



BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

APRIL 2020

A NOTE TO OUR MEMBERS

ALL BBC ACTIVITIES CANCELLED THROUGH MAY

Due to the need for social distancing in order to combat the coronavirus outbreak, and recognizing that a majority of our members fall into high-risk groups for COVID-19, the board of the Beckham Bird Club has decided to cancel all activities through the end of May. This includes the April 14 and May 12 monthly meetings and all field trips until August.

A decision on the June picnic and further activities will be made at a future date and announced in the newsletter and via email and the website. We are hoping to resume regular activities as soon as it is safe to do so. We hope to elect officers and board members at the next monthly meeting in July.

In the meanwhile, we encourage our members to continue birding, whether by watching feeders or venturing out in keeping with the best advice from health authorities.

Please stay safe and healthy.

THE BBC BOARD

2020 BBC BIRDATHON – PLEASE READ

This is an extraordinary year to have the 2020 Birdathon. With many of our birding spots closed or having restrictions and trying to keep a social distance because of Covid-19 the Birdathon is going to change this year. Instead of going out to look for birds as we have done in the past, we will not be doing so this year. We decided that to ensure the safety of our members we will instead be asking you to just donate to the Birdathon as you have done in the past to help the following organizations. If you have donated before you will receive an email or phone call asking you to do so again this year. If you have not donated in the past, we hope you will consider doing so as these organizations will most certainly be in dire straits this year.

There will be two ways to donate: 1) make your check out to **Beckham Bird Club** and please indicate on your check 2020 Birdathon and mail to Beckham Bird Club, PO Box 5301, Louisville, KY 40255-0301 or 2) use PayPal at beckhambirdclub.org and click on activities or membership. You can also use your credit card at the PayPal site also.

The following are the recipients of the 2020 BBC Birdathon:

Organization	Plan for Grant
KY Natural Lands Trust	The primary focus remains on the Pine Mountain Wildlands Corridor. This acquisition will also be a key link in connecting the existing protected areas and expanding the corridor.
Surry Hills Nature Preserves, Inc.	We plan to maintain the family farm as a green space entity, and to protect the natural communities that are present, including a twenty-five-acre old growth forest. Approximately one half of the farm is secure from future development, but we are attempting to purchase additional farmland from family members to expand the amount of land that can be included in the nature preserve.
Sunnyside Master Gardeners Bluebird Team	We construct BB boxes and install trails which are used by cavity nesters, such as, Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Chickadees, Carolina Wrens, Tufted Titmouse and House Wrens. We will use the grant to purchase materials for the construction of boxes and installation on trails.
KY Conservation Committee	Funds will be used for research, and educational presentation materials and webinars for multiple projects. Such as protecting and maintaining the habitat in the Upper Cumberland Watershed, continuing our work to protect threats to key habitat funding such as KY's Heritage Land Conservation Fund and work to educate key decision-makers and civic leaders on lands in their counties and protect that funding.

Louisville/Jefferson County Environmental Trust	We plan to use the Birdathon grant to purchase and develop outreach and education materials for current & prospective conservation easement donors as well as updating our outreach brochure and develop a portable educational display to be taken to events.
Creasey Mahan Nature Preserve	This grant request is to provide funding for a very exciting, new bird mural! This bird mural would be painted by our Artist-in-Residence, Jean Smith. The goal of the mural would be to present a variety of native birds, and additionally will be used as part of bird classes offered with our school field trips, Thrive Forest School, and as part of public events, such as our Great Backyard Bird Count.
Louisville Nature Center	LNC seeks funding for two areas: bird education and improvements to the bird blind. Most funds will go toward enabling Title 1 schools from JCS to come to the LNC for bird-related programs for free or at a discounted rate, and to cover any supplies associated with those programs. The remainder of funds will go toward repairing and improving a water feature at the bird blind, to provide habitat and water for birds in the summer drought season.
Woods and Waters Land Trust	The mission of the Woods and Waters Land Trust (WWLT) is to preserve the natural areas—forests, streams, cliffs and other natural features of the lower Kentucky River and its tributaries—and to promote responsible land use and appreciation of the natural landscape. We will concentrate funds to be used in three areas, Trail improvements, Land conservation and Invasive plant removal.
Kentucky Resources Council	KRC seeks continued support for our shared mission of restoring and protecting our natural environment and conserving our natural resources to assure a healthy society and environment. Among the ways in which the Council advances our shared mission are: Community and environmental defense, Programmatic advocacy, Education and outreach, as well as our Environmental Leadership program.
Office of KY Nature Preserves	The goal of our management work is to protect and expand glades and grasslands on the Crooked Creek State Nature Preserve and to improve the quality and diversity of the ecological communities found there.
Bernheim Forest	Bernheim is proud to be the first organization in Kentucky to install MOTUS and link Kentucky to the global bird research community. MOTUS is a data driven bird tracking system. Data collection on bird migration, life cycles, habitat requirements, etc. will help scientists better understand birds and how to help the declining bird populations

