



# Sycamore Warbler



Volume 34, Issue 4

Winter 2009-10

## LOCAL CHRISTMAS COUNTS Lafayette, Crane, Willow-Slough/Iroquois

If your January New Year's resolution included trying something new, here's your chance: try helping with an annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Participation can be as simple as watching birds in your yard if you live in a count circle, or as extreme as getting up to go owling at 4 a.m. and then canvassing your given territory until it gets dark. Most people opt for something in between, but it's amazing what you can find when you do some serious looking. And of course, you have the satisfaction of knowing you are part of one of the biggest and longest running (110 years) citizen science projects ever undertaken. When combined with other citizen science projects such as the Breeding Bird Surveys and May Counts, the Christmas Counts give a very clear picture of the health and stability of the continent's bird populations .

The Lafayette Count is the standard 15-mile circle as is the Willow-Slough Iroquois CBC. Participants can only count birds seen or heard within the circle. The Crane Naval Count is a little different as it uses the base as the outline of its area. To prevent birds from being counted multiple times, each person or team is given a specific area of the circle. Many participants do the same area each year. A compiler oversees the count, handing out the forms, making sure areas don't overlap, verifying any rare birds that may be discovered, and tallying the data.

Count dates: Crane Naval Depot CBC —Wednesday, December 16  
Lafayette CBC —Saturday, December 19  
Willow-Slough CBC — Friday, January 1

**TO PARTICIPATE** in the Lafayette or Willow Slough counts contact Ed Hopkins (463-5927) or sign up at the December 10th SAS meeting. Note: *If you live in the Lafayette circle and have an unusual species at your feeders but can't participate to tally it on count day, be sure to let Ed know it is there so someone can try to spot it.*

For the Crane count, contact Harmon Weeks (494-3567). This has to be done in advance since base security needs to clear admission to the base.



### WHOOPING CRANE

Participants on the Dec 6th field trip were lucky enough to spot a Whooping Crane at Jasper-Pulaski while viewing the thousands of Sandhill Cranes.

### IAS ANNUAL EAGLE TRIP

Have you ever seen forty-eight Bald Eagles in a half hour in Indiana? That's what happened last year on the Indiana Audubon Society's annual Eagle Field Trip which produced an "average" number of eagles. This year the trip is January 30, 2010 & will also be SAS's January Field event.. The trip starts at sunrise at the West Union covered bridge in western Parke Co. where the group can see the eagles coming off their upstream roost, passing over the bridge on their way to the Wabash River. After that, participants work their way up and down the Wabash River bottoms in Parke and Vermillion Counties to observe eagles going about their daily activities

See page 4

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### COMPILATION PARTY:

On the evening of the Lafayette count, participants get together at 8 p.m. at the Wild Bird Shoppe to tally the list of birds each group found. Everyone brings something edible to share and exciting and fun incidents of the day are recounted along with the number and species of birds seen. SAS thanks the Wild Bird Shoppe for the use of their facility.

# CHAPTER NEWS



Chuck Tuttle with some of the 1,200 smoked turkey legs he and Barny reheated on the charcoal grills. Susan Ulrich is holding the pan to take them to the waiting customers.

## TURKEY LEGS SELL OUT EARLY AGAIN

In spite of having 1,200 turkey legs this year, SAS's booth at the Feast of the Hunter's Moon sold out again—took a little longer this time—but we still had to turn away disappointed customers.

It was a lot of fun—no rain and the mud from the previous week's downpours didn't seem to bother the large crowds. Chuck Tuttle and Barny Dunning handled the cooking, ably assisted by Ginnie Tuttle, Jean Emmons, Evelyn Johnson, Roberta Weiner, Rick Read, Susan Ulrich, Liz & Micky Penrod, Anna Thiel, and Andrea Maxwell.

SAS added mulled cider to the items available at the booth this year. The combination of hot cider, cinnamon, allspice and brown sugar proved popular, and all twenty gallons sold out early.

