



# THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

SEPTEMBER 2019



## UPDATE ON BARN OWLS in KENTUCKY- a Decade of Monitoring

Kate Slankard, an avian biologist with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) will give our September program on Barn Owls, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Kentucky and thus, KDFWR has been monitoring this species for the past decade. In her talk, Kate will discuss the results of this monitoring project, current threats to the species, as well as some fun facts about Barn Owl life history.

Join us on Tuesday, September 10 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 2822 Frankfort Ave, 38.254256, -85.689458. Bring a young birder!

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, August 31 8:00 a.m. – noon easy	<b>BECKLEY CREEK PARK – GRAND ALLEE SECTION</b> - For fall migrants. Meet at the "Port-a-Potty" parking lot at the south end of the Humana Grand Allee just before the large bridge over the creek. <b>GPS: 38.209077, -85.474110</b>	Andrew Melnykovych 502-608-4655
Saturday, Sept. 7 8:00a.m.-noon easy	<b>POPE LICK PARK</b> – For residents and 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) <b>GPS: 38.184655, -85.488095</b>	Andrew Melnykovych 502-608-4655
Sunday, Sept. 8 8 a.m. CDT - ???? easy/moderate	<b>MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK</b> – For fall migrants. Meet at the service center in the park just past the campground entrance. This is the parking lot just to the right of the camp store. Bring lunch. <b>GPS: 37.183860, -86.097705</b>	Pat & Jane Bell 502-326-9610

Friday – Sunday Sept. 13-15	<b>KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING</b> – Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park	Details at <a href="http://birdky.org">birdky.org</a>
Sunday, Sept. 22 9 a.m. – noon easy/moderate	<b>HARRODS CREEK PARK</b> – For fall migrants. 6530 Montero Dr., Prospect. Meet at the parking lot at the bottom of the hill. <b>GPS: 38.340941, -85.600052</b>	Pat and Jane Bell 502-326-9610
Saturday, Sept. 28 8:30 am – noon Easy/moderate	<b>TOM SAWYER PARK</b> – For migrants and residents. Meet in front of Recreation Building - 3000 Freys Hill - large parking lot. <b>GPS: 38.286500, -85.557326</b>	Patrice Pittman 502-235-8046 Michael Callan 502-592-7008
Sunday, Sept. 29 8:00 am – noon easy	<b>BROAD RUN PARK</b> – For migrants and residents. South on Bardstown Road from Gene Snyder Expressway. Park entrance is about 4 miles on the left. Meet at south entrance <b>GPS: 38.089188, -85.550621</b>	Meg and Steve Brown 502-435-3967



Beckham Bird Club wishes to extend sympathy to the family of Julie Campbell who passed away on June 23. Julie had been a long time member of the club and a supporter of the Birdathon. The club also wishes to express our thanks to Martha and Cecil Smith who made a donation to BBC in honor of Julie.

### **Book review: *The Genius of Birds* by Jennifer Ackerman**

Penguin Press, 2016, 266 pages      By Ren Bilkey

The Genius of Birds is pleasant, entertaining and informative, and ranks in the top three birding related books I have read. Considerable amount of science is discussed but in an elegant, descriptive and informal manner which makes this a good read for a lay person.

Organized in eight chapters, with examples from around the world, the book starts by defining intelligence and how to measure it. Here, bird examples from Barbados, where research is aided by the unusual tameness of their birds, compares the ever exploring Bullfinch with the safe and predictable behavior of the Grassquit.

Brain size, related to intelligence and ability to innovate and communication is discussed with reference to the Chickadee. Fun fact (FF): Chickadees constantly communicate about threats. A nearby Great-horned Owl gets two “dees”, but a more threatening Pygmy Owl gets four. In the same setting, a person doesn’t change their behavior or calls. In spite of a brain twice the size of a pea, they are known to have an immense memory for their food stashes.

A chapter is devoted to “boffins” with an example the New Caledonian Crow crafting of and use of tools. The chapter on social intelligence includes social learning, and societal interaction and sharing. Birds also play, deceive, manipulate, eavesdrop, give gifts, summon witnesses to the death of a peer, and may even grieve. FF, the African Grey Parrot will reciprocate sharing food, even with humans, if they know they will be shared with in return.

