



THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG

JUNE 2022

THERE IS NO MEETING IN JUNE



The Annual Beckham Bird Club Picnic will be on Sunday, June 5 at 4:00 p.m. at the Education Center at Beckley Creek Park.

The club is resuming its annual picnic this year so join us for a fun afternoon of birding, food and friendship. Bring a dish to share, insect repellent and, of course, your binoculars. There is no cost but the BBC asks you to donate to the BBC Birdathon when you come to the picnic. We encourage you to bring your own cloth napkin, plates, cups and utensils. That is, use non-disposable items. There will be a bird quiz with a prize to the winner. Hint: study your field guide of NA birds.

PICNIC RESERVATION- Deadline June 3

NAME(S) _____ PHONE _____

I will bring ___ salad/vegetable ___ desert ___ other(_____)

Number attending who want chicken ___

Number attending at who do not want chicken ___

Mail to Pat Bell, 1876 Dove Creek Blvd, Louisville, KY 40242-3492 or bring to May meeting.

Or email your reservation to: patjanebell@bellsouth.net. Include your name(s), number wanting chicken and what you are bringing. Hope to see you at our picnic.

BIRDATHON

The birds have been counted – **132** in all. Now it is up to you to help make our 2022 BBC Birdathon a success. Can you do it? Many members and friends have already made and sent in their pledge. But we need all our members to contribute to help us raise the money to support the organizations that have asked for grants from BBC. No amount is too small. Please send in your contribution to the person you sponsored or mail to the BBC post office box. Help us beat last year's \$24,000. Make check payable to **Beckham Bird Club**.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN TIME FOR BENNETT LANE AND MORGAN CONSERVATION PARK.

Sunday, May 29 8 a.m. – noon Easy/moderate

POPE LICK PARK – For residents, breeding birds and late migrants. From Gene Snyder get off at Taylorsville Rd toward Fisherville, go about a mile, & take a right on South Pope Lick Rd. Follow signs to Pope Lick Park, part of the Parklands. Meet in the parking lot. (formerly called Floyds Fork Park) **GPS: 38.184655, -85.488095**

Andrew Melnykovich 502-608-4655

Saturday, June 11 7:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Easy

FOR EARLY BIRDERS - BENNETT LANE FIELDS - For summer breeders of the open prairie and mixed forest. Meet at the Intersection of Morgan Road and Bennett Lane. **GPS: 38.423240, -85.443033**

Mike Callan 502-592-7008

Saturday, June 11 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Moderate

IF YOU WANT TO SLEEP LONGER - MORGAN CONSERVATION PARK - For summer breeders of the open prairie and mixed forest. Meet at Morgan Conservation Park parking lot. **GPS: 38.500359, -85.380793**

Mike Callan 502-592-7008

PAST FIELD TRIPS

Tom Sawyer - April 30 - Eleven birders were greeted by the sounds of spring migrants singing fervently as they traversed over 4 miles of EP Tom Sawyer Park. The weather was pleasant and the birds were numerous and diverse. Highlights included 4 species of vireo including 2 blue-headed, along with numerous least flycatchers, rose-breasted grosbeaks, and scarlet tanagers. We also saw *21* species of warbler including, blue-winged, pine, numerous Nashville and black-throated green, Kentucky, cape may, hooded, redstart, magnolia, palm, prairie, chestnut-sided and a cerulean! Less common species observed included a Lincoln's sparrow, two pairs of red-headed woodpeckers, *several* veerys and a late brown creeper. The final tally came to 78 species! Thanks to everyone who came out for a spectacular day of birding!

Mammoth Cave National Park – May 1, 2022 Our day of birding began with 14 members and 2 guests. It was a beautiful day for our trip. Ovenbird, Worm-eating, Louisiana Waterthrush,

Prothonotary, Kentucky, and Hooded were just some of the 20 species of warblers seen by the observers. Of the 20 warbler species we saw only the Magnolia and Blue-throated Blue Warblers were migrants. Vireos, thrushes, and Orioles added their presence as we traveled from one spot to the next. Cedar Waxwings were the most numerous species seen. Be sure to join us on the next BBC field trip.

Anchorage Trail – May 8, 2022 Bright sunshine, blue skies and a great group of birders made for a super Mother's Day field trip. The fourteen participants walked the trail picking up a species here and there. At the end of the trip we were surprised to find that we tallied 64 species. Here are some highlights - Wood Ducks with lots of cute ducklings, a Blue-headed Vireo, Rough-winged, Barn, and Tree Swallows, both Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, and eleven species of warblers. Don't miss the next BBC trip.

Turkey Run – May 7 Cloudy with intermittent drizzle, temps remaining in the low 50s. BBC field trip. Fourteen birders met on a chilly May morning to see what could be found. In spite of the clouds and occasional drizzle, we managed to get 49 species in 4 hours. Highlights included a nice look at a Kentucky Warbler, a Wood Thrush that posed beautifully, and a pair of Scarlet Tanagers.