So far SAS hasn't gotten a final figure on the profits, but last year the booth made \$1,200 and we expect it to be around \$1,500 this year. The funds will pay for

the bird seed at Lilly Nature Center and for most of the **Audubon Adventure** classrooms. The picture is courtesy of Rick Read.

## POOKIE FUND HELPS ERECT 4TH OSPREY NEST PLATFORM

Thanks to Rick Read, potential nesting Ospreys around Lake Freeman and Lake Shafer now have four suitable nest sites. The fourth nesting platform (see picture) was erected on Small Island in Lake Freeman. SAS's Pookie Fund paid for the auger to drill the hole for the telephone pole. Being

Photo by Rick Read



## Birder's High: Finding a rare bird

Birders always hope to find something unusual when they are out birding. Ann Marie Ackermann (nee Neugebauer), had that thrill this past September 28th when she discovered a **Black-throated Thrush** in Germany where she now lives. The Black-throated Thrush (AKA Dark-throated Thrush), *Turdus ruficollis*, is a rare visitor to western Europe. A member of the same genus as the American robin, the species normal range is the eastern palearctic. Most breeding is in central Russia.

In addition to seeing the bird, Ann Marie managed to get a long distance photo. The photo, along with written documentation, was sent to the German Rare Bird Committee which will make the decision verifying the find. (read about Indiana's Rare Bird Committee on p.5). The thrush caused a lot of excitement for German birdwatchers.

The Spring 2008 **Warbler** contained an article by Ann Marie about her volunteer birding trips with children in Germany. In it she thanked members of the Sycamore Audubon Society, especially Peg and Merritt Webster, for their help and encouragement when she first got interested in birds at the age of twelve.

on an island made erecting this platform much more complicated since everything had to be ferried to the island by boat. The protrusion sticking up on the left side of the platform is a perch for the adults to sit on by the nest.

An osprey has been hanging around the lake this past summer. It is hoped that it will eventually become part of a nesting pair utilizing one of the platforms.

## BAKE SALE REPORT

SAS raised their \$500 pledge to the NICHES Endowment Foundation at the Fall Bake & Plant sale. Mary Cambell, Kay Harris, Marilyn Hinze, Mary Ann McGill, Diane Packett, Heather Stout, and Susan Ulrich helped as cashiers.

Our thanks to the many people who donated plants—there were an incredible number brought in, including several very large robust plants. Extra funds raised at the sale will help pay for **Audubon Adventure** Classrooms and environmental education/outreach materials..

# Fall-Winter Sycamore Audubon Calendar

**Save the Dates!** Program meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at 7:15 PM in the Lilly Nature Center in West Lafayette. People are invited to join other members and the speaker for "Dinner and Conversation" starting at 6:00 PM at the MCL Cafeteria (West Lafayette) except for September's Carry-In dinner. Field trips times vary, see below.

