

Sycamore Warbler

Volume 41 Issue 1 Spring 2016

Mind BOGgling Event at Celery Bog May 21

Once again it's time to celebrate National Wetlands Month at Celery Bog's **Mind BOGgling Event**. There's always a lot of fun things to do and learn and it is very family friendly with many activities aimed at children including a portable bee hive to see.

SAS will be there with information and displays. SAS is supporting the event by paying the fee to hire **Animalia**, a great wildlife education non-profit, to give a program. If you've seen one of their programs in the past, you know their quality. Bring a friend along. **Animalia's** 45 minute presentation in the outdoor Amphitheater will start around 10 a.m.

There will be other fun outdoor and indoor programs, hikes, music, hands on insects, games, tadpoles and salamanders, information booths, etc. It's well worth a visit. The Emergency Munchee Truck will be there for those interested in purchasing lunch or nibbles, or bring your own food/picnic with you.



Snow Goose:
One of many
wetland species
seen at Celery Bog.

5th Grade Walks: Volunteer & Share Your Knowledge

For over 40 years SAS has helped the West Lafayette Schools by leading bird walks at their 5th Grade Nature Camp. This year the walk dates are Tuesday, May 3 & Thursday, May 5. Volunteers are needed to help. In recent years 3 to 4 people have helped each morning but we could use 5 or 6 as the number of students has climbed. You do NOT need to be a top of the line birdwatcher just have some basic knowledge of birds. Anyone interested but uncertain about their abilities can come to a crash course on birds which will cover some of the more likely species and provide tidbits of information about each. A teacher also goes along with each student group so you are not completely on your own. Chuck Tuttle helps spur the students interest by giving a pre-camp bird program at the school.

If you can help for a few hours one or both mornings please contact Chuck Tuttle (see p. 7) . The hikes start at 7 a.m. at Camp Tecumseh in White County and go to 8 a.m. After entering the camp take the first big parking area to the right. A carpool for those in the Lafayette area meets at 6:30 a.m. at Celery Bog. Hikes are followed by a free breakfast in the dining hall if you can stay longer.

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Big Day in May Bird Count is May 14th

SAS is sponsoring Big Day bird Counts in Tippecanoe and Warren Counties. The counts cover the 24 hours of May 14. County boundaries are used to define the count area. Any bird seen May 14 in the county can be included. People are needed to cover various territories on foot, car, boat, bike or other means of transportation. People can also use their yards and feeders as a territory. Go for a few hours or more depending on your time available. To help, request a territory from the county compiler.

Tippecanoe County Barny Dunning 765-494-3565 jdunning@purdue.edu

Warren County Susan Ulrich 765-583-3375 sueandtedulrich@msn.com

CHAPTER NEWS

Thank You, Joe

In the last newsletter we forgot to thank Joe Hiscock who saved the day at the feast by fixing the large grill which holds 100 or more turkey legs. Without it SAS volunteers were struggling to keep up using several small charcoal grills which held only 10-20 legs each.

And speaking of the Feast

The 2015 feast was the **Best Ever** for SAS. The chapter ended up making an astonishing \$2,935.59—over \$1,000 more than last year. Thanks again, Joe, for getting the grill usable and making this happen. Feast money supports the chapter's yearly expenses such as liability insurance, website, newsletters, postage, post office box, etc.

Funds for conservation & education efforts come from the Bake & Plant Sales and Garden Expo (see below). Past projects have supported the Mind BOGgling Event, Flory-Gemmer Marsh restoration (see p.3), Clegg Garden's bird feeding area, sunflower seed at Celery Bog, the Wildcat Wildlife Center, and the purchase of Mulvey Pond.

Bake & Plant Sale April 15-17 Plants and other sale items needed to help support local Nature Club

SAS's semi-annual Bake & Plant Sale is going to support Hands of the Future Audubon Nature Club. Donations of items to sell are needed and people to help at the booth. The sale is in the West Lafayette Public Library. Donations can be dropped off starting Thursday at 10 a.m. Hours are 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Friday, 10-5 on Saturday, and 1-5 on Sunday. Baked goods and garden plants are always popular. If you can help or have questions about things to donate email Susan Ulrich (p.7) .

Birding on the Fly...

Birding on the FLY is an email list. If there is an unusual bird sighting nearby or around the state, Barny sends the list an email so anyone interested can pursue the bird by themselves or often via a carpool. Contact him to be added to the list. His email is on page 7. This service is for your information only, you are under no obligation to follow up on any of the sightings.



