

December 2012



The Goldfinch

Daviess County
Audubon Society

www.daviessaudubon.net

December's Program: Christmas Count

JOIN US DECEMBER 4TH FOR A CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT PREP

DCAS member and experienced birder, Mike Brown has prepared a special power point to help us get ready for two bird counts in the next month. He's focused on the species we're most likely to see in our area in December. In addition, Mike has included some slides that will help us identify birds by shape and size rather than color. This should really help when you're staring at a tree and the light is on the wrong side and the bird is very far away! Remember, even if you're a novice birder, these bird counts (and their prep programs) are a great way to improve your birding skills. So bring your field guides and test yourself as we learn together. As usual, we'll meet at First Christian Church, 700 J.R. Miller Blvd, Tuesday, Dec. 4th at 7:00 P.M.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...TWO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS!

Get ready for some serious birding and equally serious eating and comraderie. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count will be Saturday, December 15th, under the direction of Mike Henshaw. Mike will have maps of the 15 mile circle at the Dec. 4th meeting. The plan is to meet at Mike and Sherry's at 7:30 A.M, have a quick cup of coffee, then head out to our sectors in teams. Remember, this is a real opportunity to mentor someone with less experience. Many of us are still in the learning phase of this birding stuff, but make good drivers and recorders. We will meet back at the Henshaw's around noon to enjoy the fantastic food that Sherry and her Mom prepare. I know that Sherry takes great pride in her culinary skill, but I'll also bet that she won't turn you down if you offer to bring something to add to the feast. You can contact Mike and Sherry at 270-275-4250. They live at 11201 Fields Rd. S., Utica 42376.

The KOS Bird Count (KY Ornithological Society) will be Tuesday morning January 1st at 7:30 A.M. at Jan Howard's. Jan will also have maps available at the December meeting. The same basic guidelines apply,

but this count will reach into Western Daviess County. She lives at 3534 W Parrish Ave. 42301 and can be reached at 570-1596. And I'm confident that Jan won't reject any offers of food, either!

December's Calendar:

Tuesday December 4, 7:00 p.m. Meeting at First Christian Church, 700 JR Miller Blvd
Saturday, December 8, 11:00 A.M. Powell Dedication at Native Grasses plot
Saturday, December 15, 7:30 A.M. Christmas Bird Count at Henshaw's
Tuesday, January 1, 7:30 A.M. KOS Bird count at Jan Howard's

A SPONTANEOUS TRIBUTE

When we asked Mike Brown for some background to assist in introducing his program for the December meeting, we were surprised and pleased to receive this heartwarming story.

I have been an avid birder since I was 11 years old, watching birds at my Mom's feeder. The following spring, my brothers and I were playing in the woods near our home. All of a sudden a Scarlet Tanager flew down right smack dab in front of us! He was in the sun and we were all floored at the sight of this flame red and jet black bird! I had no idea what it was, but I headed straight for the school library on Monday to find out. I was hooked! I started saving my money for a pair of binoculars. My dear sweet Mother ordered me a field guide Golden Field Guide to the Birds of North America. It seemed to take forever to arrive, but when it finally came it was like the best Christmas present ever. Off we went, chasing down every bird we heard or saw, wading through mud and crawling through thickets.

When I was 18, I was working at Wyndall's Grocery and my life was about to be enriched beyond my dreams.

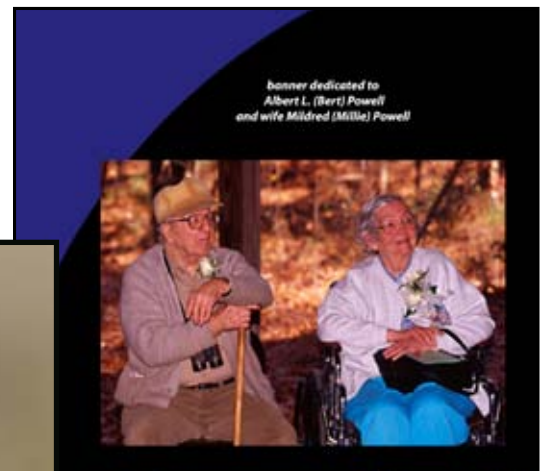
I was taking out a lady's groceries when a Common Nighthawk was flying around. They nested on top of the store every year and they still do. The lady said "Is that a bat?". When I told her about the birds nesting on the flat roof she said "Do you know Bert Powell?" She told me that he knew all about birds and that he was the "birdman" of the county. As

