

November 2009

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DAVISS COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

# THE GOLDFINCH



Members take a well-earned break as they collect hundreds of pounds of trash Oct. 11. (Bill Little photo)

## DCAS cashes in on trash

### *Hard work raises \$613 for chapter*

**By Brenda Little**

There were sighs of “I should have taken ibuprofen,” “Never again; I’m too old for this,” and “Oh, my aching back!” as the sun was setting on a crystal clear Sunday evening Oct. 11 in the western portion of Daviess county. On one of the most beautiful au-

tumn days of the year, the agricultural fields enveloping Keller and Fisher roads and their ditches had just been picked clean of trash by eight Daviess County Audubon Society volunteers. Twenty HUGE garbage bags of litter that weighed in at 500 pounds were setting at Miles Farm Supply waiting to be hauled to the landfill, where our chapter would be given a certificate to authorize the reward for our efforts of the afternoon, \$200 per mile for the 3 miles of

roadway assigned to us, a significant earning of \$600 for our chapter’s annual budget.

In addition to the bags of trash hauled to the landfill, Rose Ann Radzelovage delivered 27 pounds of aluminum that was separated for recycling to the recycling center which earned us another \$13. Our trash pickers were helped greatly by refreshments supplied by Janet Howard of Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn, who

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### Eric Williams to discuss quail restoration efforts

One of the most cheerful sounds in all of birddom is the simple call of “Bob-white” echoing across a field. Efforts to keep this species alive in Kentucky will be the focus of the Nov. 3 meeting, when Eric Williams, Peabody Wildlife Management Area manager, discusses the state’s aggressive quail restoration initiative.

In the latest National Audubon Society State of the Birds report, the bobwhite quail was considered the

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### November Calendar:

Monthly meeting, 7 p.m. Nov 3, First Christian Church; Moonlite dinner at 5:30 p.m.

Bird classes at Western Kentucky Botanical Garden, 9 a.m. Nov. 6.

Field trip to Peabody WMA: Meet at 2 p.m. Nov. 9 at Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Directors’ meeting, 10 a.m. Nov. 16, home of Judy Adams, 2245 Canonero Loop.

# Flight of the monarchs inspires awe

## *Hundreds have been tagged by volunteers in Henderson sessions*

One of nature's crown jewels --- the monarch butterfly --- was examined by Julie McDonald, naturalist at John James Audubon State Park, at the Oct. 13 meeting of the Daviess County Audubon Society.

It's a subject close to her heart, because volunteers annually tag the butterflies in Henderson as they continue their migration to Mexico -- 1,400 miles away.

"If they're adults, they're looking for nectar sources, flowers that have a special look to them so they can stick their proboscis in and get all of the good stuff out," she said. Swamp milkweed is one of their favorite sources, so they head for the Sloughs Wildlife Management Area for large patches of nectar-bearing plants for a "fast-food" break, especially those with a wind break.

Tagging programs with all ages is a way to engage the public with nature as they compile important data, including date, sex, whether or not it was raised in the wild and tagging location.

Only one generation is tagged in western Kentucky. How far can they fly? One butterfly was tagged and recaptured 230 miles away the next day, carried along by winds.

"Butterflies don't fly in a predictable pattern," she said. They are powered by four sets of wings, which make them difficult to catch. A small tag is put on the outside of the wing, close to the body, so it doesn't interfere with flight, because it's absorbed by its body weight.

She will put person's name on the tag so they can be notified if the butterfly is found elsewhere. One spring, someone found two tagged butterflies minutes apart, meaning the two made the trip from Kentucky to Mexico and back together.

How are they caught?

"Have a clipboard in your hand with stickers and no net. You are guaranteed to have a dozen butterflies land on the same

One butterfly was tagged and recaptured 230 miles away the next day, carried along with winds.



*Julie McDonald of John James Audubon State Park discussed monarch butterflies at the Oct. 13 meeting.*

bush, two feet away," she said, tongue firmly planted in cheek.

The best method is waiting until a butterfly lands on a bush, then plopping a net on a bush, and pinching it off after a butterfly escapes up into the net.

