



Sycamore Warbler

Volume 41 Issue 4

Winter 2016-17

Last Year's CBC Season sets records

By all accounts last year's 116th Christmas Bird Count was a record-setting season. A new high total of 2,505 circles were covered, with 1,902 counts in the United States, 471 in Canada and 132 in Latin America, the Caribbean, Bermuda, and the Pacific Islands. This led to a new record level of participation on the Christmas Bird Count, with 76,669 observers in the field and at feeders.

In the United States, 59,039 participants helped out, with 52,771 counters traversing the fields and streams while 6,268 watched their feeders. All that coverage, and all those party-hours (and days...and weeks...), were bound to turn up a lot of birds of a mind-boggling array of species. In total, 58,878,071 birds were tallied: 54,531,408 in the United States; 3,723,228 in Canada; and 623,435 in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Pacific Islands. Diversity-wise, 2,607 species were tallied—roughly one-quarter of the world's known avifauna. All counts combined in the United States tallied 646 species and 53 forms (plus 7 in count week only and 36 exotics) and in Canada 297 species were found (plus 6 count week only). New to the United States all-time list was the Fieldfare found on the Missoula, Montana count. In Canada, Vermilion Flycatcher at Wallaceburg, Ontario, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Cedar Creek, Ontario, and Siberian Accentor at White Rock, British Columbia were all added to that country's overall Christmas Bird Count roster.



Thank You, Celery Bog

May birders were thankful for Celery Bog this Thanksgiving vacation. Ryan Sanderson found and reported a female Long-tailed Duck (AKA Oldsquaw) in winter plumage there on November 25th.

The bird was seen for a few days then disappeared for one or two days but was found again on the 29th by Landon Neumann and is still present at this time. Check out the nature notes for other sightings at the Bog and elsewhere.

Be Part of the 117th Annual CBC

People are **always needed** to help find birds on our three "local" CBC's, both field counters who are assigned specific areas of the 15 mile diameter circle to cover, and feeder counters who tally birds seen at their (or a friend's) feeder that's within the circle. Feeders often produce birds missed in the field so please help if you have an active feeding station. Any birds seen or heard and identified between Midnight and midnight should be included.

To participate in the Lafayette or Willow Slough-Iroquois Reserve CBC's contact Ed Hopkins (birder4in@gmail.com; 765-463-5927) or come to the Dec. 8th meeting to get forms and a map—come for the program and holiday party even if you can't help with the count!.

The 3rd CBC in Cass County is centered at Logansport. Landon Neumann is the compiler (landonneumann25@gmail.com) Remember, expertise not required and there is the option to go with someone with experience. Fun!

December 17: Lafayette CBC

January 1: Willow Slough-Iroquois Reserve CBC

December 28: Cass County CBC

More on the Mississippi Kites

The Mississippi Kites found in Tippecanoe County as reported in the last *Warbler* indeed bred here this summer and, it turns out, also last summer. Neighbors told people looking for the birds that last year they nested in the tree that was now **dying. This year's nest was in a nearby tree.** The birds are strong, acrobatic fliers and were seen frequently over the summer catching large insects such as cicadas on the wing and successfully raising two young.

The birds have migrated south for the winter, but it is hoped they and some of their offspring will return to the area to nest next year.

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CHAPTER NEWS

September meeting report

As usual, members at the September meeting gave a number of excellent mini-programs. Rick Read showed slides from his and Debbie's extensive trips this past year, John Skene showed pictures of birds he found and photographed from Celery bog to California, Susan Ulrich's presentation featured prairie plants and how to start a prairie; Chuck Tuttle had a number of bird and train pictures taken locally and elsewhere, and Dan Miller had more fantastic bird and nature shots mostly taken at Celery Bog. If anyone was left off this list, my apologies—lost my notes from the meeting. The Editor.

More "Thank You's"

Several people have made financial donations to SAS since the last meeting. **Thank you** to Stephen Wood, Jim Klatch (again), Tom Brennan, Susan Ulrich, and Mark & Rhonda Arvin.

And thanks to Marilyn Hinze, Joan Samuels, Brooke Criswell, Dorothy Jones and Joanne Lax, for donating plant pots.