soon as I got home I looked up his phone number and called him. His kind heart and open mind told me to come on over, and I did. That afternoon Bert and I became friends like we had known each other our whole lives. He showed me a Kentucky Warbler nest he had just found and before you knew it I was going on birdwalks with him all the time. He took me and my brothers and a cousin down to LBL, Reelfoot and Mammoth Cave many times and never asked for a dime. Millie was always there too. I miss that sweet woman so

much...the two of them were so special to me. I tell people all the

time that I had three sets of grandparents, and that's the truth. Bert and Millie were like grandparents to me and he was my hero...still is today. I loved him so much. I knew a lot about birds, but I soon found out that I was a rookie compared to him.

Bert began to pass down all he knew to my young mind and there was a purpose behind all he ever showed me or taught me about birds and nature. That purpose was to pass on his passion for them to me and he did just that. By the time I was 28 to 30 years old I was the one correcting him many times on things we would hear and see. It was the saddest time when we would go birding and he could no longer hear the warblers all around us. I hated it for him and I would work hard to find the warbler and point it out so he could see it. When he did see it way up in the trees a beautiful grin would cross his face. For just a moment he was young again and I will cherish those moments forever. Now it is my turn to pass on what Bert taught me and I am so glad that I am finally able to be active in Audubon again.



4th in a Series of Greenbelt Birds Sculptures To Be Dedicated December 8th

Everyone in our Society should make an effort to save the date of Saturday December the 8th beginning at 11 AM and should extend invitations to others in the community to gather together with us as we dedicate a tall standard beside the Greenbelt Park at the Old Hartford Road crossing. Atop the bright yellow post will perch a wrapped wire sculpture by David Stratton depicting an Eastern Meadowlark. Hanging from the crossbar of the standard will be banners describing the Meadowlark, a grassland bird that is struggling with the loss of habitat. The banners will also identifying the newly planted Native Grass and Wildflower Garden nearby, and most important of all, the banners will hold the images of Albert “Bert” and Mildred “Millie” Powell, two founders of our club.

For over 4 decades the Powell’s devoted their time, energy, and leadership to the Daviess County Audubon Society. Our club was just one of the beneficiaries of this humble couple’s charitable contributions that have made our community richer for the role they played in day-to-day life. The couple came to Owensboro when Texas Gas, Bert’s employer, brought them here. T-Gas is still respected years after the fact for being the kind of employer that gave generously of its employees’ time and talents to the betterment of our

area. Bert and Millie gave of their private and personal time as well with the construction of the lodge at the Girl Scout Camp, and years of volunteer work with Scouting. Their church, the Native Plant Society, the photography club and other organizations knew them well as people who put heart and soul into their programs and who could be depended on to take up the yoke of service to others. Rose Ann Radzelovage has commented that “Millie must have baked a million cookies”.

In good times and bad, the Powell’s hung in there with the Audubon Society. When attendance was low, when our bank account was next to