In the past, up to 200 butterflies have been tagged on a single day. Monarch migration in western Kentucky peaks during the second week in September. She blamed a Texas drought for dwindling populations,

although it rebounded slightly in the past year. She also discussed the monarch's life cycle. They start out as an egg the size of a pinhead. Mothers

have 100 eggs, and they lay one egg per plant to give them the best chance for survival. Once hatched, they hatch out in three to five days. Their voracious appetite includes milkweed, which has toxins that are ingested, making them an unappealing target for predators. Having double antennae is also a protective measure. So is the bright orange color, which warns predators they are toxic.



"Birds learn pretty quick that if you got a stomachache eating that insect, you're not going to eat it again," McDonald said.

She also reviewed the growth of the monarch from caterpillar to chrysalis. They go through five instars, split their skin and eat their own skin, developing as they grow. At their fifth instar, they shed their skins for the last time, curl into a J and develop a chrysalis. About 2 weeks of constant change later, the impressive green chrysalis turns transparent. Their wings emerge wet, the consistency of tissue paper. If they are touched at that time, they are permanently damaged.

Migration is amazing because only a select generation makes the trip to 12 mountain peaks west of Mexico City. The ones who are born in early fall have the longest life expectancy -- about 7 months.

McDonald has no idea why these peaks become "on fire" with monarchs each fall. They cover everything in its wake.

"It's pretty rough country," said DCAS member Bill Tyler, who has made the trek south.

Is there safety in numbers? Perhaps. This phenomenon has been spotted locally too, noted Rose Ann Radzelovage. Sisters at Mount St. Joseph also have found large groups of monarchs.

The group of about 30 -- including several local students -- also was put through paces on how to determine the sex of a monarch. Males have scent glands in its lower third and thin veins in opened wings.

The difference between monarchs and the Kentucky state butterfly -- the viceroy -- also was noted. Viceroys are smaller, and the caterpillars are completely different from the brightly striped monarch caterpillar.



# Cold front ushers in autumn bird flurry

## Trip to Peabody will be Nov. 9

**T**he change of season brings a change in habitat. It also brings a change in the birding population. Those birds who show up most often in early spring and mid-fall didn't mind the cold Oct. 17 as the Daviess County Audubon Society made its way on a half-mile stretch of the David C. Adkisson Greenbelt Park, along Horse Fork Creek off West Byers Avenue.

The group hadn't even exited the parking lot off the Higdon Road dead end when a pair of great blue herons flew overhead, signaling it was going to be a profitable morning.

Although the last of the summer warblers – Magnolia and black-throated green -- left with the Friday night cold front, there were other visitors of interest. Both ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets were tallied. So were brown creepers, who blend in quietly along the tree trunks. A pair of yellow-bellied sapsuckers, with that distinctive vertical stripe along the side,



*From left, Judy Adams, Bill Little, Jill Flachskam, Kenny Lin, Mary Kissel, David Stratton, Brenda Little and Tony Eaden scan the Horse Fork Creek trail for fall birds. (Winny Lin photo)*

thrilled those in attendance, and the morning concluded with a pair of Cooper's hawks letting the cool winds carry them away.

Hikers were: Judy Adams, Bill Little, Jill Flachskam, Kenny Lin, Mary Kissel, David Stratton, Brenda Little, Winny Lin and Tony Eaden.

Birds recorded included: song sparrow, Canada goose, great blue heron, goldfinch, northern flicker, blue jay, downy woodpecker, ruby-crowned kinglet, eastern pe-

wee, eastern towhee, red-winged blackbird, red-bellied woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, cardinal, white-breasted nuthatch, robin, starling, killdeer, white-throated sparrow, tufted titmouse, Carolina chickadee, blue jay, hairy woodpecker, Cooper's hawk, Carolina wren, red-tailed hawk, brown creeper, yellow-rumped warbler, house sparrow.

The morning concluded with hot drinks at Dairy Queen on New Hartford Road.

