

# The Goldfinch



Daviess County Audubon Society

www.daviessaudubon.org

May 2008

## Stewardship stressed at Earth Day



*Joseph Howard and Brad Johnson work on bird sketches.*

Tomorrow's stewards of the Earth had fun with it today, as more than half of the Wayland Alexander Junior Audubon Society attended a spring work/study day April 19 at the Powell Bird Blind at Camp Pennyroyal Girl Scout Camp.

Students were able to tap into the talents of adult volunteers. Local artist/DCAS secretary Sherry Henshaw led a session on nature notebooks. First, she offered advice about looking for details when observing nature. Then, she took them step-by-step through the process of drawing birds in their proper proportion. The Wayland students carefully drew their "egg" bodies, adding wings, heads, tails and coloration. Using photographs as their guides, they selected birds they wanted to draw, and slowly, but surely, colorful goldfinches, blue jays and cardinals emerged from their colored pencils.

In the morning sessions, Mary Kissel briefly discussed the importance of the written word in capturing a creature, encouraging them to write as if someone would be reading it two years from now. Sheyann Hunt needed little prompting to capture details, vividly recounting for classmates an up-close-and-personal encounter with a cardinal that would make a perfect journal entry.

University of Southern Indiana professor Chuck Price brought digital photography equipment to the shelter house, so kids could capture the sights for posterity. By early spring, the camp was coming to life again with wild flowers and other vegetation happy to stand still for budding photographers.

Once downloaded, the kids were delighted to see the results, including beautiful dogwood blossoms and stately ferns.

Students also hiked out to the lake for spotting scope practice. Tony and Brenda Eaden and former DCAS member Neil Hayden worked with hikers and came back with an impressive list of sightings on a cloudy day, including red-headed woodpecker, red-breasted nuthatch and yellow-throated vireo.

Students also worked for their hot dogs and other vittles, doing such chores as filling feeders, cleaning blind windows and even digging up a stubborn stump at the blind.

The camp activities were only part of a busy day for DCAS members. Carolyn Williams, Mary Kissel and Roseanne Radzelovage manned a table at Kentucky Wesleyan College for their Earth Day

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*Jordan Toomey was one of the students who tackled cleanup work at the blind.*

## Pack your bags: Travel group may be formed

There's a big wide world out there. Want to see it?

Retired teacher and world traveler Chuck Mills will be in Owensboro prior to the May 12 meeting to discuss establishing a regional ecotravel program, spearheaded by the Daviess County Audubon Society.

Mills, a retired chemistry teacher from Gibson Southern High

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## May session explores debate on evolution

The link between birds and reptiles will be explored at the May 12 meeting of the Daviess County Audubon Society.

A segment of the DVD "Formed to Fly" will be shown. The DVD is from the Creation Museum near Cincinnati and sets out to debunk the argument that birds evolved by chance from dinosaurs. With an electron microscope, Dr. David Menton examines the feathers of

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# Wayland students reflect on first year of JAS study

The state's lone Junior Audubon Society reflected on a successful first year at the April 14 meeting.

The JAS grew out of a longstanding relationship between DCAS members Starla Cravens and Brenda and Bill Little, who got involved in tree nurturing at Wayland Alexander Elementary School in Hartford after a 2000 tornado. Fearing they would be harmed, Cravens asked Brenda Little not to put up bluebird boxes on the campus. Her wishes were ignored, and bluebirds began calling Wayland home. Happily, conditions at the school improved, and the two began in earnest to develop one of the state's top bluebird trail ... a trail which led to the creation of the JAS.

Cravens said the JAS meshes with the goals of the school's family resource center and called it her "pride and joy."

"It's a way to connect kids to our own little ecosystem right there at school. It makes it tangible," she said, noting that promotion of nature ripples across the county.

"There's real power ... we try to tell them to use that power to make the world a better place. They are good kids doing good work."

Chanda Shock is a co-sponsor and a parent of a third-grader, Tanner, whose love for nature far outweighed his love of school. The Wednesday sessions became a carrot for him to apply himself more at school. "He's really got something to look forward to," she said. The JAS third-graders have eventually turned into ambassadors for the program giving twice-monthly programs for their spellbound peers.

The other co-sponsor, biologist Scott Harp, is a "magnet" with the kids, tantalizing them with amphibians and his winning nature, Little said.

Transportation issues have limited participation, not enthusiasm. Topics have ranged from reptiles to amphibians to grizzly bears.

"We've been begging Scott all year to bring a snake," sighed Sheyann Hunt.