Garden Expo Sat April 23 More Plants Needed!

That's right: Expo is only ONE week after the Bake & Plant Sale which means the usual SAS plant donors won't have much time to supply more plants so donations from you are really important. In addition to plants we sell garden equipment, bird houses, etc. SAS's booth will also have lots of free information about birds and the environment to pass out.

The Master Gardener's Expo is 9:30-3 p.m. in the Hog Barn at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds (1010 Teal Rd, Laf). There are dozens of vendors, lectures, food, and door prizes. Items for SAS can be dropped off Friday from 3-6 p.m. or Saturday morning. If you can't bring items then, contact Susan Ulrich (p.7) to make other arrangements. If you'd like to help sell plants during the event, let her know.

Monticello Nature Club

Audubon Nature Club dates in Monticello are as follows. Children must sign up at school for these after-school sessions.

Oaklawn April 11, 18, 25,
Meadowlawn April 12, 26, May 10,
Eastlawn April 13, 27, May 11.

Hand of Future Nature Club

Spring programs for the Nature club are now underway. Contact Zonda for more info (see p.7). Happy Hollow has become the third school to join the Club's Schoolyard Program which has been eagerly received by students at the two previous schools.

More "Thank You's"

Thanks to Rebecca Wong and Jim Klatch for their extra monetary donations to SAS since the last newsletter. Thanks to Barb & Russ Allison for donating four small to large coolers for use at the feast and on field trips and to Chuck Tuttle for donating propane for use at the Feast.

Rick Read, SAS's treasurer reports that in 2015, SAS received \$874 in cash donations, \$600 of which went to the Pookie Fund and supported Environmental Education. SAS also received \$1,000 in grants from the White County Community Foundation for Monticello's Audubon nature Club.

Spring RIP Squad

The Remove Invasive Plants Squad (RIP) will be pulling garlic mustard in local parks Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30-5:30 p.m. between April 5 and May 31. To find

out which parks will be worked on which days, contact Patty Rader at patricia.w.rader@gmail.com.

Honeysuckle Update

Cutting honeysuckle in Ross Hills County Park continues. The park is starting to look healthier with a noticeable increase in native vegetation replacing the honeysuckle.

The winter workdays (Feb 7 and 21) drew 14 people who took out thousands of the smaller honeysuckle and autumn olives. NICHES's two stewards + Elisabeth Kornblum have been working under contract with INPAWS & SAS to take out many of the larger plants remaining which are mostly along the Ross Park-Ross Camp border. Constant monitoring for smaller plants is needed but efforts to will soon turn west to Ross Camp and east to WREC's Kerber property.

Birds In Bloom

Wes Homoya's picture recently appeared in *Birds and Bloom* Magazine. SAS's VP, Wes was in a photo for an article on Bird-a-thons. He was a member of a four person carbon-neutral team that raised money for the Amos Butler Birdathon using bicycles for transportation. Birdathon events are where people pledge so much for each species of bird a team sees. Nationally they raise an enormous amount of money for the birds.

Tippecanoe Audubon & Flory-Gemmer Marsh

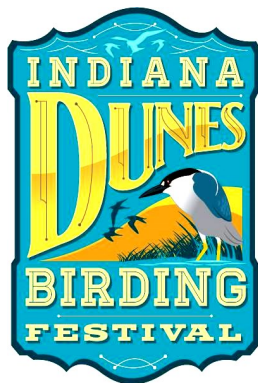
One of SAS's sister Audubon Chapters in Indiana is the Tippecanoe Audubon Society which is northeast of SAS. They acquired a property known as the Flory-Gemmer Marsh and a few years back started an effort to restore the area. SAS sent a donation to help with the effort and now, David

Wednesdays in the Wild

A listing of upcoming programs in this series can be found on the back of the inserted calendar page. To get these flyers by email or for a copy of *Native Roots*, contact Joan Mohr Samuels at mohrsamuels@comcast.net.

Bicentennial Birding with SAS & IAS

Check out page 8. Anyone wanting to become an "official" 100 bird bicentennial lister in 2016 should be sure to attend SAS's field trips. Getting to 100 species will be a snap. To reach 200 with 100 coming from Indiana State & National Parks is more of a challenge. SAS has a June trip to Prophetstown SP can be a start and **Indiana Audubon Society's Dunes Birding Festival May 5-8** provides another great opportunity to work on your "in the parks" list.



