

THE BECKHAM



OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

APRIL 2016

Birds of South Africa



Beckham members Jamie Baker and Carol Besse will give a talk on their recent trip to South Africa. Jamie & Carol traveled to Eastern South Africa with Rockjumper Birding Tours in November 2015. Their trip included several national parks including Africa's most famous, Kruger National Park, the tiny country of Lesotho, and a variety of habitats in between. Each added more than 400 species of birds to their life lists with sightings as varied as the tiny Sunbirds to the enormous Ostriches. They also saw plenty of spectacular mammals up close and personal. Please

join us to see Jamie's wonderful photographs of the wildlife and birds of this very welcoming and easy-to-visit country. Our meeting will be on Tuesday, April 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Clifton Center on Payne Street.

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

The field trip schedule for April, May and June is included in this newsletter for those receiving it by mail. For members receiving it by email there will be a link to the schedule. Thanks to Carol Besse for organizing the trips and thanks to all the leaders.

GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are open to our members. Guests are invited to join us on a trip to find out about BBC and to become members of this group of enthusiastic birders.

Please arrive a few minutes before the field trip begins to sign in and be ready to go.

2016 BBC BIRDATHON

This year we need your pledge to help the following organizations that the Beckham Bird Club Board selected as recipients of grants from the 2016 BBC Birdathon. Several of these organizations depend on funds from the government and as you know these funds are being cut. Please be generous this year. You will be contacted either by email or a phone call so please say YES. Just make a pledge of a set sum or an amount for every bird that is counted on birdathon day by the person you sponsor. After birdathon day you will receive an account of the day and information about where to send your pledge.

The following are the recipients of the 2016 BBC Birdathon:

1. **Kentucky Resources Council, Inc.** - provides legal and strategic assistance without charge to low-income individuals, community groups, and local governments concerning air, waste, water, land use and mineral development-related matters, with a goal of advancing the protection of environmental health and quality and prudent use and conservation of the state's natural resources.
2. **The Nature Conservancy, Kentucky Chapter** – for understory restoration in the Kentucky Palisades Preserve System. This restoration would provide high quality habitat for many bird species.
3. **Creasy Mahan Nature Preserves** – wants to convert grasslands into a productive birding and butterfly habitat. By planting many native plants it would provide a good food source.
4. **Kentucky Natural Lands Trust** – to protect large forest tracts along the Pine Mountain to maintain the ecological and migratory corridor for birds.
5. **Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission** – maintain open glade and grasslands habitat for Henslow's Sparrow and Prairie Warbler at Bouteloua Barrens State Nature Preserve in Lincoln County.
6. **Raptor Rehabilitation of Kentucky, Inc.** – provide presentation of RROLI educational programs to six school groups that otherwise could not provide the program fee.

CHEROKEE PARK BIRDING TRIPS

Rob Lane will again lead birding trips at Cherokee Park during April and May. Meet at the foot of Maple Road on the scenic loop of Cherokee Park next to Nettelroth Sanctuary at 8:30 a.m. on the last three Wednesdays of April and the first three Wednesdays of May. Free and open to the public. Stay as long as your schedule allows. All birders welcome from expert to beginner. In case of inclement weather use your best judgment. These walks are not affiliated with the Beckham Bird Club. For any questions or additional information contact: Rob Lane, 205-276-9580 or Shrikeguy@yahoo.com

MARCH DINNER MEETING

Neil Hayward entertained the 90 Beckham Bird Club and Louisville Audubon Society members and guests at our annual March Dinner Meeting. He gave us his account of his "Accidental Big Year" as he traipsed over North America several times in his quest to break the big year record. Many thanks to Carol Besse, Mary Yandell, and Jane Bell for their work in making the yearly dinner meetings such a success.

Following the March dinner meeting on Tuesday night, many of the observers including our guest speaker, met at the Anchorage Trail on Wednesday morning to search high and low for every bird there. It was great fun to walk the path with birders of all ages that share a common love of birdwatching. Despite a few raindrops a good time was had by all. Among the 39 species seen by the group were 2 Wood Ducks high up on a limb of a sycamore tree; two Green-winged



Teal on the lake; Red-shouldered Hawks which at times seemed to be following us along as we walked the trail; one beautiful Hermit Thrush that came to see what all the commotion was about; a pair of Eastern Towhees searching for breakfast in the thicket; five species of sparrows led the group a merry chase as they preferred to stay hidden from view; and lastly Red-winged Blackbirds were on territory. Birding was rather slow over all, so all thirty observers were looking forward to spring migration.