Women Giving Together Grant Supports SAS Nature Club Programs

The White County Community Foundation's *Women Giving Together Fund* is again providing support for SAS's after school Audubon Nature Club programming in Monticello. This year's grant was for \$1,100. Rick Read, SAS treasurer, wrote the grant request.

Cookie Party & Meeting Refreshments

Don't forget, SAS's December meeting is the annual Holiday Party. People are asked to bring a dozen or so cookies or another edible goodie for the event. As usual the society

provides beverages, napkins, cups, and plates.

Connie Brown, Karen Griggs, Elsa Janle and Susan Ulrich all signed up to bring meeting refreshments so far this year. George Kopcha has been supplying hot coffee.

To sign up for refreshments for the February, March or April meetings contact Susan Ulrich (see p. 9).



Feast Report

Approximately 26 volunteers helped at SAS's Feast Booth this year. Turkey legs continue to be popular and SAS sold more legs than ever before. There were some frozen legs left. If you are interested in buying a few, contact Barny Dunning. They are \$2.49 a pound, which is what SAS paid for them.

Walking for Wolves

Rick & Debbie Read and Susan Ulrich hosted an SAS bird information stop at Wolf Park as part of the park's Walking for Wolves fundraiser. Many people stopped to talk. Items displayed including a mounted cock pheasant (under the table) and a stuffed Great horned owl.

If you want your newsletter sent via email in color rather than as a paper copy, contact the editor at sueandtedulrich@msn.com.

EARLY BIRD HIKES continue at 8am Thursday mornings as long as interest continues. Typically it is a one-hour walk as long as parts of Celery Bog have open water. Starting time may get adjusted if it gets too dark. Contact Barny (p 9) if you are unsure if a walk will occur.

Warren Co Birding Spark Benefits

The Warren Co 4-H birding spark program is getting a whopping \$731.67 from SAS thanks to a great fall Bake & Plant Sale.

Many thanks to all who made this sale so successful: Maryann McGill, Amanda Beheler, Mary Sue Waser, Susan Ulrich, Marilyn Heinz, Elsa Janle, Karen Griggs, Bill Baugh, Jim Klatch, Anne Piechota (& her famous cream puffs), Dorothy Jones, Nick Schenkel, Tom Johnson plus those donors who dropped off plants and items early.

RIP Squad

The RIP Squad fall workdays have come to an end. The group took out loads of Honeysuckle and Autumn Olive at Ross Hills and loads of Honeysuckle and Burning Bush at Prophets Rock Park.

The group can use more volunteers, watch for nest spring's schedule for garlic mustard pulls and join to help improve our local parks.

Pulling for Bats

SAS's Oct. 30 Pulling for Bats event took out non-native shrubs at Ross Hills Park and Happy Hollow

Park. Since native plants produce lots more tasty and nutritious insects that the bats and birds feed on, removing invasive species to let native plants increase benefits birds as well as the bats.

Junior Nature Club an Amazon Smiles Option

Amazon has a program called Amazon Smiles. When you sign up for this, your shopping experience is like before, except that a small percentage of your purchases go to help support a charity of your choice. Hands of the Future is now one of those choices. If you haven't already signed up for the program, Zonda would love you to give it a try. Here is the link you need:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/35-2475997>

Also from Zonda: "Avery Peckinpaugh won the design contest for the Hands of the Future T-shirts. Avery is in the oldest group of kiddos and has been coming to Junior Nature Club for three years. She wants to be an ornithologist. These shirts will be available all year and range in size from youth sizes XS to XL and adult sizes S and M. We can get them in larger adult sizes by special order. The shirts are \$15 for one, \$28 for two and \$39 for three. If you have a larger family, we can adjust the price for purchases of more than three."

Not to Late to Join the Indiana Feeder Count

Enjoy watching birds at your feeders? Consider contributing data to the Indiana Feeder Count. The November count period is past, but you can still record info for December, January and February. It is easy to do and adds interest to what's coming to your yard.

The Winter Bird Feeder Count is sponsored by the Indiana Audu-

Audubon Great Lake News from Our Audubon Rep

- Bill Heck, representative on the National Audubon board for Audubon chapters in the Mississippi Flyway North .

