

# THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

JANUARY 2011 – SPECIAL EDITION

Beckham Bird Club, Inc.

Monthly Newsletter

Louisville, KY

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## **SPECIAL EDITION OF *THE BECKHAM OBSERVER*** **TO OPPOSE THE HUNTING OF SANDHILL CRANES** **IN KENTUCKY**

To address the issue of hunting Sandhill Cranes in Kentucky, which is being proposed by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Board of Directors of the Beckham Bird Club decided to put out a special edition of *The Beckham Observer*. The board, representing the club, opposes the hunting of Sandhill Cranes and has sent a letter (see below) to the commissioners of the KDFW stating its opposition to the hunting of Sandhill Cranes in Kentucky. At the town hall meeting that was held last fall at Tom Sawyer State Park the issue of hunting cranes was brought up and Paul McAllister, our president, Ben Yandell, representing the Kentucky Coalition for Sandhill Cranes, and several hunters spoke in opposition to this hunt. The commissioner said that if there were enough people opposing this hunt that they would reconsider their plans.

This newsletter's objective is to ask and encourage each of our members to write to the commissioners expressing opposition to the hunting of Sandhill Cranes. The more letters they receive the better - so ask relatives and friends to write also. Please do not leave it up to other members to write. When writing please be objective and respectful when addressing your opposition to hunting Sandhill Cranes. Included in this letter are the names and address of the KDFW commissioners.

### **SOME IDEAS FOR YOUR LETTER:**

- More money would be generated through eco-tourism than hunting.
- Whooping Cranes could be accidentally killed. Three Whooping Cranes were shot in Georgia.
- Too much money has been invested in the reintroduction of an eastern population of Whooping Cranes to let them be shot. State that the American public would not agree that an endangered species should be considered as non-essential.
- For out of state members, if you bird in Kentucky let them know you are spending money in Kentucky especially if you go to see the cranes in Cecilia, KY, or Barren River State Park.
- Please read the letter the Beckham board of directors sent to the commissioners. Feel free to use the ideas expressed in the letter, but try to use your own words.
- Write as a concerned citizen not as a member of the Beckham Bird Club. (Dozens of letters from club members will look like an organized campaign – letters from concerned individuals may have more impact)
- Speak from your heart but avoid overly emotional appeals as they may be easily dismissed by commissioners. If you feel strongly about the issue don't be afraid to express it.
- Avoid comments that are generally anti-hunting. Be specific to opposing Sandhill Crane hunting.
- Mention that you have spoken to friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, etc. about this issue and found the vast majority (or 100% if it's the case) opposes hunting Sandhill Cranes. Explain that you will enlist their help to oppose the hunt when the time for public comment comes.
- Keep your letter short and to the point.
- Check your spelling and grammar. Ask someone else to proofread it for you.

- Be sure to state clearly what you are asking for: a vote against hunting Sandhill Cranes.
- If you like, ask the commissioner to respond to your letter.

**Address your letter to:**

Commissioner Jonathan Gassett  
 Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources  
 #1 Sportsman's Lane  
 Frankfort, KY 40601

In addition, send your letter to **Commissioner Stuart Ray who represents Jefferson County** and to the other eight District Commissioners that represent the rest of the state. All letters can be sent to the same address in Frankfort as Commissioner Gassett's above.

District Commissioners:

- Mr. Terry K. Teitloff
- Mr. David M. Williams, II
- Mr. Stuart N. Ray ("our" commissioner)
- Dr. James R. Angel
- Dr. James R. Rich
- Mr. Stephen M. Glenn
- Mr. Doug Hensley
- Mr. Norman Fryman
- Mr. Taylor Orr

We also encourage you to contact your state representatives and senators. The names and addresses are available at <http://lrc.ky.gov/Legislators.htm>. Also include a letter to Governor Steve Beshear.