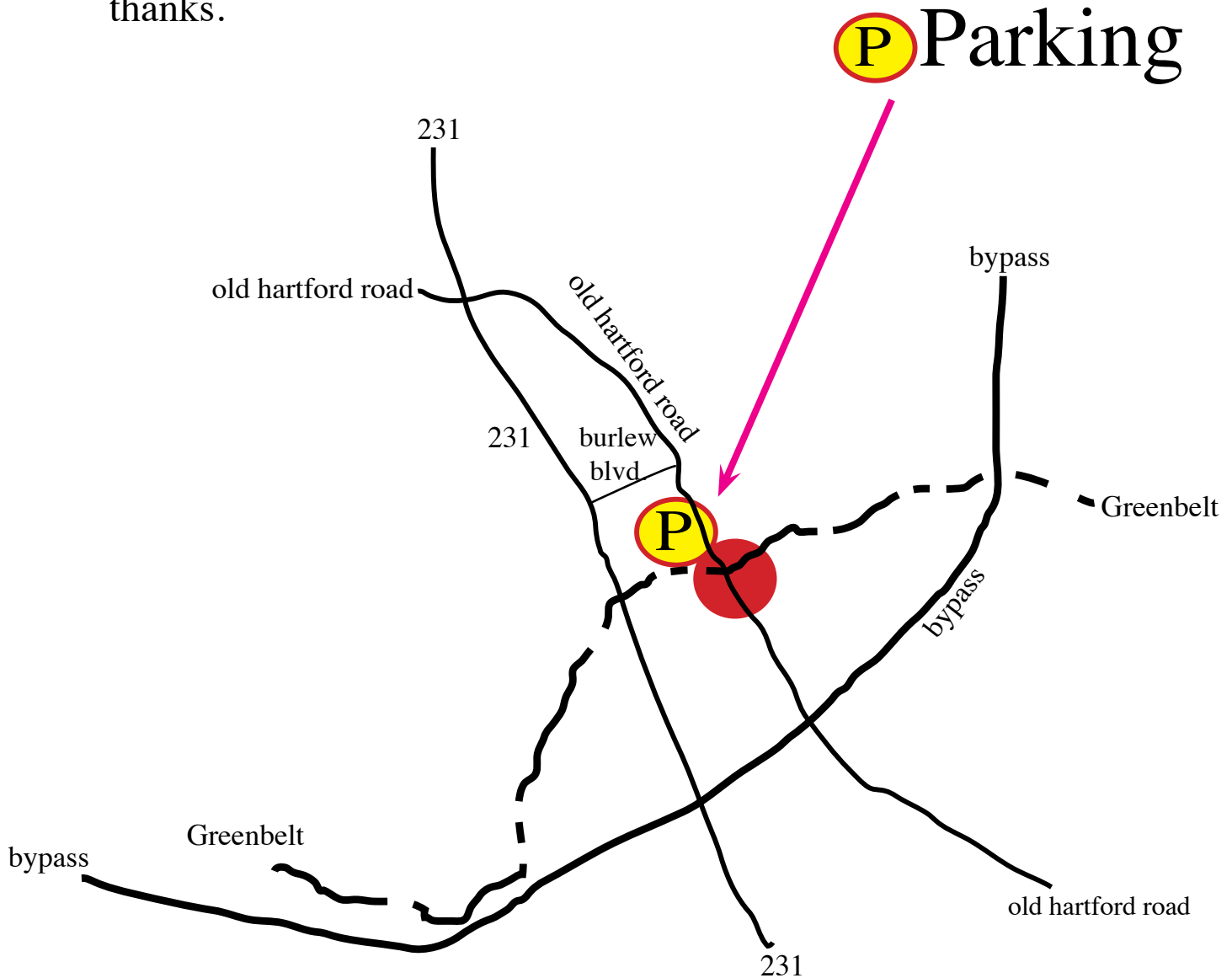
nothing, when there were squabbles, they stayed the course. Even following Millie’s heart attack when breathing was a struggle and when bouts of coughing strained her very being, still they attended meetings whenever they could arrange transportation from their Maceo home. Bert and Millie never sought recognition; they never held office. Yet from their kitchen table they compiled the chapter’s newsletter and hand addressed thousands of copies that they mailed to members and potential members year after year.

The Greenbelt Birds program is intended to heighten the awareness of walkers, bikers, joggers, and skaters as they use the paved path that arcs around Owensboro to the variety of birds that inhabit the fringes of the Park. The program is a joint venture between Brescia University’s Art in Service to the Community and the Daviess County Audubon Society. Bonnie Terrizzi, daughter of Bert and Millie, has donated funding to the program in honor of her parents.

There will be a no-host lunch at the Moonlite following the 11 AM dedication and everyone is invited to join in sharing memories of two people for whom we hold respect and appreciation by a club that serves hundreds of people with environmental education and recreation even after these two steadfast founders have departed this life.



For the December 8th dedication,
here is a map to get you to the site.
11 am, saturday. Park on the other
side of the bridge, then walk to the
greenbelt site for the dedication.
thanks.



