

THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

JANUARY 2010

Beckham Bird Club, Inc.

Monthly Newsletter

Louisville, KY

*Happy 75th Anniversary
January 11, 2010*

The date: January 11, 1935. The place: a room on the University of Louisville campus. Thirty-two bird enthusiasts, as they called themselves, gathered for the first meeting of the Beckham Bird Club, an organization dedicated to the study of birds and named for the 19th Century Kentucky ornithologist Charles Wickliffe Beckham of Bardstown. Seventy-five tumultuous years have passed. The world has changed in ways none of the founders could have imagined. And yet, in today's Beckham Club, they would find the same welcoming spirit, the same dedication to the study of birds as well as an expanded mission in preserving the natural world. Join us to celebrate the club's 75th anniversary. Mr. Beckham would be pleased at what the club has done in his name.

NEXT MEETING

The fastest bird on earth as it flies over the Falls of the Ohio gets our adrenalin pumping as we try to keep up with this spectacular bird. The Peregrine Falcon has made a great recovery over the years and our speaker, Kate Heyden, a Kentucky Fish and Wildlife biologist, will give us an overview of the Peregrine Falcon in Kentucky. Kate's program will give us the current status, past recovery efforts and current management efforts that have led to the recent success of this species in our state. Join us on Tuesday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m. 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

Falls of the Ohio State Park, November 15 – The group enjoyed a morning of mild weather for November. From the observation deck few birds were seen out on the fossil bed with the exception of Great Blue Herons and Double-crested Cormorants. A Peregrine Falcon could be seen perched atop the railroad bridge. An active group of songbirds was seen along the woodland trail including Brown Creepers and a Winter Wren at the creek at the west end of the

trail. The group of 11 birdwatchers also enjoyed good looks at an American Kestrel and an adult Cooper's Hawk from the parking lot of the Interpretive Center.

Muscatatuck NWR/Hardy Lake, November 21 – On this beautiful Indian summer type day, the group of 14 BBC members recorded 56 species with some great highlights. Sandhill Cranes were both heard and seen; nine species of ducks were found including two White-winged Scoters at Hardy Lake; Common Loons and Horned Grebes were seen at Hardy Lake; a muddy field at Muscatatuck produced numerous Wilson's Snipe; six species of sparrows were found, including American Tree, Fox, White-crowned; Purple Finches were seen at the feeders at the MNWR Visitor Center. But, perhaps the best find of the day was both a Sedge and a Marsh Wren at Endicott Marsh.

Tom Sawyer State Park, November 22 – The group of 4 Beckham members was treated to a Cooper's Hawk chasing an American Crow from a tree and following it until they were out of sight. There were good flocks of American Goldfinches, American Robins and Cedar Waxwings. Everyone had great, up-close views of Chipping Sparrows only 20 feet in front of the group. In all, the group tallied 26 species.

Cave Hill Cemetery, November 29 – But for a large number of Robins, birds were sparse during three hours of birding. A pair of Black Ducks was seen on the main lake and three Wood Ducks – two males and a female, were found in a striking setting on the small pond adjacent to the Civil War section of the cemetery. Five Beckham members and four guests recorded 18 species despite the pleasant weather.

River Road, December 5 – A juvenile Bald Eagle soaring over Towhead Island and a large flock of Hooded Mergansers at the Louisville Water Company impoundment off Mayfair Avenue were highlights for 14 Beckham members on a bright, cold morning. A handful of Bonaparte's Gulls were seen tucked in among a larger flock of Ring-billed Gulls on the Ohio upriver from the Kennedy Bridge. A Pied-billed Grebe, a Belted Kingfisher and a pair of Wood Ducks were recorded from the old River Road bridge at the mouth of Beargrass Creek while a Pileated Woodpecker and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were seen at Putney Pond. Forty-four species were recorded, but surprisingly few ducks were seen during the three and one-half hours of birding.

Bernheim Forest, December 6 – Two members of the Beckham Bird Club birded Bernheim Forest on an early December day, locating 33 species including 3 Mute Swans. Other birds of interest were Fox Sparrow, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Several Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen – interesting since they seem to be scarce this year.

Ohio River, Indiana Side, December 12 – Eight Beckham members met at the Falls of the Ohio where we saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk mildly aggravating a Red-tailed Hawk. Due to unusually high water, few waterfowl were present at the Falls. The group managed a few species at every stop during the outing though numbers were low. The group tallied 15 species of waterfowl with

the most interesting being 2 Common Goldeneye and a single Red-breasted Merganser. Two adult Bald Eagles were also seen among the 48 species tallied for the trip.

Ewing Bottoms, December 12 – Eight Beckham members met with the hopes of locating Sandhill Cranes and Short-eared Owls in Ewing Bottoms and surrounding areas. Though the owls were not found, approximately 300 Sandhill Cranes were located primarily in the Medora area. A side trip to Starve Hollow produced little in the way of waterfowl due to the lake being unexpectedly frozen. Other birds of interest among the 30 species located that afternoon included American Pipit and Horned Lark. Thanks to Major Waltman, 4 of the group were treated to 11 Whooping Cranes (7 juveniles and 4 adults), in a group feeding in a cornfield.

BIRD ALERT AND SIGN UP FOR 2010

If you want to be on the **2010 Bird Alert Telephone List** it is time to sign up. The deadline is Friday, January 15. **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 2010 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.

On November 24 an Eared Grebe was found on the Ohio River from the Ashland Park in Indiana. The bird was seen for several days. The Eared Grebe is rare visitant in the fall and winter. On November 30 a Ross's Goose was in the Ohio River near Shippingport Island. It flew to Lannan Park near 27th and Northwestern Parkway where it was seen feeding with Canada Geese. It is a rare bird in Jefferson County. On December 13 an alert was started for 11 Whooping Cranes in a corn field off of Highway 31 near Seymour, Indiana. There were four adults and 7 juveniles. These birds were migrating on their own.

2010 MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you see a red check mark on the cover of this newsletter your membership dues for 2010 have not been paid. Please send in your 2010 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. The different dues levels are available on the BBC web site. Please consider becoming a contributing member.

IN SYMPATHY

Beckham Bird Club extends its sympathy to Carl and JoAnn Bochmann on the death of Carl's mother in November.

AUDUBON CAMP IN MAINE

The National Audubon Society is re-opening the historic Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine next summer for 5 ornithology programs, each lasting about 6 days. A description of the programs, faculty, costs, dates, etc. and registration can be found at www.projectpuffin.org. There is a discount for signing up before February 2010. There are 4 adult sessions and one teen session, sponsored in part by the ABA. Dr. Steve Kress, restoration ecologist and author, will be directing, and he has lined up Kenn Kauffman, Pete Dunne, Scott Weidensaul, and many other wonderful teachers to live and work on Hog island during various sessions. Two sessions are co-sponsored with Elderhostel (now called Exploritas) and will involve direct conservation action on offshore seabird islands in Maine's Muscongus Bay, home to the world's first restored seabird colony. (Puffins, Roseate, Arctic and Common Terns).

There is an upcoming PBS/KET Nature program in early January about hummingbirds —
***Hummingbirds: Magic in the Air* premieres Sunday, January 10, 2010.**

Good Birding in 2010!