- 
- Dec 10  
Thursday **PROGRAM: Rare Birds of Indiana: a look at Habitat Restorations, Better Birders, and the Picnic Table Effect.** Brad Baumgardner. The title says it all. Should be an interesting program. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center. Come a little early (6:45 or so) and **sign up for the December 19th Christmas Bird Count.** See page 1.
- Dec 16  
Wednesday **CRANE NAVAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT.** All day count. Participant ride down to Crane in Purdue Vehicles. Need to sign up early. See page 1.
- December 19  
Saturday **LAFAYETTE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT.** An all day count covering the standard 15 mile diameter circle. This is the longest continuous count in Indiana. Feeder counters and field counters needed. Contact Ed Hopkins for info, forms, and a territory to cover. See page 1.
- January 1  
Friday **WILLOW SLOUGH-IROQUOIS PRESERVES CHRISTMAS COUNT.** All day count. Sign up with Ed Hopkins. See page 1.
- January 14  
Thursday **PROGRAM: Talking Turkey.** Barny Dunning, Professor Purdue Forestry & Natural Resources. This past summer Barny went to Turkey with students in Forestry. They visited various sites as part of a course. Needless to say, Barny did as much birding as his schedule permitted!! 7:15 Lilly Nature Center. West Lafayette.
- January 26  
Tuesday **INDIANA CONSERVATION DAY** at the Statehouse. A yearly event organized by numerous environmental organizations to "put a face on conservation". Participants get info on upcoming bills and are encouraged to talk to their local legislators. Lots of exhibits and networking as well.
- January 30  
Saturday **IAS EAGLE FORAY.** See story page 1 & 4. Call about a carpool if interested or follow the directions given. Call Susan Ulrich will coordinate the carpool. See p 7 for phone number and email.
- February 11  
Thursday **PROGRAM: Indiana Bird Photography.** Marty Jones has taken photos of 276 species of birds in Indiana. He will talk about bird photography, interesting stories and memories, , and his future photographic goals. He will also discuss camera techniques and equipment. 7:15 Lilly Nature Center. West Lafayette.
- February 12-15 (Fri-Mon)  
**GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT. "Count for Fun, Count for the Future!"** This count is coordinated by National Audubon and Cornell with interactive results on the web. See how your birds stack up statewide and nationally.
- February 13  
Saturday **WINTER BIRDS TRIP.** A search for winter visitors such as longspurs, Long-eared Owls, Rough-legged Hawks, etc. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Celery Bog Parking lot. Half day.
- March 7  
Sunday **WOODCOCK COURTSHIP TRIP.** 6:30 p.m. Celery Bog parking lot. We will carpool to the Purdue Wildlife Area off SR 26 in the hopes of seeing (or at least hearing) courting American Woodcock at sundown. Return should be around 8:30 p.m.
- March 11  
Thursday **PROGRAM: Hellbender Stories.** Rod Williams, assistant Professor in Forestry and Natural Resources, will talk about this rarely seen large amphibian found in Indiana. 7:15 Lilly Nature Center. West Lafayette.
- March 20  
Saturday **FIRST DAY OF SPRING MIGRANT TRIP.** Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Celery Bog Parking area. We will look over the wetlands at Celery Bog for migrating water birds and move to other areas if birds are being reported elsewhere.
- April 8  
Thursday **PROGRAM: Chattering in the Chimney: the mysterious Chimney Swift.** Shirley Needham, Wildlife Rehabilitator, Fulton County. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, W Lafayette.

## Eagle Trip cont.

Though not guaranteed, Golden Eagle, Trumpeter Swan, and various waterfowl are usually spotted.

### Directions to West Union Bridge

Starting at the intersection of US 41 and St. Rd. 236 three miles w. of Marshall in Parke Co, go south approximately one mile and turn west (right) on Co. Rd. 500 N (the first black-top road). Drive about five miles to an angled 4-way stop at Co. Rd. 210 W. Turn right on Co. Rd. 210 W. After approx. 1 mile veer right on 550W for another mile where you should reach a concrete bridge with a covered bridge to your right. Drive across the concrete bridge and pull into the parking area on the north side of the covered bridge or (if there is heavy snow cover) pull over as far as possible on the east side of the bridge and park. You may also find a map online by searching for the "town" of West Union which consists of only a few homes. The bridge is just north of the indicated spot.

Be at the bridge **no later than 7:15 a.m.** The first eagle may cross the bridge at 7:15 a.m. or as late as 7:35 a.m. The main flight is over by 8:00 o'clock.

The bulk of the eagle watching will be done by 1:00 p.m. but the trip will continue as long as there is interest and daylight. Lunch will be at the Green-acres Restaurant on St. Rd. 63 south of Cayuga.

Those wishing to spend the entire day, or who are unsure how to reach the West Union bridge, can meet at Turkey Run State Park at the east end of the Turkey Run Inn parking lot **no later than 6:30 a.m.** We can carpool from there. Also anyone who is unsure how to reach the West Union Bridge can meet us there and follow us to the bridge. Be prepared for the weather.

