



Sycamore Warbler



Volume 30, Issue 2

March/April 2005

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Upcoming Spring Programs

Sycamore Audubon Society plans to prepare everyone for spring with great programs in March and April. The temperatures may still be cold outside, but we can definitely start readying ourselves for the beautiful creatures set to return this spring!

On Thursday, March 10, Russ Mumford, author of *The Birds of Indiana* and *The Mammals of Indiana*, will present a program on butterflies called "Butterflies that Flutter By." At this program, we'll have the opportunity to learn more about some of nature's other winged creatures and to see wonderful photographs.

Then, on Thursday, April 14, Barny Dunning, Purdue professor and SAS board member, will present on the "Status and Identification of Indiana's Breeding Warblers." This presentation will help everyone

gear up for spring migration and the arrival of Indiana's nesting warblers.

Meetings start at 7:15PM in the Walnut Room of the West Lafayette Public Library. Members are also encouraged to meet for dinner before the program. Those interested should meet at 6PM at the Parthenon restaurant in Chauncey Hill Mall.



Credit: Kirsten Munson

Christmas Bird Count Results

This year's Christmas Bird Counts were again a success. Those taking part in the Lafayette area count on December 18 enjoyed a mild winter day with much sunshine. Twenty-six observers counted birds, both in the field and at feeders. Some highlights included one Cackling Goose, two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, five Pine Siskins, and a Northern Shrike found at Prophetstown State Park.

After spending many hours out in the field, observers congregated in the evening at the Wild Bird Shoppe to tally the data, share stories, and warm up after a long day out. The count was organized by Ed Hopkins,

who also compiles and submits the data for the count.

In addition to the Lafayette area count, a smaller group of birders ventured out on New Year's Day to count birds at Willow Slough Fish & Wildlife Area and Iroquois Preserves. These areas are found along the western edge of the state.

The data collected from the Christmas Bird Counts will contribute to ongoing research projects of the National Audubon Society intended to monitor bird populations.

Continued on page 2

LOCAL & CHAPTER NEWS

Spring Field Trips

March 12. Waterfowl Viewing Field Trip. Barny Dunning will lead this field trip to view migrating waterfowl in our area, including ducks and geese. The group will focus its efforts at Pine Creek Gamebird Habitat Area in Benton County, along with other local sites. It is hoped that early migrant birds of the open country will also put in a showing. Meet at 8:30AM in the first gravel parking lot at Celery Bog Nature Area (on the right hand side) in West Lafayette off Lindberg Road. Please note this new meeting location, as we will no longer be meeting at the Levee due to parking concerns.

April 9. Early Spring Migrants Field Trip. Come along with us to Horticulture Park in West Lafayette where we'll be looking for early spring migrants. We're hoping that some migrating songbirds – perhaps an early warbler, thrush, vireo, or flycatcher – will greet us while there. Meet at 8AM in the east parking lot on McCormick Road (across from the Purdue West shopping center).

If you have any questions, contact Barny.

New NICHES Property: Indian Creek Basin

NICHES Land Trust purchased 59 acres of bottomlands along the Wabash River in Tippecanoe County last December. This new property is a little downstream from Granville Bridge and will be called Indian Creek Basin. The purchase was made possible by funds donated by an anonymous donor, which was supplemented by a grant from the Roy Whistler Foundation.

NICHES is submitting an application to enter the property into the Federal Wetland Reserve program. The property will continue to be farmed in 2005 since the application cannot be filed until NICHES has owned the property for one year. Keeping the property in crops until restoration is ready to begin keeps out weeds, making the later restoration easier and improving its rate of success.

Indian Creek Basin buffers the river and is the newest property along the Wabash corridor between Granville Bridge in Tippecanoe County and Little Pine Creek in Warren County. Already existing properties in that area include Granville Landing; Ross Hills Park; Ross Camp; Wabash Bottoms; Janssen Tract; Black Rock Barrens; and Weiler-Leopold Nature Reserve.



Credit: Kirsten Munson



Credit: Steven J. D'Amato

Christmas Bird Count Results — Continued from page 1

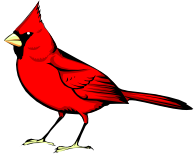
Participants in the Lafayette count included: Delano Arvin, Kevin Arvin, Mark Arvin, Mike Bratton, Josh Christian, Barny Dunning, Angela Hoffman, Ed Hopkins, Elsa Janle, Noble Kizer, Allison Klement, Alvin Laasanen, Seth McConchie, Gale Motter, Michael Myers, Joe Pearson, Temple Pearson, Harry Potter, Rick Read, Dan Scheiman, John Skene, Larry Theller, Rebecca Theller, Charles Tuttle, Susan Ulrich, and Ted Ulrich.