They moved trees to create a wind block. A handful was able to participate in a trial Christmas bird count. What was a highlight? "Seeing a brown thrasher," said Jasmine Allen, who spotted a flicker on the same snag. They also were challenged to come up with Earth-friendly ways to change their lives for Earth Day. And, nest box eggs will be monitored for Cornell's NestWatch project.

Funding for the club has come from a variety of sources. The family resource center partnered with Oak Creek Methodist Church to come up with money for field guides and binoculars. Earlier in the club year, the DC chapter was awarded \$400 from the National Audubon Society for assorted nest box supplies. The Kentucky Audubon Council, in a supplemental funding cycle, awarded the program an additional \$345.



*Treasurer Charles Morris presents a check to Brad Johnson.*

## Club plans to pick up trash

Daviess Audubon members have decided to participate in the Trash for Cash program, conducted by the Daviess County Solid Waste Department.

It may be fall before they hit the road. Solid waste coordinator Mike Hamilton says 22 groups have already indicated they want to participate, and the program halts once hot weather arrives.

Members indicated a preference for Wayne Bridge Road from Kentucky 81 to Panther Creek Park, the connecting Fisher Road or Fields Road South.

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. DCAS members hope to tackle three miles.

## Travel

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School in Fort Branch, Ind., also has taken dozens of groups on trips around the globe. Earlier in the year, he approached the Evansville Audubon Society chapter about traveling to Costa Rica, one of the prime birding spots on the globe. They balked because of liability concerns, but the possibility intrigued Brenda Little, who contacted him to see if this chapter could work with him to generate interest in trips. He also has expressed interest in leading trips to Panama, Puerto Rico and Cuba, as well as Minnesota, Kansas, Ohio and the Washington coastline.

Among the subjects for discussion will be ways to resolve liability insurance issues, which run in the hundreds of dollars. If those can be resolved, Little is excited about offering affordable ecotravel possibilities and opportunities for members to improve themselves by exploring foreign environments and learning about other cultures. Promotional work through the National Audubon Society and other entities may be a way to attract birders from around the U.S. and literally put the DCAS on the map. Birders from around the region are invited to meet Mills at 5:30 p.m. May 12 at Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn.



## First 'Bert' presented to Whitesville's Barr

One of the more memorable students to participate in a Daviess County Audubon Society education program was honored with its first "Bert of the Month" award.

Evan Barr of Whitesville Elementary was given the award at the April meeting. This citation is presented in the honor of DCAS co-founder Bert Powell, who died earlier this year.

Barr stunned adults when he arrived at the Yellow Creek Park field day with his own field guide of common Kentucky birds, which he lovingly created on his computer – a feat that education members still recall fondly months later. However, like the namesake for the award, his organizational skills were matched by his enthusiasm for drawing others into the fun.

"After we started watching birds, he not only was content to enjoy the birds he saw, he was like a cheerleader for his class. He would say 'you all hurry up. There are birds over here in this meadow, in this flat area,' " Brenda Little said.



*Evan Barr receives his award from Carolyn Williams.*



*Charles Morris addresses Utica students.*

## Garden, Yellow Creek welcome educators

The spring Western Kentucky Botanical Garden sessions with students began April 16, as Audubon team members began their birding classes. Project chairman Charles Morris added yellow and black-and-white warblers and red-bellied woodpecker to the lineup for identification.

But who needs fake birds when the real ones show up? An eastern bluebird stuck around for a rotation or two while excited kids scrambled for their binoculars to see the bird perch on sign posts. A red-tailed hawk, treetop cardinal and garden-traipsing robin also grabbed attention.

Anyone who would like to join Morris, Mary Kissel, Carolyn Williams and Ken Hurm on the volunteer rotation may call Morris at 683-5870. Students will be at WKBG almost every weekday from May 5 to May 14.

Meanwhile, the education team also will return to Yellow Creek Park with Whitesville Elementary students May 9, where Mary Kissel will present her birds and beaks lessons and Bill and Brenda Little will lead bird hikes. Scott Harp also will discuss reptiles and amphibians.

## Earth

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celebration, with Joe and Grace Ford next door to promote the Joe Ford Nature Library. Several other members were in attendance, including one of the organizers, Jill Flaschkam. It was a fair-like atmosphere, with environmental organizations around the perimeter of the health building offering plenty of Earth-saving advice.

At the DCAS booth, visitors were eager to pocket advice on hummingbirds and bird feeding. Updated DCAS pamphlets were available for anyone who wanted to join the chapter. Few kids were in attendance, but a handful colored bird pictures and picked up bird tattoos. The club also sold three of Bill Freels' deluxe bluebird houses, netting the chapter \$45. Hats with the colorful goldfinch logo also were available for sale.

