



The Goldfinch

October 2011

Daviess County
Audubon Society

www.daviessaudubon.net

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO WORK AT ONE OF THE TOP BIRDING HOTSPOTS IN THE MIDWEST?

That will be the subject of the Oct. 4 meeting when Daviess County Audubon Society alum Jill Flachskam visits us from Goose Pond Wildlife Management Area, near Linton, Ind.

Flachskam said she will talk a little about the history of Goose Pond, which is naturally a wetland but was drained for agricultural purposes. It was recently reflooded using a system of levees. She'll also talk about her job there, which has included bird monitoring (secretive marsh birds, landbirds, shorebirds and waterfowl) and habitat management through succession control and invasive species eradication.

Those who enjoyed the bittern show earlier this year can appreciate the unique appeal of the southern Indiana wetland. Flachskam's presentation promises to drive more enthusiasm for a return visit.

Let's dine with the speaker at Moonlite at 5:30. Social time for the meeting begins at 6:45.



SEPTEMBER MEETING CELEBRATES 2010/2011

Representatives from several partners of Daviess County Audubon Society (DCAS), shared their experience and appreciation with the DCAS members at their first meeting in 2011-12.

From left to right are Courtney Calhoun (Girls Inc), Lisa Leonard (Girl Scouts), Kathy Olson (Owensboro Science and History Museum), Kaye Fulkerson from Deer Park Elementary School, Marsha Allen and Larry Lowing from Western Kentucky Botanical Garden.(WKBG)...

DCAS had a program "Urban Girls and Urban Birds" at Girls' Inc., built and maintain a bird blind for the Girls' Scouts campground, offered programs at the science museum during fall and spring breaks, built blue bird trail at Deer Park, and taught elementary school students bird identification program at WKBG.

President of DCAS, Judy Adams(far right), was all smiles at the time.

This Month's Calendar:

October

Oct. 4th- DCAC meeting 7 p.m.

Oct 9 -Field Trip to Lincoln State Park
(Sunday, ...meet at Kroger's
on 60 East at noon)

Oct 10- DCAC Board Meeting, 11:30
Judy's House

Monarch Butterfly Migration Mysteries

One of science's greatest mysteries is the migration of the monarch butterfly.

About 80 Deer Park Elementary fourth-graders played a part in unlocking the riddle by participating in a butterfly tagging program at Owensboro Community Technical and Community College.

Jackie Crowley of John James Audubon State Park reviewed monarch basics. She took the kids through the life cycle of the butterfly, from tiny egg on a milkweed leaf to its wet-winged emergence from the chrysalis, pointing out how milkweed consumption make them "taste nasty" for predators. A little trickier for the kids was learning about indicators which mark the sex of the butterfly, from the thick veins of the female to the spotted scent glands of the males.

Then, it was time to put the information to good use. Butterfly nets were distributed to the kids, who were up to the challenge.

But where to look?

OCTC Assistant Professor Micah Perkins scoured the property a few times before the event. The summer's relentless hot, dry weather had dried up a lot of the blossoms in the outdoor classroom. However, he noted that butterflies also were attracted to leaves in the trees in the area.

Camping out in the garden, the slightest flutter of any sort of butterfly excited the kids, but often proved to be a tease. It was a hard lesson about the need for patience in wildlife research. It was also good practice on proper catching technique ... slowly bringing the net over the butterfly, releasing



the top, and then pinching it off at the bottom. One girl snared two lemon-colored cloudless sulphurs in the same net. Another got a net with bees --- and wisely let Perkins set them free. Two boys said they just missed getting the monarchs.

In the wooded area, more monarchs were spotted, setting off a frenzy of nets raised in anticipation. For the most part, the monarchs decided life just out of reach of the kids was the better path to a Mexican winter. But, three were captured – two males and a female. Their captivity was short-lived. Tiny adhesive tags were attached to the "mitten" wing, and they were released to resume their journey.

Assisting the butterfly experts in the program were: Brenda and Bill Little, Ginger Bailey, Lisa Leonard and Mary Kissel.



*The butterfly pix are of Jackie Crowley of JJ Audubon State Park, some girls reviewing butterfly ID information and two boys holding nets and having fun in pursuit.



Here is one photo of one female monarch butterfly with a tag from University of Kansas before she migrates to Mexico.



