



THE BECKHAM OBSERVER

BECKHAMBIRDCLUB.ORG

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

AUGUST 2024

The Monarch Butterfly Migration in Kentucky



The Monarch Butterfly *annually* performs the longest migration of any insect in the world, from as far north as southern Canada to south-central Mexico, a distance of more than 3000 miles. The butterflies begin their migration southward in August, passing through Kentucky in late summer and early fall, and gathering by December at several locations in the mountains south of Mexico City. The number of migrating Monarchs that winter at these sites is estimated in the hundreds of millions, with some returning north in the spring. This phenomenon has been going on since well before humans inhabited the Americas.

Once Mexico was inhabited, however, these butterflies were not ignored, and there is evidence today of the prevalence of butterfly symbols dating from as early as

100 BC and which were seen by the Aztecs as the returning souls of warriors slain in battle. In more recent times the monarch in Mexico has taken on a special symbolic meaning and its image is an important part of the annual Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations in early November.

Bob Jones has been involved in the monarch migrations since the 1980s, counting and tagging monarchs in California and now here in Kentucky. His presentation will take a look at both the North American migration and the Mesoamerican mythology of this amazing insect.

Owen Reynold who is in the picture is with Riverfields. He is releasing a tagged monarch.

Our meeting is on Tuesday, August 13 at 7:00 p.m. 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.



THE FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE IS INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER OR ON THE BBC WEBSITE

You should check Beckham Bird Club web site and birdKY for every field trip to make sure there is not a change or cancellation.

Some important reminders -

1. Read the guidelines before coming on a field trip.
2. Be sure to stow your valuables in the trunk before you arrive or carry them with you. Do not leave them in the front of the car.
3. Just remember mosquitos, chiggers, ticks and biting flies are waiting for you. Don't forget to bring insect repellent.
4. Have a bottle of water and maybe a snack.
5. Bring your sunscreen lotion.

"Breakfast with the Birds"



What a great way to start the morning with breakfast with fellow birders and a bird walk to find returning migrants! Hope you can join us at Hays Kennedy Park on Saturday, September 7 at 8:00 a.m. Please R.S.V.P. to beckhambirdclub@gmail.com by Tuesday, September 3. You can also sign up at the August meeting. The club is providing a continental breakfast of juice, fruit and assorted pastries. **If you drink coffee or milk, please bring your own.** Hope to see you there.



Beckham Bird Club wishes to extend our sympathy to the family and friends of Tom Sklodoski who died on May 31. Tom and Peggy Renn were active members of BBC and volunteered for the Louisville Christmas Bird Count. Tom, with his humor and support of the Patriots, made our compilation dinner a fun time. He will be missed.

PAST FIELD TRIP



Draut Park - June 12 Eight BBC members and five guests gathered at Draut Park on a beautiful, sunny morning to search for birds! There was lots of activity! One highlight was getting to see a Black-crowned Night Heron. Unfortunately, it was behind a large branch and we were mainly able to view him from his reflection in the creek!

We were also excited to see two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and got a very brief glimpse of a Mississippi Kite! We also had a mystery flycatcher that we are still trying to figure out! We had a total of 39 species! It was a great day!

BOOK REVIEW

The Birds That Audubon Missed: Discovery and Desire in the American Wilderness

By Kenn Kaufman

Publisher: Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster (May 7, 2024)

Length: 400 pages

ISBN13: 9781668007594

Reviewed by James A. Wheat

I have some of Kenn Kaufman's books, all of them field guides. This book is a welcome addition to my library. It's a well-written and digestible journey through a history of ornithological discovery in (mostly) the eastern United States. I was expecting an interesting read, as a history major and a birder for nearly 50 years; I got that and much more.

Kaufman focuses on Audubon and his quest for new species, funding, and competing with his rivals in the field. Other early pioneers in North American ornithology are covered in their own right (e.g., Wilson, Bonaparte, Bartram). There is discussion about who named the birds, Latin binomials, the evolution of bird names, and how credit was accorded to the first to document a species. Of course, this was all without field optics and with very slow communication about new discoveries and innovations. Many of these stories have been questioned, since Audubon's granddaughter Maria confabulated or fabricated tales to enhance Audubon's reputation. She burned all his papers after that, leaving historians without these primary sources from the pen of Audubon himself. As expected, some of these stories took place in Henderson and Louisville (including some of Kaufman's stories).

