



Sycamore Warbler

Volume 43 Issue 4

Winter 2018

Third State Record Roseate Spoonbill



In early September a Roseate Spoonbill was found near Monticello. The species is rare for Indiana, in fact it was only the third documented individual for the state. The bird was found in wetlands belonging to a private company north of Monticello near the little town of Buffalo.

It was not in a location where people could just "drop in" and see the bird. Luckily for birders, the company was very obliging and willing to have groups of people come to see the bird but they needed to have someone from the company on site to escort them to where the bird was that day.

The last sighting was September 12. The spoonbill's roughly 10 day presence delighted many local, state, and out of state birders.

And a Snowy Owl in September?

On September 13, the day the Roseate Spoonbill apparently left, Barny Dunning got a report of a Snowy Owl seen early that morning. The person reporting it got a very good look as she almost hit it. She said it was in the road on HWY 47 just outside of Crawfordsville.

In July Barny had reports of a Snowy Owl in Benton and Newton Counties, likely just one individual bird. No follow up sightings for the September owl.

'Tis the season for Christmas Bird Counts

The longest running Citizen Science project is the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). It is easy to participate: just contact the compiler, get an area of the CBC circle and then go out on count day and see what you can find (or if you live in the circle and have a feeder, you can count what comes to your yard). At 8 p.m. there is a compilation party at the Wild Bird Shop to total the birds found and share the days adventures. Everyone that attends is asked to bring something for people to nibble on. Below are the dates and the compilers to contact :



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Dec. 17 Lafayette CBC Ed Hopkins 765-463-5927 birder4in@gmail.com

Dec. 22 Cass County CBC Landon Neumann 574-516-7940
Landonneumann25@gmail.com

Jan. 1 Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves CBC Ed Hopkins (see above)

You don't need to be an expert. It is a good learning experience for the occasional birder and there's lots of area out there that need to someone to cover it so help is appreciated. Any unusual birds seen or heard in the count circle on count day should **be noted and reported even if you aren't an "official" counter.** This includes owls, waterfowl (except Canada Geese and Mallards), lingering Red-headed Woodpeckers, Hermit Thrush, thrashers, mockingbirds, catbirds, any warbler, and so forth.

Finch numbers are big this year because of poor conifer seed production up north. Watch for Pine Siskins, Purple Finch, Redpolls and possibly an Evening Grosbeak (photo above). Red-breasted Nuthatches are showing up all over too.

CHAPTER NEWS

Holiday Party

SAS's holiday party is held at the December's meeting. Bring something edible to share and get in the holiday mood. SAS provides beverages, cups etc. Come join us and check the calendar for SAS's other events.

September's 'Bring Your Own Program' covered a lot of territory. Jim and Marilyn Anderson brought pictures from their southern hemisphere trip to the Antarctic, while Peter and Mary Sue Waser showed scenes from their two week rafting trip up north in the Canadian portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Chuck Tuttle started the night with pictures from Indiana and other states, John Skene showed bird slides from Indiana, Texas, Florida and other places he'd visited this past year, and Dan Miller ended the evening with some of his excellent slides taken at Celery Bog. .

Feast Report

The heavy rain a few days before the feast resulted in some thick mud and a temporary lake. Both days of the feast were shortened: Saturday by a 4 p.m. down-pour, and Sunday by the organizers

deciding to close at 2 p.m. rather than 4 p.m. because of the number of cars that needed to be towed from the muddy parking areas.

The result was that SAS had legs left over but thanks to Barny Dunning's freezer and email contacts, all were quickly sold.

We are still awaiting the check from Tippecanoe County Historical Society, but anticipate having made between \$2,600 and \$3,000 including the post feast turkey legs sales.

Thank You's:

We'd like to thank Barb Allison, Ann Fassnacht, Pat Skiffstad, Joanne Lax,, Jim Klatch and others for saving toilet paper tubes, and/or donating plant pots, and/or paper egg cartons. Also thanks to Elsa Janle for bringing in a number of pie tins and loaf pans.

Another Successful Sale

The October 26-28 Bake & Plant Sale went very well. One or two more cashiers would have been helpful but there were tons of donations and many customers. The sale raised \$723.95 plus a generous member surprised us by sending in a check for an additional \$50.

Special thanks to the volunteer cashiers: Elsa Janle, Ann Piechota, Connie Brown, and Susan Ulrich, along with all the other individuals who brought in food items and plants

Another Thank You

This one goes to the Community Foundation of White County which announced it is giving SAS a \$500 grant for Audubon's *After School Bird Club* in Monticello for the upcoming year.

The Foundation has helped fund this program for several years now. Their support is greatly appreciated.

SAS's Pookie Fund provides the remaining money needed for this After School program.

to sell. The spring sale will be March 29 to April 1 (no fooling!).

Five hundred dollars of the total raised is going for the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival. The rest will be used locally for environmental education.

Busy in Monticello

Rick Read gave another talk in Monticello, this time to the "Enter The Garden Club" which maintains eight gardens around town plus the community garden that they started. Twenty-nine people attended.

Half the program was devoted to images and songs of yard & feeder birds since the club members spend so much time out doors and hear the birds but don't know the ID. The last half dealt with the importance of

T'is the season to be Thankful

And SAS would like to thank the Payless Supermarket in W. Lafayette for arranging for and selling us the 1,600 lbs. of smoked

hen turkey legs for the feast at their cost. If you stop in the store, please thank them.