## HUMMINGBIRDS LINGER

Many hummingbirds stayed in Indiana well into November. Not surprisingly, the latest birds were seen in the southern counties along the Ohio River.

## Nature Notes & News

● Sept 5 **Steve Brackett** reported a huge migration of **Common Nighthawks** (100+) over Celery Bog/WL Walmart. There were **Chimney Swifts** mixed in as well.

● That same day, **Michael Retter** saw 8 **Baird Sandpipers** and 8 **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at Pine Creek. 9/9 **Ed Hopkins** visited Pine Creek and had a **Merlin**.

● **Rick Read** had **Caspian Terns** at Lake Freeman 9/5 and 60 **Turkey Vultures** near the Whyte Horse Winery on 9/19. He also located a **Chimney Swift Roost** in Monticello. On 9/30 there were 365 Swifts present, but by 10/1 the number dropped to less than 100. **Grant Martin** reported several hundred swifts entering a chimney at Beta Theta Pi fraternity in W. Lafayette the evening of Sept. 21

● **Black-throated Blue Warblers** were spotted at Horticulture Park in WL by **Marty Jones** 9/23 and seen by **Barny & SAS early bird hike participants** on the 24th. On 10/23 Barny saw his first of the season **Cackling Goose** along with 2 **Ross's Geese** at Pine Creek.

● **Ed Hopkins** heard a **King Rail** calling near sunset on 10/16 at Pine Creek in Benton Co. On the 21st he kicked up 7 **Woodcock** and 11/1 had two late **Eastern Woodpeewees**. Visiting Mulvy Pond near Mountmorenci on 11/11 Ed found a **Black Scoter**. This species is rarely seen in Tippecanoe County. The bird was gone on an 11/19 revisit but Ed found a **Ross's Goose** along with some White-plumaged **Snow Geese** instead.

● 10/25 **Ed Gorney**, while checking downtown Indianapolis for window injured birds as part of the *Lights Out Indy* project, found a **Yellow Rail!** With the help of a dozen birders, the rail was caught a few hours later and released in suitable habitat.. Steve Enochs picture of the rail is to the right.

● A wave of **Fox Sparrows** showed up in early November. **Barny Dunning, Del Arvin, Susan Ulrich**, and others reported seeing them in their yards and at feeders.

● **Marianna Sandowski** saw her first **Brown Creeper** in a couple of years on a tree in her yard 11/21

● SAS's 11/21 field trip turned up **HOODED MERGANSERS** at several places, a good selection of dabbling and diving ducks, a nice **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** in Warren County, and a covey of **NORTHERN BOBWHITE** at the Weiler-Leopold Reserve. The target bird at W-L was **Long-eared Owl**. A likely suspect was flushed, but did not hang around long enough to be IDed.

● **Kevin Arvin** had a single **Pine Siskin** show up on Nov 9th and 10th. He also has a **Northern Mockingbird** that showed up in late October.

● November was a good birding month for **Del Arvin** near Buck Creek. **American Pipits** put in an appearance on the 13th, (& Kevin saw more nearby on the 16th). On the 17th Del spotted numerous **Common Loons** migrating over his property. Most were moving SE but some actually flew back north. On the 20th two **Pine Siskins** showed up and then on the 21st there were mixed flocks of **Horned Larks**, **Longspurs**, and **American Pipits**.

● **Martin Curd** who lives a bit north of Westwood in West Lafayette, was excited to see an adult **Bald Eagle** sitting in a tree near his house while out walking his dogs. The eagle sat and let Martin get to within 30 feet of the tree before the bird took off. No camera of course!



## CONSERVATION NEWS

### Exciting news for the Patoka River NWR

Finally some funding for land acquisition! After more than two years building advocacy, leaders from Indiana conservation and environmental organizations hailed passage of the 2010 Interior Appropriations bill, which President Barack Obama signed into law earlier this year. The bill includes \$1.15 million in funding for land acquisition at the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge in southwest Indiana. The funds enable the refuge to acquire a 1,150 acre parcel containing critically-important wildlife habitats.

