



# THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

APRIL 2022

## APRIL PROGRAM "LET THE EARTH BREATHE"



Anne Milligan and Stephen Brown are the recipients of the 2021 Native Plant Biodiversity Award. They converted their backyard into a native plant oasis, started a seed swap movement and chronicled their work in a book, *Let the Earth Breathe*.

They will be talking about the joy and inspiration of their project. What they know, they learned along the way. They firmly believe that anyone can replicate their results and *Let the Earth Breathe* shows how. Their journey began with the gravel and koi ponds that came with the house, and has led to a suburban botanical park-like native plant sanctuary that has every window tuned to the nature channel.

Anne and Stephan will also lead a tour of their garden on August 7th from 2 to 3. This talk is an introduction to their garden that you will get to see in person.

Their book, *Let the Earth Breathe*, will be for sale at our meeting if anyone is interested.

**Our meeting is on Tuesday, April 12 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 2822 Frankfort Ave, Louisville, KY 40206, 38.254256, -85.689458. St. Mark's is at the corner of Frankfort Avenue and Kennedy Ave. Please enter by way of the back door near the parking lot. Just as a reminder Frankfort Avenue near the Louisville Water Company is under construction so you may need to find an alternate route.**

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

The field trip schedule for April, May and June is included at the end of this newsletter. It is also available on the BBC web site.



## PAST FIELD TRIPS

**Harrods Creek - February 13** It was 27° and sunny, wind W at 5 mph. Five intrepid souls braved cold sunny weather and tallied 26 species. Highlights included 2 Hooded Mergansers on the creek, a cooperative Hermit Thrush and an ending of 2 soaring Bald Eagles, an adult and a

juvenile. Ground was frozen and a chilly west wind greeted our return on the Orange Trail. A perched Red-shouldered Hawk did a pirouette giving us a good show and a pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers were carving out a new nest hole.

**Beckley Creek Grand Allee – February 26** A dozen members turned out on a sunny but chilly morning, with temperatures around freezing all morning. Breeding season is nigh, as evidenced by many singing Song Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Towhees and others. Although many birds were seen, the number of species was fairly low. Winter visitors seem to be declining, and a number of expected species were nowhere to be found. Highlights were a flyover Ring-billed Gull (only the third sighting at this location and, oddly, exactly a year after the second sighting) and a nice flock of American Tree Sparrows.

**Muscatatuck NWR/Hardy Lake – March 5** On a perfect day weather-wise to be birding EIGHTEEN BIRDERS arrived at Muscatatuck. Thanks so much for joining us. Although we traveled every road and lane birding was very slow. Only 5 species of ducks were found and not in good numbers. Sparrows were also extremely hard to find. Highlights at the refuge included small groups of Cranes flying overhead, six species of woodpeckers including one gorgeous Red-headed, two Phoebes, two Winter Wrens, and one Rusty Blackbird. A sure sign of spring was the sighting of three Tree Swallows. When we left the refuge, we had tallied 44 species.

After lunch we headed for Hardy Lake. One of the first birds to be found out in the water was an oh so handsome Common Loon. Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, a Horned Grebe and two species of gulls were also seen. A Bald Eagle flew over the lake. One of the last birds to be seen was a Pine Warbler in beautiful spring plumage. Nineteen different species were seen at the lake. Come join us on future field trips.

**Anchorage Trail – March 9** The trip started with cloudy skies, temperature 38F, and a few drops of precipitation. Skies started to clear and temperature 47F by the end of the walk. Thirteen birders gathered the day after the annual dinner meeting for a morning of birding. Our speaker from last night, Denver Holt, also joined us. Spring is in the air--especially for the titmice, cardinals, and song sparrows! They were active, vocal and numerous. We tallied 38 species - pretty good day for early March. Thanks to Pam Spaulding for the pictures of the field trip.

**Turkey Run Park – March 26** Ten birders met at Turkey Run Park on a cold, blustery March morning. We walked the Seaton Valley Trail and tallied 40 species. Highlights included a pair of bald eagles soaring over the valley (harassed by a Red Tail for a short time) and FOS Blue-grey Gnatcatchers! The Field and Song Sparrows were also out in large numbers. A fun time was had by all. After completing the walk around Seaton Valley Trail, five birders went to Squire Boone Bottoms trail looking for possible early migrants. We didn't find any early arrivals, but we did see our fourth bald eagle for the day. Saw a nice group of Golden-crowned Kinglets and the Carolina Wrens were vocal and active. Spring is in the air!