As you may have heard, Audubon has recently adopted a new strategic plan. As part of our vision of collaborating with our network of chapters to increase our collective effect, Audubon has launched a new effort in our region. The Audubon office in Chicago, founded as Audubon Chicago Region in 1998, has expanded to become *Audubon Great Lakes*. Audubon Great Lakes will be working with 58 chapters across five states – Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Rebecca Sanders is the Executive Director of Audubon Great Lakes. She also serves as the Deputy Director of the Mississippi Flyway and manages Audubon's new Great Lakes Conservation Initiative. Troy Peters recently joined the Audubon Great Lakes team as Engagement Manager. Both are copied on this message, so please feel free to reach out to them or to me if you have any questions. They will arrange a conference call for January to introduce chapters to the team in the expanded Chicago office.

Of course, it will take awhile to bring additional staff on board and ramp up our efforts. We have not had a regional office, or state offices, in place for quite a long time, so we need to rebuild the processes and relationships that will make the Audubon Great Lakes office truly effective. But, having met some of the people there, I can tell you that we have a great team in place; I also can tell you that national Audubon is very much on board at all levels in the effort to make the Audubon network of chapters all that it can be. I look forward to continuing to represent you on the Audubon board. Should you have any comments or questions, or just want to chat, please contact me by phone at 614 859 2473.

bon Society and provides yearly data for birds seen at feeders in Indiana during winter.

The count is a simple one page form and covers birds seen during the 20th to the 25th of November, December, January and February. All you need to do is to count and record the maximum number of birds of

each species seen at your feeders during those periods and submit the form at the end of the February count period.

Forms are available at SAS meetings or can be found at www.indianaaudubon.org. See the back page for info on the international Great Backyard Bird Count.

You can again pay for an Audubon Membership by Check

When Audubon redid its membership earlier this year, it made it very difficult for individual chapter to send in memberships by check and tried to discourage individuals from doing so as well. It hoped people would renew online. Chapters were unhappy with the situation and let NAS know. As a result you can now send a \$20.00 new or renewal membership check to National Audubon at the following:

Audubon National
P.O. Box 97194
Washington DC 20990-7194

CONSERVATION NEWS

Indiana's Super Polluters

A few weeks ago, the Center for Public Integrity, USA Today, and the Weather Channel revealed that four of the nation's 22 Super Polluters -- coal plants that disproportionately contribute to toxic and greenhouse gas emissions -- are located in Southwest Indiana.

These Super Polluters are owned or co-owned by Indiana & Michigan Power (I&M), Indianapolis Power & Light (IPL), Duke Energy, and Vectren. They provide power to 60 percent of Indiana's electricity customers, including the state's largest cities: Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Evansville, South Bend, and Carmel -- many of which have already started to call for these companies to move towards clean energy.

These Super Polluters collected nearly \$6.9 billion in revenue in Indiana last year. Their CEOs -- I&M's Paul Chodak, Vectren's Carl Chapman, IPL's Rafael Sanchez, and Duke Energy's Melody Birmingham-Bird -- are getting rich, while Southwest Indiana residents pay the price with their health and utility customers foot the bill.

Seven coal plants sit within 30 miles of Evansville, Indiana, which has more toxic pollution from coal-burning plants around it than any other midsize or large city in the nation. In the Ohio River Valley it is more the norm than the exception for people to have asthma, cardiac issues, and even cancer.

Coal has been a part of Southwest Indiana's history and its heritage, but unlikely a major part of its future. Competition from cleaner and cheaper fuels is the reason coal is in trouble. In Texas only one of its seven coal-fired power plants is making a small profit. The others are losing money because of power from cheaper wind, solar and natural gas. It was recently announced that some of Indiana's coal-powered plants would be retired or converted to gas by 2024. Not soon enough for many.



One of Indiana's Coal-fired Power Plants

New IL-IN Federal Wildlife Refuge Now a Reality

The new Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation area is now official. It dedicated its first acquisition Oct. 15: the 60-acre Kolar Savanna donated by the Friends of the Kankakee, a bi-state environmental group that cleaned up old dumps and restored natural drainage to the area.

This first unit of the new refuge is a sandy preserve of prairie and oak trees near Indiana's Willow Slough Fish and Game Area. Fran Harty, one of the naturalists who led tours of the area during the dedication, said that eleven endangered species live on the refuge. The Kolar Savanna is characteristic of the flatwoods ecosystem with a high water table and open prairie savannas due to natural fires that suppressed the woody vegetation.