This is the second year for this festival designed to celebrate the dunes area's rich biodiversity and bird watching opportunities. This second year will have more activities and trips than last year. The Indiana Dunes Tourism Visitor Center is the festival headquarters. To register or for more info including the line up of great presenters go to

<http://www.indunesbirdingfestival.com/>

Hicks, Biology Professor at Wabash College, is coming to talk about the restoration effort and how the chapter is improving the area for birds. Forty percent of the birds that visit Indiana are wetland dependent.

The program is Monday, March 21st at 7 p.m. at Lilly Nature Center and is sponsored by the Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society. It is free and open to the public.

GM Pullers Needed for Fall Creek Gorge

Fall Creek Gorge (AKA the Pot-holes) in Warren County is one of the most popular state nature preserves. Its great botanical diversity is matched by its tremendous geological features.

It also has its share of exotics needing control. Derek Luchik, the TNC Field Steward, has scheduled two garlic mustard pulls for the property and is looking for people to help. It's easy and rewarding.

The first pull is on Friday, May 6th and the second is Saturday, May 14th. Both run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. **CENTRAL** time. Derek likes to take everyone to the falls to eat lunch at noon so people get a chance to enjoy the property. Just show up if you can, or contact him at dluchik@TNC.org.

Indiana Audubon Spring Festival

You are all invited to join Indiana Audubon members at the 2016 Spring Festival at the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary south of Connersville.

Most events will be focused on Saturday, April 31 with a bird walk, a special speaker, and bird banding. You can come on Friday and camp, meet folks, and enjoy the Sanctuary. Some activities will be on May 1. For more information email

carl.wilms@indianaaudubon.org
Registration and more information will be available soon.

Nature Notes & News

● Dec. 27th Russ Allison recorded the 25th species for his yard at Camelback thanks to a pair of Red shouldered Hawks that were around all day.

● The new year started off with a bang for Del Arvin. He had a late Turkey Vulture January 3rd, then over 600 Sandhill Cranes in various groups heading south. About 4:40 p.m. just as he decided to stop counting them, 4 cranes appeared one of them was a Whopping Crane!

● Jan 13 Landon Neumann and Frank Stetler birded southern Benton Co looking for longspurs and Snow Bunting. Good numbers of longspurs, but no buntings. The real surprise were 4 Savannah Sparrows in a tree line.

● On the 23rd the pair went to Georgetown in Cass County checking for the Northern Shrike which they found along South River Rd across the river from Georgetown. They saw the bird fly across the river toward the dairy farm along Georgetown Rd. Obviously the bird has a large territory. Other birds seen were Snow Geese and Snow Buntings along with 25 Herring Gulls and a Mockingbird.

● January 18th - Sara Benham (her photo is to the right) saw a pair of Long-eared Owls roosting in shrubs along the creek in Franklin Park Apartments in West Lafayette. As of Feb. 22nd they were still there.

● John Skene visited Celery Bog Jan. 29 and had a decent array of waterfowl. He had both Greater White-fronted Geese and Snow Geese, plus Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Gadwall and N. Shoveler. All of the 5 swans were Mute Swans, so the Trumpeters present in December were not there.

● Sycamore Audubon Society's field trip the next day spent part of the morning at Celery Bog sorting through the large numbers of geese and other waterfowl that ringed the

edges of open water in the northern part of the basin. Highlights were some very close views of 12 Cackling Geese, plus flocks of Greater White-fronted Geese. It was great to hear their calls. Other highlights were the continuing young Snow Goose, and decent numbers of Gadwall and Northern Shoveler.

● Barny Dunning had more Greater White-fronted Geese Jan. 31 when a flock of about 35 flew over West Lafayette.

● Feb. 3 Wes Homoya found what he described as an "Excellent Snowy" Owl north of Lafayette in White Co. (Brookston). It was in a field just north of 800S and east of 450W.

● Larry Miller went up the next day and found the Snowy Owl near 300 W and 800 S.

● Russ & Barbara Allison went looking for the owl the following day, Feb. 5, with no luck so moved on to the Feldt Game Area in Benton County where they saw numerous white birds on the south body of water. In the scope they turned out to be around 200 Greater White fronted Geese,(300) and 300 Snow Geese (both white and dark phases). There



were also some Canada Geese, Northern Pintail, and Mallards along with a Northern Harrier.

● Ed Hopkins had better luck Feb. 6th. He spotted one Snowy Owl a half mile NW of White CR800S and CR450W and then while driving homeward found a second Snowy Owl near the CR900S and CR 450W junction. He could still see the first bird 1.4 miles to the north.

