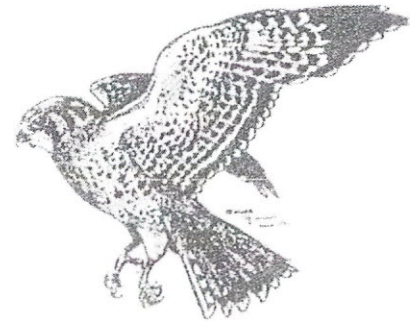


AUDUBON
SOCIETY OF
KENTUCKY
KESTREL



2011-12

No. 3 February

Spring Luncheon Program to Be on JJ Audubon March 3

Reservations deadline: Feb. 16

Our society has been called by his name since its beginning, but what do you really know about John James Audubon? The speaker for the Audubon Society of Kentucky Spring luncheon, Dr. Richard Taylor, will share his knowledge of Audubon's life through his book, *Rare Bird: Sonnets on the Life of John James Audubon*.

The annual meeting will be at Spindletop Hall Saturday, March 3, with business meeting at 11, luncheon served at noon, and program beginning at 1pm. **Spindletop policy now requires a total number attending to be reported to them by February 17. If you were used to being able to make your reservation later, please take note of this change and have yours to Joe Swanson by February 16.**

Dr. Taylor is Keenan Visiting Writer at Transylvania University and former Kentucky poet laureate. He and his wife own Poor Richard's Books in Frankfort. His book is unique in telling Audubon's story in a series of 86 poems rather than the usual biographical prose form. It covers Audubon's career from his birth in Haiti through living in France, coming to America, marriage, travels, and publication of his *Birds of America*.

Rare Bird is a fine letterpress publication by Larkspur Press with limited edition of 550 hardcover (\$36) and a paperback edition (\$28). Copies will be available for sale and to be signed.

In the business session, officers will be elected, revised bylaws adopted, and reports presented on the seed sale, finances, and Spring Weekend.

The luncheon menu features a choice of two entrees: chicken à la king or penne pasta alla genovese (vegetarian), with country green beans, roasted pota-

Spring Weekend returns to Pine Mountain May 4-6

This spring ASK returns to a favorite spot for the birding weekend: Pine Mountain State Resort Park, the only one of the parks we usually go to that is on a mountain. The park itself is scenic, the birding is usually good, and there is a good variety of habitat both in the park and nearby, with Cumberland Gap National Park being just down the road.

Pine Mountain was the first state park, opened in 1924, but the lodge and cottages were not built until the 1960s. There are 30 lodge guest rooms and 10 one-and two-bedroom cottages as well as camping. Senior discount rates are given.

Those attending must make their own reservations, either online at www.parks.ky.gov or by calling 800-325-1712. When you call, say that you are with the Audubon Society. The deadline for rooms in the Audubon bloc is April 4. Cancellations must be received by April 27.

The birding weekend begins with a picnic potluck Friday evening (bring a main dish, salad, or dessert to share and your own beverage). Guided walks are scheduled all day Saturday and Sunday morning. There will be a break in birding to watch a horse race late Saturday, followed by a program and short business meeting if needed.

To find Pine Mountain Park from Lexington, take I-75 south to Corbin, exit east on U.S. 25E, follow it through Pineville, and the road to the park will be a right turn before you get to the tunnel. Birders of all ability levels are welcomed. If you are a novice, birding with experienced birders is the best and easiest way to learn. We are not a competitive group. We bird for fun.

Program details will appear in the April newsletter.

(Continued on page 2)

War and Peace: Squirrels Version.

I got a new bird feeder for Christmas. It was to replace an old wooden one that was nailed to the porch rail and was easy for squirrels to get seed from. One night the squirrels, or possibly a raccoon, pulled the top loose and dropped it on the ground, leaving just the open floor of the feeder.

The new one hung from a branch and was round with a narrow tray all the way around: easy enough for small birds. It was just slightly out of reach for a squirrel standing on the porch rail.