Participants in the Willow Slough – Iroquois Preserves count included: Susan Bagby, Ken Brock, Leslie Bury, John Cassady, Leila Mae Eason, Jed Hertz, Lynea Hinchman, Ed Hopkins, Jean Marshall, Jeff McCoy, Bronson Radcliff, and Dave Spitnagle.

For full results, see page 6. Species of note are shown in italics.

Bake Sale at Library

This spring, SAS will again have a bake sale and plant sale booth at the Friends of the West Lafayette Public Library's book fair. The book sale will run the weekend of April 29 – May 1. In addition to the book and bake sales, area merchants plan on holding a street fair. If you're interested in helping at the table that weekend, or by providing baked goods, please contact Susan Ulrich. Proceeds from the sale will benefit the Goose Pond habitat restoration project.



An Open Letter to Our Members

Dear Sycamore Audubon members,

Well, it has finally happened; our chapter has to undertake some cost-cutting measures, and we need your input. As you may know, as a chapter of the National Audubon Society, we have received a portion of each member's dues every year. However, National Audubon is undergoing its own financial difficulties, and they have recently been pushing to consolidate local chapters into Audubon Centers. Because of this, they have been reducing the amount of dues share that our chapter receives. This is making it more difficult for us to fund community projects and Audubon Adventures, in addition to distributing six issues of *The Sycamore Warbler* to our membership each year.

Our chapter has more than 500 listed members, but we have no way of knowing how many are primarily subscribers to National Audubon only and the *Audubon* magazine versus those who are also interested in chapter activities. Attendance at monthly meetings ranges between 10 – 40 people and field trips usually have about 10 attendees. Every issue of the *Warbler* costs hundreds of dollars to print and mail to 500+ members, and this seems a logical place to reduce expenditures if many members are not interested in receiving it. As environmentalists, we also want to reduce unnecessary use of paper and ink as well!

We are asking all members who wish to continue receiving the *Warbler* to fill out and return the form below. Please indicate how you would prefer to receive the newsletter: 1) by paper copy; 2) via e-mail; or 3) by having it posted on our website. We are happy to provide members with a newsletter, as long as they want to receive it.

Please do take a moment and let us know that you would like to continue to receive our newsletter. We appreciate your participation in our chapter, and we thank you for your continued interest in birds and the environment.

Board of Directors
Sycamore Audubon Society

YES, I want to continue receiving *The Sycamore Warbler*!

If possible, I would prefer to receive the newsletter by:

- paper copy
 e-mail
 web site

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please detach form and return to:
Sycamore Audubon Society, P. O. Box 2716, West Lafayette, IN 47996.

Late Winter Nature Notes & News

Jan 8: A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** visited **Diane Packett's** feeder in the morning.

Jan 9: **Lil Fisher** was delighted to see an adult **Bald Eagle** flying over the river by downtown Lafayette. Another bird, also believed to be an eagle, was further upstream.

Jan 9: While volunteering at Celery Bog and Lilly Nature Center, **Temple Pearson** observed some good birds at the feeders, including **3 species of woodpecker (Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy), Fox Sparrow, and Red-tailed Hawk**. She was also able to share the birds with some new friends from China.

Jan 25: On campus, **Barny Dunning** observed some early signs of spring. He heard **House Finches** singing, and he watched an **American Kestrel** displaying a few days prior.

Jan 26: East of Monticello, **Rick Read** saw approximately 200 birds foraging in the snow among corn stubble. The majority of them turned out to be **Snow Buntings**, with a few **Horned Larks** mixed in.

Jan 29: Walking home from the office, **Orvin Lindell** watched an **Eastern Screech Owl** flying through the snow on South 9th Street near the South Street Hill.

Jan 29: Returning home at nearly midnight after a trip, **Angela Hoffman** and **Seth McConchie** saw a **Great Horned Owl** perched in a small tree along Sagamore Parkway near Happy Hollow Road. The bird was visible as a shadow against the snowy night.

Feb 6: Flying overhead at 3:15PM, **Nancy and Brad Grenard** saw a "V" of **Sandhill Cranes** pass over them.

Feb 12: For a few weeks, **Del Arvin** had a hard-to-identify accipiter visiting his yard to prey on feeder birds. Sadly for the bird, it killed itself in a window impact on this day, but this provided an opportunity to measure it for a definitive ID. Based on precise measurements, he found that the bird was a **Sharp-shinned Hawk**.