The Kolar Savanna was funded by numerous individuals from Indiana and Illinois from individuals plus grants from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the Grand Victoria Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and others.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service only accepts donations from willing sellers and does not use eminent domain for land acquisition.

The historic Kankakee Marsh, known as "The Everglades of the North," stretched from western South Bend to Momence, Illinois.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory bird Treaty Act of 1918 has been a lifesaver for more than 1000 species of birds. We have two Boston socialites, Harriet Hemenway and Minna Hall to thank for their activism which eventually led to this treaty.

Learning about the impact hunting (especially for feathers for hats) was having on bird populations the two women organized a boycott among the chic set. Conservation groups sprang up and the movement became a political force, eventually in 2016 the U.S. and Canada entered into a treaty setting uniform protections for many migratory birds. When the Act was signed in 1918 the treaty became law. Later Mexico, Japan and Russia entered similar agreements with the U.S.

Winter/Spring Sycamore Audubon Calendar of Events 2016-7

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.

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| December 3 Saturday | Warmup for the Christmas Bird Count. Get your binoculars and gear ready and refresh your identification skills. 8 a.m. carpool at Celery Bog's gravel parking area. A half day trip. |
| December 8 Thursday | <p><u>Program:</u> <i>Have we Lost a Billion and a Half Birds since 1970?</i> Barny Dunning, Professor, Purdue Forestry & Natural Resource Dept. A look at why many bird species are declining and what the future might bring. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center Celery Bog Park, WL. Bring a goodie for the Holiday Party. Parking is free and there is handicapped parking close to the door.</p> <p>Come early to sign up and get forms and a territory for the various Christmas Bird Counts held in the area (see p.1).</p> |
| December 17 Saturday | Lafayette Area Annual Christmas Bird Count. An all day count of birds seen or heard from midnight to midnight. Participants living in the circle can count feeder and yard birds, or sign up with Ed Hopkins and get a larger area to check. See p.1 for his contact information. The compilation party will be at 8 p.m. at the Wild Bird Shoppe. Bring something to help with refreshments if you can. |
| Dec 20-25 Jan 20-25 Feb 20-25 | Indiana Feeder Bird Count periods. See p.3. Simply record what birds show up in your yard during the official 5 day periods. Use the maximum number of birds you can confirm, e.g. if you see 2 male and 2 female cardinals one day and 5 male and one females the next. You should record 7 cardinals as you know there are at least 5 males and 2 females. |
| December 28 Wednesday | Cass County Annual Christmas Bird Count. The compiler is Landon Neumann (see p.1). Contact him for an area and any needed info. This count includes most of Logansport and adjacent areas. |
| January 1 Sunday | Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves Christmas Bird Count. As above for the Dec 17 Lafayette CBC except there will be no compilation party afterwards. Compiler is Ed Hopkins, see p.1 |
| January 12 Thursday | <u>Program:</u> <i>Images and Stories of a Careered Nature Photographer.</i> Dan Griggs is a nature photographer and conservationist. For about 15 years, Dan earned a living from his images, at times as assistant to a National Geographic photographer." 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center Celery Bog Park, WL There is free parking and refreshments. |
| January 28 Saturday | Winter Birds. Meet at 8:30 am from gravel parking lot at Celery Bog. We will look for species like Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, winter owls, etc., depending on which species are being reported. Half-day trip (subject to weather). |
| February 9 Thursday | <u>Program:</u> <i>The DNR in Indiana: an update.</i> Allisyn-Marie Gillet, the new DNR biologist for our area is the speaker. This is a chance to meet Allisyn-Marie and learn about the DNR and how what she does helps Indiana's Wildlife. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center in Celery Bog Park, WL. There is free parking and refreshments. |
| Feb 17-20 Fri—Monday | Great Backyard Bird Count. See information on the back cover. An easy to do event that thousands of people all over the globe contribute to. See what usual and unusual birds you can find. |
| February 25 Saturday | Early Migration at Celery Bog. Starts at 8 am. Depending on the availability of open water, we will be looking to catch the start of waterfowl migration. Half day trip. |
| March 4 Saturday | Woodcock Ramble. March forth and meet at 5:30 pm at the gravel parking lot of Celery Bog to carpool to an area where we can carpool to see / hear timberdoodles (AKA American Woodcocks) doing their breeding display. We may go to the Purdue Wildlife Area or the Tippecanoe Amphitheater, depending on reports of active woodcocks. Sunset is at 6:40 pm |
| March 9 Thursday | Program: To be announced in the March newsletter. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park, WL. Free parking and refreshments. |
| March 25 Saturday | Audubon at the Overlook. The year's first Audubon at the Overlook event at Prophetstown State Park. Audubon members will be at the overlook at the end of the park road from 6-8 p.m. to interact with visitors to the park and identify birds in the area. Usually one Overlook event is scheduled each month over spring and summer. |

