

Anne Stamm Grant report By Steve Kistler

I was pleased to receive a 2021 grant of \$593.56 for the purchase of four additional pairs of binoculars for use in leading bird hikes at Mammoth Cave National Park. Adding these to a previous grant purchase, we now have ten pairs of good 8 x 42 binoculars to share.

I have led bird and wildflower hikes at Mammoth Cave since the spring of 2016, with the exception of 2020, due to COVID restrictions. Typically, I begin in mid-March and continue through April each year. After that date, the trees are leafed out enough that novice birders have difficulty locating the birds. I estimate that I have led approximately 100 hikes over that period.

Most participants are beginning birders who happen to be visiting the park. They come from all over the nation and the world. My favorite are nature-loving kids. One ten-year old girl this spring was dying to see a scarlet tanager. We were able to get her good looks at three, plus a couple of summer tanagers for comparison purposes. She and her mom were overjoyed! Others in the group include experienced birders, either KOS members dropping by to join us, or folks traveling through the area. More eyes are always helpful.

Group sizes range from just a few handfuls of folks to several dozen. In 2022, I had one British gent who showed up on a rainy day in full wet weather gear. He wanted to find some American birds! We lasted about 15 minutes in a steady rain. On the final day of 2022, I had my biggest group ever, with 42 participants. The expression "herding cats" comes to mind, but everyone had a good walk on a fine spring day. Lots of kids.

The purpose of the Anne Stamm fund is to educate young people about the birds of Kentucky. I am grateful to KOS for providing the means to do so.