Some of our youngest birders.

PAST FIELD TRIPS

E.P. Tom Sawyer State Park, March 2

Thirteen people participated in the American Woodcock walk at Tom Sawyer SP. In cool but nice weather, as many as six Woodcocks were heard calling, and several display flights were heard. Eleven other species were seen typical of winter visitors and residents.

Turkey Run Park, March 5

The conditions were not favorable or the most pleasant for the field trip to Turkey Run Park. However, the group of 9 members managed to locate 28 species. Nothing unusual was seen but they had good looks at Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets.

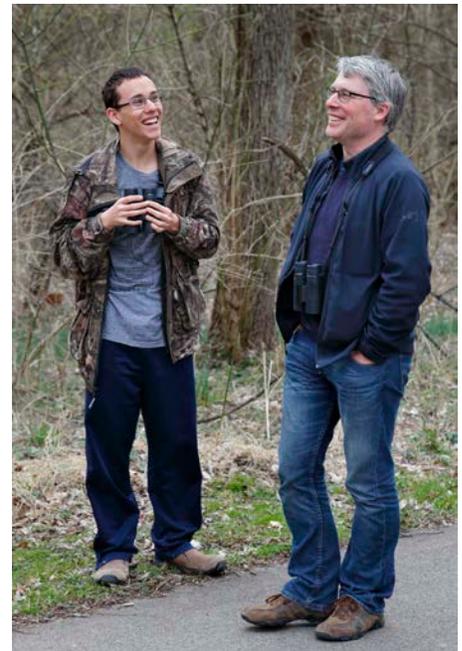
March 6 – Muscatatuck NWR and Hardy Lake

Eleven members of the Beckham Bird Club took part in a field trip to the refuge and to Hardy Lake. On this beautiful late winter day birds seemed to be everywhere. Sandhill Cranes flew over for most of the morning. A Bald Eagle and four species of raptors were observed. A Sharp-

shinned Hawk was harassing the birds at the feeders. Nine species of ducks were on the lakes at the refuge and Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneyes and Ruddy Ducks were seen at Hardy Lake. Phoebes and Tree Swallows had returned to Muscatatuck, a sure sign that spring is here! Six species of sparrows were located as well as two Purple Finches that added to our list at the refuge. It was a great day to be birding and the group tallied 60 species.

March 20 – Pope Lick Park

A nice, cold morning for the Beckham Bird Club field trip to the Parklands. Signs of spring were evident as several species of birds had returned to the park. Tree Swallows had claimed territory to every bluebird box; Phoebes were busily gathering what appeared to be nesting material along the creek; Brown Thrashers, Towhees, and Field Sparrows were greeting the morning with song. Wood Ducks flew overhead. Numerous Swamp Sparrows were found in the grassy fields. The two members and one guest located a total of 32 species.



Thanks to Pam Spaulding for the pictures of the field trip on March 9 with Neil Hayward.



"I GIVE A WHOOP" PLEDGE

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) continues its work to protect Whooping Cranes from threats like fresh water shortages, wetland destruction, power line collisions, illegal shootings, and more. But they need our help to protect Whooping Cranes from extinction. To get the word out about the endangered cranes, ICF has started a nationwide "I Give A Whoop" pledge campaign. If you can and are willing to do the following three things, please consider signing the pledge at the link below.

1. Be able to accurately identify a Whooping Crane.
2. Report any suspicious activity that appears to harm or disturb a Whooping Crane.
3. Tell friends, family and your networks about the plight of the Whooping Crane.

Join "craniacs" everywhere who give a whoop – to learn more and take the pledge to protect Whooping Cranes go here: <http://www.savingcranes.org/i-give-a-whoop/>

and here: <https://www.savingcranes.org/whooping-crane-pledge/>