Nature Notes & News



Three Mute Swans at Celery Bog. Photo by Karen Griggs

- Sept 2 Michael Topp and his wife Patty saw all four of the Mississippi Kites in West Lafayette. There were 2 adults and 2 juveniles all visible at the same time. One adult was feeding both Juveniles that were next to each other in the same tree.
- On Sept 7 Michael Brattain saw one of the immature Kites.
- Landon Neumann had 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches on Sept 11 and on the 12th he and Frank Stetler had a late immature male yellow Warbler at Celery Bog .
- Barny Dunning was surprised by 3 Sandhill Cranes flying just over the treetops as he drove down his driveway on Sept 17th. As he says, "Not the most usual "yard bird" for our property near Battle Ground in north-eastern Tippecanoe County."
- The Audubon Overlook event at Prophetstown SP on the 17th wasn't a washout: some raindrops but 22 species of birds, the highlights being Osprey and Yellow-billed Cuckoo.
- Sept 23 Russ Allison reports that the Osprey is still fishing at Celery Bog. He also still has a few Ruby-throated Hummingbirds fighting at his feeders
- The Early Bird Hike at Celery Bog on Sept 27th was a birdy hour . 36 species were tallied including the first fall Ruddy Duck, Gadwall and American Wigeon along with a Bonaparte's Gull. In the woodland edges, there was a scattering of warblers, including a nice male Black-throated Blue, along with the first-of-fall Swamp Sparrow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Winter Wren. At the end of the walk there was a pair of very young Indigo Buntings, one of which was still begging from the other. One silent Empidonax flycatcher was flicking its wings and tail nervously - Barny Dunning pegged it as a Least Flycatcher. The list included 9 warbler and 3 vireo species..
- The next day Barny Dunning led a banding session at the Purdue Wildlife Area. In spite of threatening rain they handled a decent number of birds including a LOT of Yellow-rumped Warblers. Four other species of warblers also found their way into the nets: Common Yellowthroat, Magnolia Warbler, American Redstart and Ovenbird.
- The Feast of the Hunter's Moon Oct.1 and 2 wasn't a washout either. Barny Dunning was part of the SAS group selling turkey legs all week-end. He writes "On both Sunday and Saturday I was somewhat surprised to see/hear YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS on the Fort property. Seems pretty late. In fact on Sunday I also heard my first GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET during the Feast. I don't know if I can recall a time when I had YB Cuckoo and GC Kinglet on the same day."
- October 3 Landon Neumann visited Pine Creek in Benton County. Among the birds present were a Marsh & Sedge Wrens, an American Bittern and at least 40 Sora Rails.
- 10/5 Back at Celery Bog Russ Allison saw a White Pelican on Oct. 5th. John Skene saw it later in the day along with Least Sandpipers, Pectoral Sandpipers and a Long Billed Dowitcher. The Pelican stayed around until at least Oct. 8.
- Judging by the number of birds Barny Dunning and his students did at the Purdue Wildlife area on Oct. 14, there appeared to be a major migration of birds the night before (or in the previous few days). There were LOTS of sparrows (mostly White-throated Sparrows) were there had been none a week before. But the real excitement warblers—36

individuals of 5 species flew into the nets. Most were Yellow-rumps, but Blackpoll, Palm, Tennessee and Orange-crowned. Warblers were also caught and banded.

- Russ Allison had 7 Dark-eyed Juncos arrive at his feeder October 15th an indication of fall.

