



Sycamore Warbler



<http://www.sycamoreAudubon.org>

Volume 37, Issue 4

Winter 2012-13

Winter Finches moving South: Feeder Watchers & Others Needed for CBC

It should be an interesting Christmas Count year as winter finches, red-breasted Nuthatches, and Northern Shrikes have been moving south into Indiana. Many of these species are most easily spotted at bird feeders, so if you feed birds and live within the Lafayette Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Circle, we'd like your participation. Participation in the CBC means counting birds in a given area of the circle, which is as simple as watching your feeders for several hours, or as complex as covering several square miles and starting with owling in the early morning hours and going to dusk. Most people do something in between. Forms and an area to cover can be gotten from the compiler, Ed Hopkins, see below.

Why participate? CBC's always have surprises! Then there's the challenging of seeing what you can turn up in your territory. It's always a thrill to find that species you were missing near the end of the day—and a bigger thrill if it is the only one reported on the count. Usually the Lafayette Count produces 68-75 species. Even better, our local CBCs added to those held all over Indiana and the United States plus foreign countries, produce information on bird numbers and distribution that would be impossible to get any other way. Our local Lafayette Christmas Count holds the distinction of being the oldest continuous count in Indiana—past data documents changes in local bird species and abundance: the increase in Bald Eagles, Goldfinch and Canada Geese, the decrease of Evening Grosbeaks, Bewick's Wren and Common Goldeneyes, and the decrease then increase in the number of Red-shouldered Hawks..

If you live in the Lafayette circle and see an unusual species at your feeders or elsewhere in the circle but can't participate on count day, be sure to let Ed Hopkins know so someone can look for it. The Lafayette CBC is the standard 15-mile circle as is the Willow-Slough Iroquois CBC. In Lafayette the circle is centered in West Lafayette with its northern most arc barely getting into White County just east of I65, the southern most at 450S, the eastern point is 675E, and the western point 825W. To prevent birds from being counted multiple times, each person or team is given a specific part of the circle. Many participants do the same area each year. Ed Hopkins, 463-5927; 496-3492, is the compiler for the two local counts. He hands out the forms, keeps track of areas, tallies the data, and verifies rare birds that may be discovered. You can call him or come to the December 13th SAS meeting to sign up.

Count dates: Lafayette CBC December 15

Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves January 1.

COMPILATION PARTY:

On the evening of the Lafayette count, participants get together at 8 p.m. at the Wild Bird Shoppe to total all the bird seen. Everyone brings something edible to share and exchanges anecdotes about their experiences that day. SAS thanks the Wild Bird Shoppe, once again, for the use of their facility.

Audubon Pledge

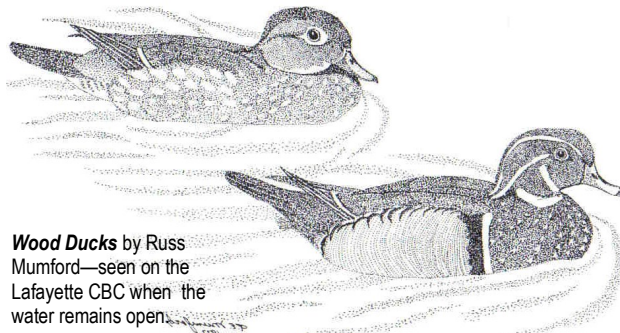
Audubon has joined forces with ConserAmerica, a leading conservative pro-environment group, on a campaign called "Because Conservation Doesn't Have a Party." The hope is to deliver thousands of signatures for the American Eagle Compact to the winners of November's elections.

Your signature will tell legislators that playing politics with our planet and with our children's future isn't the right path forward. You can tell them that there's a better way to go—a way to support smart conservation practices across America.

Please sign the pledge at <http://eaglecompactusa.org>.

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Wood Ducks by Russ Mumford—seen on the Lafayette CBC when the water remains open.

