

# The Goldfinch



Daviess County Audubon Society

www.daviessaudubon.org

November 2007

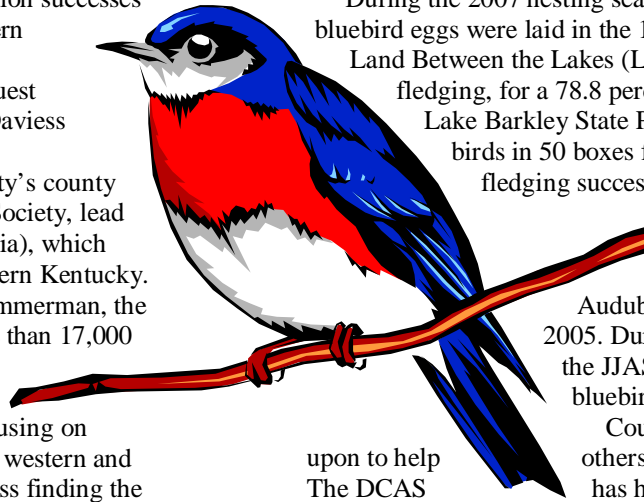
## Bluebird champions to speak to DCAS

One of Kentucky's greatest conservation successes in recent years is the rebound of the eastern bluebird. Two people who have been instrumental in that success will be the guest speakers for the Nov. 12 meeting of the Daviess County Audubon Society.

Bob and Judy Peak, Henderson County's county coordinators for the Kentucky Bluebird Society, lead the efforts of Project SOS (Save Our Sialia), which maintains bluebird trails throughout western Kentucky. First established by George and Della Zimmerman, the last 19 years of the project has seen more than 17,000 bluebirds fledged.

The Peaks will discuss their program with a slide show, primarily focusing on eastern bluebirds, while also touching on western and mountain bluebirds. They also will address finding the perfect habitat – a key element in attracting bluebirds.

Thanks to the Peaks and their core of volunteers, they've done plenty of attracting birds.



During the 2007 nesting season, a total of 1,331 eastern bluebird eggs were laid in the 165 bluebird nest boxes at Land Between the Lakes (LBL), with 1,050 bluebirds fledging, for a 78.8 percent fledging success rate. At Lake Barkley State Park in Trigg County, 405 birds in 50 boxes fledged for an 82.3 percent fledging success rate. The volunteers

monitored a 12-box bluebird trail that they established at John James

Audubon State Park (JJASP) in 2005. During the 2007 nesting season, the JJASP nest boxes produced 34 bluebird fledglings.

upon to help  
The DCAS

bluebird trails along the Horse Fork trail of the David C. Adkisson Greenbelt Park and Jack C. Fisher Park.

County coordinators are called others establish their own trails.

*See Bluebird, Page 3*

## *Could holiday lights, trash lead to cash for club?*

Two fundraising opportunities will be up for discussion at the November meeting of the Daviess County Audubon Society.

First, the club has the opportunity to sell tickets for the upcoming Christmas at Panther Creek lighting display. The organization was not one of five selected to man booths this year. However, the other five which expressed interest are given the opportunity to sell as many 300 \$3 tickets, of which the club could keep \$600 of the proceeds.

President Steve Anderson said the club should easily sell that amount. He assisted efforts to sell on behalf of the Western Kentucky Raptor Center and sold his share in a matter of minutes. He pointed out that the annual event has become a popular tradition in Daviess County, because it's an event which appeals to all ages.

Christmas at Panther Creek begins after Thanksgiving and continues until New Year's Day.

Meanwhile, members Carolyn Williams and Rose Ann Radzelovage are raising the idea of participating in the Cash for Trash program, run by the Daviess County Solid Waste Department.

Cash for Trash pays community and school groups \$200 per road mile, up to five miles, in an effort to clean the sides of hundreds of miles of county roads.

It's not easy work, Radzelovage notes, so many members would be needed for the cleanup day, which would take place in the fall or spring. According to the program application, people work in pairs to clear one side of the road, then the other. Members are not to remove dangerous items, from syringes to broken glass, or dead animals. The county would supply all needed equipment, including safety vests and gloves.

# Panther Creek birds, deer welcome DCAS

*Members' suggestions needed for  
destination during Nov. 17 trip*

The transitional nature of early fall was on display at Panther Creek Park Oct. 20 during the field trip for the Daviess County Audubon Society.