Credit: Steven J. D'Amato

Feb 19: While scanning geese at Mulvey Pond, **Ed Hopkins** observed a **Ross' Goose** among the usual group of **Canada Geese**.

Eagle Viewing Field Trip Report by Barny Dunning



A large crowd gathered on February 12th to look for Bald Eagles and other good birds in the Tippecanoe County area. At least 34 people collected at 9AM and divided into car pools to travel to spots along the river and to various wetlands.

Our advertised goal proved to be easy to meet: we had an immature eagle fly by near the Route 231 bridge over the Wabash, and an adult on her nest in the southwest corner of the county. Many people have seen the eagle nest on Collier Island by Ross Hill County Park over the years. That nest blew down in 2004, but the eagle pair built a new nest a bit upstream from Collier Island, and the new nest is also visible from a county road. So we got good views.

At a variety of other places, we saw 3 Mute Swans, Common Mergansers, and a Cackling Goose, the newly described species split from Canada Goose. We did very well on hawks: Rough-legged Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Harrier, and American Kestrel were seen by at least part of the group.

This field trip was the first at our new starting point, the overflow parking lot at the Lilly Nature Center next to Celery Bog. We are not going to meet anymore at the old location, the former Smitty's store in Levee Plaza, because of a new towing policy there.

**Many thanks to Barny Dunning, Ed Hopkins, and Susan Ulrich
for their contributions to this issue of the newsletter!**



Credit: Kirsten Munson

Wednesdays in the Wild

Wandering Wednesdays Nature Hike

MAR 2nd 1 – 3PM; led by Brian Tunis. At Happy Hollow Park, West Lafayette.

Bluebird Basics

MAR 9th 1 – 3PM; led by Mary Cutler. At Lilly Nature Center/Celery Bog Nature Area.

Advance Preview of Spring Wildflowers

MAR 16th 1 – 3PM; led by Chris & Jim Brewster. At Lilly Nature Center/Celery Bog Nature Area.

Sounds of Spring – Wacky Woodcocks!

MAR 23rd 6:30PM; led by Rod Williams. Meet in parking lot for Tippecanoe Amphitheater and bring a flashlight.

Duck Migration

MAR 30th 1 – 3PM; led by Susan Ulrich. At Lilly Nature Center/Celery Bog Nature Area.

Wandering Wednesdays Nature & History Hike

APR 6th 1 – 3PM; led by Dan McCain. This special hike will be a 3-mile walk along the Monon High Bridge Trail to visit places overlooking Deer Creek valley. Meet at City Park in Delphi or carpool from West Lafayette, leaving the Lilly Nature Center promptly at 12:15PM.

Leapin' Lily Pads (Frogs & Toads)

APR 13th 7 – 9PM; led by Mary Cutler. At Lilly Nature Center/Celery Bog Nature Area.

Woodland Gems (Spring Wildflowers)

APR 20th 1 – 3PM; led by Chris & Jim Brewster. At Michaud-Sinninger/Cumberland Woods in West Lafayette. Meet in athletic complex parking lot on Salisbury Street, just north of Cumberland Avenue.

Hidden Treasures in Vernal Pools

APR 27th 6:30 – 8:30PM; led by Mary Cutler. At Lilly Nature Center/Celery Bog Nature Area.

For more information about these programs, contact:

- Mary Cutler: (765) 567-2993 or
- Joan Mohr Samuels: (765) 567-7023

Events & Programs of Interest



Credit: R. Gilbert Bell

Nature Conservancy Work Day

Saturday, March 19th @ 10AM — 2PM

Lookout Point Gravel Hill Prairie, Tippecanoe County

This work day is intended to remove garlic mustard from the property. Bring water and gloves with you. Lookout Point offers an exceptional panoramic view of the Wabash River Valley. To caravan to the property, meet at the Eli Lilly parking lot (off Lilly Road) at 10AM.

Mosses & Liverworts -- the Overlooked Plants!

Monday, March 28th @ 7PM

Presented by Bill McKnight, Science Dept. Chairman at Guerin HS (Noblesville)
West Lafayette Public Library – Elm Room

Sponsored by the West Central chapter of INPAWS.

NICHES Annual Meeting

Tuesday, April 12th @ 7PM

West Lafayette Public Library

Gus Nyberg, property manager for The Nature Conservancy's Kankakee Sands property, will speak about this large and exciting project. Desserts start at 6:30PM before the meeting.