CHAPTER NEWS

Bake & Plant Sale

October's Bake & Plant Sale went well thanks to the people who donated items to sell, and Elsa Janle, Elisabeth Kornblum, Mary Ann McGill, Susan Ulrich, Marilyn Hinze, Marisa Beyerlin, Karen Griggs, and Ning Wu who acted as cashiers.

SAS raised \$618. Two hundred & fifty went for half of the Stewardship match, \$250 to an SAS fund to build a chimney swift tower, and \$100 went for the Wabash Audubon Society's Flory-Gemmer Marsh Restoration project. The \$18 left went into SAS's general fund.

Junior Nature Club

Audubon's **Junior Nature** club is meeting regularly at 6 pm roughly every third Tuesday. About a dozen young people attend and enjoy the programs put together by Zonda Bryant. The club meets at Lilly Nature Center in West Lafayette. If you know someone in the 4th to 5th grade (or thereabouts) who might be interested, call Zonda for more information. The next two programs scheduled are December 18th and January 22nd.

Monticello SAS Nature Club

SAS continues to provide financial support for the Audubon Nature Clubs in Monticello. These are classroom based at four schools and led by Cindy Isom. Rick Read helps her with the birding session each year. In September he taught the use of binoculars and took the students out to look for birds.

Feast of the Hunter's Moon

It took the entire two (lovely weather) days of the Feast, but SAS sold out of its Turkey Legs and cider,



Nature club participants

raising \$2,025 to support SAS and its programs.

The large legs took forever to cook to 165-degrees internally. The volunteers had to keep hopping so all the legs were cooked by the end of the Feast on our few charcoal grills. Some customers had long waits to get their legs. We hope to find an alternate way to handle the cooking next year, but we certainly can't complain about the results.

Early Bird Hike Change

The popular early bird hikes switch back to Thursdays beginning March 21 as Barny's teaching schedule changed. They will continue to meet at Celery Bog Park.

Holiday Party in December

Remember that SAS's December's meeting is our holiday party. Everyone is asked to bring a dozen cookies or something to eat. SAS will supply the drinks, cups, napkins, etc.

Stewardship Match

SAS's 1:1 \$500 match raised the full \$1,000 towards NICHES' Whistler Stewardship Endowment Challenge. A big thank you to all who contributed. SAS's \$1,000 will be matched by the Roy Whistler Foundation and add \$2,000 to the new Endowment Stewardship Fund. The income from the endowment will support maintenance needs on NICHES ever-growing list

of properties.

Although the Whistler Challenge is now over, anyone wishing to support NICHES and its properties *in perpetuity* can always send a donation to the NICHES Endowment Fund, PO Box 2, Lafayette IN 47902-0002.

Feeder Birds Program

In preparation for the coming months, Rick Read gave a program on **Winter Feeder Birds** in Monon September 26. It was greatly enjoyed by the people attending.

September 22 he and about 30 other volunteers learned about invasive species and put that knowledge to work removing invasives from their existing City Park.

Swifts Night Out

The September 9th Monticello **Swifts Night Out** went very well. 13 People met at the courthouse putting them within a block of the four downtown roosts which Rick & Debbie Read had located earlier. Swifts usually start roosting about 10-15 minutes after sundown.

After a brief talk by Rick, people sat or stood back to watch the arriving swifts. Debbie counted 292 birds. Another couple estimated 400-500, but they may have counted the swoops down toward the chimney not realizing that some reappear on the other side. It was a very good demonstration – all were amazed!

Tippecanoe Summer Count

WOW! Is the only way to describe this summer's bird count for Tippecanoe. Barny reported 135 species—much higher than normal. The numbers were supplemented by the

Continued page 6

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.