Established in 1994 with the purpose of restoring bottomland hardwood forest habitats, the refuge's purchase boundary covers 22,472 acres, including 30 miles of the Patoka River, and at least 7,000 acres of bottomland forested wetlands, the most imperiled wetland type in Indiana and the American Midwest.

### Brown Pelican De-listed

The Brown Pelican is now officially off the endangered species list. Its recovery is proof that the often criticized Endangered Species Act is effective, said Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. "For all the criticism that the Endangered Species Act takes, we need to celebrate now in 2009 that we have a bald eagle, we have a peregrine falcon, [and] we have the brown pelican".

Officials will continue to monitor the Gulf and Pacific Coasts to make sure the activities that first threatened the birds—including use of toxic pesticides—wouldn't resume. While government agencies no longer have to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service to make sure their actions won't harm the brown pelican, it is still protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty and Lacey acts, Mr. Salazar said.

The government listed the brown pelican as a protected species in 1970, under the predecessor to the Endangered Species Act which was passed by Congress in 1973. The EPA banned DDT pesticides in 1972, the first step to the bird's recovery. At one point, the brown pelican's population may have dropped below 10,000 individuals, said Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife Tom Strickland. The population has recovered dramatically: there are now estimated to be about 620,000 Brown Pelicans in the United States. Amazing what a little helping hand can do.



### Trumpeter Watch

The Trumpeter Swan Society has launched a Citizen Science project to answer questions about Trumpeter Swan migration and winter distribution. They are looking for birders to join their network of volunteer observers for the period of Nov 1, 2009 - May 1, 2010.

Observers are asked to register at [www.trumpeterswansociety.org](http://www.trumpeterswansociety.org). The society hopes to get 1,000 bird-watchers involved. The first year focuses on Indiana, and Southern, Central or Eastern states where Trumpeters are seen in winter.

Why the query about Trumpeter Swans? By 1900 Trumpeter Swans were extirpated from their nesting and wintering areas in Central and Eastern North America. Their historic migrations to wintering sites in the south were utterly destroyed. In recent decades wild nesting populations of Trumpeters have been successfully restored in several northern states and Ontario. Most birds winter near their northern breeding areas, but an unknown number are pioneering southward and are beginning to establish the use of more southerly wintering sites.

Little is known about the numbers and groupings of southward migrants, the location and characteristics of the sites they are now using, the duration of site use, or problems the birds encounter. By providing information, observers can help document the changing distribution of wintering Trumpeter Swans and help identify the new southern wintering areas.

Until now there has been no coordinated, broad-scale observation effort to monitor Trumpeter Swans during the winter. If Trumpeters are regularly using a location in your area, the Society would appreciate additional details or photo documentation of the habitat.

## TO FEED OR NOT TO FEED

Barry Dunning

(reply to a question about feeding bluebirds)

The question about whether to keep feeding birds in the fall is one we get regularly each year. I will answer it on two levels. First, for migrating birds - their decision on when to migrate is determined by photoperiod (more accurately, the length of the nights), not the amount of food. Food levels are not a reliable cue for migrating for precisely the reason behind the question: if a bird stayed too long because of high food levels and got caught in the wrong area when the weather turns bad, that bird will not survive to let its genes get passed to the next generation. Changing day length is much more reliable. So feeding migratory birds is fine - they leave when they need to.

The basic answer for bluebirds is the same, even though many bluebirds in our region are probably not migratory any more. The species is a regular winter resident. Feeding the young at this point simply means that they will be in good condition as the harsh weather approaches (assuming of course that the food being provided is good and nutritious - mealworms are not particularly nutritious). The only really bad thing to do is to feed the birds consistently and then stop abruptly right when the harsh weather occurs.

## YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB

A new club has been created specifically for Indiana's Young Birders and nature lovers by the Indiana Audubon Society, as a way to cultivate an interest and encourage friendships.

