

THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

DECEMBER 2020

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Beckham Bird Club members:

By now you should have received your membership renewal reminder and request for updated information.

I hope that all of you have both renewed your membership and verified your email and address.

It has been a challenging year, to say the least, and the board and I have been concerned that the inability to provide programming would discourage members from renewing. We hope that will not prove to be the case.

It appears that the next few months will be difficult. But with a COVID19 vaccine on the horizon, the board is increasingly optimistic that we will be able to resume field trips in the spring and meetings later next year.

We're hoping to see some new faces when we do.

COVID 19 has both kept many people at home and has also prompted them to get outdoors. As you may have read or heard, that has increased interest in birds and birding, both in backyards and out in the field. Membership and participation in eBird have increased. Sales of bird feeding supplies have risen.

If you are in a Facebook birding group or follow eBird reports closely, you probably have noticed that there are a lot of new and enthusiastic birders out there. Every one of them is a potential new member for their local bird club.

That is where you come in. You are the best recruiters for the Beckham Bird Club.

If you are out birding and encounter someone who expresses an interest in birding or asks for assistance in identifying a bird, please take the time to stop and answer their questions (in a safe, socially distanced way, of course!).

Help them with identification and (politely, of course) inform them about birding and birding ethics.

Ask them whether they are aware of the Beckham Bird Club.

Provide them with the club website address and tell them to contact BBC via email (beckhambirdclub@gmail.com) if they want additional information.

Let them know that BBC is planning to offer an introductory birding class to members as soon as it is safe to do so next year.

Encourage them to join the Beckham Bird Club.

I know that we tend to be very focused on what we are doing when we are out birding – especially if we are stalking a rarity or on a quest for that elusive perfect photo. We're not necessarily in a sociable frame of mind.

But this horrible pandemic has created an opportunity to significantly enlarge our birding community and thus not only strengthen our organization but also build support for bird conservation in our region. Let's make the most of it.

I look forward to welcoming you back to BBC events next year and I hope that you will bring new members with you.

Until then, stay safe and good birding!

Best,

Andrew Melnykovych

BBC President



Don't forget to renew your 2021 membership!

Please use the postcard you received in the mail or go to the Beckham Bird Club website <http://www.beckhambirdclub.org/> and click on the membership tab at the top of the homepage. For more information go to the November newsletter to get all the details for renewing your membership.

If you used Pay Pal don't forget to send your postcard or an email to the club with name, address, phone numbers and email so the club can update the membership list. All life members should do the same.

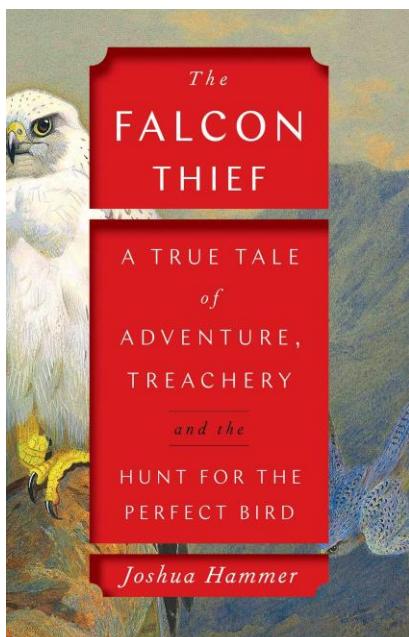


CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

This year marks the 121st Christmas Bird Count sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Your participation is needed in one or more of these counts this year. The date for Louisville is listed below. Please email the compiler for the dates of the other counts. The CBCs could change due to Covid-19 or weather conditions so you should sign up to participate in case the compiler needs to contact you in the event there is a change. New participants should contact the compiler. See birdky.org for other CBC in the state.

If you can't participate in the Louisville CBC consider being a feeder watch counter. If you live in the count area all you need to do is count the birds that come to your feeder but there are protocols for counting the birds. Please let James Wheat know you will count the birds at your feeder and get the detail of how to participate.