- The Ulrichs still had a Ruby-throated Hummingbird Oct. 17th in Warren Co.

- That same day Barny Dunning's first Northern Harrier of the fall showed up at Pine Creek. Visiting Pine Creek again on the 22nd he had his first Fox sparrow and White-crowned Sparrows of the fall.

- Sycamore Audubon's Oct. 22nd "Audubon at the Overlook" event at Prophetstown State Park drew 6 people for the 2 hour observation period. Another 15 or so park visitors stopped by. Bird-wise, there were decent numbers of sparrows and hawks. For waterfowl hunters, bad news - only one Mallard (it was opening day of waterfowl season).

- Del Arvin had 22 Purple Finch at his feeders near Buck Creek In Tippecanoe County on the 22nd.

- Chuck Tuttle reported on the Oct. 27 Early Bird Hike that there were two birds on the far north pond that appeared to be Wilsons Phalaropes.

- Barny Dunning and a group of Purdue students banded birds Oct. 28 at the Purdue wildlife Area. The nets caught mostly White-throated Sparrows but also a Hermit Thrush and White-crowned Sparrow. An interest-

EARLY BIRD HIKES
will continue at 8am Thursday mornings as long as interest continues. Typically this means a one-hour walk as long as parts of Celery Bog have open water. Starting time may get adjusted if it gets too dark. Contact Barny (p 9) if you are unsure that a walk will occur.

ing mixed flock of blackbirds—mostly Rusty with some Red-wings mixed in—unfortunately didn't end up the nets. Several people saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk and John Skene had an Eastern Screech-Owl calling and saw 2 Orange Crowned Warblers

- Karen Griggs saw a Common Loon and some sandpipers at Celery Bog Park Oct 29th.
- 10/29 Charles & Karen Lunsford visited the Purdue Wildlife Area on the 29th and in the smaller south pond saw a single common gallinule among the lily pads.
- It was barely light for the Nov 3 Early Bird Walk at Celery Bog. The highlight was the continued presence of a pair of female Common Mergansers. Gadwalls and Northern Shovelers were in good numbers along with a few Wigeon and one Green-winged Teal.
- That afternoon at the RIP Squad work day at Ross Hills Park Susan Ulrich had a number of Red-headed Woodpeckers and a female Merlin that sat and posed in a tree as she was leaving.
- Good weather for Audubon's Nov 5 Field trip to the Lakeshore cut down on the birds seen. Nevertheless both Surf & White-winged Scoter along with loads of Bonaparte's Gulls and a Peregrine Falcon showed up with the other lakeshore birds. A stop at Jasper-Pulaski on the way up had Sandhill Cranes and a stop at Kankakee Sands on the way back produced Northern Harriers and a Rough-legged Hawk. The big miss was a Parasitic Jaeger which flew by as the group arrived at Michigan City harbor.
- Barny Dunning counted 58 Sandhill Crane flying south over Purdue's main Campus on Nov. 10. That evening he had a calling Eastern Screech-Owl at his home.
- That same day's Early Bird walk at Celery Bog included the pair of lingering female Common Mergan-

sers that had been there for 3 weeks, along with the first Ring-necked Ducks and American Tree Sparrows. 30 species overall.

- A few days later Tyler Stewart found an apparent hybrid Mallard mix at Celery Bog. Unfortunately it wasn't spotted at the Nov 17th Early Bird Hike but they did have what looked like American Black Ducks, along with Northern Pintails and lots of Green-winged Teal along with the lingering pair of Common Mergansers.
- A couple of Sycamore Audubon members joined 16 freshmen from Purdue's forestry and natural resources department at Purdue for the Sandhill Crane field trip to Jasper-Pulaski Nov 20th. It was pretty cold but most people found a spot out of the wind and were rewarded by a single Whooping Crane among the 10,000 or so Sandhill Cranes.



- In addition to the Long-tailed Duck, 2 Cackling Geese were seen at Celery Bog on the 25th and again on the 26th. They look like small Canada Geese with a proportionally shorter neck & bill. Photo above.
- The winter-plumaged female Long-tailed Duck which showed up at Celery Bog Nov. 25 (see p.1) was still present for the Early Bird hike Dec. 1st. Most of the other diving ducks were no-shows this morning, but a bird flying in and out (made multiple passes but never landed) appeared to be a male Greater Scaup, which is not often reported from the Bog.

