



THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG

SEPTEMBER 2022

P.O. BOX 5301 LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40255-0301

HAWKS! AND OWLS! AND FALCONS!

Live and in person!

Join the Beckham Bird Club on Tuesday, September 13 at 7 pm for a presentation by Raptor Rehabilitation of Kentucky (RROKY), which is our area's leading caretaker of injured and ill birds. Most of the birds that RROKY nurses back to health are released back into the wild, but those that are too injured to survive on their own are cared for at their facility in Louisville and serve as avian educators, teaching the public about the need to protect birds in general and raptors in particular.

RROKY will be bringing four birds with them, which makes this a particularly kid-friendly program. Please feel free to bring children, grandchildren and other young friends and Beckham Bird Club members-to-be. The meeting will be at our usual location – St. Mark's Episcopal Church at the corner of Frankfort Avenue and Kennedy Avenue.

Just as a reminder Frankfort Avenue near the Louisville Water Company is under construction so you may need to find an alternate route.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Please read the guidelines before going on a field trip. They are on the BBC website.

Saturday, September 3 8:00 a.m. – noon easy	MELCO FLOOD RETENTION BASIN - For migrant waterfowl, shorebirds and more. Meet inside the gate. GPS: 38.151966, -85.732617	Mike Callan 502-592-7008
Sunday, Sept. 4 8:30 a.m. – noon easy	TURKEY RUN PARK - <i>Stop And Go Field Trip</i> - We will be stopping at different areas in Turkey Run. <u>No long walks.</u> Meet at the Seaton Valley Paddling Access off Seatonville Road. 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; parking lot is on the right. <u>Park in the paddling access lot.</u> GPS: 38.13208, -85.51903	Pat & Jane Bell 502-326-9610
Sunday, Sept. 11 8 a.m. CDT - ???? easy	MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK – For fall migrants. Meet at Little Hope Cemetery inside the park. Bring lunch. GPS: 37.154126, -86.053762	Pat & Jane Bell 502-326-9610

Friday - Sunday Sept. 16-18	KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING – Pine Mountain State Resort Park	Details at birdky.org
Saturday, Sept. 17 8:00 a.m.-noon easy	ANCHORAGE TRAIL – For residents and early migrants. Meet in the parking lot behind Anchorage Presbyterian Church. GPS: 38.267802, -85.542014	Michael Autin 502-298-2456
Saturday, Sept. 24 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	MCNEELEY LAKE PARK – Meet at the horse trail parking lot. Directions: Enter at south entrance off Mt. Washington Road (about 1.8 miles east from Preston Highway) and drive approximately 0.4 miles; turn left at the first entrance to the gravel parking lot. No scopes needed. GPS: 38.089958, -85.634853	Mike Callan 502-592-7008
Sunday, Sept. 25 9:00 am – noon easy	HARRODS CREEK PARK – Residents, migrants. 6530 Montero Dr., Prospect. Meet at the parking lot at the bottom of the hill. GPS: 38.340941, -85.600052	Win Ahrens 502-500-1175

PAST FIELD TRIPS

Beckley Creek Park – Grand Allee Section, Saturday, August 20 - Temp 69 at start rising to 78. Skies partly cloudy becoming mostly cloudy with a slight breeze. Thirteen birders participated in a Beckham Bird Club field trip with hopes of seeing some migrating birds, especially warblers. Not much luck with warbler species, but we had good looks at Red-headed Woodpeckers along the creek and a beautiful Blue Grosbeak. The group tallied over 40 species and we all enjoyed being out birding again after the summer heat.

Cherokee Park - Sunday, August 28 - Fourteen participants found 30 species on what started as a pleasant if quiet morning. The scenic loop was closed to cars so the park was quieter than usual, however there just weren't a lot of birds. Even residents were relatively few. Goldfinches were plentiful and Pewees were calling. We saw a thrush-like bird bathing in the creek however no one got a great look. Several photographers snapped photos so we'll see what ID that might provide. Possible Gray-cheeked Thrush. We had just six species of warblers but got pretty decent looks at most, especially the Black-and-Whites. Hummingbirds seemed to be everywhere.

CLEANING BLUEBIRD NESTBOXES



A BBC member asked when is the appropriate time to clean Bluebird nest boxes. Bob Peak and his wife, Judy, monitor over 232 nest boxes and he was kind enough to supply an answer.

"The nest cleaning question is one we get quite a bit. I clean out each bluebird nest after a brood has fledged. Bluebirds will not reuse a nest, so each successive nest puts the nestlings closer to the entrance hole of the nest box, where a predatory bird could reach in and pluck out the baby birds. (We have observed that

behavior on a shallow Peterson nest box we used to have in our front yard---a Downy Woodpecker had enlarged the entrance hole, and a Red-bellied Woodpecker landed on the front of the box, reached in and snatched a featherless baby bluebird and flew off with it. Needless to say, we were shocked, and I immediately replaced the nest box and transferred the bluebird nest (and nestlings) over to the safe box. When the Red-bellied Woodpecker returned for another meal, it could not gain access to the young nestlings. Eventually, the remaining nestlings fledged.)