-
- December 13
Thursday **PROGRAM: Birds & Bombs on the Base: a Citizen's Tour in Iraq.** Carl Vogelwede spent 5 months working to solve human/wildlife conflicts with the USDA's Flight Safety Program on the Joint Base *Balad* in Iraq. His perspectives and pictures will be enlightening. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, free parking. Christmas party for refreshments. Come early to sign up for a birding area for the Christmas Bird Counts.
- December 15
Saturday **Lafayette Christmas Bird Count.** Day-long bird count covering a 15 mile circle so people are needed well as feeder watchers to try and cover everything adequately. Contact Ed Hopkins (see page 1) or sign up at the Dec 13th meeting. There is an 8 p.m. compilation party in the evening at the Wild Bird Shoppe in West Lafayette (1151 W 350 N, WL). Data on the birds found that day is compiled and everyone brings something to eat. SAS provides beverages, napkins and plates.
- January 1
Saturday **Willow Slough-Iroquois Reserve CBC.** Day-long bird count covering a 15 mile circle and help is needed. Contact Ed Hopkins (see page 1) or sign up at the Dec 13th meeting.
- January 10
Thursday **PROGRAM: Land Trusts and Conservation.** Cliff Chapman, previous IDNR Ecologist and now Conservation Director for CILTI (Central Indiana Land Trust, Inc.). 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center in Celery Bog Park, West Lafayette. Free parking and refreshments.
- Feb 9
Saturday **Winter Bird Finding Trip. Barny Dunning, Leader.** Meet at 8:30 am at the gravel parking lot, Celery Bog. We will look for winter birds such as raptors, sparrows, longspurs and whatever else is being reported in the area. Since our winter field trips seem to attract snow, this trip will be weather dependent. Half day.
- Feb 14
Thursday **PROGRAM: Diversity in the Birding Community.** Doug "Birdman" Gray. Come and find out why it is so important to have diversity of ages, races, gender, etc. in the conservation and birding communities. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center in Celery Bog Park, West Lafayette. Free parking and refreshments.
- March 2
Saturday **Waterfowl and Eagles Field Trip. Barny Dunning, Leader.** Meet at 8 am at Celery Bog's gravel parking lot. This should be at the peak of spring waterfowl migration, so we will go wherever ducks, cranes, etc. are being reported. Half-day trip.
- March 14
Thursday **PROGRAM: Rare Plant Communities in Northwest Indiana.** Roger Hedge, Indiana Dept. of Nature Preserves. Believe it or not, there are eco-communities in NW Indiana that are otherwise only found on the Atlantic Coast. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center in Celery Bog Park, West Lafayette. Free parking and refreshments.
- March 21 &
Every Thurs **Early Bird Hikes.** Same location: Celery Bog Nature Park, WL, but a new day of the week, Thursday, reflecting Barny's class schedule. Same great birds and a fun start to your day. Meet at 8 a.m. at the first gravel parking lot. Usually last one hour.
- March 23
Saturday **Lake Michigan Lakeshore Field Trip. Barny Dunning, leader.** Meet at 6:30 a.m. to carpool up to the lakeshore. We will spend the day looking for early migrants that do not show up regularly in the Greater Lafayette area, including loons, grebes, diving ducks, mergansers, etc. An all-day activity but people can leave early.

Nature Notes & News

● A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** stayed until Nov 25th at Ron & **Jacque Nevinger's** house. A few years earlier a hummer remained until Dec 5—then the latest recorded date for Indiana.

● Nov 22 **Landon Neumann & Ryan Sanderson** looked for Hoary Redpolls at the Indiana lakefront. No luck but they did see **Evening Grosbeaks & Red & White-winged Crossbills**.

● **Barny Dunning** noted **Northern Shovelers** diving for food, an unusual activity for a dabbling duck but it is done occasionally by Shovelers and other dabblers.

● **Russ Allison** found a **Great Egret** feeding on Harrison Lake at the east end of Prophetstown State Park. It was doing a great job of catching small fish.

