

THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

JULY 2010

Beckham Bird Club, Inc.

Monthly Newsletter

Louisville, KY

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Beckham Bird Club will be on Tuesday, July 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Clifton Center, 2117 Payne Street, in the Community Room. There are many hidden jewels in our state that offer opportunities to see nature in all of its glory. These areas are acquired and protected by the Kentucky State Nature Preserves. Our speaker for the evening is Joyce Bender, the Nature Preserves and Natural Areas Branch Manager for the KSNP. Joyce is going to talk about the different preserves especially ones that would be of interest to birders. This program may give you the incentive to explore these jewels of Kentucky. See you there and bring a friend.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

The fall field trip schedule will be in the August newsletter.

| | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Sunday, July 18 8:00 a.m. – 11:00a.m. | ANCHORAGE TRAIL – For summer residents. Meet in the parking lot at Evergreen Road and Station Road in Anchorage. | Pat and Jane Bell 326-9610 |
|--|---|-------------------------------|

PAST FIELD TRIPS

May 16, Mount Saint Francis

A pair of BBC members braved a wet morning with approaching storms to view breeding behavior by pairs of Eastern Towhees, Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Kingbirds, and Yellow-breasted Chats. Good views were also enjoyed of Eastern Wood-Pewee, Red-eyed Vireo, American Redstart, Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes, and a Solitary Sandpiper. Thirty-two species in all were located.

May 19, Gunpowder Creek Nature Park

Participants enjoyed excellent looks at most of the 60 species. Among the 11 species of warblers were good numbers of Canada Warblers. An active nest of a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was located with the male incubating. In addition to the birds, the group of 4 was treated to nice views of a broad-headed skink and a spiny softshell turtle.

May 22, Garvin Brown Nature Preserve

The group of 8 members and 1 guest was treated to a Great Horned Owl being chased into a tree by several species (bluebirds, starlings, grackles). The group also had extended views of male and female Orchard Orioles, Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Eastern Kingbird, Indigo Bunting, and Common Yellowthroat. As usual for Garvin Brown, Song Sparrows were numerous. In all, the group located 47 species.

June 13, Mammoth Cave

It was hot and humid day for the four members who took part in the Mammoth Cave trip but a very satisfying day as 50 birds were recorded including 12 species of warblers. Our first warbler was a Redstart which we have not seen at Mammoth Cave in the summer for several years. We had great looks at Cerulean Warblers (a female was only about 4 feet off the ground and right in front of us), Black-and-white, Worm-eating, Ovenbirds (they were everywhere), Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky, Hooded, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-throated, Prairie, and finally a Parula that gave us a merry chase trying to see it. A mother Wood Duck with a brood of ducklings scurried across the Green River – so cute! The songs of the Acadian and Red-eyed Vireos were heard throughout the forest. Wood Thrushes and Scarlet Tanagers were heard and seen at several locations. Evidence of the early spring flood at Mammoth Cave was still apparent as the trails were muddy with debris and logs strewn along the way. Mud left on the leaves and tree branches above our head showed that the water was quite high on the Green River trail and over at Houchins Ferry.

BIRD ALERT

An alert was started on Sunday, June 13 for a Black-bellied Whistling Duck that was being seen on McElroy Lake near Bowling Green, Kentucky. This duck is an extremely rare visitor to Kentucky even though it has been seen in Indiana and Tennessee. The last reported sighting of the bird was on Tuesday morning, June 15.

MAY BIRD COUNT

The Indiana Audubon Society Big May Day Bird Count for Clark County, Indiana, took place on May 8 with nine observers in three parties. It was a very windy and sunny day with temperatures ranging from 51 to 61 degrees. The wind, which at times was above 30 MPH, made it difficult to see and hear the birds.

A total of 97 species of birds was counted this year versus 112 last year. Fifteen warbler species were counted versus twenty four last year. Total individuals were 1751. Notable observations included a Bald Eagle and a Blue Grosbeak.

A potluck dinner was held on the following Monday at the lovely home of Scottie Theiss. Many close up views of birds were seen on Scottie's deck overlooking the lake. All participants had a wonderful time.

THANK YOU

You know that there are many people who make our club what it is. Some are very visible such as officers, committee chairs, and trip leaders, but there are people behind the scene that need recognition and a thank you for what they do for the club. One of these people is Nick Martin. Nick has for many years allowed our newsletter to be printed at his business at minimal cost to the club. The club wants to recognize Nick with a “Big Thank You!”

ODDS AND ENDS

- **BBC BIRDATHON** – If you haven’t sent in your birdathon pledge please do so. No donation is too small.
- Recruit a new member and bring them to the meeting.
- If you haven’t been on a field trip or gone to a meeting lately – now is the time to join all the fun and meet other birders.
- Photographers send your pictures that you have taken of BBC events e.g. picnic, field trips, meetings, etc. to Pat Bell and I will include them in the newsletter when there is space. Send them to patjanebell@bellsouth.net. I will also take pictures of very rare birds seen in Kentucky.
- Mark your calendar for Saturday, September 11 for Breakfast With The Birds - new breakfast site and new field trip site for the event. More info in next month’s newsletter.
- Check out a cute video on youtube.com. Search for Rescued Baby Hummingbird Fed in Hand by Mother, Peter and Peeps.
- A movie is being made based on the book – *The Big Year*. It is a story of three men who set out to break the record of seeing the most birds in a year. The book is at the library.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Here is a list of some of the upcoming programs that have been scheduled by the program committee for 2010-2011.

AUGUST – Jonathon Valente –Avian Use of Department of Defense Lands: Addressing Unique Challenges and Conservation Concerns

SEPTEMBER – John Brunjes – Excellent photography of birds and other facets of nature

OCTOBER – Ren and Wanda Bilkey – Presentation on their recent birding trip to Thailand

NOVEMBER – tentative, Tom FitzGerald, Kentucky Resources Council

FEBRUARY – Dr. Rob Kingsolver from Bellarmine College – Spring Wildflowers – why they bloom at different times of the season.

BIRD FACTS

- ❖ The largest number of birds is found close to the equator. The Amazon rainforest contains about 30% of the world's birds.
- ❖ Cats are considered one of the biggest threats to birds, killing millions of songbirds every year.
- ❖ The heaviest bird to ever exist was probably the Elephant Bird of Madagascar. Scientists believe it weighed 1000 pounds. Its egg weighed 18 pounds and had about two gallons of fluid.
- ❖ Flying straight ahead swifts are probably the fastest fliers, reaching over 150 miles per hour.
- ❖ The Bobolink flies the farthest of inland birds. It flies over 2000 miles to reach its wintering grounds in South America.
- ❖ It is estimated that there are more than 100 billion birds on earth with at least 5 billion in the United States.
- ❖ The Passenger Pigeons might have been the most numerous birds in human history with over two billion in a single flock in the early 1800.