Caperton Swamp – May 21 BBC field trip report. Twelve members and three guests gathered at Caperton Swamp on a warm pleasant morning. Many great birds were seen in the parking area. A Red-headed Woodpecker, Gray Catbird, Eastern Kingbird, a first year male Orchard Oriole and bright male Baltimore Oriole appeared in the trees across River Road. Just inside the canopy were well over a hundred Cedar Waxwings feasting in the mulberry trees. Further inside, the forest was quiet in many places and almost completely devoid of spring migrants. Perhaps many took advantage of the strong southerly winds over the last two evenings. Still, good looks were had at many summer residents with highlights being many Indigo Buntings and a Summer Tanager. We also heard singing Yellow-Throated warbler, Red-Eyed and Warbling Vireos, and many Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. In the swamps we found Black-crowned Night Herons, a Green Heron, multiple singing Prothonotary warblers and Baltimore orioles. As we made our way back to the parking lot a Yellow-billed Cuckoo announced itself and a Bald Eagle was seen soaring over the river. The trip officially ended with 43 species. However just before leaving I was informed by two members that they had seen an unidentified merganser with young, so I went back to find them and picked up another 10 species along the way. Oddly the forest seemed more active after 11am. There were two female Hooded Mergansers, one with 5 juveniles, and a female Wood Duck, also with several young. Other notable late adds included a female Common Yellowthroat, a Willow Flycatcher, Belted Kingfisher, a singing Philadelphia Vireo, and a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird to bring the final tally up to 53 species. Thanks again to everyone who came out for a fun morning of birding!

BIRDING ETHICS: SOME THOUGHTS ON OWLS

Why do owls fascinate birders and especially bird photographers, often driving them to behave in ways that other species do not inspire?

After all, owls are not – for the most part – among our rarest North American birds. Yes, they can be hard to find, so seeing one is usually a treat for any birder. But why do they so often trigger irrational frenzies?

As owl researcher Denver Holt, the speaker at the Beckham Bird Club annual meeting, suggested, it may be because owls invite anthropomorphism. They have faces that remind us of ourselves, with wide-set eyes that peer out at us with binocular vision. They look and act smart and calm, encouraging us to ascribe to them those attributes.

Owls are a photographer's dream. Rather than fly away when approached, owls often sit still, watching us approach and seemingly unperturbed by our presence.

But, as Holt explained, appearances can be deceiving. Owls do indeed get stressed by humans encroaching on their space, even to the point of abandoning nests. In that respect, they are no different than other birds.

Similarly, ethical birding practices around owls should be similar to those used around species that make it clear they are bothered by human presence. First and foremost, maintain a respectful distance and keep noise and commotion to a minimum. Limit use of recording to elicit owls to respond to you.

When photographing owls, do not use flash photography, especially if the bird is flying or hunting. Owls subjected to barrages of flashes show signs of being disturbed or temporarily disoriented.

Owls also tend to bring out bad behavior toward other humans. A pair of Northern Pygmy-owls did just that in Colorado recently, creating traffic issues on a narrow road, irritating local property owners and other recreational users of the area and, worst of all, significantly disturbing a pair of birds that were simply trying to perpetuate their species.

Many social media sites for birders, including several in our area, do not permit disclosing specific locations of owl sightings because it puts the birds at risk of disturbance. As eBird says in its discussion of sensitive species, "Disturbance at (owl) day roosts or use of playback can repeatedly disturb individuals, pairs, or small populations. Large crowds surrounding and following certain owls in winter (sometimes engaging in unethical baiting practices) disrupts natural hunting and exposes owls to great risk from vehicle collisions or habituation to humans."

eBird currently masks locations for three North American owl species: Spotted Owls, Great Gray Owl, and Northern Hawk Owl, but adds that "*we encourage ethical behavior around all owls.*"

As noted by eBird, one of the most harmful practices around owls is baiting. Providing food to wild owls is not at all like maintaining backyard feeders, and should be done only by rehabilitators attempting to capture injured birds or by researchers who are banding or tagging owls. The National

Audubon Society has a detailed discussion of owl baiting here: <https://www.audubon.org/news/why-baiting-owls-not-same-feeding-backyard-birds>

In our anthropomorphizing of owls, perhaps we should think of them as the avian celebrities they are and put ourselves in their feathers. Would we want to be subjected to a crush of fans and a barrage of camera flashes every time someone saw us, especially if we're out on a date or just trying to get some rest? Would we want people throwing hunks of meat or dead rodents our way to get our attention? More likely we'd be like Greta Garbo: I just want to be left alone.

BBC Conservation Report Websites May 2022

[Five Incredible Ways Birds Change Their Bodies for Spring and Fall Migration | Audubon](#)

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2022>

[North American Birds Face Their Own Pandemic With Latest Bout of Avian Flu | Audubon](#)

[Bald eagle rebound stunted by poisoning from lead ammunition | Cornell Chronicle](#)

[Cranes of the World Opens May 1 With Steps Taken to Protect Rare, Endangered Cranes from Avian Influenza - International Crane Foundation \(savingcranes.org\)](#)

[A Deep Dive into the Oriole Genome Tackles the Mystery of Hybridization | All About Birds All About Birds](#)

[Sounds Like Home: Experimenting with Audio to Help Marbled Murrelets Find Prime Habitat | All About Birds All About Birds](#)

<https://abcbirds.org/article/avian-flu-outbreak-2022/>

[The Diverse World of Bird Beaks | American Bird Conservancy \(abcbirds.org\)](#)

[Do Ducks Have Teeth? - American Bird Conservancy \(abcbirds.org\)](#)

MAY BIRDING

Wow! Another great month to be out and seeing all the birds here in Jefferson County and the surrounding counties. Over 171 species of birds were seen here in Jefferson County alone - thirty-five species of warblers plus vireo, thrushes, flycatchers, tanagers, shorebirds, etc. Hope you were on one of the field trips or out birding on your own to see all the wonders of the bird world. There are still many birds to be seen even though many



birds were passing through to go farther north to breed. Check around, Kentucky, Prairie, Yellow-throated, Parulas, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo just to name a few are here raising young. We still have a few trips planned so join one and maybe you will see not only our resident birds but some that have come to stay with us this summer. Keep birding.