● **Chuck Tuttle** located a **Tundra Swan** at Celery Bog in Oct. **Al Laasanen** saw it again a few days later. Al noted it could hide effectively in the vegetation since he missed it the first time past.

● Oct 31 **Del Arvin** had both **Rose-breasted & Evening Grosbeaks** at his feeders near Buck Creek. Del also has multiple **Northern Saw-whet Owls** on his property for the third straight winter. Anyone wishing to see the owls should contact Barny who can put them in touch with Del to arrange a time to visit.

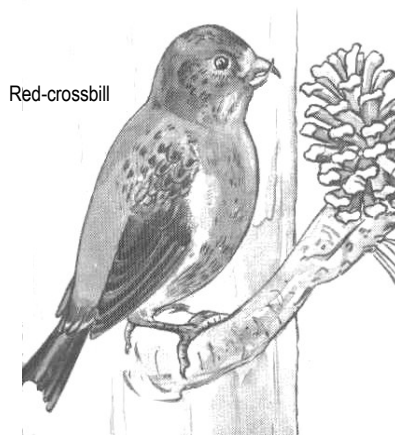
● **Ed Hopkins** had a **Cave Swallow** in Marquette Park, in Gary on Nov 8. He had three in mid-October when trying to find a **LeContes Sparrow**.

● **Joan Samuels** enjoyed a migrating **Rufous-sided Towhee** Oct 26 along with **Dark-eyed Juncos & White-throated Sparrows**.

● An immature **Harris' Sparrow** showed up at **Mark Arvin's**

feeders in West Lafayette Oct 16.

● **Russ Allison** noted a minor fallout of **White-crowned Sparrows** at Prophetstown State park on Oct 25. At one time he had over 30 in view. Several found a small stream of water and took baths. At 3:30 pm a huge stream of **American Crows** flew over. Russ only counted those passing directly overhead and had 261 in 25 minutes.



Red-crossbill

● **John Skene** recorded 43 species including a **Hermit Thrush** at the Purdue Wildlife Area off SR 26 W on Oct 21. On the 15th he located a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at the Purdue Horticulture Park. A month earlier, 9/15 he found a **Merlin** at Celery Bog.

● **Ning Wu** and **Russ Allison** held the first local Big Sit at the southern observation deck of Celery Bog on Oct 14 after SAS's field trip. Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate, nevertheless they noted 43 species, the highlights being the **Eared Grebe** and a **Merlin** that snatched a **Tree Swallow** out of the air. Most water birds hid in the tall weeds and wind kept woodland birds quiet.

● **Diane Packett** was in town Oct 13 & she & Matt Hale found 57 species at Celery bog including White-crowned, White-throated, Lincolns, & Swamp Sparrows.

● In Oct 13 at France Park **Lan-**

don Neumann spotted a Cass County record **Nelson's Sparrow** near Elzbeck Lake.

● **Barny Dunning** reported a non-breeding plumage **Eared Grebe** Oct 2 at Celery Bog in West Lafayette. The bird was foraging actively in the open water just north of the southern observation deck. **Ed Hopkins** saw it the next day and **John Skene** on the 4th. It was still around for Barny's field trip and Ning & Russ's Big Sit on the 14th.

● Warblers kept Celery Bog Park hopping in September. On the 28th **Russ Allison** reported loads, including a **Pine** & a couple of **Hooded**. His yard was also full of birds, with a yard record of 3 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** at once.

● **Matt Hale & Michael Retter** spent a lot of time warbler-watching in the park. On Sept 28 they found an immature **Connecticut Warbler**. On the 25th Michael had 45 species of birds including 9 species of warbler. On the 23rd there were 48 species, 11 of them warblers. On the 16th there were 13 species of warbler including a **Canada**, and on the 14th 12 species of warblers. SAS's Field trip that same day had 10 warbler species plus 40 species of non-warblers.