● During the Back Yard bird Count on Feb 14, Jackie Nevinger was delighted to see a Yellow-rumped Warbler at their feeders.

● Feb. 18 Russ Allison spent 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Williamsburg on the Wabash. During that time 5-7 eagles were always in view. At one time there were 11 birds in sight. Most of the Eagles were immatures.

● That same day in Cass Co, Bud Dodrill drove along the Wabash from Logansport to Georgetown to do an eagle count. The previous day he had lost count. On the 18th he managed to verify 65 Bald Eagles along the roughly 16 mile stretch of the Wabash.

● Spring was definitely in the air Feb. 20. Barny Dunning saw his first Killdeer of the spring flying over the Purdue Campus, and the next day Russ Allison noted that "Things have sure changed, the Ground Hog was right." Among other signs of spring Russ saw a Pileated Woodpecker cutting a nest hole in a tree and many Red-winged Blackbirds.

● Connie & Jerry Brown noticed 4-5 Common Mergansers on the Wabash south of West Lafayette the third week of February, by Feb 21st there 24 of them, mostly male.

● In late February Kevin Arvin had all the possible blackbirds show up at his feeder including Brewer's and Rusty.

● Sue & Ted Ulrich had a new feeder bird—a lovely male Pine Warbler—show up the afternoon of Feb 24. It fed primarily on a suet-peanut butter mix and stayed until March 3. They also had a new bird seen on or over their property: White-fronted Geese.

● Bud Dodrill enjoyed the birds brought in by the snows in early March, especially 14 Rusty Blackbirds which stopped by March 4.

● John Skene found a Horned Grebe at Celery Bog that same day.

Send your nature notes to the editor at
sueandtedulrich@msn.com

CONSERVATION NEWS

New Coastal Hazard Mapping

A Stanford-based team looking at global warming published a paper mapping coastal hazards (extreme weather, sea level rise, and degraded coasts) to U.S. residential properties, and at-risk human populations along the U.S. coasts. Their estimate is that by 2100 "high hazard" areas will contain about 1.7 to 2.1 million people and \$400 to \$500 billion worth of residential property.

Natural defenses do exist in the form of marshes, dunes, kelp forests, sea grass, mangroves and reefs. Building upon these habitats could greatly reduce the people and properties vulnerable to flooding and other storm damage, at least in the near future.

To the Governor: Veto H.B. 1386

Bill expedites construction of convention center & privatization of public beach in Indiana Dunes SP

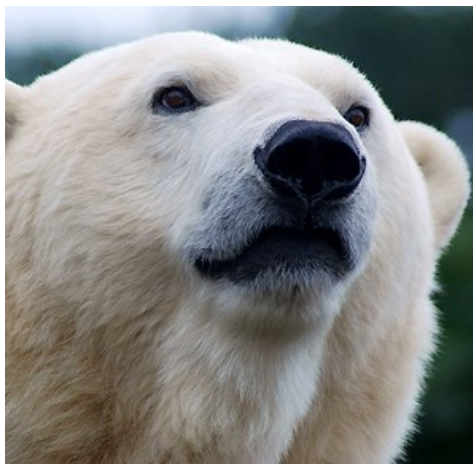
The General Assembly recently passed H.B. 1386. Please contact Governor Pence and ask him to veto the bill because of the negative environmental impact that the bill will have. H.B. 1386 replaces the Alcoholic Beverage Commission process of public hearings with a permit process by the IDNR. The bill states that **no public hearing or public notice will be provided**. This permanent secrecy by bureaucrats should not replace the present system. The motive is to expedite the construction of a convention center on the now public beach at the Indiana Dunes State Park. That would privatize a very popular and lovely outdoor recreation area on the shore of Lake Michigan.

The paving, city lights, and construction of a conference center with bars, restaurants and retail shops would destroy the public recreation area.

The delicate balance of sand dunes, wildflowers, bogs, and forests would be irreversibly harmed. Scientific research and nature photography would be devastated.

Already existing hotels at the Indiana Toll Road, restaurants, and conference centers like the Waterbird Conference Center on the west side of St. Rd. 49 would suffer a loss of business.

An alternative exists: the IDNR should repair and plan a renovation of the historic pavilion with restrooms and simple showers for swimmers. Such a project in the Marquette Park west of the Indiana Dunes State Park was quite successful.



Indiana Parks Alliance

Anyone who visits Indiana State Parks knows that the state isn't doing a good enough job to provide them with sufficient financial and other support. Now there is a new not-for-profit who is working to bring funding levels back to previous levels and protect our state parks and nature preserves in other ways as well. For a good example of why this group is needed, just read about H.B. 1386 to the left.

