

# THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

JANUARY 2011

Beckham Bird Club, Inc.

Monthly Newsletter

Louisville, KY

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## NEXT MEETING

The Beckham Bird Club will observe its 76th anniversary at its January meeting with an appearance by **Dr. Mark Wourms**, the new director of the Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest. Dr. Wourms' talk is titled, **The Importance of Large Forest Blocks and the Future of Bernheim**. Last year, Bernheim, one of the Louisville area's great natural assets, observed its 80th anniversary. Join us as we celebrate Beckham's 76 years with a special focus on Bernheim Forest at 7p.m., Tuesday, January 11, at the Clifton Center, 2117 Payne Street in the Community Room.

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

The spring schedule of field trips is included in this newsletter. Please **read and observe** the guidelines for our field trips so that everyone will have a good birding experience. Please save your copy of the schedule. Thanks to Eddie Huber for organizing the schedule and all the leaders of our field trips.

## PAST FIELD TRIPS

### November 21, Muscatatuck NWR

Weather conditions were ideal – a warm, pleasant autumn day. Most of the wetland areas at Muscatatuck were drained of water, leaving very little habitat for ducks and grebes. The 15 observers had to work hard to find birds. Red-headed Woodpeckers were still present on the refuge and there was a nice array of birds at the visitor's center feeders, including Fox Sparrows and Purple Finches. At Hardy Lake, two Bald Eagles greeted the group as we got out of the cars. Several Common Loons were on the lake along with Horned Grebes, Buffleheads, and Ruddy Ducks.

### November 20, Anchorage Trail

Ten members visited the Anchorage Trail on a mild fall day. Robins were numerous but there were fewer than expected American Goldfinches. The group had good views of White-throated Sparrows and Fox Sparrows remaining motionless in the weeds for several minutes. An immature Red-shouldered Hawk perched on a line for great views. In all, the group tallied 38 species.

### November 28, Cave Hill

The cemetery was shrouded in fog as five Beckham members met for three hours of birding. As the fog burned off to reveal a perfect late fall day, a Red-tailed Hawk flew low overhead to a tree just inside the cemetery's main gate. Four woodpeckers were counted among the morning's 28 species: Pileated, Red-bellied, Downy and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Sparrows were few in numbers – a handful of White-throated – and there were few waterfowl aside from the usual Mallards and Canada Geese. A lone Coot was the only bird on the quarry pond. Other sightings included a Winter Wren, an Eastern Towhee, and a Belted Kingfisher.

### December 4, River Road

Four Beckham members who braved a cold snowy morning were rewarded with a remarkably good view of a Common Loon as it plied the waters of the Towhead Island channel, methodically diving, then surfacing, then diving again less than 50 feet from shore. Five hours of birding from the mouth of the Portland Canal to Putney Pond in Prospect produced 28 species, including Hooded Mergansers, Double-crested Cormorants, American Coots, Herring Gulls, a Red-tailed Hawk mobbed by Blue Jays, a Yellow-rumped Warbler, and a Belted Kingfisher.

### December 5, Garvin Brown/Hays Kennedy

The cold and wind cut the field trip short but the three members managed to locate 31 species by 10:30 when they called it quits. Highlights included both Blue and Green-winged Teal, a female Northern Harrier at close range, great views of 25 American Pipits, and a flyover of Sandhill Cranes.

### December 11, Ohio River, Indiana Side

A relatively mild, winter day brought out 12 members and guests to search along the Ohio River for waterfowl and land birds. The numbers of birds seen were low but the species count of 51 was good. Most of the birds were seen on the river and at the Marriott Lake. The lakes around the Clark Maritime Center were frozen and the inlet at Eagle Steel is now full of barges, loosing another birding area. Highlights included Common Goldeneye, Horned Grebes, Ruddy Duck, Bald Eagles, and a Winter Wren.

## **2011 MEMBERSHIP DUES**

If you see a red check mark on the cover of this newsletter your membership dues for 2011 have not been paid. Please send in your 2011 dues if you have not already done so. Please use the dues envelope enclosed in the November newsletter or use the membership form found on the BBC web site at [beckhambirdclub.org](http://beckhambirdclub.org). The different dues levels are available on the BBC web site. Please consider becoming a contributing member.

## **BIRD ALERT AND SIGN UP FOR 2010**

Ten Tundra Swans were seen on December 1 at Melco, the water retention basin off of Grade Lane. These rare birds to Louisville were there for several days.

On December 5 three Long-tailed Ducks were seen on the Indiana side of the river near the Big Four Bridge. Unfortunately a barge moving down the river scared the birds and they could not be relocated.

An alert was started for a Surf Scoter at Shippingport Island that was seen on December 6.

On Wednesday, December 15, a Short-eared Owl made a brief appearance on Chamberlain Lane in the soy bean fields. It did not remain in the area.

If you want to be on the **2011 Bird Alert Telephone List** it is time to sign up. The deadline is Friday, January 14. This alert is only for people who want to pursue the rare bird. Please do not sign up if you only want to know what is being seen. This information is on BirdKY and will be published in the newsletter. In putting out the alert speed in contacting everyone is essential so that everyone has an opportunity to see the bird. **You must be easy to contact** and willing to quickly call the next person on the list and keep calling until you reach a live person. **Also you must keep a copy of the Bird Alert List with you at all times. You are welcome to join the 2011 Bird Alert if you meet these requirements.** Please mail or email your name, home, business and cell phone number(s) and address to Jane Bell, 1876 Dove Creek Blvd, 40242-3492 or [patjanebell@bellsouth.net](mailto:patjanebell@bellsouth.net).

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

- Dr. Rob Kingsolver, a professor at Bellarmine University, will be our speaker for February. His topic will be – Spring Wildflowers – why they bloom at different times of the season.
- Make plans now to attend the March dinner meeting at the University Club. Laura Erickson, author of *101 Ways to Help Birds*, will be our guest speaker.
- Look for upcoming information on what each of our members can do to oppose the hunting of Sandhill Cranes in Kentucky.

## **LOUISVILLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

The Louisville Christmas Bird Count was on Sunday, December 19. Remnants of the ice storm on the Thursday were clearly evident as the 34 participants made their way through icy fields and paths. Even though the main roads were clear, parks and cemeteries were closed. The good part was that it was sunny and had calm winds. The group totaled 90 species as compared to only 81 in 2009, and tallied over 20,000 birds. A list of the birds seen can be found on BirdKY. Thanks to all the participants who took part in the Louisville count.

## **KENTUCKY NATURAL LANDS TRUST AND FORT KNOX**

Kentucky Natural Lands Trust and Fort Knox have partnered to purchase two conservation easements totaling nearly 308 acres in Bullitt County, Kentucky. These purchases are part of a larger effort to secure conservation easements in a one mile buffer zone around the Army installation. The easements will allow the Army greater training flexibility by reducing development encroachment. KNLT and the public will benefit through this support of land conservation as well as endangered species and habitat protection. The easements will help protect the area's largest forest block located between Fort Knox and Bernheim Forest. See the KNLT website at [www.KNLT.org](http://www.KNLT.org) for more information.

*Happy New Year and Good Birding in 2011!*