● **Landon Neumann & Bud Do-drill** added two species to the Cass County checklist: **Gray-cheeked Thrush & Marsh Wren** Oct 20-21. On the 13th they went to downtown Logansport and saw 600 **Chimney Swifts** entering a chimney roost.

● **Don Gorney**, Amos Butler AS president, updated his **Indiana field Checklist of Birds** to reflect the 53rd supplement's changes to the AOU Check-list. It also includes new species that have been added to the Indiana state list by the Indiana Bird Records Committee.

The checklist is available at www.amosbutleraudubon.org/files/checklist.pdf. It is designed to be printed on both sides of one sheet of paper & then folded.

CONSERVATION NEWS

BP Criminal Oil Spill Settlement —*David Yarnold, NAS president*

You're probably aware that BP reached an historic settlement with the federal government last month that will dedicate most of \$4 billion to conservation. Fully \$1.2 billion will go to coastal Louisiana. Below are some of the questions people have been asking me about the settlement:

Q: Does this mean the RESTORE Act won't happen?

No. This criminal plea deal does not have a direct impact on the RESTORE Act. That legislation, which was passed last fall, will send up to 80% of BP's civil penalties—potentially in excess of \$20B—to the five Gulf Coast states that were hardest hit by the spill. That case is still headed for court early next year.

This week's criminal settlement charges the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) with disbursing \$2.4B of the \$4B. NFWF's CEO, Jeff Trandahl, called me the afternoon the settlement was reached and asked if Audubon would be one of three partners it cites for the media and for Congress. I told him we'd be pleased to talk about our partnerships and we've been mentioned in numerous stories in subsequent days.

Q: Do we expect Audubon's projects to benefit from those funds?

Absolutely. We work extensively with NFWF and it's likely they'll be significant funders of our new Flyways work. We've discussed large scale restoration projects with them in the past and it was the key point of my conversation with Jeff; this is an opportunity to have the kind of large scale impact that we've always known was possible. Here's what *Businessweek* said in a story about the settlement: "NFWF was formed in 1984 as Republican senators wanted to counter President Ronald Reagan's funding cuts for conservation with a way to augment private contributions. The foundation doesn't do the conservation work itself; it administers grants to national non-profits such as the National Audubon Society or Ducks Unlimited or to local conservation groups."

Q: Where can I get more information on the settlement?

The Department of Justice has posted a full statement and details of the penalties online at

www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2012/November/12-ag-1369.html.

Lead Bullet Legislation Update

Voting on the pro-lead Sportsmen's Act amendment which exempts lead ammunition from regulation under federal toxics law, has been delayed. A move by Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) tried to attach the amendment to the defense authorization bill however the amendment was rightly ruled "non-germane," and dropped.

This NRA-backed amendment may come back before Congress adjourns -- we'll keep you posted. Thank you to everyone who called their Senators to oppose this amendment. In the meantime, call your senators and urge them to block this poisonous language wherever it surfaces. The Senate number is (202) 224-3121.

NW Indiana Oil Tar Pipeline

In June, Save the Dunes learned of the Embridge Line Oil Sands 6B pipeline proposal for NW Indiana. Ever since then it has been working to find out what it can about the pipeline, to inform people in the area about the pipeline and what it could mean to them, and ensure that this proposed oil pipeline expansion project does not negatively impact the people and environment of northwest Indiana. Their activities have included:

- Scheduling of a public hearing through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to address concerns about impacts of the pipeline on wetlands and water resources. The hearing will be held Thursday, December 18, 2012 from 1-4PM at the LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Avenue, La Porte. (If you would like to attend a pre-meeting with Save the Dunes members, please contact nathan@savedunes.org).
- Developing plans to advocate for enhanced pipeline regulations at the state level. Those plans were shared with other conservation organizations on November 30th.
- Changing the company's plans relating to how they construct river crossings to be more sensitive to the environment. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources is requiring the changes, which is great news.
- Presentations about the potential impacts of Enbridge's pipeline to local groups, helping to raise awareness of the issues.
- Attendance by Nathan Pavlovic of Save the Dunes staff at the Pipeline Safety Conference earlier this month, made possible through the generous support of the Pipeline Safety Trust.