Winnie Lin showed an alfalfa butterfly she caught with her net at the Sloughs Wildlife Management to Ricky Lin. They attended the monarch butterfly tagging program by Audubon State Park on Sept. 18, 2011. Because the place has just been mowed and the habitat for the monarch butterflies was damaged, the participants caught few monarch butterflies. Another Audubon Society member, Carolyn Williams also went with her granddaughter.



On Sept. 2, 2011, Winnie Lin showed the life cycle, migration, and predators of monarch butterflies to the 4th graders in Mr. Dennis Millay's science class at East View Elementary School in a powerpoint presentation. One student had fun flying with wings like a monarch butterfly from Kentucky to Mexico. Lots of learning and lots of fun!

EARLY FALL MIGRANTS TARGET FOR SEPT. 10 BIRD WALK ON GREENBELT

Early fall migrants were the target for the family fun walk on the David C. Adkisson Greenbelt Park Sept. 10, the first field trip of the Daviess County Audubon Society year.

Alas, despite nearly a week of cool, fall weather – and promising fallout earlier in the week -- they were few and far between. The overcast skies also created lighting issues along the southern end of the Horse Fork Trail.

But, there were a few highlights. A black-and-white warbler – a life bird for president Judy Adams -- entertained the group as it foraged for food in tree trunks. The group lingered for several minutes to watch a yellow-shafted flicker on a dead tree and ponder why its coloration was so dull. Rough-winged and barn swallows are familiar faces along this part of the path, but it was a surprise when a tree swallow showed up to pose for photographer Bob Adams' steady gaze.

The quartet – which included Madeline Oetinger and Mary Kissel – also enjoyed the vocal stylings of a warbling vireo.

Other birds sighted that morning included: northern mockingbird, American robin, killdeer, blue jay, house sparrow, Carolina chickadee, northern cardinal, Carolina wren, American goldfinch, song sparrow, eastern phoebe, eastern pewee, catbird, downy woodpecker, mourning dove and starling.

WILD ABOUT BIRDS AT CAMP PENNYROYAL

15 to 20 young girls attended the Wild About Birds program at Camp Pennyroyal the last Saturday in September. The weather threatened us with intermittent showers until the 3 PM start of the program when the sun broke through and allowed us to conduct the birding classes outdoors. The object of the outing was to learn about optics used with bird watching and the how's and why's of taking field notes and making sketches for nature notebooks.

Male Mallard and Gadwall decoys were used for practice with the spotting scope that was donated to our chapter by Catherine Clay. The girls then practiced making sketches of the ducks based on their memory of the images they saw through the scope that was set-up on the porch of the lodge and aimed at the decoys on the lawn below about 200 feet away.

The Powell Bird Blind did not have any visiting birds at its feeders, but the girls were able to understand the concept of bird watching through one-way glass. The frog pond has developed a leak and will be in need of repair or replacement of its liner. Undeterred, a healthy population of frogs is still living in the deepest part of the pond where there is a small puddle of water. A couple of beautifully colored terrapins also are hanging out in the shallow and dry part of the "pond".

The girls used

binoculars to practice looking into mysterious holes in distant "snags" in the forest without leaving the trail. What looked like perhaps a bird, or a leaf to their naked eyes turned out to be pieces of rotting wood that have fallen down into the dead tree's cavity. The forest is thick with beautiful fungi on decaying logs and vivid emerald colored moss that also makes for a rewarding outing when birds are scarce.

The Screech Owl nest box that was constructed last year at this event was used for practice focusing binoculars. As the girls focused-in on the box's opening, there came shouts of, **"There's something in there! It's moving! I think it's an owl!"** And sure enough as the Audubon leader, Brenda Little, aimed her binoculars at the box, there could be seen something small and brown cautiously bobbing up, then back

down, hiding down in the box and then gathering enough courage to ease back up into our view. It truly did look like the ear tuft on the head of a Screech Owl until it eased a bit further up staring out at us with a terrified look in its black eye. What we were seeing was first the tip of an ear, then the full ear and finally the cute little face of a**SQUIRREL!**

We eavesdropped as the 15 young girls responded to the questions their troop leaders' read to them from an evaluation questionnaire before they were awarded their Bird Watching badges. We would have been happy with "Good" or better as we did not have our act as well put together as we normally do. It was music to our ears to hear girl after girl rate our program unanimously as **Awesome!**

The troops participating in the program came from Greenville, KY and Owensboro. Our chapter is in the process of being credited with Audubon Society members in counties surrounding Daviess County and this program is one example of our outreach in the region.