PAST FIELD TRIPS

February 18 – Bernheim Forest - Eighteen Beckham Bird Club members and guest set out to travel to the hill where Golden Eagles are most often seen in Bernheim Forest. Gravel roads had to be navigated and rushing streams had to be forded. Hiking up the muddy hill the intrepid birders scanned the skies for long minutes, but no eagles appeared. However, we were not discouraged as it was fun to share a meal before setting out and it was great to be in the company of birding friends. Notable birds of the day included a Northern Harrier, Kestrels and several Red-tailed Hawks. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S64780832>

February 23 – Long Run Park - Ten birders gathered on a cool late winter morning at Long Run Park. A few highlights included a female Ruddy Duck and a good number of Field and Swamp Sparrows. Total of 37 species on the day made for a nice morning of birding. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S64906749>

March 1 – Bernheim Forest – Eagle Hill - Eleven observers saw a nice variety of birds, including raptors, but – alas! – no eagles. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S65328209>

March 8 – Muscatatuck NWR, Hardy Lake - Gathering at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, seventeen observers set out to explore the trails, roads and feeders on a bright sunny morning. Sandhill Cranes flew overhead during the morning; ducks and geese swam on the lakes; sparrows searched for food in the grasslands. Phoebes were calling and Brown Thrashers and Tree Swallows were making their first spring appearances. Four Bald Eagles lit up the sky as the group looked on in awe. Many birds were coming to the feeders at the visitor center including a Fox Sparrow and White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows. As we left the refuge to proceed to Hardy Lake, we had tallied 52 species. Four Common Loons were swimming on the lake. What a great find! A short walk through the woods produced two Pine Warblers another highlight of the trip. Come join us on our next outing. You won't be disappointed! <https://ebird.org/checklist/S65624110>
<https://ebird.org/checklist/S65607033>

MARCH DINNER MEETING AND FIELD TRIP

The BBC dinner meeting was a fun event with over one hundred members and guests in attendance. Coming together at Big Springs Country Club the group was treated to a delicious meal and a program presented by Scott Whittle. Scott talked about one of the most beautiful group of birds in the world. Warblers are special to Scott and he is one of the co-authors of *THE WARBLER GUIDE*. Early the next morning 15 members came together to walk the Anchorage Trail with Scott and to find as many birds as possible. Several species of ducks were swimming on the lake including Shovelers, Green-winged Teal and Gadwalls. Wood Ducks were high in

the sycamore trees. Phoebes, Bluebirds, and Red-winged Blackbirds were signs that spring would soon be here. The participants were amazed at how knowledgeable Scott was and how he could imitate almost every bird song. All who attended the dinner and the field trip are looking forward to next year. Special thanks to all those who worked hard planning this event: Pat and Jane Bell who were contact persons with Big Springs, took reservations, and set up the seating arrangements; Carol Besse, who procured our speaker; Pam Spaulding and the telephone committee members who called to remind members about the dinner; and Mary Yandell for preparing the BBC Directory.

UNUSUAL BIRDS OF THE WINTER

An abundant food supply and mild temperatures in the northern part of our country and Canada kept the ducks, finches and other species from migrating into Kentucky. Thus, birding was a little dull at times, but we did experience visits from some unusual species. First to appear was a Rufous Hummingbird that spent the winter in LaGrange. Willa couldn't have found a better home. She has been well taken care of. Then on December 12 BBC received word of a Western Tanager coming to a feeder in St. Matthews. The proud owner of the feeder to which this beautiful bird is coming fills it with seeds, fruits and meal worms. The bird may put on weight this winter. Then on February 10 a Varied Thrush turned up for about a 40-minute visit at a home off Westport Road. Pictures were taken of this beautiful bird so it was confirmed, but sad to report that only 3 birders were able to see it. A truly remarkable sighting for Kentucky was made on Sunday February 23. A Burrowing Owl was discovered on a farm in rural Todd County. Many birders dropped everything they were doing to go and see this bird as it is the first time it is ever been seen in our state. Birding is just so much fun and you never know what species you will see next.