LOUISVILLE Sunday, December 20	All new participants contact compiler by email or phone. Compiler: James Wheat (CP)904-608-3406 or james.a.wheat@gmail.com
BERNHEIM FOREST, TBA	All participants call or email compiler Michael Callan 502-592 -7008 or mikesindahouse@gmail.com
OTTER CREEK TBA	All participants email or call compiler Brainard Palmer-Ball. (CP) 502-330-3998 or brainard@mindspring.com
PARADISE TBA	All participants email or call compiler Brainard Palmer-Ball. (CP) 502-330-3998 or brainard@mindspring.com



**The Falcon Thief:
A True Tale of Adventure, Treachery, and the
Hunt for the Perfect Bird**
By Joshua Hammer
Review by Abigail Blair

It is not often that my two niche interests of birds and true crime intersect, but they just so happened to in *The Falcon Thief: A True Tale of Adventure, Treachery, and the Hunt for the Perfect Bird*.

This book by Joshua Hammer is a true account of the many crimes of Jeffrey Lendrum, an Irish national with dual citizenship in Zimbabwe, who, since the 1980s, had been stealing eggs from the most coveted species of raptors worldwide. After securing the eggs, he would then

smuggle them across several borders, and eventually sell them to wealthy clients in the Middle East, where falcon racing is a lucrative sport. His crimes spanned across countless countries, and nearly all continents, until he was caught in an airport in the United Kingdom with 14 peregrine falcon eggs strapped to his chest. It is this particular moment where the story begins. It is also where we meet our hero Detective Andy McWilliam, of the National Wildlife Crime Unit in the United Kingdom. Many of our volunteers and supporters will find a kindred spirit in McWilliam- he is driven by his passion for wildlife to capture Lendrum and bring him to justice.

Throughout the book, we also follow Lendrum on his perilous escapades across the globe, from scouring the most remote corners of Russia, to dangling from a helicopter in Quebec. He often risks more than just injury to steal eggs from some of the world's most endangered species. While reading, I could not help but reflect on my time spent at RROKI. Oftentimes, the birds we receive are due to conflict with humans in some way: injury due to a vehicle, lead poisoning, or being shot. I never stopped to consider that there are dangers wild raptors face that defy even our wildest imaginations. A man who steals eggs for the black market almost seems like the work of pure fiction. *The Falcon Thief* is not only a gripping story, but it also calls attention to the heinous illegal animal trade, which affects far more species than just raptors. By the end of the book, it is hard to determine whether Lendrum did what he did for money, notoriety, or just a toxic fascination for beautiful birds. Either way, it is a good lesson in loving an animal does not mean we must possess it. To keep from spoiling any more details, I urge anyone who is interested in raptors, conservation, or just the thrilling true story of Lendrum and McWilliam to find a copy of *The Falcon Thief* today.

Thanks to Abby Blair for sharing her review of this book with BBC. It is available at the Louisville Free Public Library or at Carmichael's Book Store.

BBC Conservation Report December 2020

The 3,000-mile-long migration of the critically endangered Siberian Crane poses serious difficulties from poisoning, food shortages, habitat loss, and disturbance. The website below features the rescue of three Siberian Cranes, including the remarkable journey of **Siberian Crane 419**, who survived tragedy to become a symbol for his species' survival.

https://www.savingcranes.org/safe-passage-for-siberian-crane-419/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=october_2020_contact_call

American Bird Conservancy and partners are using advances in the developing field of bioacoustics to help monitor and protect rare birds. Read how they are **using sound to save birds**.

<https://abcbirds.org/blog20/saving-birds-sound/?omhide=true&eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=6e9502fc-58da-4ea8-a84b-ce65ee4a6ce9>

A deeper dive into the cause of the **thousands of birds that died in New Mexico** and its implications for conservation.

<https://abcbirds.org/blog20/thousands-of-migratory-birds-suddenly-died-in-new-mexico-what-does-this-mean-for-conservation/?omhide=true&eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=6e9502fc-58da-4ea8-a84b-ce65ee4a6ce9>

46 **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were translocated from Arkansas to restored pine woodlands in Missouri's Mark Twain National Forest after a nearly 100-year absence.

<https://abcbirds.org/article/milestone-brown-headed-nuthatches-return-to-missouri/?omhide=true&eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=6e9502fc-58da-4ea8-a84b-ce65ee4a6ce9>

For a nice respite from everyday life, check out the Cornell's live Ontario FeederWatch.

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/ontario-feederwatch/?utm_source=Cornell%20Lab%20eNews&utm_campaign=07bb_b58a62-Cornell-Lab-eNews-November-2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-07bbb58a62-316437313



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!!