To learn more or to join and help them protect these areas go to:

www.indianaparksalliance.org

Polar Bear Protection Reinstated

In a win for Polar Bears, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2010 decision to protect more than 120 million acres as critical habitat for polar bears. In its ruling the court reversed a 2013 lower-court decision that shot down that designation after it was challenged by the state of Alaska and the oil and gas industry.

These habitat protections are vital as polar bears struggle against the climate crisis and melting sea ice. Without help, scientists predict more than two-thirds of the world's polar bears -- including all of those in Alaska -- will be gone by 2050. Arctic sea ice, which polar bears depend on for hunting and raising their cubs, has hit record lows this winter.

This decision gives polar bears some breathing room, but leaders still need to be quick to leave dirty fossil fuels in the ground to give this species and many others a shot at survival.

Spring Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2016

Programs are held on the 2nd Thursday at 7:15 PM in the Lilly Nature Center in West Lafayette. People are invited to come beforehand for "Dinner & Conversation" starting at 6:00 PM at the MCL Cafeteria (WL). Field trip times vary.

- Every Thursday **Early Bird Hikes.** Celery Bog Park, West Lafayette, 8 a.m. These will be held every Thursday morning through migration. Meet at the gravel parking area (first turn to the right).
- March 20 Sunday **Evening Woodcock Walk.** 7:45 Celery Bog. A chance to hear (& possibly see) this evening court-ing upland shorebird. Meet at the outdoor Amphitheater near Lilly Nature Center.
- March 26 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook..** 6-8 p.m. Prophetstown State Park. Meet at the end of the road. Even-ing birds such as waterfowl, woodcock, owls possible. Even Otters?
- April 9 Saturday **Birds and Wildflowers of Fall Creek Gorge.** 7:30 a.m. carpool at the gravel lot at Celery Bog or be at Fall Creek at 8:30 a.m. Note: parking space there is limited. Early Spring Wildflowers & birds.
- April 14 Thursday **Program: Have You Seen a Goatsucker Lately?** Remember hearing Whip-poor-wills or flushing coveys of Bobwhite quail? Alan Bruner will discuss changes in populations of some of our bird friends that are now rare and/or difficult to find. Ten bird species that were once easily found in our area through the 1980's will be highlighted and their current & past status and possible reasons for declines considered. Lilly Nature Center, WL 7:15 p.m. Free parking and refreshments.
- April 15-17 Fri-Sun **Spring Bake & Plant Sale.** See p. 2. Donations and helpers needed. Proceeds going to Hand of the Future Junior Nature Club. Contact Susan Ulrich (p.7) for questions or to volunteer to help.
- April 23 Saturday **Garden Expo.** See p. 2. 9:30-3 p.m. Tippecanoe Fair Grounds Hog Barn. Again donations are needed and people are urged to contact Susan Ulrich (p. 7) if they have questions, need to arrange to make donations, or volunteer to help out. Door prizes, lectures, loads of vendors.
- April 30 Saturday **Goose Pond Excursion.** Contact Barny if interested. This is a 2.5 hour trip and may involve over-night arrangements such as going down Friday to bird that night and then the next morning.
- May 3 & 5 Tues & Thurs **Fifth Grade Camp Walks.** People are needed to help teachers lead bird walks at Camp Tecumseh in White County. See story on p. 1. Carpool leaves from Celery Bog at 6:30 a.m. for 7 a.m. start.
- May 5-8 Thurs-Sun **Indiana Dunes Birding Festival.** See p.2 &/or www.indunesbirdingfestival.com/. People interested in carpooling should contact Barny Dunning, see p. 7.
- May 12 Thursday **Program: This Was Indiana: The Natural Landscape of the Hoosier State in 1816.** Join Mi-chael Homoya, botanist and plant ecologist with the Indiana DNR Division of Nature Preserves, as he takes us to a time when Indiana possessed a grandeur we can only imagine today. During this Indiana bicentennial year, it is appropriate to remember the Indiana that was. Prior to statehood Indiana was a land of vast forests, expansive wetlands, and prairie as far as the eye could see. Herds of bison traveled ancient paths, passenger pigeons darkened the skies, and wolves, bears and panthers roamed the land. All this we know from eyewitness accounts provided by early explorers, pioneers, and government surveyors. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, WL. Free parking and refreshments.
- May 14 Saturday **Big Day In May Bird Count.** See story on page 1. You can help with either the Tippecanoe or Warren County count. Any birds seen within the 24 hours of May 14 can be included. Please contact the county compiler to volunteer and get your territory to cover and the reporting forms.
- May 21 Saturday **Mind BOGgling Event.** See story on p.1. Lots going on. More detailed information available short-ly so watch for it, but it is sure to be a fun day for everyone attending.
- June 11 Saturday **Two Prophetstown Field Trips: Both meet at the far end of the park road.** Species seen will count towards the 100 State and National Park birds needed for the Bicentennial Big Year.
- Grassland and Other Birds of Prophetstown.** 6:30 a.m. to around 8:30 a.m. We'll look for the typical grassland species and see what else we can find in our local state park.
- Audubon at the Overlook.** 9 a.m. Stick around the overlook and join SAS members to see and learn about local birds that might put in an appearance.

