

Kentucky Ornithological Society Annual Meeting, 2025

Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park, September 19-21, 2025

The 2025 annual meeting got an informal start with Friday afternoon field trips. Jeremy Teague took a group to the Clarks River NWR and Brad Everhart took a group to the Barkley Dam and other nearby spots.

The Friday evening meeting began with acting Vice President, Libby Megna, welcoming attendees. She thanked David Bailey for taking on the role of President and thanked all those who made the meeting possible. She gave some information about the silent auction, organized by Asher Higgins.

Steve Kistler kicked off the meeting's presentations with his bird quiz. As always, it was lots of fun to try and figure out some tricky identifications.

Sam Prickett, the 2025 Kingsolver Grant recipient, along with Ethan Wells, the '24 recipient, gave a presentation about their experience at Camp Talon in Georgia this summer. They each got several "lifers" at camp and enjoyed learning with other like-minded young people and experienced professional naturalists. They developed lasting friendships and learned how people from different backgrounds can bond over nature.

Libby presented a talk about "Why Birds' Eyeballs Are Better Than Yours." She compared a human eye to a bird eye in structure. Bird eyes have additional structures in the eye, more photo receptors, and a greater visual field, which helps them see ultraviolet light, detect electromagnetic fields, and focus better. These adaptations help birds survive in their habitats.

After her talk, Libby asked leaders to describe the Saturday field trips:

Morning walks, starting at 8:00

- Win Ahrens – Kentucky Lake Scenic Drive Loop in Land Between the Lakes (LBL), looking for warblers and other passerines.
- David Bailey – Sledd Creek Boat Ramp, for warblers, passerines, and water birds
- Libby Megna – area around the lodge, including the beach and marina, for passerines, gulls, and water birds.
- Jeremy Teague – Boyd's Landing on the north shore of Lake Barkley, which is a migrant trap.

Afternoon walks, starting at 1:00

- David Bailey and Hap Chambers – Jonathan Creek Embayment for shore birds, waders, and ducks
- Steve Kistler – Canal Loop Trail at LBL, a general nature walk
- Ethan Wells – Kentucky and Barkley Dams for gulls, ducks, and terns

David Bailey, KOS President, opened the Saturday evening program. He introduced the current board, thanking them for their service. He recognized retiring board members, Nancy Braun and Donna Hundley. He introduced the slate of candidates for officer positions and councillor positions including new candidates Brad Eberhart, Bruce Cryder, and Joyce Bender. See the slate below.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the entire slate. The motion was approved unanimously.

KOS Treasurer, Steve Kistler, gave a detailed treasurer's report. KOS is in good financial shape, thanks to the generosity of our members and donors. Funds are available for grants in bird-related research, publication, and education and for ongoing needs: the twice-yearly meetings and publication/ mailing costs of *The Kentucky Warbler*. Kroger reward funds yielded \$675 and the t-shirt design contest/sale earned \$1,864.

Membership remains fairly stable with steady growth – currently 329 members.

David asked trip leaders for highlights of the day's field trips before recording the species seen during the meeting so far. There were 123 species identified including 21 warblers.

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Keynote Speaker, Dr. D.J. McNeil – Assistant Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Management at the University of Kentucky. His research focuses on the ecology and conservation of native wildlife, particularly species of conservation concern. His lab aims to bridge the fields of forest management and animal population ecology.

His talk revolved around the Umbrella Species concept. With this concept, improving the habitat for one significant threatened species can help other organisms in the environment. He and his associates have been working to improve the habitat for Golden-winged Warblers, which breed in heavily forested/early succession situations. They have managed tracts of land in the Midwest and Appalachia, monitoring the success of GWWA and other birds, plants, and insects. They found that using GWWA as an umbrella species can prove beneficial for many other species, especially when combined with management for Cerulean Warblers. Healthy forest management is essential.

A field trip for Sunday was announced: David Bailey will meet birders at 8:30 at the Peabody WMA, Goose Lake Hotspot. (Directions sent to birdky email.) Informal trips were also available.

The 2026 Spring Meeting will be held in Berea, with details to be available soon.

The 2025 KOS Annual Meeting was drawn to a close, with 10 minutes for final bids in the silent auction and time for fellowship.

Candidates for KOS Board Positions, September 20, 2025

- President: David Bailey
- Vice President: Libby Megna
- Secretary, recording: Janet Kistler
- Secretary, corresponding: Carol Besse
- Treasurer: Steve Kistler

Councillors (3-year terms)

- through 2026 Asher Higgins, Michael Patton
- through 2027 Kyle Bixler, Brad Everhart
- through 2028 Joyce Bender, Bruce Cryder