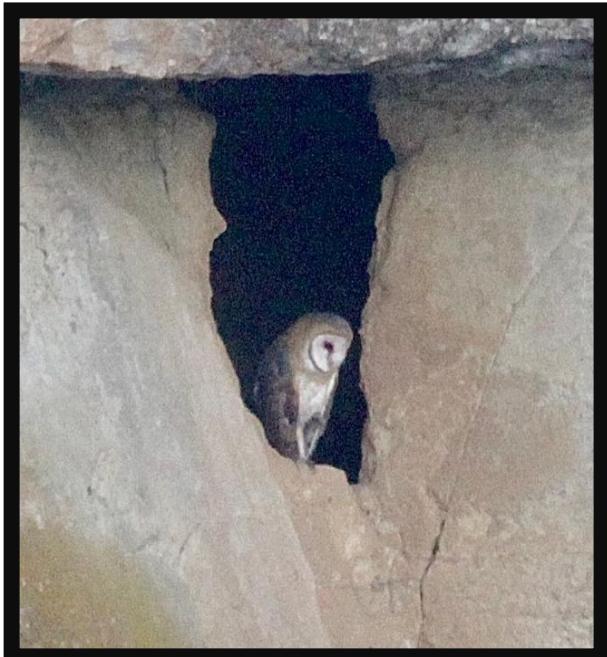
Of course, like most things, there is a caveat connected to the nest removal.

Due to the size of our bluebird trails and the number of boxes we monitor (232), we check the boxes monthly. So, if a female bluebird has completed a second nest on top of the first *before* I return to monitor the nest box, I will usually leave both nests in place until the second brood has fledged. Otherwise, if all nest material is suddenly removed and the female is ready to lay the eggs, she may be forced to lay the eggs on the bare nest box floor, thereby eliminating any chance of successful incubation.

There are other things I would recommend...wearing a mask when removing old, used nests (there can be dried fecal matter and pinfeather scales in the nest material that can become airborne and be inhaled), using a flat metal tool to remove the nests (I use a wide metal drywall spatula), and putting old nests in a bucket and carrying them some distance from the nest box before discarding them (so predators will not be attracted to the scent). Bet Zimmerman-Smith has an excellent webpage about cleaning out nest boxes, and I would refer bluebird "land lords" to it. Here is the URL: [Cleaning out nestboxes](#)"

Thanks to Pam Spaulding for her picture of the Eastern Bluebird.

AUGUST BIRDING



Weather in August on the whole was better than the last two months. Also, there was a big change in birding as migration has started. Lots of shorebirds were reported from the Falls of the Ohio and Hays Kennedy including Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plover, Avocets, Spotted Sandpipers and Solitary Sandpipers, Stilt Sandpipers and both Yellowlegs. Snowy Egret and Caspian Terns were good finds at the Falls of the Ohio. Warblers have returned with over twenty species having been seen this month including summer residents and migratory birds. Look to the night skies as Common Nighthawks wing their way south. Yellow-throated, Warbling, Willow, Bell's and

White-eyed Vireos have been seen along with Least, Yellow-bellied, Great Crested and Willow Flycatchers. A Veery was seen on a field trip.

Again, thanks to Linda Metro for finding the two birds of the months – Swallow-tailed Kite and Barn Owl in Jefferson County. Thanks to Rev. Lee Payne for his picture of the Barn Owl.

There is still time to see lots of migrating birds coming through Louisville. So, grab your binoculars and head outdoors.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE FIRST IN JEFFERSON COUNTY SINCE THE EARLY 1800S



On Monday evening of August 22, a report came in that a Swallow-tailed Kite was being seen in Shively. The next day the search was on to relocate the kite. The bird was eventually found circling the Crums Lane area. And of course, there was a scramble of birders heading to the area to see the first Swallow-tailed kite in Jefferson County in nearly 200 years.

According to Brainard Palmer-Ball, the author of the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Kentucky*, "The Shively Swallow-tailed Kite is a first for Jefferson County in the modern-day era. However, during the 19th Century the species was much more widespread across eastern North America including the western half of Kentucky. John James Audubon even reported Swallow-tailed Kite *nesting* in the county."

From Mengel's "Birds of Kentucky" (1965) . . . Audubon wrote "Near the Falls of the Ohio, a pair had a nest and reared four young ones, in 1820. In the lower parts of Kentucky it begins to be more numerous."

If you have Mengel's book, the S-t Kite entry (p. 204) is quite an interesting read."

Beckham Bird Club wants to thank Linda Metro for alerting the birding community about this great find and also thank her for sharing her picture of the kite.

BBC Conservation Report Websites August 2022

[Avian Flu Threatens Seabird Nesting Colonies on Both Sides of the Atlantic | Audubon](#)

[Bird Poop: The Next Frontier of Avian Conservation | Audubon](#)

[What's In a Bird Name? | Audubon](#)

[Rebuilding an Iconic California State Park With Birds and Wildfire In Mind | Audubon](#)

[SpaceX's Harm to Wildlife in Texas Set to Continue, Due to FAA Decision - American Bird Conservancy \(abcbirds.org\)](#)

[Fading Symbols: These Five State Birds Are In Trouble | ABC \(abcbirds.org\)](#)

[Neonic Nation: Is Widespread Pesticide Use Connected to Grassland Bird Declines? | All About Birds All About Birds](#)

[Everybody Likes Bobwhite. Is That Enough to Save Them? | All About Birds All About Birds](#)

[Sizing Up the World's Birds with AVONET | All About Birds All About Birds](#)

[Migration Dashboard - BirdCast](#)

https://www.audubon.org/magazine/summer-2022/the-2022-audubon-photography-awards-winners-and?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-newsletter-engagement_20220709_audubon-magazine_Summer-2022-issue&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20220709_audubon-magazine&utm_content=Summer-2022-issue



Mark your calendars for October Big Day—8 October 2022!

Big Days are a 24-hour opportunity to celebrate birds near and far. Last October, more than 32,000 people from 195 countries submitted 78,000 checklists with eBird, demonstrating the power of birds to bring people together.

Wherever you are on 8 October, take a few minutes to join the world of birding on October Big Day. Participate from anywhere—even home! By taking part in October Big Day, you're also celebrating [Global Bird Weekend](#) and [World Migratory Bird Day](#). Be a part of the global team and help set a new record for October birding.