Scheduling conflicts prevented the group from having expert guides to Higginson-Henry Wildlife Management Area, so a decision was made to take advantage of the western Daviess County Park.

Inside the woods, some of the birds proved frustratingly elusive ... was that woodpecker sound coming from a pileated? However, Jill Flachskam spotted a handful of one of the most elusive of all birds – brown creepers – working the trunks of some trees. The unseasonably warm fall even kept some black-throated green warblers in the park a little while longer.

Other species found by Flachskam, Steve Anderson and Mary Kissel included: flicker, American kestrel, Carolina chickadee, blue jay, starling, grackle, cowbird, cardinal, mockingbird, yellow-rumped warbler, eastern bluebird, downy woodpecker, white-breasted nuthatch, Carolina wren, tufted titmouse, red-bellied woodpecker, goldfinch, house finch, robin, song sparrow and turkey vulture. White-tail deer also was spotted at the opening of muzzle season.

Because of deer season, Eric Williams, Peabody Wildlife Management Area manager, has recommended waiting until early 2008 to travel there. We will have a field trip on Nov. 17. Where to? Bring your ideas to the DCAS meeting or e-mail Steve Anderson at [stevoander@peoplepc.com](mailto:stevoander@peoplepc.com).

## November events

Meeting, 7 p.m. First Christian Church,  
Seventh and J.R. Miller, Nov. 12  
Field trip to TBA, Nov. 17.



*Neblett Center  
kids enjoyed a  
Saturday at the  
Sloughs and  
other stops.*

## Neblett kids walk, learn at Sloughs

Two vans filled with excited folks – 19 After-School Program kids and three staff persons from the H.L. Neblett Community Center headed to southwest of Henderson Oct. 6 to learn about the Sloughs Wildlife Management Area, where they

met up with Ken Hurm at Hardy Slough.

On the Joe Ford Nature Library trip, Grace Ford notes that though there were no migrating birds to observe, there were other interests, such as the flock of red-winged blackbirds, the harvested fields that showed how the farmers left plenty of feed for the birds that will come, the site of the eagle aerie and a lake covered with a massive carpet of duckweed. A majestic cypress tree also commanded attention at this location.

Brown bag lunches were eaten at a historic site. Now a park for all to enjoy very near U.S. 60, the spot at one time is where the first church in Henderson was established in 1826. The intense heat (high 90s) called for cold drinks to quench thirst.

“The Hopewell Indian Village site was the next stop, and it didn’t take long for the group to take off looking for fragments of pottery dating back to the time of Christ. Recently tilled dirt aided in the discovery of some

*See Walk, Page 3*





*Charles Morris leads a binoculars lesson.*

## Fall lessons at garden conclude

The series of 55 fall bird watching lessons at the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden concluded in October after sessions with students from Meadow Lands, Sorgho, East View and Tamarack elementary schools. In all, Charles Morris, Ken Hurm, Mary Kissel and Grace Ford taught 760 4th graders from 11 schools from Aug. 28 to Oct. 18, said Larry Lowing of the WKBG. Five of the schools were from Owensboro Public Schools, and six schools were from Daviess County. There were 361 4<sup>th</sup>-grade girls and 399 4<sup>th</sup>-grade boys.

In a true spirit of cooperation and appreciation, the WKBG has ordered additional fold-out bird guides to replace some that were lost during the fall and have simply worn out after being handled by hundreds of kids.

The DCAS will return in the spring as other city and county classes -- including many third-grade classes -- will be taking these lessons. During the winter, new birds will be considered for the program to replace weather-beaten birds.

Charles Morris has been thrilled by the response.

"It's been a real good program," he said. The recent session with Newton Parrish Elementary students was featured in the monthly slide show on Channel 53.

## Walk

From Page 2

treasured finds to add to the piece of pottery Joe gave to each," she reported.

"Finally we stopped for a nature hike at Ben Hawes Park. Shortened by the heat of the day, the hike was a delight to those who liked the wildflowers such as goldenrod, asters, pink flowering smartweed, all of which were a wonderful sight for eyes that had not been conditioned to look for these kinds of treats nature has for us.

"We left the group midst many 'thanks for your time.' We left hoping that some seeds were planted that will take root so nature lovers will increase in this area."

Their next trip is Nov. 3 to Angel Mounds.