Be berry berry quiet, we're listening to the goose pond video



GROUP ESPECIALLY ATTENTIVE TO GOOSE POND VIDEO

We've never been so quiet and attentive as we were on the night of November 6th! And it had nothing to do with election night fatigue. Technical challenges left us watching the first 30 minutes of "Four Seasons of Goose Pond" without the audio! Thanks to David Stratton (who ran home for speakers and cable) we finished up with audio, then chose to watch the first part again. It felt like those days when you'd stay over to watch the beginning of a great movie again. Regardless of the snafu, the video was informative and well-received. Charles Morris provided personal highlights of his trips to the area, including the addition of several birds to his life list. These included both the Whooping Crane and American Bittern, although he never did see the Asian Hooded Crane that was a real rarity in the area. The program provided both background and inspiration for our November field trip to Goose Pond. The DVD is now a part of our permanent collection, so feel free to check it out to share with family and friends.

Goose Pond Trek

TEN BIRDERS TREK TO GOOSE POND

On Saturday morning, November 17th, Tony Eaden and Mike Brown led a hardy group to explore the (not very) wet lands of Goose Pond. Although they didn't spot the sandhills or any whooping cranes (which had been reported earlier in the day) they did identify 38 species. The ponds were low and the hunters were out in force, but Bob Broddle, Jim and Pam Kimsey, Pat Augenstein, Lavern Bush, Kenny Lin, Mike Henshaw, Brenda and Tony Eaden and Mike Brown thoroughly enjoyed a full day of birding.

Hawks, Plenty

HAWKS A-PLenty!

It all started with an email from Pat Augenstein on November 19th... and took off from there. Pat reported a large collection of various hawks just off US 81 near Haycraft Rd. She had been observing them for a week or two. Mike Brown headed over one morning a day or two later. He was "blown away" by the sheer number. He identified 26 Red Tails (8 mature, 15 immature, 2 Harlan's dark phase and 1 Krider's light phase) 5 Rough-legged, 6 Northern Harrier, and 1 Cooper's as well as 6 American Kestrels...whew! Curious as to what was drawing these hawks, he started walking across the fields and found that he would see a mouse or a vole every 15 feet or so...a huge buffet for the hawks. In addition, he flushed out two Short-eared Owls from a small depression in the grass.

Curious about the cause of these large numbers of hawks, we contacted Dr. Michael Stokes at WKU. You may remember that he did a presentation on Prairie Voles last February. Although he didn't think we were seeing an eruption of voles (that would mean a high number of immature hawks) he did note "an extraordinary number of accipiters here this year". Having just driven south from Wisconsin, he observed that many birds had not yet moved south and that "even the beaver ponds weren't frozen yet". So, we don't know why for certain, but we sure have enjoyed the show!

