



THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

March 2018



MARCH DINNER MEETING

BIRDING AND BIRDER BRAINS by Alvaro Jaramillo

How do expert birders identify birds so quickly? Ever seen the stick bird, a stick that you are sure looks like a bird. Sometimes, you even identify it to be a subspecies? Or the leaf bird? The birder brain does some weird stuff. In trying to understand how people learn birds, I have been led down all sorts of interesting paths, from psychology to neurobiology. What happens when we try to identify a bird is actually very complicated, and it differs if you are learning or new at birding, in contrast to someone who has been doing it for years. I will give you the background of how it appears that our brains identify a bird, and then what to do to make it come easier to you. Another facet that came through in my journey to understand birder brains, is that we are also getting a healthy dose of medicine when we are birding. It is healthy to be outside birding, and now science is starting to show that this is true and why. The end result of my foray into understanding birders is that I am convinced that everyone should become a birder, or at least a nature enthusiast. Come on out and learn a bit about why birding is the best, and how birders are actually mental athletes, doing some pretty amazing things.



Alvaro Jaramillo, owner of Alvaro's Adventures, was born in Chile but began birding in Toronto, where he lived as a youth. He was trained in ecology and evolution with a particular interest in bird behavior. Research forays and backpacking trips introduced Alvaro to the riches of the Neotropics, where he has traveled extensively. He is the author of *the Birds of Chile*, an authoritative yet portable field guide to Chile's birds. Alvaro writes the "Identify Yourself" column in *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Alvaro recently wrote part of the sparrow chapter for the *Handbook of Birds of the World*, and the new *ABA Field Guide Birds of California*. He was recently granted the Eisenmann Medal by the Linnaean Society of New York. It is awarded occasionally for excellence in ornithology and encouragement of the amateur. He organizes and leads international birding tours, as well as a full schedule of pelagic trips out of Monterey, Bodega Bay and Half Moon Bay. Alvaro lives with his family in Half Moon Bay, California.

The March Dinner Meeting is on Tuesday, March 13 at **Big Spring Country Club**, 5901 Dutchmans Lane. **The club wishes to recognize and thank the Louisville Audubon Society for its generous support of the dinner meeting.**

A **cash bar (no credit cards)** will be available from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. when dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m. A vegetarian entrée will be on the menu but for any other dietary needs please indicate them on the reservation form.

There is a **dress code** at Big Spring CC. Collared shirts for the gentlemen must be worn at all times. Casual dress is permitted as long as it is tasteful. **PARKING: Due to construction please park in the rear of the building in the guest parking lot. Enter by the rear door. People will be there to direct you to the meeting room.**

There will be a field trip on Wednesday morning, March 14 at 9:00 a.m. at the Anchorage Trail for BBC members. Reservations are required. See the reservation form.

PLEASE NOTE THE DEAD LINE FOR MAKING RESERVATIONS. ALL CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO BECKHAM BIRD CLUB. REFUNDS ARE NOT GUARANTEED AFTER THE DEADLINE.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS WITH THE DINNER RESERVATION. SEND IT TO THE BBC POST OFFICE BOX WITH THE RENEWAL FORM FOUND ON THE BBC WEBSITE.

DINNER MEETING

NAME(S) _____

PHONE NO. _____ Email _____

Dinner Meeting -\$35.00 ea. Make check payable to Beckham Bird Club.

Please list any special dietary needs. _____

Print names of people with whom you wish to be seated. (Table of 8)

Reservation for field trip. Name(s) _____

Mail to Jane Bell, 1876 Dove Creek Blvd, Louisville, KY 40242.

DEADLINE – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7



Beckham bird Club wishes to extend our sympathy to the family of Downey M. Gray III. Downey passed away on January 27.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, March 3 8:30 a.m. – ?? easy	MUSCATATUCK NWR/HARDY LAKE - Meet at the Muscatatuck visitor center at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Directions: I-65 north from Louisville to Exit 50 (Seymour). Take US Highway 50 east about 3 miles to refuge entrance. About 1 hour north of Louisville. GPS: 38.959304, -85.798258	Pat & Jane Bell 502-326-9610
Saturday, March 10 8:30a.m.-noon easy	GEORGE ROGERS CLARK PARK – For residents, winter visitors, early migrants. Park is on Poplar Level Road opposite Norton Audubon Hospital. Entrance off Thruston Avenue. Meet in main parking lot. GPS: 38.216020, -85.728548	Andrew Melnykovich 502-608-4655
Sunday, March 18 8:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. easy	CHEROKEE PARK / NETTELROTH – Residents, winter visitors, early migrants. Meet at the foot of Maple Road at the bridge. GPS: 38.239490, -85.694147	Jamie Baker 502-403-9845
Saturday, March 24 8:30 a.m. – noon easy	HAYS KENNEDY PARK/GARVIN BROWN PRESERVE – Residents, winter visitors, early migrants.. Meet in the parking lot of Hays Kennedy Park off Upper River Road. GPS: 38.352711, -85.630354	Karen Bonsell 502-794-3526

PAST FIELD TRIPS

Beckley Creek, January 28 - Four BBC members attended this field trip. Highlight was watching two feuding male Red-bellied Woodpeckers lock claws and spiral about 20 feet toward the ground before separating. The group also enjoyed good looks at a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers. Missing in Action were juncos, towhees and several of the expected sparrows. In all, the group tallied 34 species.