The Scouting program and Audubon Society's Environmental Education Program make a perfect fit and there is no better setting than the natural environment of the forest at Camp Pennyroyal with acres of beauty and wonder to be explored. It truly is **AWESOME!**



Taken at our Wild About Birds program yesterday, this is a few of the girls who only moments later played a game of Peek-a-Boo with their binoculars at one end and a gate crashing gray squirrel peeking out of a nest box at the other end.

NATURE DAY FOR NEWTON PARRISH AT OCTC

About 70 students from Newton Parrish Elementary School got back to nature Sept. 23 during the annual Nature Day program hosted by Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Stations on subjects from forestry to mammals were set up around the campus to complement the students' science instruction.

Brenda and Bill Little and Mary Kissel taught classes on behalf of the Daviess County Audubon Society, using materials from the Girls Incorporated Urban Girls/Urban Birds program as a foundation. The purpose was the same – to encourage boys and girls to appreciate uncommon qualities of common birds who grace their backyards and schoolyards.

One urban bird has made its presence known at NPES – two killdeer nests have been sighted at the school. The kids were flabbergasted to learn that a baby killdeer has been reported to have survived a seven-story drop from its rocky rooftop nesting area.

Brenda Little used the checklist to make sure the kids learned about as many birds as possible. She discussed the differences of color between the sexes and the dangers cowbirds present to their fellow birds. The checklists were sent home with the kids, as she challenged them to work with their families to see how many they could find.

Kissel had played only a miniscule role in last spring's Girls Inc. program, so Cornell's fun facts were as new to her as it was to the kids. They enjoyed learning how barn swallow couples can offer 400 meals a day to their young and how food consumption affects a bird's coloration. That set off a fun discussion about what color each student would be if they were the color of their favorite food.

The NP kids also were really fascinated about bird calls, and several demonstrated their own interpretations to their classmates.

The classes concluded with a walk on the bridge, so the kids could see where barn swallows had built their nests before highailing it to South America for the winter.

Sitting in on the programs was Dianne Meador, who served on the Nature Day committee for the community college. She also donated several birding books for the chapter's use.



HAWK'S DINNER

It was late afternoon in mid-September when I heard a loud "thwack" from the family room. As I looked out the window, I saw an immature Cooper's Hawk (thanks, Mary, for the I.D.) with his talons into a Mourning Dove. I grabbed a camera and called my neighbors to share my excitement. By the time his dinner was over, there were only a few feathers left on the ground.



FROM THE BACKYARD

Fall is in the air, the hummers are on their way south and the AC has stopped running full tilt...yea! DCAS has had a busy month, Budding Bio-tech classes at WKBG, butterfly tagging at Deer Park Elementary and at the Sloughs, birding classes at Newton Parrish, building birdhouses with the Girl Scouts...oh my! Ken Hurm is busy filing your pictures for a new "end of year" DVD. Our thanks go out to Ken, who was not present to hear the oohs and ahs and appreciative applause as we watched his first DCAS DVD.

As we settle into our program year, we want to invite your input and participation. Field trips are ultimately more rewarding when we have a couple of carloads. Nothing measures up to hearing and then spotting a bird and then sharing that with a group of equally excited birders. So please, sign up for our October field trip to Lincoln State Park. This is David's territory and he loves to share it with others who want to learn

And please join us Oct. 4th at 5:30 at Moon-lite for supper with our own Jill Flachskam. She's driving down from Goose Pond to do our program and would love to visit with old friends.

Future programs include one on the controversial decision to allow the hunting of sandhill cranes in Kentucky (November 1st) and an opportunity to improve our birding by ear (Dec 6th) in preparation for the Christmas Bird Count. Don't forget that Board minutes are posted on our website www.daviesaudubon.net.

I'd be remiss if I didn't publicly thank Mary Kissel for her many years dedicated to writing and publishing our "Goldfinch. Kudos to you, Mary! David Stratton and the board have a hard act to follow, but we're learning.

—Judy Adams