Members will be invited to special field trips across Indiana, have a chance to participate at programs and workshops, receive a membership card and a quarterly newsletter, and help with conservation issues.

<b>Fledglings (up to 11)</b>	<b>\$ 5</b>
<b>Young Birders (12-18)</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>Adult Mentors</b>	<b>\$30</b>

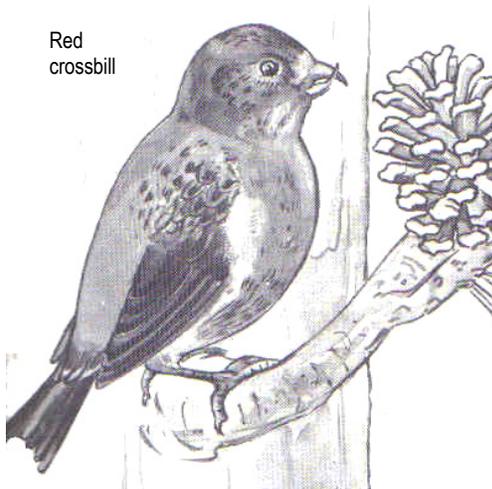
These prices includes membership in the Indiana Audubon Society, Inc.

## Indiana Bird Record Committee (IBRC)

Brad Bumgartner

The IBRC is a committee of the Indiana Audubon Society. Its primary task is to identify and maintain the official checklist of all birds known to have occurred in Indiana. To do this, the IBRC solicits bird records and documentations deemed by the committee to be helpful in understanding the status and distribution of birds in Indiana. Results and review lists are maintained on the Indiana Audubon website [www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org). Simply hover over "Birds," then click the IBRC link.

Red crossbill



Birds have been documented in Indiana for well over 100 years. Some of the earliest documented accounts come from notes taken by Amos Butler in the late 1800s. Now 413 species are on the checklist, with 2 more likely to be added with the recent spoonbill and hummingbird sightings.

These documentations help us understand the birds seen over the years. A undocumented mention of an extreme rarity 100 years ago cannot be looked at seriously today. However, with detailed descriptions of the bird, documented reports contain more credible information. A documentation filed is not only important now, but for future birders.

Today's increase in photos and digital camera technology allows for more verified finds throughout the state. It can be harder for folks to realize the value of a written documentation when a photo has been taken, but a photo still does not indicate when, where, how the bird was seen, or who found it, nor what behavior it exhibited. Therefore, written documentation is still very much needed within the IBRC. I will not disguise that I believe written documentations with photos need not necessarily be as detailed as those without photos, however they are still a crucial part of the documentation process. The IBRC still asks everyone that finds or sees a review species to submit some documentation along with photos and not assume that the photo alone will stand the test of time when future generations look upon what we found.

People with an interest in the rare birds of Indiana and the documentation process, should attend the Sycamore Audubon Society's program December 10 on the above topics. The program meets at the Lily Nature Center at 7pm EST.

## Join Sycamore Audubon Society!

You can support Sycamore Audubon Society's local educational programs and field trips by becoming or renewing as a Friend of the Sycamore Audubon Society (SAS). Friends become chapter members of the Sycamore Audubon Society and receive our quarterly newsletter, *The Sycamore Warbler*.

You can support national conservation efforts by joining the National Audubon Society (NAS). When you join NAS, you will receive *Audubon* magazine **along with automatic chapter membership in SAS**. Since NAS dues primarily support national projects, we encourage national members to ALSO become Friends of SAS. As a Friend, you contribute directly to our local chapter and its projects.

### Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Friend of the Sycamore Audubon Society** \$15/year x \_\_\_\_ year(s) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Note: SAS's membership year runs September 1 through August 31.

New member  Renewal

**National Audubon Society membership** \$20 for first year \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special introductory offer for new members (renewals \$35/year)

**Additional contribution to SAS** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

For \_\_\_\_\_ (if specific purpose)

**Total enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send checks to : Sycamore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2716, West Lafayette, IN 47996-2716. **H10 7XCH8**

**I would prefer to receive the chapter newsletter by:**  e-mail or  paper copy.

## Sycamore Audubon Society

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## NAS's Famed Hog Island Reopens

The National Audubon Society will reopen its legendary Hog Island camp for four adult ornithology sessions and one teen bird studies session during the summer of 2010.