Vocal virtuosity, special anatomy and bird song learning are reviewed. FF: the Mockingbird has an ongoing library of about 200 bird songs. President Jefferson had a pet Mockingbird “Dick” who during presidential naps would sit on the couch and serenade bird and human tunes to him. A chapter on bird aesthetics and nest building covers the Australian Bower birds.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter reviews bird navigation and migration processes. This includes the research findings on mental mapping, night and magnetic navigation, but also olfactory and auditory navigation; and the brain anatomy that allows for these skills. The final chapter discusses the special attributes that allow sparrows to be so successful in urban settings.

Although anybody will enjoy this book, the bird watcher in particular will be rewarded by the breadth of information provided in *The Genius of Birds*.

#### **PAST FIELD TRIPS**

**Turkey Run Park, August 18** - Eleven people (8 members plus 3 guests) participated in the field trip to Turkey Run. The weather was extreme heat but there was still a good number of species with some good looks at Yellow-billed Cuckoos, a Summer Tanager and a Blue Grosbeak. Three species of warblers were seen – Prairie, Kentucky and Northern Parula. Forty-two species were tallied on the trip. Two of the guests intend to join the club and the third guest, from Spain, managed to get 20 life birds on the trip.

**Melco Basin, August 24, 2019** - Thirteen people attended the field trip to Melco Basin on a beautiful, late summer day. Forty-nine species were seen including 9 species of shorebirds, including 3 Stilt Sandpipers. However, the highlight of the outing was locating the Buff-breasted Sandpiper that had been seen there the day before. A few of the group ran into Jim Arnett at the end of the outing who was able to get the group on the sandpiper.

#### **BBC Conservation Report Websites August 2019**

Bears Ears - [https://act.nrdc.org/donate/bears-ears-190730?source=act\\_nrdcnewsletter&tkd=1044484&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=mainlink&utm\\_campaign=email&t=5&akid=5863%2E1044484%2EWzpB8](https://act.nrdc.org/donate/bears-ears-190730?source=act_nrdcnewsletter&tkd=1044484&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=mainlink&utm_campaign=email&t=5&akid=5863%2E1044484%2EWzpB8)

Songbirds - [https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/07/songbirds-are-being-snatched-from-miamis-forests/?cmpid=org=ngp::mc=crm-email::src=ngp::cmp=Editorial::add=Animals\\_20190801::rid=5ED34E11E0C43A8BBCB7FFCD22E86384](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/07/songbirds-are-being-snatched-from-miamis-forests/?cmpid=org=ngp::mc=crm-email::src=ngp::cmp=Editorial::add=Animals_20190801::rid=5ED34E11E0C43A8BBCB7FFCD22E86384)

California Condors - [https://www.audubon.org/news/lead-ammo-top-threat-condors-now-outlawed-california?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-newsletter-engagement\\_20190722\\_wingspan%5baudience%5d&utm\\_source=ea&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=engagement\\_20190722\\_wingspan&utm\\_content=%5baudience%5d](https://www.audubon.org/news/lead-ammo-top-threat-condors-now-outlawed-california?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-newsletter-engagement_20190722_wingspan%5baudience%5d&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20190722_wingspan&utm_content=%5baudience%5d)

[https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/california-condor-nearly-went-extinct-now-1000th-chick-recovery-program-has-hatched-180972698/?utm\\_term=EndangeredSpecies](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/california-condor-nearly-went-extinct-now-1000th-chick-recovery-program-has-hatched-180972698/?utm_term=EndangeredSpecies)

Identiflight - <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2018/how-new-technology-making-wind-farms-safer-birds> National Wildlife Magazine August-September 2019 issue

PFAs - <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/summer-2019/birds-are-living-proof-forever-chemicals-pollute>

Human Impact on Chimp Behavioral Diversity -  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/03/190307141021.htm>

African grey parrots -

[https://www.facebook.com/pasaprimates/videos/354839145462909/?utm\\_source=PASA+Supporters+-+Save+Endangered+Species&utm\\_campaign=ae45a6ec96-2018-07-xx](https://www.facebook.com/pasaprimates/videos/354839145462909/?utm_source=PASA+Supporters+-+Save+Endangered+Species&utm_campaign=ae45a6ec96-2018-07-xx)

[https://www.facebook.com/pasaprimates/videos/354839145462909/?utm\\_source=PASA+Supporters+-+Save+Endangered+Species&utm\\_campaign=ae45a6ec96-76510065&mc\\_cid=ae45a6ec96&mc\\_eid=be15ffc79a](https://www.facebook.com/pasaprimates/videos/354839145462909/?utm_source=PASA+Supporters+-+Save+Endangered+Species&utm_campaign=ae45a6ec96-76510065&mc_cid=ae45a6ec96&mc_eid=be15ffc79a)