To learn more on this topic, go to Save the Dunes website: www.savedunes.org or email Nathan (see above)

Chapter News continued from p 1

huge number of shorebirds seen at Celery Bog when it dried down, and waterfowl that don't normally summer here. Missed species include Cerulean Warbler, Whip-poor-will and Mute Swan. In contrast Warren County only had 98 species (but included a cerulean warbler).

Audubon at Prophetstown

Chuck Tuttle organized an **Audubon Day** at Prophetstown State Park starting Friday night and going to Saturday evening. He and Russ Allison did two bird/nature hikes on Saturday and were there to answer questions about birds and nature for the campers and visitors.

It wasn't the best of weekends (rainout on Friday), but the park naturalist was grateful to SAS for the service and would like to work with Audubon again. A number of birds were seen in spite of the weather including 5 raptors, Wilson's Snipe, Common Nighthawk, Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker, and over 2,000 migrating Blue Jays (they stopped counting at 1 p.m.) SAS is working on a bird checklist for the park. If you have seen unusual species, please contact Chuck or Barny (p. 7).

Duke Energy's Eagle Day

Duke Energy will hold its 18th annual bald eagle viewing day on Saturday, Jan. 26, 2013, at its Cayuga electric power plant along the Wabash River just north of Terre Haute. The event is free and open to the public from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Reservations are not necessary. Don't forget your binoculars, although there will be scopes set up outside.

Because the plant's discharge keeps water open, the area can attract large numbers of Bald Eagles and other species. The American Eagle Foundation will give its *Eagle and Birds of Prey Program* at 10 a.m., 12 noon, and 2 p.m. These presentations include captive live eagles and other raptors and owls.

Wednesdays In the Wild

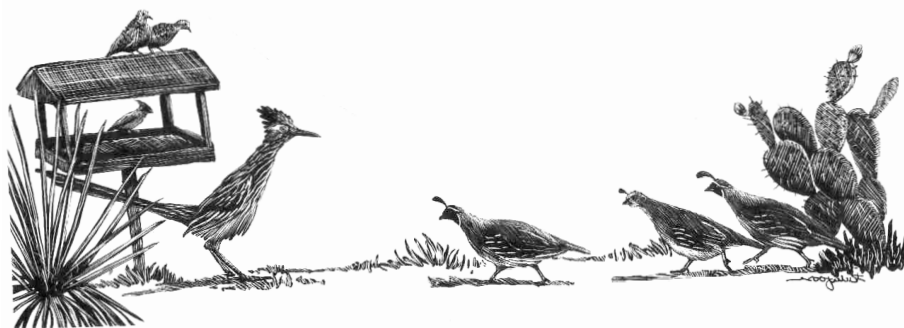
Draft: Programs are free and open to the public. Most meet at Lilly Nature Center (LNC) in Celery Bog Park, from 1-3 p.m. or 7-9 p.m. Other places as noted.

- JAN 16 7-9 pm **Entomology Museum Tour** Arwin Provonsha, Purdue Ento. Dept.
 JAN 23 1-3 pm **National Parks: Capitol Reef & Grand Canyon** - John McDonald LNC
 JAN 30 1-3 pm **The Status of Indiana Walnut Trees** - Lenny Farley - LNC
 FEB 6 time? **Maple Sugaring** - Don Bickel - LNC
 FEB 13 time? **River Otters** - LNC
 FEB 20 **not yet finalized**
 FEB 27 **not yet finalized**
 MAR 6 7-9 pm **Emerald Ash Borer** - Cliff Sadoff - LNC
 MAR 13 time? **Wacky Woodcocks** - Mary Cutler- outdoor Tippecanoe Amphitheatre
 MAR 20 time? **Kankakee River NWR Proposal** - Jim Sweeney LNC
 MAR 27 1-3pm **Waterfowl Walk** - Susan Ulrich- indoor/outdoor —LNC/CBP

First Conservation Assessment of All American Birds Shows More Than a Third Need Help

A new study on the conservation status of American birds completed by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is the first-ever published to include the full range of bird diversity in all 50 U.S. states and dependent territories. The study finds that more than one third of these birds are in need of conservation attention. More details, including a complete bird list with conservation rankings, can be found at www.abebirds.org/checklist.