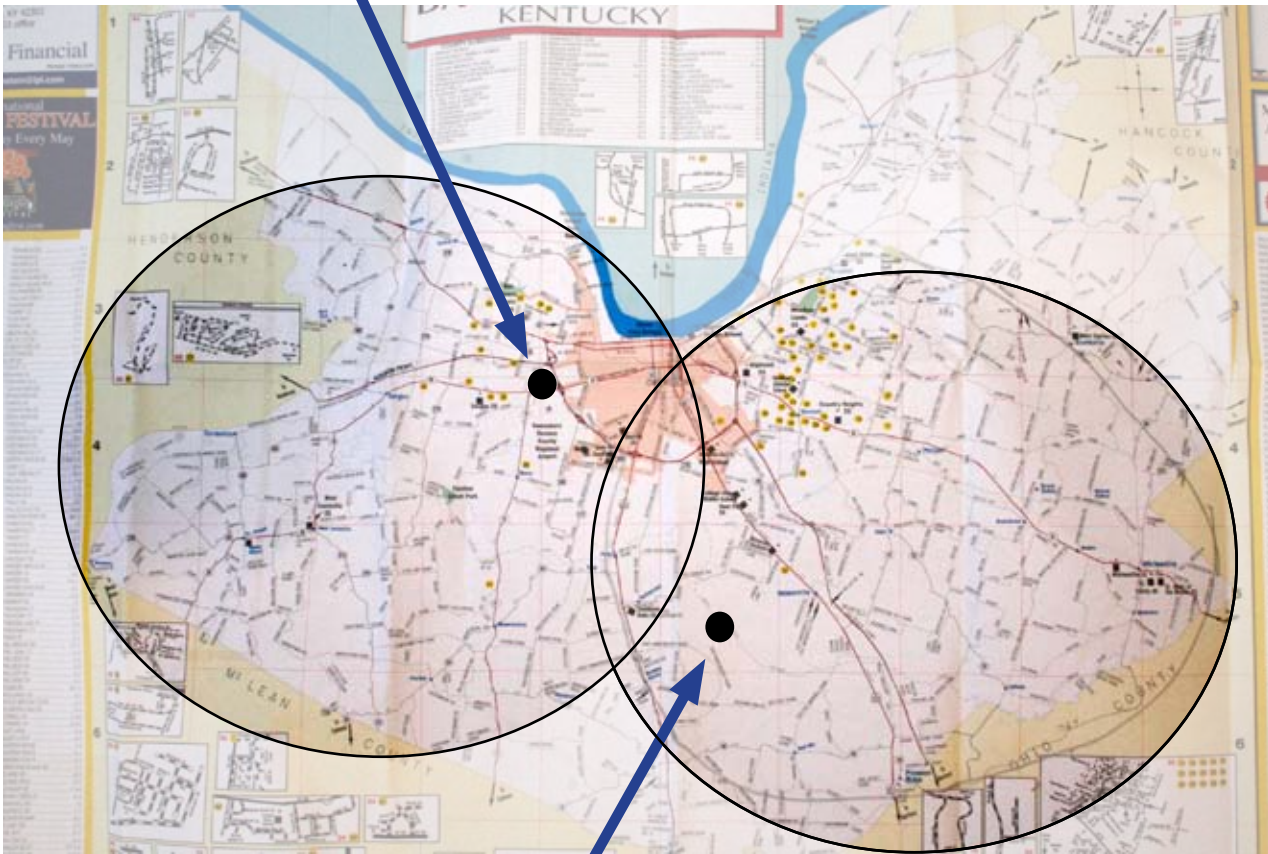




Christmas count maps

Jan

January 1st--3534 W Parrish Ave. 42301



December 15 th---11201 Fields Rd. S., Utica, 42376

Mike/Sherry

FROM THE BACKYARD

It looks like December will be just as busy a month as November...lots going on in the birding world! First, we must thank all of you who came out for Trash for Cash on November 3rd. It proves that DCAS folk really read their Goldfinch! There was some concern about turn-out, since the date was before our regular meeting and our only way to inform the membership was through email and this newsletter. Eleven people came out and cleaned seven miles of roadway...earning us a check for \$700. Not bad for a day's effort. Thank you to Carolyn for organizing us and to Pam and Jim Kimsey, Mike Henshaw, Tony Eaden, Lavern Bush, Henry Conner, Ken Hurm, Jan Howard, Mary Kissel and David Stratton for devoting a Saturday for DCAS.

Our December meeting will be devoted to preparing us for our two bird counts this month. If you can't get to the meeting, please mark your calendars for the mornings of Dec. 15th and Jan. 1st. These efforts help us to understand changes in bird behavior both on the local and national levels. Besides, we have a lot of fun!

Saturday, Dec. 8th will provide us with an opportunity to properly honor our founders, Bert and Millie Powell. The dedication of the Powell family bird banner and sculpture is at 11:00 A.M. at the Native Grasses plot on New Hartford Rd. You can pull up your map from the October Goldfinch. Plan to bring Powell stories to share as we gather afterward for lunch at Moon-lite. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have been so supportive since my accident. I assure you that your good wishes sustained me. Hopefully, I'll be comfortable on uneven terrain again in time for this month's bird counts!

Best wishes for a very Happy Holiday season, however you wish to celebrate!

And here's to a year of good birding in 2013!

Judy Adams, President

There's a lot going on...be a part of it!

Judy Adams, President

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(334-1391)



Ideas meeting at Moonlite Barbeque. Photo by Winny Lin.