Presentations included talks by authors Dr. Matthew and Emma Sleeth. The city's new hybrid vehicle was also on display in the front of the building.

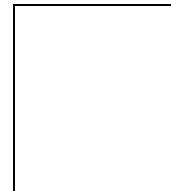
## May

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birds and compares them to reptile scales.

Joe and Grace Ford recently visited the museum and left impressed by the exhibits.

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. May 12 at First Christian Church, J.R. Miller Blvd. and Seventh Street.



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Festival salutes regional birding

Birding enthusiasts and novices alike will want to be sure to mark their calendars for a new event this spring in celebration of International Migratory Bird Month. Wesselman Nature Society has partnered with the Evansville Audubon Society, Evansville's Wild Birds Unlimited store and John James Audubon State Park to bring four days of birding excitement to Evansville and the surrounding region on May 1-4.

A whole host of activities are being planned for birders (or potential birders) of all ages and skill levels. Guided hikes to area birding hotspots such as Howell Wetlands, Hovey Lake, Bluegrass Fish and Wildlife Area and the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge will showcase a variety of native and migratory bird species. Various lectures and workshops will be offered, including topics such as photographing birds, making gourd birdhouses and providing backyard habitat for birds. Special guest Stan Tekiela, author of *Birds of Indiana* will also be on hand to share his birding expertise and autograph copies of his books.

Saturday, May 3, will be a special day for children and families at Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve. Children will have many opportunities throughout the day to participate in hands-on learning activities related to birds and their environment. A bird banding demonstration, family hike and a live raptor show are among attractions.

For a complete schedule of events, visit  
<http://www.wesselmannaturesociety.org/society/public.php>

## Spend Derby Day with Perry Co. birds

With all of the activities around Earth Day, the club opted to postpone their spring trip to Hoosier National Forest in Perry County, Ind.

They will leave at 8 a.m. May 3 in the area between Kroger and the gas station on U.S. 60 East.

The May date will put the trip at the peak of the spring migration and present numerous opportunities to see wild flowers, Steve Hahus said.

Meanwhile, Hahus led a chilly trip April 12 at Ben Hawes State Park. Marching along were: Carolyn Williams, Jill Flaschkam, Mary Kissel, Roseanne Radzelovage, Charles Morris, Joe and Grace Ford, Jan Howard and Tony Eaden, who arrived before the rest of group and hiked alone.

Hahus said the cold, damp conditions depleted the number of spring migrants, because it was too cold for birds to soar to the treetops in search of food. However, blue-gray gnatcatchers made their presence known. In all, members saw 27 species: American robin, great blue heron, Nashville warbler, northern cardinal, American goldfinch, Canada goose, ruby-crowned kinglet, tufted titmouse, Carolina wren, eastern towhee, turkey vulture, white-throated sparrow, downy woodpecker, eastern bluebird, white-eyed vireo, blue jay, field sparrow, Cooper's hawk, yellow-rumped warbler, Carolina chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, northern flicker, red-tailed hawk, chipping sparrow, rusty blackbird and brown thrasher.

From his part of the park, Eaden recorded a barred owl and wild turkey.

## Celebrate May Day in park

Celebrate the arrival of summer -- and a gentler age -- at a May Day celebration May 31 at Yellow Creek Park. The event is being organized by the Joe Ford Nature Library and Daviess County Parks.

Morning activities begin at 11 a.m. and include preparing flower baskets with the Younger Woman's Club, Robin Hood story telling with Kappa Kappa Iota sorority and flower selection program with florist Ella King. Daviess County Audubon vice president Steve Hahus will also present a session on wild flower identification.

There also will be May pole dances at 11:30 and 12:30 p.m., with picnicking on the grounds at noon. The Owensboro Herb Society also will prepare samples for the public.

The afternoon will be filled with assorted games for the kids, crafts and a 2 p.m. nature hike. Various information booths and nature displays, including ones with the DCAS and Western Kentucky Raptor Center also are planned.

## Briefly speaking

Ken Hurm recently led a wild flower walk at John James Audubon State Park.

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Jan Howard was surprised by a wild turkey hen on the patio at Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn.

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Bonnie Terrizzi offers thanks for contributors to the Bert Powell memorial, noting they were helping keep his legacy alive.

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Brenda Little reported a bluebird nest at Hartford's Dogwood Retreat; a chickadee nest at the Powell Bird Blind; 15 bluebird eggs, a chickadee brooding six eggs, and a nesting Carolina wren on their property and 10 bluebird eggs and a chickadee nest at Southern Elementary.