**Here are some online places to learn more about the KDFWR proposal and Sandhill Crane hunting in other states as well as other sites to gain information:**

Kentucky Coalition for Sandhill Cranes - <http://kyc4sandhillcranes.wordpress.com/>

One More Generation – a website devoted to protecting endangered animals - <http://onemoregeneration.org/2010/12/19/say-no-to-sandhill-crane-hunting/>

Blog by Julie Zickefoose (speaker at BBC banquet March 2006) <http://juliezickefoose.blogspot.com/2010/12/sandhill-crane-hunting.html>

Blog post by Courier-Journal reporter James Bruggers with links to the Kentucky Draft plan and the Flyway Council's Eastern management plan - <http://blogs.courier-journal.com/watchdogearth/2010/12/06/they-call-them-flying-rib-eyes/>

Blog by Vickie Henderson on the Tennessee Proposal - <http://vickiehenderson.blogspot.com/2010/11/sandhill-crane-hunting-in-tennessee.html>

For specifics on the economic value of "watching" wildlife versus hunting and fishing the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation has both national and state (KY) data showing that watching has a greater economic impact than hunting (but less than fishing); it also shows that more people (16 and older) participate in watching than in hunting and fishing

combined. *The 2006 Survey found that 1.9 million Kentucky residents and nonresidents 16 years old and older fished, hunted, or wildlife watched in Kentucky. Of the total number of participants, 721 thousand fished, 291 thousand hunted, and 1.5 million participated in wildlife -watching activities, which include observing, feeding, and photographing wildlife.* The report is available by searching for the 2006 National Survey at <http://library.fws.gov/>.

The publication Wildlife Watching in the U.S.: the Economic Impacts on National and State Economics in 2006, Addendum to the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation shows wildlife watching in KY supports over 10,000 jobs and produces over \$76 million in state and local tax revenue; that report is available at <http://www.wildlandscpr.org/files/economicsofwildlifeviewing.pdf>

- Barren River State Park is having Sandhill Crane viewing tours on January 21 and 22, and again on February 18th and 19th. We encourage you to participate to demonstrate that wildlife watching contributes to the state's coffers. There are two web sites that provide information. The registration form for the tours and park information is at <http://parks.ky.gov/findparks/resortparks/br> and <http://www.benzinga.com/press-releases/11/01/e761420/kentuckys-barren-river-offers-sandhill-crane-weekends-in-january-and-fe> has more information.

**THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS ADDRESSED TO THE COMMISSIONER AND THE NINE DISTRICT COMMISSION MEMBERS. IT WAS SIGNED BY THE BBC OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS.**

The Beckham Bird Club, a 300-plus member organization that has raised and donated more than \$100,000 to conservation projects in Kentucky, would like to bring to your attention its fervent opposition to the proposed hunting season on Sandhill Cranes in Kentucky. We are not against hunting. On the contrary, we understand that hunting is an important aspect of sound wildlife management and that hunting generates significant revenue to fund habitat preservation and conservation efforts that benefit birders and all Kentuckians.

We are specifically opposed to the institution of a hunting season on Sandhill Cranes. There are important reasons not to hunt these large, highly noticeable birds. They present excellent opportunities to increase Kentuckians' understanding and enjoyment of wildlife which will result in long-term benefits to our state's environmental efforts and add real dollars to the state coffers. Perhaps the most practical reason not to hunt cranes is the very real damage it will bring to the public image of the KDFWR and the hunters in our state, whether they participate in crane hunts or not.

While the KDFWR may be funded primarily by hunters and fishermen, its charge is to manage Kentucky's wildlife in a way that benefits everyone in the state. In Kentucky, interest in and spending on watching wildlife outpaces interest in and spending on hunting by a very substantial margin. (*2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation-Kentucky*)

As the Flyways Council management report states, The sandhill crane also holds special significance among the wildlife viewing public, and future management decisions will need to consider the high wildlife viewing value of Sandhill Cranes to people throughout their range. With this in mind, we believe your proposal to hunt Sandhill Cranes has the potential to become a public relations disaster which will unnecessarily put both hunters and the KDFWR in a bad light.

We respectfully urge you to cancel this proposal and focus on the Department's current programs which successfully manage Kentucky's wildlife resources to the benefit of all Kentuckians.

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