Wednesdays in the Wild

Here is a partial listing of upcoming programs. To get the entire list when it is ready via email, write Joan Mohr Samuels at mohrsamuels@comcast.net or pick up a listing at Lilly Nature Center (LNC).

Mar 16 1-3 p.m. Forest Bird Responses to Clearcutting. Patrick Ruhl, Indoor LNC. The surprising use of small forest clearings by normally deep forest bird species. Great close up bird photos.

Mar 23 1-3 p.m. Indiana State Parks: the first 100 Years. Ginger Murphy, IDNR . Indoor LNC. Highlights and stories of Indiana's 100-year old State Park System within the context of World History.

Mar 30 1-3 p.m. Benefit of Controlled burns. Brad Weigle, NICHES Steward. Outdoors at NICHES Granville Sand Barrens. Lots of sand so wear closed toe shoes! See and discuss the benefits of burning various ecosystems.

Apr 6 1-3 p.m. Exploring the Unique Features of the Big Pine Valley at Crow's Grove - Bob Easter, NICHES Steward- outdoor pgm - NICHES Crow's Grove Property, one of NICHES's newest reserves. **[12:15 LNC carpool]**

Apr 13 TIME to be determined. INVASIVES - Ellen Jacquart, TNC. - indoor/outdoor pgm - LNC. Includes an UPDATE on local invasives work & a Garlic Mustard Pull!

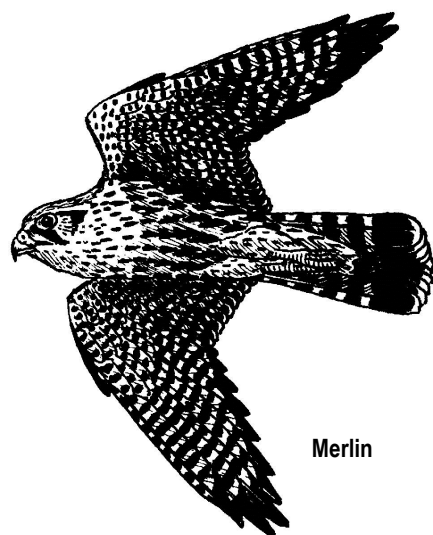
Apr 20 1-3 p.m. WILD EDIBLES - Talk, Walk, Eat! - Angie Manuel, Prophetstown Naturalist - outdoor pgm at Prophetstown STPK *[no park entry fee]* . Learn and taste various wild edibles found in the park.

Apr 27 1-3 p.m. Field Guides 101: Putting a Name with those Wildflower Faces- Mary Cutler. Indoor/outdoor pgm-LNC. Mary will talk about field guides and walk participants through the use of Newcomb's Wildflower Guide (easily mastered by non-botanists). We'll take our guides into the field and use them to ID spring flowers. Bring your Newcomb's guide or borrow or purchase one that day (at discounted price of \$15 courtesy of Von's Book Store!).

APR 27 7-9 p.m. National Park Service at 100 Years - Purdue Environmental Ed Students. - indoor pgm -LNC . America's greatest idea turns 100 years old. What is the current status and history of this program?

MAY 4 1-3pm Spring Warblers & Other Migrants - Susan Ulrich. Indoor/outdoor pgm - LNC. Indoor talk about migration and the birds that are coming through, followed by an outdoor bird walk at Celery Bog. Binoculars available if needed.

MAY 11 1-3pm Moyer Gould Woods Wildflower Hike - Brad Wiegel - outdoor pgm—at NICHES/Moyer Gould Woods. (Carpool LNC time not yet specified). The property along the Tippecanoe River has a wealth of wildflower species.