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

Summer Bird Counts

The Tippecanoe County summer bird count ended up with 112 species and 1928 individual birds. A few shorebirds and a Ring-billed Gull were found, but the most exotic sightings were the breeding pair of Mississippi Kites and a Eurasian Tree Sparrow photographed by a son of Del Arvin.

Warren County's Summer count had 98 species and 837 individuals. A pair of Tundra Swans joined the Eurasian Tree Sparrow as one of 5 new species reported for an Indiana summer count. The total species list seen in Indiana during June and July now stands at 298 species. Eleven counties of the 37 counties participating topped 100 species.

Opportunity to Plant a Prairie Dec 10th

NICHES is hand-planting 9 acres of land on the south side of Gish Wildlife Area in Jasper County Dec 10 from 10 AM to 1 PM ET. Gus Nyberg, NICHES Executive Director, who has been involved in the restoration of Holley Savanna and Fisher Oak Savanna, reflects, "Not only will you have some fun when you help, the process of seeding will develop a relationship between you and this protected land. In future visits when you see the species that you helped plant, you will have that great feeling of seeing a friend that you haven't seen in a long time. And who doesn't want to see a good friend?"

"The loss of grasslands has been disastrous for native animals. There are no free ranging bison, bear, cougar or wolves in the state, and the places where one can find Franklin's ground squirrel, regal fritillaries, smooth green snake and upland sandpipers are counted on one hand. However, there is hope as the art, science and, yes, the business of grassland restoration improves."

News about Elephants, Tigers and a leopard.

June 2, 2016 the U.S. Fish & wildlife Service announced a nearly complete ban on commercial ivory trade in the United States. A few days later, China announced it would issue a timetable before December 31st to shut down its own domestic ivory trade. The World Wildlife Fund is working to get similar commitments from other countries with active ivory trades.

In July of this year three Persian Leopards were reintroduced into the Caucasus in SW Russia where they were once abundant. These are the first leopards of any type to be reintroduced to the wild. The remains of several prey species since their release shows the cats are starting to hunt successfully.

For the first time in 100 years and thanks to efforts spearheaded by the World Wildlife Fund and others, tiger numbers increased globally. The species is still at extreme risk due to poaching, illegal logging, and human expansion.

Natural Rubber & Deforestation

Natural rubber production is on the rise and is expected to be the leading cause of deforestation in mainland southeast Asia in the near future. 75% of natural rubber goes into making tires so tire companies are being asked to commit to sustainably and ethically produced rubber. Michelin, the world's largest buyer of natural rubber is the first tire company to commit to responsible rubber sourcing. The aim is to grow trees for rubber production on low-quality degraded land instead of clearing high-quality natural forests. Info from the *World Wildlife Fund*.

100th Anniversary Present

A 400 acre parcel of open grass in a sea of shady forest is now part of Yosemite National Park. Ackerson Meadow, as this area is called, lies along the **park's western boundary. Its the largest addition to Yosemite in nearly 60 years.** A nice way to celebrate the National Park Service 100th anniversary.

Markley Bavinger, project manager with The Trust for Public Land says, **"I've never seen a place so rich". Why so rich in species? Ackerson Meadows** holds a lot of water which means lots of insects and the spiders, birds, bats, and small mammals which feed on them, then up the web to hawks, owls, and coyotes. In 2013 when the Rim Fire blazed a wide variety of wildlife found refuge in the heart of Ackerson Meadow. The wet soils held the fire at bay.



considered two species, the Myrtle Warbler of the East (and far north) and the Audubon's Warbler of the West. But in 1973 scientists lumped them based on evidence that the two species routinely hybridize in a narrow zone in western Canada.

Since then the narrow zone has remained the same and now, evidence from more than 37,000 regions of the birds' DNA suggests that Myrtle and Audubon's really are separate species—and so is a third, isolated form known as "Goldman's warbler" that is almost entirely restricted to Guatemala.

A fourth form known as the "Black-fronted" warbler lives in the mountains of northern Mexico but its species status is more debatable, the study authors report.

