

THE BECKHAM



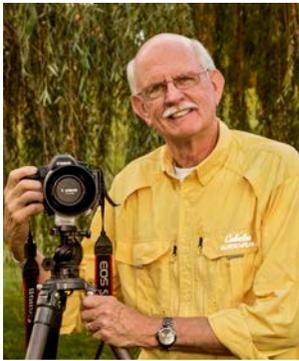
OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

JANUARY 2016

A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY OF RED RIVER GORGE

Photographer John Snell will talk about landscape photography, with emphasis on Kentucky's Red River Gorge. He'll show some images from his latest book, *Red River Gorge, My Second Home*, and offer some insights about how those photographs were taken. Although primarily a landscape photographer, he will present a few bird photos, as well. Join us as we celebrate our 81st anniversary on Tuesday, January 12 at 7 p.m. at the Clifton Center on Payne Street.



After a career working with computers spanning nearly 30 years, John W. Snell shifted his focus to photography. He is very much in his element while toting 30 pounds of camera gear and trekking around Kentucky's Red River Gorge or other equally photogenic venues. His work is characterized by saturated colors and he attempts to represent his subjects in ways that evoke smiles of wonder from those viewing his work. His *Red River Gorge, The Eloquent Landscape*, a 168-page coffee table book of photographs, was released in 2006 and quickly went through two printings. His latest book, *Red River Gorge, My Second Home*, a 224-page coffee table book, was released in late 2015 and is experiencing a very positive response from the newspaper and magazine book reviewers, as well as the buying public. Snell is a juried member of The Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen and of the Kentucky Arts Council's "Kentucky Crafted: The Market." His work has won numerous awards, including "Best of Show" at Lexington Art League and Creative Camera Club (Lexington, KY) competitions. His photographs have appeared in *Outdoor Photographer*, *Southern Living*, *Keeneland*, *Popular Photography*, *The Lexington Herald-Leader* and numerous other regional publications.

IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR 2016 MEMBERSHIP.

If you have not sent in your 2016 BBC membership you are past due. **PLEASE SEND IT IN ASAP.** **Be sure to send your check with a [membership form](#).** We need both. Make your check out to Beckham Bird Club and mail to Beckham Bird Club, PO Box 5301, Louisville, KY 40255-0301. Think about joining the state birding organization, the [Kentucky Ornithological Society](#). Details are on their web site at [birdky.org](#).

<u>FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE</u>	<u>GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIPS</u>
<p>The field trip schedule for January, February and March 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 also thanks to the leaders.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Please arrive a few minutes before the field trip begins to sign in and be ready to go.</p>

PAST FIELD TRIPS

Bernheim Forest, November 15 - Clear blue skies and red and gold autumn foliage made for a striking background when viewing Mockingbirds and Bluebirds basking in the sun at the top of pine trees. Scattered flocks of Cedar Waxwings were observed quietly snacking on berries. Eight observers found a total of 37 species while enjoying a beautiful fall day at Bernheim.

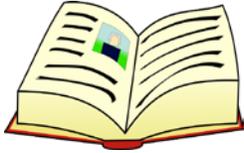
Turkey Run Park, November 21 - This was the first Beckham Club field trip to Turkey Run Park which opened in October. The best birds seen by the 9 observers were a male Northern Harrier which came in low over the ridge top, giving good looks and a male Purple Finch. Thirty-five species were seen which seemed pretty good for this time of the year.

Cave Hill Cemetery, November 29 - But for large flocks of European Starlings and American Robins, gorging themselves on holly berries, birds were scarce and interesting birds generally solo performers: a single Yellow-rumped Warbler, a lone Eastern Towhee, one Brown Creeper and one Song Sparrow. There were small numbers of Cardinals, White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and Chickadees, and the call of a Red-shouldered Hawk was heard as the trip came to a close. Five Beckham members spent three hours and found just 19 species.

Jefferson Memorial, Forest, December 5 - Seven BBC members met with a couple hundred trail runners at Jefferson Memorial Forest. Unfazed we birded the area near the nature center and then moved down to the Tom Wallace area. Not a lot of birds, but we did have really excellent

views of Pileated Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, and several Golden-crowned Kinglets. Best bird was probably the Pine Warbler near the nature center.

Freeman Lake, December 10 - What started as a poor birding day didn't get any better as the morning progressed. Two members and guest were fortunate to find 25 species on a densely foggy day. There was never more than seventy yards of visibility and the group gave up at 11:20. No highlights to speak of but they did have 5 species of sparrows, a Kingfisher and several woodpeckers.



Cuckoo: Cheating by Nature

by Nick Davies

This is an excellent book that goes into the history of parasitism among birds, focusing on the common cuckoo of Europe and Asia. Since cuckoos are not parasitic birds in the U. S. there is not much about our native birds. Nick Davies is a professor of behavioral ecology at the University of Cambridge. He has spent the last 30 years studying cuckoos and their habits at Wicken Fen near Cambridge where cuckoos have been studied for over a century. Not only are his insights thoughtful and well explained but he brings in an amazing range of others' studies from Australia, Africa and India and his knowledge of old documentation going back to the Greeks is very helpful also. He details many of the defenses that the host birds attempt in order to stay a step ahead. Over the years it is clear that defenses have evolved just as the cuckoo's techniques have changed. Different races of cuckoos evolved to parasitize different species as bird egg patterns evolved for instance. It is clearly an evolutionary arms race. I highly recommend it.



Judith McCandless

2016 EMAIL BIRD ALERT



This past year during the Jefferson County Big Year the participants used emails to alert each other about a new or rare bird in the county. The BBC board decided to continue this email alert for next year for everyone in the club who is interested in finding out about first of season birds or rare birds in Jefferson County. We would like this email alert to be for people who are really interested in going to see the bird or birds. If you only want to know what is being seen you can check out birdKY or ebird. Beginning on January 1 to the 10th if you are interested in receiving bird alert emails, email Carol Besse at csbesse@bellsouth.net to add your name to the list. After January 10 you will receive an email that will include the emails of the group. You will use that email to send out your sightings as you should be an active participant by sending your findings to the group. Statewide alerts can still be found on birdKY.



***HAPPY 81ST ANNIVERSARY
BECKHAM BIRD CLUB
JANUARY 11, 1935***

LOUISVILLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – DECEMBER 20, 2015

The Louisville Christmas Bird Count took place on Sunday, December 20 with 42 participants. We had 87 species which was down from last year's 92 but it was still a good count considering the warm weather the area has had. The count tallied 16,331 birds which was way down compared to last year but we did not have the 50 thousand plus Starlings that we had last year. With the warm weather we tallied some lingering warblers – Orange-crowned, Palm, and Pine. Another highlight was 2 Cackling Geese feeding with Canada Geese. Black-crowned Night-herons were still present. Northern Harriers and Sandhill Cranes were other good finds. Thank you to all the participants who counted birds for the 116th Christmas Bird Count.

JCBY – COMING TO A CLOSE

Our Jefferson County Big Year is coming to a close with only a few days left in 2015 to try to find a new bird. The warm weather hampered us in finding new birds as the northern species are not coming south. Our collective total still stands at 250 species which is remarkable. Last January when we started our quest we thought if we got 230 we would be doing great. It has been a fun year for the participants as we traveled from one end of the county to the other trying to add to our list. We have had some experiences that we will share with BBC when we give a program on the JCBY in February. Thanks to everyone who participated and shared your findings and pictures with the group. We will still continue to look hoping between now and December 31 a new bird will show up to be counted.

***HAPPY NEW YEAR AND GOOD BIRDING IN
2016!!***