For the November field trip, the target bird will be the short-eared owl, another one of America's most endangered species. Peabody Wildlife Management Area will be the destination Nov. 9, to take advantage of manager Eric Williams' expertise and the owls' inclination to be most visible later in the day.

Meet at Owensboro Community and Technical College's south lot at 2 p.m. The group will eat supper on the way back to town.

From the president's perch

## Crack the J52 code: Rejoin national organization

**By Brenda Little**

**L**ast month, our treasurer, Charlie Morris, alerted me to the need for our chapter to get our ducks in a row concerning dues: listing paid-up members, the dates when each member's year of membership

expires, and such. When we changed from our newsletters being sent by snail mail to electronic delivery via email, we lost our mailing label coding for when a member's membership expired indicating that it was time for renewal.

What I have realized during the weeks

when we've been looking at local dues receipts and the list of members' names from the National Audubon Society, which includes a membership in Daviess County Audubon Society, is that almost none of our active members, my

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# Brescia professor seeks input on public art celebrating birds

**T**he beauty of art and the beauty of nature are taking root in the fertile imagination of Brescia art professor David Stratton, who is exploring a way to put a bird sculpture in a natural setting within the city limits of Owensboro, perhaps the David C. Adkisson Greenbelt Park.

"My main goal is to create some educational objects, informational boards and public sculptures to entice some thinking and children-giggles," he said.

Primarily a Web and graphic designer and landscape painter, he has a passion to create public art. The idea is evolving from a Brescia-supported program, "art in service to the community."

"Instead of using only students, this 'program' utilizes staff, faculty, students, alumni and area technicians (that answer my call) to implement public sculpture, design, promotions, a wide range of things art-and-design-related," he explained.

At this point, he is drawn to using the image of a red-tailed hawk, an almost ubiquitous presence along the byways of western Kentucky. So, it wouldn't be out of the ordinary to see a large hawk figure rising from the post blocking cars from entering the walkways.

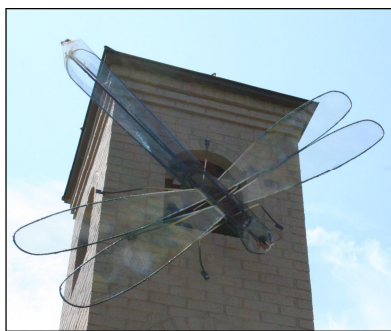
The Greenbelt seems a good fit for a sculpture, because it's a natural setting, and artwork wouldn't be blocked by cars or other large objects, he said. However, he is also working with the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden on design and publication ideas and would "loooooove" to work with PRIDE on public art for medians and city entrances.

He said the sculpture would be made from clay, steel or a fiberglass-hybrid, with clay being the most realistic media. Brescia will donate the clay or steel to make the hawk, but he would have to find funding for a post.

Stratton joined the DC Audubon bunch on their Horse Fork Creek trip. After that, he also wondered about putting up an information kiosk on a section of the Greenbelt that would highlight birds that are either uniquely associated with Daviess County or are special visitors.



*David Stratton's "In Silence I Speak"*



*A Stratton dragonfly on campus celebrated the "Big Bugs" exhibit at Western Kentucky Botanical Garden. (art images courtesy of David Stratton)*

## Trash

From Page 1

fixed barbecue sandwiches and by Mike and Sherry Henshaw, who provided bottled water. The food and drink were essential when the workers paused just past the midway point to rest before tackling the final couple of hours of work.

Radzelovage said she was disheartened by the amount of trash that had accumulated since last year's pickup.

"That's disgusting. I don't know why people keep throwing everything out of their windows," she said.

Co-chairing the event were: Radzelovage, Tony Eaden and Carolyn Williams. Also participating were: Bill and Brenda Little, Brenda's sister-in-law, Virginia Bailey, Jill Flachskam and Steve Hahus.

We've already begun making plans to participate in the program next year. For some of our people who feel it is time to pass the torch, we hope to graduate them into supervisory, support and refreshment supply roles. We also plan to recruit some youth to pitch in along with us. This program is a good fit for our club because it is a way to earn funds quickly as well as being the kind of community service that is fitting for an environmental organization such as Audubon. We can practice what we preach and make money as well.