DNA Strikes Again

One of North America's most beloved and familiar birds, the Yellow-rumped Warbler, may be at least three separate species, says a study published in *The Auk*. If the species were to be split, it would upend a status quo that has lasted for almost five decades and would restore two cherished common names that many bird watchers still fondly use.

The Yellow-rumped Warbler used to be considered two species, the Myrtle Warbler of the East (and far north) and the Audubon's Warbler of the West.

Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society:

programs start at 7 p.m. in Lilly Nature Center. Dinner with speaker at 6 p.m. at MCL Cafeteria.

January 23 *Rare, threatened and Endangered Plants on NICHES Properties.* —Bob Easter, NICHES steward. Each property gives the potential thrill of discovery of something unexpected.

February 27 TBA

March 27 Indiana Plant Atlas. Rebecca Dolan, Butler Herbarium. A new website for plant identification and learning. Local naturalist and photographer Ed Zschiedrich supplied a number of the images.

American Voters Support Parks & Greenspace

On November 9, 2016 Americans voted overwhelmingly in support of parks. Of the 86 park, conservation, and restoration measures that appeared on ballots across the country, 68 passed. That means that in one day, voters approved \$6.3 billion for land conservation, parks, and restoration.

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). See their website for membership information, or mail a check to Audubon National, P.O. Box 97194, Washington DC 20990-7194

Memberships are \$20 a year and NAS members receive *Audubon* magazine **along with automatic chapter membership in SAS** and a *Warbler* subscription. 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: _____

☐ **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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Asleep over the Deep

How can birds fly nonstop for days or even weeks? Niels Rattenborg of the *Max Planck Institute for Ornithology* in Germany investigated how Great Frigate birds managed to stay aloft for days. They glued tiny brainwave sensors and accelerometers to their heads along with GPS trackers. The devices let them track when, where and how these birds slept during their multi-day journeys.

The data confirmed that the birds did sleep and did it by flying while one side of the brain or even both were asleep, but their sleep in flight differed from sleep on land. The birds slept remarkably little, spending only 42 minutes per day on average, mostly at night and in snatches of around 12 seconds at a time. On returning to their nests they typically slept for more than half the day and sleep was deeper and in longer stretches.

Increased Protection for a Bird being Loved to Death



The Gray Parrot, also known as African Grey Parrot, is one of the world's most popular pet birds—but that popularity has fueled the capture of millions of parrots from the wild in Africa.

Earlier this month, an international wildlife trade

conference granted this declining species increased protections under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The Cornell Lab's Multimedia Productions program produced a video summary of the plight of the Gray Parrot for the government of Gabon and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Tidbits

- ◆ Researchers think turtle shells originally developed to improve digging in increasingly arid environments rather than for predator protection.
- ◆ Lichens were thought to be made up of an algae and a fungi, but now it appears many are a triple mix and include a basidiomycete yeast. The role of each organism and whether or not all lichens contain a yeast is now under study.
- ◆ A Cerulean Warbler weighs less than two nickels. In the last 30 years their population has gone down 70%.
- ◆ Protecting mangrove forests can help with climate change. They are among the most carbon-rich habitats on earth, perhaps 4X more effective in storing carbon than tropical rain forests.
- ◆ Spider silk used in hummingbird nests stretches. That lets the nest expand as the young grow.



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A subscription is included with membership in National Audubon or Sycamore Audubon Society.

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20th Great Backyard Bird Count

Feb 17 to Feb 20, 2017



This winter has seen a number of two northern visitors showing up in our area. Both Red-breasted Nuthatches and Purple Finch came early and are still around.

That's right, the annual GBBC, a joint project of Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, is 20 years old. It has grown to a truly international count and it is easy to participate. Mark your calendar and simply keep a list of your yard or other areas and then go to the website and record it. There are four days and any site you chose can be **done on one or more days. This year's dates are Feb 17-20.**

Visit the official website <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/> to learn more. You can check out the latest educational and promotional resources there as well. You can explore real-time maps and charts both for this year and past years.

Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2014 GBBC data highlighted a large irruption of Snowy Owls across the northeastern, mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes areas of the United States. The data also showed the effects that warm weather patterns have had on bird movement around the country. For more on the results of the 2016 GBBC, take a look at the GBBC Summary, and be sure to check out some of the images in the 2016 GBBC Photo Contest Gallery.