Periodical Cicadas: the Plague and the Puzzle

Monday, April 25th @ 7PM

Presented by Gene Kritsky, author and professor
West Lafayette Public Library – Elm Room

Kritsky is the author of the book, *Periodical Cicadas: the Plague and the Puzzle*, and there will be copies available for purchase and signing after the program. Books will be sold at the discounted price of \$13. Please reserve your copy in advance by contacting Joan Mohr Samuels at (765) 567-7023.

Sponsored by the West Central chapter of INPAWS.

Earth Day on the Pedestrian Bridge

Friday, April 22nd @ 12PM

People are invited to come out for an "Eco-Convergence Event" between 12 — 1PM. There will be displays by environmental groups, a speech by the mayor, and other activities. Watch local media for more details.

2004 Christmas Bird Count Data

| <u>Species Name</u> | <u>Laf</u> | <u>WS/I</u> | <u>Species Name</u> | <u>Laf</u> | <u>WS/I</u> |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Pied-billed Grebe | 2 | - | Golden-crowned Kinglet | 26 | 3 |
| Great Blue Heron | 42 | 15 | Eastern Bluebird | 38 | 2 |
| Cackling Goose | 1 | 1 | American Robin | 1145 | 7 |
| Canada Goose | 1233 | 496 | Northern Mockingbird | - | 3 |
| Gadwall | 17 | - | European Starling | 57013 | 543 |
| American Black Duck | 3 | - | Cedar Waxwing | 87 | 78 |
| Mallard | 551 | 11 | Yellow-rumped Warbler | 2 | - |
| Green-winged Teal | 1 | - | Eastern Towhee | - | 4 |
| Bald Eagle | 5 | 1 | American Tree Sparrow | 155 | 442 |
| Northern Harrier | 11 | 16 | Field Sparrow | 7 | - |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | 3 | 4 | Savannah Sparrow | - | 1 |
| Cooper's Hawk | 9 | 2 | Fox Sparrow | 2 | 1 |
| Red-shouldered Hawk | 1 | - | Song Sparrow | 113 | 27 |
| Red-tailed Hawk | 69 | 20 | Swamp Sparrow | 11 | 1 |
| Rough-legged Hawk | 7 | 9 | White-throated Sparrow | 120 | 14 |
| American Kestrel | 25 | 3 | White-crowned Sparrow | 48 | 38 |
| Peregrine Falcon | 1 | - | Dark-eyed Junco | 286 | 384 |
| Ring-necked Pheasant | 6 | 17 | Lapland Longspur | 2 | 152 |
| Northern Bobwhite | - | 5 | Snow Bunting | - | 1 |
| Wild Turkey | 4 | 1 | Northern Cardinal | 346 | 91 |
| American Coot | 67 | - | Red-winged Blackbird | 85 | 80 |
| Sandhill Crane | 3 | 1 | Eastern Meadowlark | - | 8 |
| Killdeer | 13 | - | Rusty Blackbird | 18 | 8 |
| Wilson's Snipe | 3 | - | Common Grackle | 61 | 11 |
| Ring-billed Gull | 74 | - | Brown-headed Cowbird | 1964 | 7 |
| Rock Pigeon | 800 | 48 | Purple Finch | - | 2 |
| Eurasian Collared-Dove | - | 1 | House Finch | 275 | 51 |
| Mourning Dove | 353 | 166 | Pine Siskin | 5 | 15 |
| Eastern Screech-Owl | 10 | 14 | Common Redpoll | - | 7 |
| Great Horned Owl | 9 | 16 | American Goldfinch | 180 | 671 |
| Barred Owl | 1 | 10 | House Sparrow | 1088 | 143 |
| Long-eared Owl | - | 3 | Total Indiv | 67878 | 4464 |
| Short-eared Owl | 1 | 1 | Tot Species | 71 | 68 |
| Northern Saw-whet Owl | - | 12 | Tot Party Miles Afoot | 59.4 | 13.3 |
| Belted Kingfisher | 16 | - | Tot Party Time Afoot | 58.66 | 19 |
| Red-headed Woodpecker | - | 41 | Tot Mileage By Car | 280.5 | 106 |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker | 93 | 39 | Tot Time by Car | 26.25 | 12 |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | 2 | 1 | Feeder Time | 4.5 | 8 |
| Downy Woodpecker | 110 | 25 | Owling Time | 4.75 | 8.25 |
| Hairy Woodpecker | 14 | 7 | Owling Mileage | 41.5 | 24 |
| Northern Flicker | 32 | 1 | Tot Parties | 15 | 4 |
| Pileated Woodpecker | 10 | - | Total Observers | 26 | 12 |
| Northern Shrike | 1 | 1 | Total Miles (afoot & car) | 339.9 | 119.3 |
| Blue Jay | 76 | 271 | Total Time (afoot & car) | 84.91 | 31 |
| American Crow | 469 | 265 | Field Only Watcher | 25 | 8 |
| Horned Lark | 129 | 95 | Feeder Only Watcher | 1 | 4 |
| Black-capped Chickadee | - | 10 | F & F Watcher | 1 | - |
| Carolina Chickadee | 197 | - | | | |
| Tufted Titmouse | 104 | 14 | | | |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | 116 | 22 | | | |
| Brown Creeper | 51 | 2 | | | |
| Carolina Wren | 51 | 2 | | | |
| Winter Wren | 5 | - | | | |

