voted with the others on a Committee who had the final say in a vote of unanimous approval because the numbers were 3 to 1 supporting the hunt.**

# SWEET, DELICIOUS MEMORIES

**Information for this article was obtained via an interview with Joe Ford, the sole surviving founder of the Daviess County Audubon Society. Elinor Cary Wilson was one of the founders of the Society. She passed away on June 20, 2011.**

**The Goldfinch** Joe, many of the DCAS members today never met Elinor and L.E. Wilson, two of our club's founding members. They might "know" them by having known their elder son Julian who passed away about 5 years ago, or by having attended one of the picnics by the pond or by counting birds on New Year's Day at the Wilson farm. You grew up in the rural community of Sorgho and that is where you met Elinor Wilson, right.

**Ford** Yes, her family home, Dr. Cary's home, was within walking distance of my house and she often came over to play tennis. Elinor was older than I am. I was closer friends with her brother Lewis, whose nickname was "Fish Bait". Lewis died young. But Elinor went to the same school and we all played together.

**The Goldfinch** Tell me what you remember about the early days of the Audubon Society with Elinor and L.E. Wilson.

**Ford** I called L.E. Edward. What I remember the most is about **food**. We did not have as much organization then as we do now, no regular monthly meetings and programs. We would get together and socialize, like making ice cream or having a picnic.

**The Goldfinch** That tradition carries on. Just this month when a field trip featured lunch at the Eaden's home, 18 people took part in the outing. Do you remember specific Audubon Society activities from the early days?

**Ford** I remember our very first outing. It was in the winter, when only two people showed-up, Bert Powell and myself. It was at the Cary's place where Elinor and Edward lived the rest of their lives known as the Wilson's farm. The next time 7 or 8 people showed up and we went there again.

**The Goldfinch** It is said that the bird count that is conducted every year including the fence rows, fields, and forest at the Wilson Farm on New Year's Day has been on-going for over 50 years. Is that what you remember?

**Ford** Yes, I imagine that is right, about that long.

**The Goldfinch** Your daughter, Dianne, remembers Elinor, one of her elementary school teachers at Sorgho as being sweet, kind, loving, and a classic "Southern Lady" and Bill Little remembers L.E. Wilson, his boss when he drove a school bus while he was a college student as an excellent supervisor

**Ford** That is the way I remember both of them.



**The Goldfinch** If it were not for people like you, Bert and Millie Powell, Elinor and L.E. Wilson, the organization we enjoy today would not exist, or would not be the same. We owe a debt of gratitude to all of you.

**Ford** I think you are right about that.

**The Goldfinch** The influence of the Wilson family lives on in our Society today. Julian designed and set-up our first Website, Edited our newsletter for years, and bush hogged paths through the family farm as part of hosting our annual picnic by the pond at The Wilson Farm for many years. His widow, Donna, is a treasured member currently.

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# FROM THE BACKYARD

Although the temperature's still mild, the leaves are mostly gone (from the trees, that is) we've had some hints of winter in the air. Time to pull out the warm jackets and gloves and get ready for the Christmas Bird Count! This year's official count day will be Dec. 17th. Even if you've never done this before, come join us! An extra pair of eyes and someone to tally the sightings for each vehicle are always welcome. The Sherry Henshaw's warm and filling lunch is legendary, so mark your calendar and plan to do a bit of "crowd science" with almost 60,000 birders across the continent. And don't forget Janet Howard's New Year's Day count! Shake off the New Year's Eve partying and start off the year by helping with the KY Ornithological Society's count. You can contact Janet at [jbbq@aol.com](mailto:jbbq@aol.com). The board's efforts to expand our reach have been successful. Our roster now reaches to Madisonville, Henderson, Rockport, IN, to mention a few areas. Since the Henderson chapter has been inactive for quite a while, we're hoping to include some of those folks in our activities. Speaking of membership, if you aren't sure whether yours may have expired (are you not getting your issues of "Audubon" magazine?) then check with Brenda Little or Judy Adams. We have solved the mystery of national's membership spreadsheet!

Although the Christmas Bird Count is our official field trip for December, there is an additional opportunity. On December 11th at 3:30 P.M., Audubon State Park and Wild Birds Unlimited will be hosting an "owl prowls" at Bluegrass Fish and Wildlife Area in Henderson. This is the second in a series of owl prowls. There will two more in January and in February. For more information, contact Julie McDonald, park naturalist, at [julie.mcdonald@ky.gov](mailto:julie.mcdonald@ky.gov).

Our Costa Rica trip is filled to capacity! Twelve of us will be venturing to warmer climes for a week in early January. Please, have patience with us as we repeatedly share our excitement about our upcoming adventure with you! Maybe it will be so successful that we'll plan another international trip next year. Your DCAS Board and I would like to wish you all a joyous and fulfilling holiday season. Birds, wildlife and the great outdoors give a great deal to celebrate and be thankful for.

—Judy Adams

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