While the conservation status of bird species has been widely researched in the past, the new study is the first national assessment to also rank the status of subspecies: regional forms of species that differ in appearance, and sometimes in habitat choice and migration patterns. For instance the eastern subspecies of the Painted Bunting is considered to be At-Risk but historically has received relatively little conservation attention.



ABA Winter Birding Rally: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Things are looking *Rosy* for the American Birding Association's (ABA) Winter Birding Rally Feb 16-20, 2013. A great get-away to combat the winter blues.

The gorgeous Sandia Mountains northeast of Albuquerque are famous for hosting all three rosy-finches in winter. From the Sandias south to legendary Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, they will search for specialties such as Scaled Quail, Greater Roadrunner, Chihuahan Raven, Crissal Thrasher, Verdin, and an array of juncos. If you like a spectacle, then you won't mind the scene at Bosque del Apache, with the thousands of Sandhill Cranes, and Ross's and Snow Geese. For more information and to register, call (800) 850-2473.

Join	Sycamore	Audubon	Society!
<p>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, <i>The Sycamore Warbler</i>.</p> <p>You can support national conservation efforts by joining the National Audubon Society (NAS). When you join NAS, you will receive <i>Audubon</i> 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.</p>			
Membership Application			
Name: _____		Email: _____	
Address: _____			
City/State/Zip: _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend of the Sycamore Audubon Society		\$15/year x ___ year(s) \$ _____	
Note: SAS's membership year runs September 1 through August 31.			
<input type="checkbox"/> New member <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal			
I would prefer to receive the chapter newsletter by: <input type="checkbox"/> e-mail or <input type="checkbox"/> paper copy.			
<input type="checkbox"/> National Audubon Society membership		\$20 for first year \$ _____	
Special introductory offer for new members (renewals are \$35/year)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional contribution to SAS		\$ _____	
For _____ (if specific purpose)			
		Total enclosed \$ _____	
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- Chuck Tuttle, President**
1708 Maywood, W Lafayette, 47906
463-0531 catuttle@comcast.net
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317-452-5355 whomoya@yahoo.com
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- Rick Read, Treasurer, Field Trips**
402 E Terrace Bay, Monticello 47960
574-583-3431 Richardaread@hotmail.com
- Paul Brooks, Webmaster**
219-221-0254
paulbrooks@gmail.com
- Zonda Bryant, Nature Club**
765-366-9126; birgez@purdue.edu
- Barny Dunning, Conservation, Field Trips**
7509 N 75 E, W Lafayette, 47906
(H) 497-3082 (W) 494-3565
jdunning@purdue.edu
- Jeff Ganley, At Large**
160 Vicksburg Lane. WL, 47906
- Judy Gasvoda, At-Large**
1511 W 350 N, W Lafayette, 47906
463-2098 wildbirdshoppe@comcast.net
- Noble Kizer, Membership**
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538-3656 NobleK@hotmail.com
- Diane Packett, At large**
1928 Indian Trail, W Lafayette, 47906
920-219-2587 dlpackett@pex.net
- Ning Wu, Education**
tippbird@gmail.com

Common Cat Parasite a Threat to Pregnant Women & Wildlife

Feral and free-ranging cats kill birds and other wildlife relentlessly, according to a range of studies, but they pose other threats as well — cats are also the primary host of a protozoan parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii*.