It took exactly 12 days for squirrels to learn how to jump onto the feeder and hang up-side-down to reach the seed. At first, when they tried it, they would slide off and fall on the porch. I actually felt sorry for them and kept putting some seed on the rail along with peanuts as usual. Of course they weren't satisfied with that.

I wondered if each squirrel had to learn this skill for itself, or if they could communicate with each other. It doesn't matter now anyhow. A couple of weeks later, I came home one day to find the new feeder lying in pieces on the porch. They had pulled it down and the plastic top broke in two pieces. Two squirrels were feasting on the spilled seed.

I picked up the pieces and went back to putting more seed on the porch rail. Oh yes, I have a metal feeder with the bar that closes when anything heavier than a small bird perches on it. The squirrels sit on the rail and reach around to scoop up the seed. If I put the feeder out in the middle of the yard on a pole, that might deter them. But I like seeing the feeders through my front window and being able to reach them easily.

So I have given up and made peace with my squirrels. I've lived in this house 42 years, so these squirrels, with a life expectancy of six years, may be at least the seventh generation since I started feeding. All God's creatures need to eat. I will fight no more forever with my squirrels.

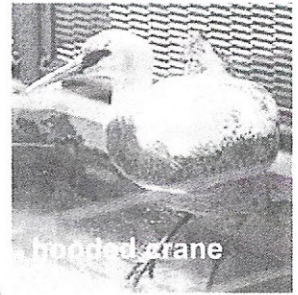
(Luncheon Meeting, Continued from page 1)

toes, and a wild field green salad with walnuts and mandarin oranges. Dessert will be bourbon pecan pie. The price of \$23 includes tip, tax, and a small charge for use of the meeting room. Mail to treasurer Joe Swanson, using the reservation form on the back of the newsletter.

March is dues renewal month. You may write one check to pay for dues and luncheon if you like.

ASK Birders First to Report Rare Crane Sighting

ASK members Marie Sutton and Phyllis Deal were birding on the Hi-wassa National Wildlife Refuge in Tennessee in mid-December, observing sandhill cranes, when they spotted a rare vagrant hooded crane. They were the first to report the bird on the refuge. They alerted local birders, crane experts were consulted, and soon reports went out on birding networks. Soon hundreds of birders descended on the refuge to see the hooded crane, which remained with the sandhills into mid-January.



The bird was not banded so there was no way to be sure, but it may be one that was reported in the northwest earlier. Only a very few have been seen in the U.S. The hooded is one of the smallest cranes, grey with the top of the neck and head white except for a patch of red over the eye. It breeds in Siberia and possibly Mongolia and normally winters in Japan, Korea, and China. The hooded is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN red list of threatened species.

Hiwassee Refuge is in southeastern Tennessee on Chickamauga Lake at the confluence of the Hiwassee and Tennessee Rivers. It has the largest winter flock of sandhill cranes outside Florida.

CBC Tallies 80 Species

David Lang reports a total of 80 species reported by ASK participants in the Christmas Bird Count in December 2011 with a total of 13,972 individuals. This compares to 88 (22,874) in 2010 and 73 (16,437) in 2009. (Individual counts are estimates.) Oddly enough, the weather was colder in 2010.

Perhaps the most exciting report was the flock of 50 sandhill cranes flying overhead in Jessamine County, seen by Marie Sutton, Phyllis Deal, Bernice Wood and Rose Canon. The cranes were also sighted over northern Fayette County by an observer who wasn't participating in the count.

Single sightings were the loggerhead shrike, eastern phoebe, American woodcock, Wilson's snipe, winter wren, ruby-crowned kinglet, American tree sparrow, black duck, northern pintail, black-crowned night heron, and bald eagle.

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF KENTUCKY, INC.