## Quail

From Page 1

common species most endangered, thanks to loss of habitat because of agricultural practices and use of pesticides. Nationally, the bobwhite population has decreased by 82 percent in the past 40 years. State officials believe the decline is about 67% in Kentucky, as farmers opted to replace native grasses with fescue. According to the Kentucky Division of Fish and Wildlife, this fescue formed a heavy sod, which prevented the growth of wildflowers and legumes which supplied the birds with seed and hosted insects. The thick ground covering also impeded quail's ability to scratch the ground for food.

The initiative focuses on ways to improve habitat for quail and engage landowners, hunters and nonhunters in methods to increase its population. Peabody WMA, one of Kentucky's most treasured grasslands, is one of the focus area for the project.

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. at First Christian Church, 7<sup>th</sup> and J. R. Miller Blvd. The program will begin promptly at 7:15. If you would like to eat dinner with Eric, please meet at 5:30 p.m. at Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn.

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# J52

*From Page 3*

family included, are members of the National Audubon Society. I've been privy through the years to how several of our members let their membership in "National," NAS, expire. Some of us signed up for "paperless renewal" with NAS, and that program failed. Instead of being paperless, it was just dead silence. We fell by the wayside after hearing nothing, on paper or otherwise, about renewing our memberships.

Other members tried to pay their dues to NAS using their credit cards, and the transactions never went through. These people, too, just fell by the wayside. Some members were offended when shortly after they joined NAS, they were hit-on by telephone solicitation for donations; some felt their names and addresses had been given to other organizations which hit on them. Others were not happy with too many mailings begging for money, and they decided to drop their memberships. There are other reasons

that our members have shared with me for their decision to pay local dues only.

Now that I've 'fessed up about my family's failure to keep our membership in NAS current, I'd like to launch a campaign to encourage our "local only" members to consider joining NAS with me. I believe that the National Audubon Society is the most respected and historically significant environmental organization there is. If it were not for the NAS beginning the Christmas Bird Count early in the 20th century, we would not have the data today that lets us know that 70% of the birds in North America are having problems with survival and are struggling with loss of habitat. The National Audubon Society began with a passionate concern for the health and safety of birds, but in the years following its organization, it expanded to encompass the entire spectrum of nature, our planet's: water, air, flora, fauna ... the whole ball of wax.

The National Audubon Society is not political; its thrust is education, the education of people of all ages, all walks of life, politicians, community organizers, everybody from cradle to grave. The

Daviess County Audubon Society, as a local chapter of NAS, is doing a bang-up job of outreach in our community by way of our programs geared to those of school age K through higher education levels, our monthly meetings' programs, and our field trips. Nobody is outside our target market for our product. What we are selling is the knowledge necessary to be a good citizen, an educated voter, a good parent, a good teacher, a good neighbor, a responsible inhabitant of Mother Earth.

I wish to encourage our "local only" members to consider taking a forgiving look at NAS if something has happened in the past to sour them on the organization.

Joining National can be done by going Googling "How to join the National Audubon Society?" It is important that you ask for membership in local chapter code J52 especially if you live outside of Owensboro. The cost is only \$20 for the first year and can be paid by credit card. We will have membership forms available for mailing with a check to NAS at the meeting on Nov. 3.

Please join me in joining up again.

## Brescia

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Stratton has been a freelance graphic designer since 1988, with stops at Josten's Inc. and Line Design Graphics in North Carolina and Mirror Sales in Knoxville, Tenn. He has taught graphic design courses (including computer application, studio and foundation courses) at Brescia since 1996, where he serves as department chair.

He also has taught design and art courses at Alamance Community College, Guilford Technical Community College and Illinois State University.