## Wayland's fledglings tackle lessons, trees, political advocacy

The fledgling Wayland Alexander Junior Audubon Society continues to gain momentum as members learn a lot about the world around them.

About a dozen members have studied Dundee, amphibians, autumn wildflowers and John James Audubon, according to co-sponsor Brenda Little.

There's also action behind the lessons. Little said the group is halfway through their Make A Difference Day project of transplanting three white pine trees on the school grounds from the nursery that was planted following Owensboro's 2000 tornado.

They also got a look into the world of political advocacy. The National Audubon Society asked members to take part in a Conservation Call-In Day, Oct. 17, to voice support for a farm bill which pays farmers to place some of their cropland into reserve for conservation. Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell is a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, they had a lesson about The Nature Conservancy's "Unlucky 13," grassland birds which have shown steeper, more consistent and more geographically widespread declines than any other group of North American species, because its habitat is most threatened. This group includes: Lark Bunting, Baird's Sparrow, Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Sprague's Pipit, Ferruginous Hawk, McCown's Longspur, Scaled Quail, Long-billed Curlew, Cassin's Sparrow, Burrowing Owl, Greater Prairie-Chicken, Mountain Plover and Chestnut-collared Longspur.

The group listened in as a call was made to McConnell's office on their behalf -- and grassland birds'.

"When the phone call ended, one of the girls used a viewpoint taught by Scott Harp in response to the question, 'Why should we care about birds that live out west where prairies used to be?' She said, 'If we lose one species, even two or three species, it might not be much cause for concern. But when we lose more and more species, there is risk that the web of life will unravel.'" Little said.

They also were planning a session on Kentucky bats for Halloween, holding out the possibility of a look at spiders.

"We are making plans to begin learning campus birds by going outside with a goal of learning two or three a week in preparation for the Christmas Bird Count. We will learn how to estimate large flocks should starlings fly by. We will work with some bird calls. Scott Harp is laying out our circle, and we will need four or five DCAS members to help us with our practice count this year," she said. "We also are preparing to set up a bird feeding area outside a large bank of windows so that we can begin Classroom FeederWatch Nov. 10.

"I think I can speak for the adults involved with this venture in telling you that we are having as much fun as the kids," she said.

They are still waiting to see if the group will receive National Audubon Society collaborative funding. Little notes that their coffers are pretty much depleted. Wayland has purchased 10 pairs of binoculars and field guides on such subjects as birds, butterflies and amphibians.

The Goldfinch/November 2007  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Bluebird

From Page 1

Bob Peak emphasizes the need for manpower to make it work.

"Judy and I think the No. 1 mistake people make is putting up nest boxes and not monitoring them. Many people assume that putting up the nest box is the end of the story, and those nest boxes tend to become house sparrow havens, wasp refuges or raccoon lunch boxes. Some bluebirders monitor nest boxes weekly, others bi-weekly. Due to the scope of our project, we monitor monthly... that's the maximum time to accurately determine the outcome of each nesting attempt. Regardless of the frequency, it's very important to check the birds' progress to ensure that predation, vandalism, competition with non-native species, parasitic infestations, insect problems (mainly ants and wasps) or other problems are not interfering with the reproductive success of the birds.

The couple are retired teachers from the Evansville school system; Bob taught middle school, Judy elementary students. He credits her parents for inspiring them to become interested in bluebirds.

Here's a chance to learn from the experts about improving bluebird environment in the Owensboro area.

The club will meet at 7 p.m. Nov. 12 at First Christian Church, J.R. Miller Blvd. and 7<sup>th</sup> Street. You can dine with the Peaks at Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn at 5:45 p.m.

## For news, dues

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## Schools ready for Adventures

Education chairman Grace Ford reports five schools have requested Audubon Adventures kits: Burns Middle School, Tamarack Elementary, Whitesville Elementary, Wayland Alexander's Junior Audubon club and Sutton Elementary.

Ford also hopes to use a current or past kit for use in the Joe Ford Nature Library.

This year's materials celebrate species "Back from Brink," those which have benefited from the Endangered Species Act: bald eagles, American alligator, whales and grizzly bears.

Each kit costs the club \$45.16. In the past, some members have offered to serve as sponsors by paying for a classroom kit. If you're interested in serving as an Audubon Adventures sponsor, contact Ford at [gcarford@aol.com](mailto:gcarford@aol.com).