The *Sycamore Warbler* is published six times a year by the Sycamore Audubon Society, a chapter of National Audubon Society serving Audubon members in Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Tippecanoe, Warren, and White counties in central northwest Indiana.

A subscription to the *Warbler* is included with membership in the National Audubon Society. All comments, suggestions, and submissions are welcome.

Send items you think SAS's membership might find interesting to the editor, Angela Hoffman. See address on page 1.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Chapter Application for New Members

I'd like to join! My check for \$20.00 is enclosed. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local Sycamore Chapter. Send **AUDUBON** magazine & the *Warbler* to:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Make your check payable to: **NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Mail to: The Sycamore Audubon Society, PO Box 2716, West Lafayette, IN 47996-2716

LOCAL CHAPTER H10
Sycamore Audubon Society
P. O. Box 2716
West Lafayette, IN 47996
7XCH8

Friends of Sycamore Audubon

Yes, I'd like to become a Friend of the Sycamore Audubon Society to help my local chapter maintain the high quality of its programming and environmental leadership. My check for \$15 is enclosed.

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Friends do not need to be members of the National Audubon Society. Friends who are not Audubon members will receive the *Sycamore Warbler*.

Indiana Raptors Need Our Help

Two Indiana raptors, an Osprey and a Bald Eagle, need our help. Read below for more information.

In November 2004, the Wildcat Wildlife Center (WWC) received a **juvenile Osprey** that had been hit by a car. The bird was one of the original chicks released at Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area earlier that year as part of a reintroduction program. Sadly, due to a wing injury, the young raptor will never be able to fly again and cannot be released. However, the Center has received permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to keep the bird for educational purposes.

While Osprey are typically difficult to handle in captivity, "Ozzie" is very sociable and comfortable with humans. He even runs to greet his caretakers and "talks" to them. He will finish his recovery at the WWC and then be cared for and kept as an educational animal for the remainder of his life. To help create a long-term home for Ozzie, the Center is asking for donations to help build a new enclosure. Donations of fish are also needed to help feed him on a regular basis.

To donate, or for more information, contact the WWC at:
Wildcat Wildlife Center, 4709 North 400 West, Delphi, IN, 46923
(574) 686-3069

<http://www.wildcatwildlifecenter.org>

In January 1989, a **Bald Eagle** labeled C52 arrived at Patoka Lake Reservoir in southern Indiana. Due to a wing abnormality, he was not able to be released as part of the state's eagle restoration program. Since that time, C52 has become well-known in his role as a living interpretative tool. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has been able to teach more than 50,000 people about Indiana's eagle restoration program through C52.

However, recent injuries and medical care have resulted in substantial medical costs for C52. Due to this need, and the costs of continuing care of other injured raptors at Patoka Lake, the DNR has established the C52 Raptor Fund. Donations will be used to care for C52 and other hawks and owls at the Patoka Lake education center.

To contribute or learn more, visit their website at: <http://www.dnr.IN.gov/c52>.

--adapted from *WildBulletin*



Sycamore Audubon Society
P. O. Box 2716
West Lafayette, IN 47996

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Sycamore Audubon Calendar

Mar 10
Thursday

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Waterfowl Viewing Field Trip, Pine Creek Gamebird Habitat Area. Join Barny Dunning to visit Pine Creek Gamebird Habitat Area and other local sites to look for waterfowl and early spring migrants among the open-country birds. Meet at 8:30AM in the first gravel parking lot at Celery Bog Nature Area (on the right hand side) in West Lafayette off Lindberg Road.

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Early Spring Migrants Field Trip. Come along with us to Horticulture Park in West Lafayette where we'll be looking for early spring migrants. Meet at 8AM in the east parking lot on McCormick Road (across from the Purdue West shopping center).

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