Mayfair Ave/Garvin Brown, February 3 - In 25-degree weather, the group of 7 birders started at Garvin Brown with a Northern Harrier cruising over the field at the entrance. Two Bald Eagles were swooping over the field on the way out and several flocks of Canada Geese flew north overhead. The group tallied 25 species there. The group continued on to the Mayfair Ponds and was treated to a fabulous aerial display by 5 Bald Eagles, 2 adults and 3 immatures, soaring over the ponds. The Northern Harrier seen previously at Garvin Brown also made an appearance. There were good flocks of Hooded Mergansers and Double-crested Cormorants. The group tallied 11 species

Long Run Park, February 4 - Three BBC members birded Long Run Park on a cloudy, overcast morning with a light dusting of snow and a few flurries. We were greeted with a large gathering of Mallards and Canada Geese on the lake, though some areas were frozen. Later in the morning 2 male Ring-necked Ducks flew in and gave us nice views. We were excited to see five woodpecker species: Downy, Red-bellied, Hairy, Flicker, and Pileated. There were large numbers of Eastern Bluebirds. We reported 24, but I believe there were more. Probably the greatest highlight was the presence of 6 species of sparrows. There was a huge flock of American Tree Sparrows that we observed in 2 different areas. We were lucky to also see Song, White-throated, Field, Swamp and 2 Fox Sparrows! It turned out to be a great morning for birding!

BBC CONSERVATION REPORTS – Information for further reading

Giant prehistoric penguin fossils found in New Zealand - www.sciencealert.com/giant-penguin-new-zealand

Tracking birds in the snow - www.audubon.org/news

Who wins the feeder war? - www.audubon.org/news

Whooping crane update - www.savingcranes.org/help-keep-endangered-whooping-cranes-safe-in-new-year

Year of the bird - www.birdyourworld.org.

Polar fleece and micro plastics - www.patagonia.com/blog/2017/02/an-update-on-microfiber-pollution/

Pine Creek Barrens rests on Pine Creek Trail Road approximately one mile from KY 480 near Cedar Grove. From Louisville: Take I-65 S for about 25 miles, turning off on exit 116. Turn left and go about 4.5 miles on KY 480 (Cedar Grove Rd) until you come to its intersection with Pine Creek Trail. Turn left on Pine Creek Trail and go .9mi. The entrance to Pine Creek Barrens Nature Preserve will be on the left. Note: Do not turn right on Pine Creek Road – stay on Pine Creek Trail for a total of .9 miles. GPS Coordinates: Latitude 37.9831/Longitude -85.6276 Trail map is available at: www.nature.org/PineCreekBarrens



BOOK REVIEW

Going Wild by Robert Winkler

Submitted by Leslie Moise

Published in 2003, this is one of my favorite books about birding, indeed one of my favorite books, and I read an average of one every day or two. Winkler lives in Connecticut, and his writing has appeared in publications as varied as the *New York Times* and *Reader's Digest*. He devotes the first couple of chapters to describing the places he has lived and birded throughout his life and the tools needed for birding. He includes a discussion of a number of different field guides.

With a mix of authoritative knowledge and personal narrative, Winkler blends descriptions of walking the trails at parks and rapidly decreasing farmlands close to his suburban home. Most of the chapters focus on one breed or type of bird and his interactions with them. His delight in glimpsing a Golden Crowned Kinglet finding shelter one bitter winter night, for example.

A later chapter details a number of dangerous encounters with Goshawks. He accidentally walked too close to their nesting site, and these avian aerial experts zoomed through the dense woods to clip his head with balled talons on one occasion. Winkler also shares some of his encounters with rarities. We share in his brother's delighted cry, "It's . . . it's . . . the California Condor!"

One of my favorite chapters, "Feeder Wars," describes the variety of birds that visit Winkler's feeders, plus his observations of their interactions. He also discusses the dangers of predation from house cats, as well as hawks using his feeders the way a lion does a watering hole. All in all, this is a delightful book.

KOS SPRING WEEKEND

Mark your calendars on April 27-29, 2018 for the upcoming Spring Weekend of the Kentucky Ornithological Society.

The agenda will include activities for beginning birders and avid birders alike. There will be guided birding hikes Friday afternoon and Saturday and Sunday mornings in the Barren River Lake area.

Speakers will include David Lang presenting a program on Birding in Brazil on Friday evening; Saturday evening we will have an entertaining featured presentation by Bill Thompson III of *Bird Watchers Digest* magazine; Saturday afternoon a series of concurrent workshops are being planned designed to help beginning and veteran birders alike improve birding skills. A full agenda will soon be posted on the KOS website at birdky.org. Please check it out!



A block of rooms and cabins are reserved at Barren River State Park. The cutoff for making reservations under a special discounted group rate is March 25th. After that date the group rate will not be available. You may make your reservations through KY State Parks website parks.ky.gov/parks/reservelodgecottage/ then select Barren River from list; enter date; and enter Group Code 2005 under "Special Codes" tab. Or you can call the Park at (270)646-2151 to make reservations. Hoping to see you there!! Jeffery Sole, President, Kentucky Ornithological Society