This parasite, shed only in cat feces, has been implicated in the deaths of 16% of the southern sea otters off the coast of Santa Barbara, California. Apparently the otters contracted the disease from kitty litter flushed out to sea. The parasite has also been linked to complications in human pregnancies, including some that can be fatal.

The new study underlines the threat posed by this parasite and the cats that carry it. It found that in Cayucos, Los Osos, and Morro Bay, California, feral and free roaming cats deposit huge amounts of fecal material — 76 tons — into the environment every year. When it's on the ground, the parasites are released into the air where they can be ingested by other mammals, infecting muscles and organs, including brains.

Reports that this disease can spread to pregnant women have prompted the American Pregnancy Association to warn expectant mothers to "avoid exposures to cat feces" in order to protect against transmission. The potential impacts of exposure to this parasite by fetuses are said to include "premature birth, low birth weight, fever, jaundice, abnormal head size, convulsions, and brain calcification."

The exceptional amount of fecal deposition found by these researchers has been linked in part to a sharp increase in the feral cat population. That in turn has been blamed on cat owners who dump unwanted pets, and ineffective efforts to control the feral cat population by instituting "trap, neuter, and release" programs.

See <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/6966675> Outdoor fecal deposition by freeroaming cats and attitudes of cat owners and nonowners toward stray cats wildlife and water pollution for more details.

Tidbits

◆ There are five mystery book series that feature birders and birdwatching that you might like to try if you are looking for something different to read. Unfortunately all are out of print but the local libraries have some and can get the others through interlibrary services. You may also run across some at local book sales.

Lydia Adamson (a pseudonym of Franklin B King) wrote the Lucy Wayne detective series. Then there are the George and Mary Palmer-Jones Mysteries by Ann Cleeves. The third set is Christine Goff's Birdwatcher Mystery Series featuring members of the Elk Park Ornithological Chapter in Colorado. Next is Roy Sipherd's Jonathan Wilder Mysteries, and lastly a Guidepost book series with 8 different authors but all set on Sparrow Island with ornithologist, Abby Stanton, as the detective.



Sycamore Audubon Society
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Hog Island Audubon Camp

The application deadline is January 15th for National Audubon Society scholarships for the legendary 6-day, 5-night birding & nature programs at Audubon's Hog Island camp in Maine. Camp instructors include Ken Kaufman, Scott Weidensaul, Clay and Pat Sutton, and others. All summer programs involve a trip to Eastern Egg Rock, home of the restored Atlantic Puffin colony.

Early Bird Special! \$50 discount for all registrations received by Dec. 14th.

Email: hogisland@audubon.org
or Call: (607) 257-7308 ext. 14

Great Backyard Bird Count Going Global

In 2013, people from anywhere in the world will be able to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)! Mark the dates of Friday, February 15 through Monday, February 18, 2013 on your calendar now so you don't miss participating.

To make it possible for people everywhere to participate, the GBBC will be integrated with eBird, a citizen-science project created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. Our partner, Bird Studies Canada, administers the eBird Canada portal. There are a number of benefits:

- 1) Global access: participants can submit checklists from any location in the world, and in four languages!
- 2) Precise locations: More accurate GBBC location data will make your observations more useful and easier for you to track over time.
- 3) Year-round access: Although the GBBC is a four-day project, you will be able to use your account to track your bird sightings year round in eBird.
- 4) Better visualization: Interactive maps allow you to explore bird observations in much greater detail than ever before.
- 5) Corrections: If you enter a mistake, you can go back anytime to make corrections or changes.
- 6) No dual-entry: eBird users no longer have to enter their information twice and can simply enter their GBBC counts via eBird.

Sign up now and you can submit your bird checklists any day of the year at www.ebird.org. If you have never submitted a checklist to eBird before, you'll create a user name and password. You'll be able to use the same user name and password for the Great Backyard Bird Count in February.