Dr. Steve Kress, Audubon's VP for Bird Conservation, will direct the sessions. He will be joined by top ornithologists serving as instructors, including Kenn Kaufman, Pete Dunne, and Scott Weidensaul. Additionally, said Dr. Kress, there will be two totally new sessions offered in association with Elder Hostel (now Exploritas) where participants will assist Project Puffin biologists to census gulls, eiders and cormorants at several nearby seabird nesting islands.

Participants in the September session will learn about land and seabirds through bird banding and presentations and assist with a habitat management project for endangered terns and storm-petrels at Eastern Egg Rock.. Known to thousands as the

Audubon Camp in Maine, Hog Island was closed during the summer of 2009 to permit planning for the future.

The teen session is for 14-17 year olds with a keen interest in birds. This session is co-sponsored by the American Birding Association. Due to its varied habitats, Hog Island and vicinity are an ideal setting for the program, as more than 100 species frequent the area.

Participants live in authentic, turn of the century housing on the 330 acre spruce-covered island. They will enjoy three home-cooked meals a day in an historic farmhouse that overlooks Muscongus Bay. During the five-day sessions, small field groups will go on a variety of trips and boat cruises, and attend workshops and presentations on various topics.

The Hog Island camp first opened in 1936, with Roger Tory Peterson as its first birding instructor. It is well known in America's environmental community as a distinguished and beautiful place of learning and enjoyment. For more information on dates, sessions, costs, instructors, etc. visit [www.projectpuffin.org](http://www.projectpuffin.org).



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**The Sycamore Warbler** is published four 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 National Audubon Society &/or to the local chapter.

Send items you think SAS's membership might find interesting to the editor, Susan Ulrich (see page 7).

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## Winter Feeder Counts

In the last issue we included the report form for Indiana's Winter Bird Feeding Count. We hope many of you are putting them to use. So far it's been a slow season but it should pick up shortly. Here are some instructions to go with the form. Over the years, the feeder counts help document the changes in populations of species across Indiana.

**Please note:** You do not need to count each day or even in each time period. It is best if you can, but not necessary. The best strategy is to make short periodic counts during the day, or for more extended periods during the more active feeding times such as early morning or late afternoon or just before or after a big storm.

**First:** Be able to identify the birds species listed. Some species such as Purple Finch and House Finch can be hard to tell apart. House Finch are here year-round, A good field guide should enable you to determine which species you have. If you see a species that's not on the list, it needs to be documented in writing unless it is something unmistakable such as a Ring-necked Pheasant or Wild Turkey. For real puzzlers or rarities, call Barny Dunning or another SAS board member (see p 7). Susan Ulrich would also appreciate an email or call about unusual birds for the *Nature Notes* column.

**Second:** Only record birds seen during the count periods (Nov 20-25, Dec 20-25, Jan 20-25, Feb 20-25) and record the maximum number of individuals seen during that period.

It is best to tally birds on a separate sheet and then write the final numbers down on the report sheet. Since males and females often have different plumages, you can keep track of females and males of a species (such as Cardinals) and then add the maximum of each sex together in the box. An example: *during a 30-minute period on day one you see 10 goldfinches and 2 male cardinals at one time. The next day you see 8 goldfinches and a male and female cardinal. Your tally would be 10 goldfinches and 3 cardinals.*

**Third:** don't count birds that fly over but show no interest in the food you provide. Robins and waxwings feeding on fruiting shrubs should not be counted unless you actually put fruit out for them. On the other hand hawks should be counted if they show an interest in your feeder birds or squirrels.

**Fourth:** By March 15<sup>th</sup> send the completed form to John Castrale, 562 DNR Road, Mitchell IN 47446.