Since 1910, Kentucky's First Audubon Organization

<http://audubonsocietyofky.org>

The Audubon Society of Kentucky cordially invites you to participate in any of our activities and field trips. You need not be a member of our society, nor do you need to be an experienced birder; a desire to get out-of-doors is all that is necessary. All ages are welcome. Please come.

Activities and Field Trips 2011-12

Date & Time	Activity	Meeting Place	
Sat. 2/11	Crane Viewing, Cecilia, KY(2) call to confirm		Joe Swanson
Sun. 2/19 1:30pm	Reservoir #4 (A)	Lakeside Golf Course, Richmond Rd	
Sat. 2/25 8am	Spindletop (A)	McDonalds, Newtown Pike in overflow parking area, far side of McDonalds	
Annual Events			
Sat. 3/3 11am-2pm	Spring Luncheon and General Meeting	Spindletop Hall	Jim Hodge
May 4-6	Spring Weekend, Pine Mountain State Resort Park (3) Reservations: parks.ky.gov or call 859-325-1742.		Bernice Wood

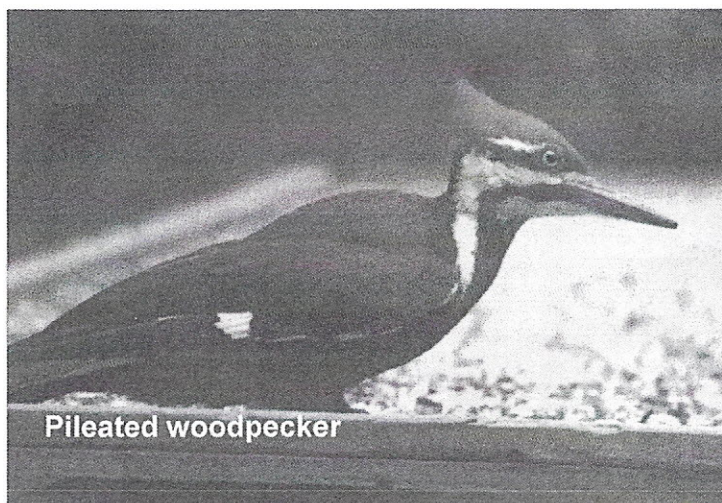
The spring field trip and walk schedule has not been completed at this time. Watch for information when it is available on the ASK website audubonsocietyofky.org and on the ASKlistserve.

For trip leaders and last-minute changes, see ASK listserver: ask@freelists.org

Notes: 1=sack lunch; 2=call leader to confirm trip or receive assignment; 3=make own lodge or motel reservations. Est. duration of trip: A=2-3 hrs., B= 6+ hrs., C=1 or more nights

This list is updated in each newsletter. If you would like your name added to the mailing list, contact Joe Swanson, treasurer, or Rose Canon, newsletter editor.

Contacts: Rose Canon, 278-6155; Jim Hodge, 263-9847; David & Betsy Lang, 502-867-1118, de_lang@bellsouth.net; Betty Maxson, 859-948-1824; Joe Swanson, 273-4601, gailandjoe@windstream.net; Bernice Wood, 254-4072.



Pileated woodpecker

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Audubon Society of Kentucky Incorporated
Lexington, Kentucky

President Jim Hodge, 263-9841	Treasurer Joe Swanson, 273-4601
Vice President Bernice Wood, 254-4072	Newsletter Editor Rose Canon 278-6155
Secretary David and Betsy Lang, 502-867-1118	

Luncheon Reservation

Choice of entree: chicken a la king _____ Penne alla Genovese (vegetarian)

No. attending _____ Price each \$23.00 total cost _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail with check to Treasurer Joe Swanson, 604 Pearl Cove, Lexington, KY 40509.

March is membership renewal month. To pay annual dues, complete form and add amount of dues to cost of luncheon.

E-mail address

New Member _____ Renewal _____ Dues: \$5 student, \$10 individual \$15 family

sustaining \$20 _____ Do you prefer newsletter by email or printed copy?