## **2022 Birdathon**

Each year Beckham Bird Club supports different organizations that in turn support birds through different means. This year the BBC board has selected the following organizations to receive grants through our annual Birdathon. To see a complete description of these projects, go to [beckhambirdclub.org](http://beckhambirdclub.org) and click on activities. Several members of BBC will be emailing or calling you to ask that you support this effort to raise money. Last year we raised \$24,000. We hope to meet or exceed that amount. How does the Birdathon work? You will be asked to pledge a set amount or an amount for each bird that is seen by the person you sponsor. After the Birdathon usually done on one day during the first week of May the person who you pledged to will contact you. The person will send you a description of their day and tell you how to complete your pledge. Only after the Birdathon do you send money to cover your pledge.

Organization	Plan for Grant
<b>KY Natural Lands Trust, Inc.</b>	Funds will be used to advance KNLT's efforts to protect, connect and restore the Pine Mountain Wildlands Corridor.
<b>Jefferson Memorial Forest</b>	Our project involves promoting bird education in our ECHO (Engaging Children Outdoors) programs at our partner, Portland

	Community Center.
<b>Josephine Sculpture Park</b>	We request funds to support our following ongoing initiatives to benefit birds. We categorize these initiatives as Habitat Restoration and Bird education.
<b>Surrey Hills Nature Preserve, Inc.</b>	The overall plan is to preserve a majority of Surrey Hills Farm as green space. This year's grant will assist in invasive species removal.
<b>Sunnyside Master Gardeners Bluebird Team</b>	Funds will be used to construct boxes and install trails for Eastern Bluebirds, Carolina Chickadees, Tree Swallows, Carolina Wrens, House Wrens, Tufted Titmouse, and others. We will also gift boxes to youth master gardeners, new interns for master gardeners and others.
<b>KY Resources Council</b>	In the coming fiscal year, we will work on several cases in this program that support bird conservation. The funds will be used to employ the attorneys providing the expert environmental, pro-bono legal services under the Environmental and Community Defense program.
<b>Kentucky Conservation Committee</b>	This year we are continuing to work on public education and policies relating to species and habitat protection in three primary areas: Impacts of birds and wildlife with relation to clean energy development; continuing work on wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity; sustainable funding for land conservation.
<b>Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest</b>	We plan to build on the success of Bernheim's Golden Eagle Tracking project by expanding the tracking project with a third Golden Eagle. Funds would go towards the purchase of a third transmitter for a Golden Eagle.
<b>Creasey Mahan Nature Preserve</b>	We plan to have live streaming cameras in various locations. Two will be in bluebird houses, one kestrel house, and one at a bird feeder outside of the Nature Center. The videos will stream directly into our web site and will be available 24/7. We also plan to replace the microphone in the Wildlife Habitat Garden at the Nature Center.
<b>Raptor Rehab</b>	Due to the increasing Bald Eagle population in Kentucky, we will need to construct an entire new flight enclosure for rehabilitation of injured eagles.

**City Nature Challenge 2022**  
 A GLOBAL BIOBLITZ!  
 350+ Cities • 40+ Countries

**April 29 - May 2 • Louisville Metro**

**How to Participate:**  
 Download iNaturalist  
 Discover wild plants, animals, & fungi  
 Document your findings with a photo  
 Share your observations on iNaturalist

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE IS ORGANIZED BY

## Nature Challenge 2022 Louisville Metro

From April 29 - May 2, 2022, let's take a break from Derby happenings and take photos of plants, animals, fungi and other organisms in Louisville Metro (Jefferson County) so we can document and share the remarkable biodiversity our city and county sustains. Who knows? Maybe we'll document more species than Lexington in this City Nature Challenge taking place in about 400 cities around the world during the same four-day period! It's a Bioblitz, so let's have fun!

Louisville will be participating with two other locations in Kentucky, Lexington-Fayette County and Madison County. If you want to see how Louisville compares with folks there, go to this

website: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/kentucky-city-nature-challenge-2022-cities>

Beckham Bird Club members may use eBird for the Louisville City Nature Challenge Bioblitz. Any bird photos taken between April 29 and May 2 within the boundaries of

Jefferson County, and any observation made using ebird will automatically count!

Here is how to take part in the Bioblitz –

1) download the iNaturalist app to your smartphone, or go to the online website at [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org) and register as a user.

2) add City Nature Challenge Project to your personal Projects list by going here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2022-louisville-metro>

Margaret Carreiro will then know you are a project member and can communicate with you.

3) You can then upload photos from your phone or cameras to the website version of iNaturalist.

If you want to know more about iNaturalist, go here for details:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/about>

## MARCH DINNER MEETING

Over ninety members and guests were present on March 8 at Big Spring Country Club for the Beckham Bird Club annual dinner meeting. Our speaker, Denver Holt, gave a very interesting and informative talk about owls. His owl calls were described as awesome. Everyone was treated with a fun evening of fellowship and food. It was great to return to our dinner meeting after two years. If you missed out this year join in 2023 on March 14. Save the date.