Interested in viewing Stratton's work? In late October, he was scheduled to install a 12-foot steel sculpture on Brescia's campus that is a "Contrast Tree of Birds" that swivels in an 8-foot circle. To at-

## On The Web

For more samples of Stratton's work online:

\* [www.brescia.edu/academics/divisions\\_and\\_schools/fine\\_arts/faculty\\_art\\_samples.php](http://www.brescia.edu/academics/divisions_and_schools/fine_arts/faculty_art_samples.php);

\* [www.heikepickettgallery.com/artists/stratton\\_david/stratton\\_david\\_1.html](http://www.heikepickettgallery.com/artists/stratton_david/stratton_david_1.html)

tract kids, he said he designed it to be "whimsical, goofy, clunky and (with) bright colors."

He is welcoming all sorts of input to inspire the project. What sort of life experience have you had with a red-tailed hawk? Or what kind of bird should be highlighted in art or a kiosk?

Contact him at [davids@brescia.edu](mailto:davids@brescia.edu).

## DC Audubon Call Notes

\* To help with record keeping for annual reports, volunteers at chapter events are asked to pick up and return record sheets at monthly meetings. This will help us keep track of such items as hours and miles logged, tallies that must be sent to the national office next summer.

\* Thanks to Ken Hurm for repairing feeders at the Powell Bird Blind and Scott Harp for working with Conrad Toepfer's Brescia biology class at Ben Hawes State Park.

\* Welcome back, Joe Ford, to the Joe Ford Library at Brescia from noon to 4 p.m. Tuesdays this month as he continues his recovery.

\* Charles Morris will continue to work with Integrity Nursery to see if the tree planted at Texas Gas will rebound. If not, the nursery has promised to replace the tree next spring.

\* The possibility of re-establishing a club scrapbook is being discussed. If you'd like to help or have DCAS memorabilia or photos from the past 40+ years, contact Brenda Little at [littleredhen1@wildblue.net](mailto:littleredhen1@wildblue.net)

# What's in Your Feeder?

Art and text from  
Cornell University  
Feeder Watch



Blue Jay

**Size:** 11 to 12 inches tall

**Call:** Harsh "Jay" or musical "queedle." Also mimics other birds

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, corn, milo seeds and suet



Downy & Hairy  
Woodpecker

**Size:** 6 (Downy) and 9 (Hairy) inches

**Call:** Hairy: "Peek," flat whiny

Downy: "Pik," descending whinny

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, and suet



White-Throated Sparrow

**Size:** 6 inches

**Call:** "Sweet, Sweet Canada" or "Poor Sam Peabody"

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, corn, millet off flat surface



White-Breasted  
Nuthatch

**Size:** 6 inches

**Call:** "Ank, Ank"

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds and suet



Mourning Dove

**Size:** 12 inches

**Call:** "Oooahoo, ooo, ooo, ooo"

**Eats:** Millet, milo seeds and corn on ground



House Finch

**Size:** 5 3/4 inches

**Call:** Harsh notes

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, millet and niger seeds



Goldfinch

**Size:** 4 1/4 inches

**Call:** "Per-chik-oree" or other assorted whistles

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, millet and niger seeds. Eats upside down on tube feeder

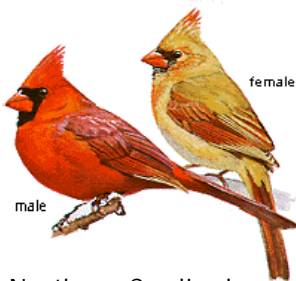


Tufted Titmouse

**Size:** 6 inches

**Call:** Whistle of four to eight notes, "Peter, Peter"

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds and suet



Northern Cardinal

**Size:** 7 3/4 inches

**Call:** "Whit, whit, whit" or "purty, purty, purty"

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds



Carolina Chickadee

**Size:** 4 1/2 inches

**Call:** Sharp "chick-a-dee-dee-dee"

**Eats:** Black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds and suet



Dark-eyed junco

**Size:** 6 (inches)

**Call:** "Tsip," "zeet," "kew, kew"

**Eats:** All seeds on platform feeder or ground

Red-bellied  
Woodpecker

**Size:** 9 inches

**Call:** "Churr"

**Eats:** Seeds, fruit, nuts and suet