Something I didn't expect were interesting sidebars which Kaufman calls "Channeling the Illustrator." These pieces, spread throughout the book, punctuate the overall chronological narrative with discussions of the many aspects of creating bird paintings. Specifically, Kaufman challenged his artistic skills by attempting to paint some of the birds that Audubon did not, using the methods and materials Audubon used. The results are included in the section of color plates in the center of the book and are beautiful works of art.

Kaufman addresses some controversial topics in the book, such as the means by which early ornithologists obtained specimens, up to the recent decisions by the American Ornithological Society about renaming certain bird species. While making his opinions clear on these and other topics, Kaufman comes across as reasonably fair; that is, none of it was belabored.

A strong undercurrent throughout is Kaufman's insight and experience with the birds covered in the book. These reflections bring to life the historical tales of ornithological discovery by linking our own experiences seeing and hearing these birds in our own lives. This is what holds the book together through the characters' histories, artistic interludes, ornithological controversies, and taxonomic developments. Don't be surprised if you find yourself searching the web to see more images of the works of Kaufman, Audubon, Catesby, and others. Reading the book will take longer because of these online diversions, but it is a worthwhile effort.

Sixty-fifth Supplement to the American Ornithological Society's Check-list of North American Birds

The AOS recently made changes to the NA bird checklist.

These changes include:

1. No hyphen in Night Heron
2. Cattle-Egret gets a hyphen.
3. Hoary Redpoll is no more as it has been lumped into Redpoll.
4. Barn Owl is now American Barn Owl

More information about the changes to the NA Bird Checklist can be found at this website. <https://www.aba.org/aos-supplement-2024>

Come join us for the Lights Out Louisville Launch Event!

Join the Louisville Audubon Society for the launch of [Lights Out Louisville](#), an initiative to make our city safer for migratory birds! Register [here](#) to reserve your spot or scan the QR code. *Registration is free but needed to reserve your spot. Seating is limited!*



The [event](#) includes a screening of “Lights Out Texas”—a documentary about the mission to protect migratory birds, produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in association with several Texas conservation groups—and a Q&A with a panel of experts from across Kentucky. Panelists will include Betty Barr, Frankfort’s Dark Sky initiative; Dr. Vincent Cassone, University of Kentucky Professor of Biology; Sarah Lynn Cunningham, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Louisville Climate Action Network; and Dan Price, NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador.

Light refreshments will be served.



DATE: Thursday August 22, 2024

TIME: 6:30 p.m. - 8:30p.m.

LOCATION: Main Louisville Free Public Library, 301 York St., Louisville KY 40203

Carpooling is recommended; parking meters are free after 6:00pm.

The documentary screening is presented with permission from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Questions: Contact Mary Yandell
Chair of the Conservation Committee, Louisville Audubon Society
mtwyandell@gmail.com

CONSERVATION REPORT

[Completed Predator-proof Fence on Moloka'i's North Shore Will Provide Safe Haven for Endangered Seabirds - American Bird Conservancy \(abcbirds.org\)](#)

[Return of the Millerbird \(abcbirds.org\)](#)

[Help Swallows, Nighthawks, and Flycatchers by Creating an Insect Buffet | All About Birds All About Birds](#)

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/attract-birds-gardening-native-plants-insects/>

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/quiz-phylogeny-evolution-choose-closest-relative/>

<https://www.nwf.org/Home/Magazines/National-Wildlife/2024/Summer/Animals/Animal-Tool-Use>

[The 2024 Audubon Photography Awards: Winners and Honorable Mentions | Audubon](#)

[The 2024 Audubon Photo Awards: The Top 100 | Audubon](#)

[Macaulay Library's Best Bird Photos 2024 | All About Birds All About Birds](#)

FALL MIGRATION IS STARTING



Migration is starting. The first to arrive are sandpipers, herons, egrets (Snowy), plovers, etc. with a few rarities thrown-in such as the White Pelican at the Falls of the Ohio. By the middle of August the first warblers will start to appear such as Redstart, Blackburnian and Canada Warblers. By the end of August and the first two weeks of September there will be an influx of many species of birds that have been nesting north of us and are starting their journey to Central and South America. Join our field trips and

also go out on your own to see all the wonderful birds that will be arriving and departing. This includes our resident migrants such as the Blue-winged Warbler, Nighthawks, Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Wood Thrush, Eastern Kingbird to name a few.