Special thanks go to our members who worked hard to make this evening a special night. Carol Besse arranged the speaker. Steve and Meg Brown worked on the membership directory. The directory will be available at the next BBC meeting if you didn't get one. Thanks also go to Meg for leading the field trip on Wednesday morning to the Anchorage Trail. Pam Spaulding added her pictures of the two outstanding birds seen in Jefferson County this past year – Anna's Hummingbird (first record for Kentucky) and the Fulvous Whistling Duck (first record for Jefferson County). Jane Bell arranged the meeting at Big Spring CC and took reservations for the dinner. Again, a big thank you to all the people who worked on the dinner meeting.

## **MARCH BIRDING**

As March ebbs away we say good-bye to waterfowl and sandhill cranes and begin to welcome returning birds to our area. Many members have gone to Tom Sawyer Park and Beckley Creek to listen and watch as Woodcocks perform their aerial mating displays. Snipe have returned to their marsh areas. Again, look for them at Beckley Creek. Black-crowned Night Herons were present at Draut Park. Tree Swallows are being reported at several locations. A few Purple Martins have returned and will keep increasing as the month progresses. Be sure and get out to see new arrivals as migration picks up in the next couple of months. Use [birdcast.info](http://birdcast.info) to see the progress of migration. The next two months are an exciting time to go birding either on a field trip or on your own. Better yet grab a friend and head out to discover the birds that are around you. Also, take a moment to look down to see the spring wildflowers and other critters that are emerging from their winter sleep. Most important have a GREAT TIME!



## **A BIRDABILITY PROJECT**

One way we can all help more people to enjoy birding in Kentucky is to help identify accessible birding locations for those who may have certain requirements to be able to enjoy these places. The Birdability organization is collecting detailed site information toward this purpose. But there is a simple first step, and James Wheat hopes some BBC members might have time to take on this project. There are six basic questions for a site, and the answers to these questions will identify quickly which locations lend themselves to a further, detailed site assessment. Presently, there are 107 eBird hotspots in Jefferson County (though this project doesn't have to be limited to Jefferson).

If anyone is interested in this project, please contact James Wheat so we can meet to discuss the details. Bottom line is answering six questions about 107 eBird hotspots in Jefferson County, then completing a site assessment for those hotspots identified by the rough-sort process. Site assessments take less than 30 minutes, but may require a site visit.

Thank you for your consideration. Contact James at [James.a.wheat@gmail.com](mailto:James.a.wheat@gmail.com)

## ETHICAL BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

If we haven't experienced them ourselves, we have heard the stories: the overzealous photographers who go charging off across a meadow or a field or a marsh to get a better shot at their target. If the critter is a bear or a bison or a bull moose, the reward for their unethical behavior may be a trip to the emergency room or a citation and fine from the local park rangers.

If they were chasing a bird, the photographer likely escaped unscathed, but the bird was stressed and probably fled, perhaps leaving behind a nest or some vulnerable young. Not to mention other birders or photographers who maintained a respectful distance, only to have their day ruined by the inconsiderate behavior of others.

The advent of affordable and excellent digital cameras has led to a growing interest in nature photography. As more people congregate where photogenic or rare creatures are found, increasing numbers of them will either not be aware of or not care about ethical photography practices.

That can lead to several negative outcomes:

- More stress on bird populations that already face too many challenges.
- Conflict with property owners who may decide they don't want any nature lovers around.
- Closures of public lands in order to protect wildlife from the heedless minority.
- Fewer opportunities for ethical birders to observe and photograph birds the right way.

That is why all birders and bird photographers – from beginners to experts – should know and adhere to ethical practices.

An excellent resource for either learning or reviewing best practices is *The National Audubon Society's Guide to Ethical Bird Photography and Videography* (<https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography>). It is a comprehensive guide to best practices in bird photography, compiled by a team of experts that includes renowned bird photographer Melissa Groo, who spoke several years ago at our annual dinner.

The Guide covers a wealth of topics, including:

- How to tell you're too close
- The use of artificial light
- Photography at nests
- Shorebird photography
- The right way to get close to birds to get better photos
- Photography in a crowd (of people, not birds)
- Photography of captive birds
- Use of geographic information, including GPS embedded in digital photos, in captioning photos
- Sharing photos and full disclosure in captions

If you know and follow the best practices set forth in the guide, you, your fellow birders and photographers and – most importantly – the birds themselves, will all have a better experience.

## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR: FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS APRIL THROUGH JUNE 2022

DATE, TIME, RATING	ACTIVITY	LEADER
Saturday, April 2 9 a.m. – noon easy	<b>HARRODS CREEK PARK</b> – For early migrants, residents. 6530 Montero Dr., Prospect. Meet at the parking lot at the bottom of the hill. <b>GPS: 38.340941, -85.600052</b>	Win Ahrens 502-500-1175
Saturday, April 9 8:30 a.m. – noon easy	<b>BERNHEIM FOREST</b> – For migrants and residents. Meet at the Bernheim Forest Arboretum Way parking lot, next to Lake Nevin and the old education center rotunda. Directions: I-65 south from Louisville to exit 112. Bernheim entrance is about one mile east on KY 245. About 30 minutes from Louisville. <b>GPS: 37.918889, -85.669087</b>	Meg and Steve Brown 502-435-3967
Tuesday, April 12	<b>MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING</b> - 7:00 p.m. – St. Mark's Episcopal Church - 2822 Frankfort Ave – corner of Frankfort and Kennedy	
Saturday, April 16 8 a.m. CDT - ?? Moderate/Strenuous	<b>SLOUGHS WMA, HENDERSON CO. KY</b> — Meet at the observation platform on Highway 268. For directions check DeLorme Atlas page 44 quadrant A 2&3. Bring lunch, shoes for wading, & extra clothes. <b>GPS: 37.850231, -87.742674</b>	Brainard Palmer-Ball 502-330-3998
Saturday, April 23 8 a.m. – noon easy	<b>BECKLEY CREEK PARK – GRAND ALLEE SECTION</b> - For migrants, summer arrivals and residents. 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 Melnykovich 502-608-4655
April 22-24	<b>KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SPRING MEETING</b> <b>Barren River Lake State Resort Park</b> <b>See KOS website or Kentucky Warbler for details</b>	
Saturday, April 30 7:30 a.m. – noon easy	<b>E.P.TOM SAWYER PARK</b> – Migrants, residents, summer birds. Meet at the softball field parking lot. <b>GPS: 38.282818, -85.552016</b>	Mike Callan 502-592-7008
Sunday, May 1 8 a.m. CDT – ??? Easy	<b>MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK</b> – For spring migrants. Meet at Little Hope Cemetery inside the park. Bring lunch. <b>GPS: 37.154126, -86.053762</b>	Pat & Jane Bell 502-326-9610
Saturday, May 7 8:30 a.m. – noon Easy	<b>TURKEY RUN PARK</b> – Brown-Forman Silo area. Residents and migrants. Directions: From I-265 exit (19) Billtown Road, go south and turn left at the T; go 1.5 miles and turn right into Turkey Run Park entrance; continue through the park to the Brown-Forman Silo parking lot. <b>GPS: 38.115846, -85.533371</b>	Meg and Steve Brown 502-435-3967
Sunday, May 8 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Easy	<b>ANCHORAGE TRAIL</b> – Residents and migrants. Meet in the parking lot behind Anchorage Presbyterian Church. <b>GPS: 38.267802, -85.542014</b>	Pat & Jane Bell 502-326-9610
Tuesday, May 10	<b>MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING/OFFICER &amp; BOARD ELECTION</b> - 7:00 p.m. — St. Mark's Episcopal Church - 2822 Frankfort Ave – corner of Frankfort and Kennedy	
Saturday, May 14	<b>GLOBAL BIG DAY</b> - See April and May newsletters for all the details.	Andrew Melnykovich 502-608-4655
Saturday, May 21 7:30 a.m. – noon Easy	<b>CAPERTON SWAMP</b> – Late migrants, residents, summer birds. Meet at parking lot on River Road. <b>GPS: 38.290297, -85.681192</b>	Mike Callan 502-592-7008
Sunday, May 29 8 a.m. - noon Easy/moderate	<b>POPE LICK PARK</b> – 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) <b>GPS: 38.184655, -85.488095</b>	Andrew Melnykovich 502-608-4655
Sunday, June 5	<b>BECKHAM BIRD CLUB PICNIC</b> – Beckley Creek Park. Details in newsletter. <b>GPS: 38.216955, -85.477216</b>	
Saturday, June 11 6:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Easy	<b>FOR EARLY BIRDERS - BENNETT LANE FIELDS</b> - For summer breeders of the grasslands and mixed forest. Meet at the Intersection of Morgan Road and Bennett Lane. <b>GPS: 38.423240, -85.443033</b>	Mike Callan 502-592-7008
Saturday, June 11 8:30 a.m. – noon Moderate	<b>IF YOU WANT TO SLEEP LONGER - MORGAN CONSERVATION PARK</b> - For summer breeders of the grasslands and mixed forest. Meet at Morgan Conservation Park parking lot. <b>GPS: 38.500359, -85.380793</b>	Mike Callan 502-592-7008