Christmas Count Comments

SAS members helped with three separate Christmas Bird Counts this winter. Unfortunately we do not have the results for Cass County but they did have a good count and found at least two extremely uncommon bird species: Orchard Oriole and Northern Shrike.

Both the Lafayette and Willow Slough counts found 20% more individuals and more species this year than last. See the results to the right. Overall at least 98 species were found on the three counts (including the oriole and shrike).

Woodland bird populations were notably up from last year, while migrating sparrows were down on the Lafayette Count. Notable birds for Lafayette included Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Black Duck, Bufflehead, Turkey Vulture, Wilson's Snipe, a Merlin, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and Purple Finch. Thanks to open water an impressive number of waterfowl species were still present.

Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves had its own Merlin, along with Cackling Goose, Canvasback, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Savanna Sparrow and Eastern Meadowlark.

Area Christmas Bird Counts

Species Name: Laf WS/I

Snow Goose	0	cw
Greater White-fronted Goose .cw	13	
Canada Goose	1285	610
Cackling Goose	0	1
Mute Swan	3	0
Trumpeter Swan	3	0
Wood Duck	6	0
Gadwall	44	0
American Wigeon	1	0
American Black Duck	1	0
Mallard	1541	55
Northern Shoveler	44	2
Green-winged Teal	19	0
Canvasback	0	9
Ring-necked Duck	8	51
Lesser Scaup	0	6
Surf Scoter	0	1
Bufflehead	1	0
Hooded Merganser	5	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	0	24
Wild Turkey	0	2
Common Loon	0	1
Pied-billed Grebe	3	18
Great Blue Heron	36	3
Turkey Vulture	1	0
Bald Eagle	11	0
Northern Harrier	2	42
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1
Cooper's Hawk	3	1
Northern Goshawk	0	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	0
Red-tailed Hawk	54	13
Rough-legged Hawk	3	22
American Coot	36	192
Sandhill Crane	10	4
Killdeer	15	0
Wilson's Snipe	1	0
Ring-billed Gull	281	4
Eurasian Collared-Dove	0	26
Mourning Dove	192	133
Barn Owl	cw	0
Eastern Screech-Owl	5	6
Great Horned Owl	0	1
Barred Owl	3	1
Short-eared Owl	1	3
Northern Saw-whet Owl	0	1
Belted Kingfisher	10	2
Red-headed Woodpecker	0	5
Red-bellied Woodpecker	84	20
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4	0
Downy Woodpecker	95	9
Hairy Woodpecker	14	8
Northern Flicker	19	2
Pileated Woodpecker	17	0
American Kestrel	9	5
Merlin	1	1
Blue Jay	59	78
American Crow	933	177
Horned Lark	48	314

Species Name: Laf WS/I

Black-capped Chickadee	0	9
Carolina Chickadee	95	0
Tufted Titmouse	81	5
White-breasted Nuthatch	112	14
Brown Creeper	43	4
Carolina Wren	17	0
Golden-crowned Kinglet	35	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	0
Eastern Bluebird	38	4
Hermit Thrush	1	0
American Robin	262	323
European Starling	8899	191
Lapland Longspur	3	137
Snow Bunting	9	7
Cedar Waxwing	4	0
Chipping Sparrow	cw	0
American Tree Sparrow	247	444
Field Sparrow	2	2
Savannah Sparrow	0	1
Fox Sparrow	3	cw
Song Sparrow	70	14
Swamp Sparrow	1	3
White-throated Sparrow	87	3
White-crowned Sparrow	2	32
Dark-eyed Junco	342	114
Northern Cardinal	163	48
Eastern Meadowlark	0	4
Red-winged Blackbird	2	762
Rusty Blackbird	0	22
Brown-headed Cowbird	83	2280
Purple Finch	4	0
House Finch	135	21
American Goldfinch	90	148
House Sparrow	349	138
Total Individuals	16,537	6,751
Total Species	73	70
(Total Species last year	67	59)

cw species seen During Count Week only

Lafayette Compiler: Ed Hopkins. Participants: Delano & Mark Arvin, Joyce & Mike Brattain, Barny Dunning, Elsa Janle, Landon Neumann, Harry Potter, Rick read, Patrick Ruhl, Marianna Sadowski, John Skene, Larry & Becky Theller, Chuck Tuttle, Susan Ulrich, Taylor Whitson, Mike Yough.

Willow Slough/Iroquois Preserve Compiler: Ed Hopkins Participants: Ken Brock, John Cassady, Lynea Hinchman, Jeff McCoy, Randy Pals, Bronson & Gary Ratcliff, Lynn Vernon,

Join Sycamore Audubon Society!

You can support Sycamore Audubon Society's local educational and conservation work by becoming or renewing as a Friend of 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). Contact SAS's membership chair for information. 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 all national members to ALSO become Friends of SAS. As a Friend, you contribute directly to our local chapter and its projects.

Date: _____

Chapter Membership Application

Name : _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Send to : Sycamore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2716, West Lafayette, IN 47996-2716.

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

SAS's treasurer would appreciate payments in August-September to make it easier to keep track, however Friends memberships are credited to whatever month a Friend first joined.

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

I would prefer to receive the chapter newsletter by ☐ email ☐ paper

☐ **Additional contribution to SAS for** _____ \$ _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

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Needed: Smarter Alternatives to Lawn Care

Americans love their lawns, all 45 million acres of them (8 times the size of New Jersey). More than 500 square miles are added each year. The average US homemaker spends at least a full workweek mowing.

This preoccupation comes with a cost. Besides millions of gallons of water and lots of gas, 70,000 pounds of pesticides are used. That's 10 times more than used in farming. The runoff percolates into groundwater, a threat to wildlife and humans. A study on grassland birds concluded that pesticides were **four times as likely to be associated with grassland bird declines** as were the changes in pastures and hay cutting. This was true even in areas where only small portions of farmland were treated.

Insects Show up on Radar

A swarm of mayflies erupting from burrows in the river-bottom mud of the Mississippi in Wisconsin was so massive it was picked up on radar by the National Weather Service. Mayflies spend their first years in a larval stage eating decaying organic matter in the river muck. When conditions are right, they erupt en masse through the river's surface into the evening sky, find a mate, lay eggs and abruptly perish.

This was a literal "Bug Storm". The abundance indicated the health of the river was good. The flies' eruption created a short-lived all-you-can-eat buffet for frogs, birds, spiders and other insects.



Tidbits

◆ Door Swallow? In 2001 Barn Swallows were known to have learned to open motion-detector doors and began nesting inside places such as the Lumberyard section at Home Depot in Minnesota. They are now opening many of these type doors. To see this in action check out the video tinyurl.com/viralSwallows.

◆ Swainson's Warblers, a rare secretive species that breeds in southern swamps and bottomlands and sometimes in southern Appalachian laurel and rhododendron thickets, has begun using a new habitat. In the 1990's they started to breed in industrial-type pine plantations and can now be found from Texas to Virginia. They only use these areas for 7-8 years of the 25-35 years plantation's rotation cycle but given the number of acres these plantations are expected to eventually support a majority of the global population.

◆ One out of every three bites of food is pollinated by honey bees, Neonics are playing a role in bee decline. Friends of the Earth checked 'bee-friendly' home garden plants sold in garden centers nationwide. They found many were pre-treated with neonics at levels 200X higher than used on farms.



Sycamore Audubon Society
P. O. Box 2716
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A subscription is included with membership in National Audubon or Sycamore Audubon Society.

Indiana Bicentennial Birding Big Year

It's Indiana's bicentennial. What better way is there to celebrate than to go birding?

The Indiana Bicentennial Birding Big Year is a chance for Indiana birders to celebrate birding in Indiana during the course of the state's bicentennial. In partnership with the Indiana DNR, National Park Service, and Indiana Audubon Society, birders are invited to seek out as many species of birds that can be found in Indiana during 2016. The contest begins January 1 and continues through December 11 (Indiana's birthday). All participants need to submit their bird lists no later than December 16 to be eligible.

To play, birders must find a minimum of 100 species of birds in Indiana during the contest period. All birders finding 100 species will receive a commemorative IBBY sticker or decal from Indiana Audubon. The real challenge will be for birders to find and log 200 species of birds. Since 2016 is also the 100th anniversary of the Indiana State Parks and National Park Service, 100 of the 200 species must have been found on an Indiana State Park (or reservoir) or National Park site in Indiana. State Fish and Wildlife Areas, State Forests, and State Nature Preserves (not located inside a state park) do not count towards this criteria.

Participants reporting their totals will be required to log their checklists into ebird.com and download their year list (directions to be provided). All those finding at least 200 species will also receive the commemorative IBBY sticker or decal, but also go into a drawing for the following:

- 2017 DNR Annual Entrance Pass
- \$50 DNR Inns or Camp Gift Card
- One Year Complimentary IAS membership
- 2 tickets to the 2017 Indiana Dunes Birding Festival
- one of 3 Eagle Optics Binoculars
- + other prizes to come!