Turkey Leg in a Pot

- 1 1-pound smoked turkey leg
- 2 carrots sliced
- 1 medium onion sliced
- 2 celery sticks w/leaves in 1 inch pieces
- 1/2 Zucchini cut in cubes
- 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon coarse pepper
- 1 C Chicken broth
- 1/2 C chardonnay or other white wine
- 1/2 teaspoon basil
- 8 small red potatoes

- ◆ Put carrots, onion, celery and potatoes in bottom of crock pot.
- ◆ Add leg, salt, pepper and liquids.
- ◆ Top with basil.
- ◆ Cover and cook on low for 7-10 hours or on high for 2.5 to 3 hours.
- ◆ Add zucchini cubes about halfway through the cooking time.

Recipe courtesy of Rick & Debbie Read

native plantings and how the group could play a role in spreading that message.

Rick ended by covering a bird's basic needs: food (including bird seed, and man-made food as well as that provided by native plants); water; and shelter.

R-R-RIPIT

The RIP Squad (made up of the local native plant society and the Sycamore Audubon Society) is now one of a number of independent groups and individuals that are part of the recently formed loosely organized R-R-R-RIPIT. The acronym stands for *Recognize-Report-Remove Invasive Species in Tippecanoe County*.

The group is a new CISMA for Indiana and the first one in any of our local counties. Similar groups began operating in various southern Indiana counties in the last few years. CISMA stands for

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area.

Why a CISMA? CISMA's serve to inform the public about new and old invasive species to watch for and how to identify them; help landowners by doing assessments of invasive problems on their property; and provide information on how best to manage various invasive species.

They can also assist in finding funding sources that might be available to help landowners and supply the names of companies and individuals who work on invasives for hire.

Any group or individual wanting information about the CISMA or forming one in their county should email Patty Jones at

patricia.c.w.jones@gmail.com

If you know of an Individual or local company that can be hired to work on invasive species, please pass their name and contact info on to her as well.

Celery Bog makes TOP 10

In the Indiana Audubon Society's Fall newsletter, *The Cardinal*. They list the top 10 places to bird in Indiana. That Celery Bog made the list is a remarkable feat given its size. Here is the list:

1. Indiana dunes national Lakeshore & State park (15,000 A)
2. Eagle Creek Park & Reservoir (4,400 A)
3. Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area (8,000 A)
4. Celery Bog Nature Area (105 A)
5. Miller Beach Lakefront (50 A)
6. Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge (7,724 A)
7. Cane Ridge Wildlife Management Area (440 A)
8. Willow Slough & Kankakee Sands (17,000 A)
9. Lake Monroe (10,000 A)
10. Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary (700 A)

Kankakee Sands News

First, great news, the proposal to build a dairy CAFO (confined animal feeding operation) adjacent to Kankakee Sands has been withdrawn.

Second, the original 23 bison introduced at Kankakee Sands, have grown in number to 58. Ten of the 35 'new' bison came from Wind Cave in South Dakota, the remaining 25 are calves born at Kankakee Sands.

Monitoring is underway to measure the effect the bison have on the prairie restoration and see if their selected grazing (mainly grasses) makes a positive changes for the plant species composition there.

RIP Squad Fall Schedule

Ross Hills Park 3-5 p.m. on Thursdays from now to Dec. 20. Meet at the first parking lot to the left after entering the park.

Prophet's Rock Woods 3-5 p.m. on Tuesdays from now to December 18. Meet in the little parking lot on Prophets Rock Road, just north of 600N near Battle Ground.

WALLA Course on Local Environmental Groups

Nick Harby invited speakers from various environmental groups to come and tell about their organizations. Two SAS board members were among them: Zonda Bryant on Environmental Programs for Children and Susan Ulrich on the Sycamore Audubon Society and its activities.

New At Mary Gray



The vacant position of caretaker at Indiana Audubon Society's Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary near Connersville has been filled. The new caretakers, pictured above, are Stefany and Daniel Boleyn. The Boleyns have moved in at the sanctuary and already started their duties. If you visit the Sanctuary and run into them, please say "hi" and welcome them to Indiana.

Nature Notes & News

● Thursday, Aug 30 Rick Read got a call about an injured hawk near Delphi. Rick went and captured the hawk which was very weak and took it to the Wildcat Creek Wildlife Center just NE of Delphi. Based on early experiences capturing injured birds of prey, Rick put a cardboard box over the hawk and then tried to slip a flat piece of cardboard under it—unfortunately the bird was so weak Rick had to pick it up with his leather gloves and place it in the box.

The bird turned out to be a 2-3 year old Red-Shouldered Hawk just getting the black and white tail. The bird had some head and eye trauma and the Wildcat Creek Wildlife Center needed to see how the eye would respond to treatment. Rick says the WCWC is a great resource for helping any wild animal. However, they are staffed too thin to do capture or transport of injured animals.. They can always use help as well as funding.

● On the Sept 6 Early bird Hike there was cluster of migrant flycatchers included a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Celery Bog. In all 26 species including 8 Great Egrets and 44 Wood Ducks were seen during the 1 hour walk.

● Barny Dunning spent an hour at Celery Bog the morning of Sept. 9 hoping for migrating terns as seen at Eagle Creek. No terns, but Double-crested Cormorants were up to 30 and there were two Greater Yellowlegs along with a good number of migrant songbirds along the water's edge. He returned the next day and had an array of warblers: Magnolia, Blackburnian, Tennessee, Blackpoll, Redstart, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, and Cape May. The Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were still calling.

● That same day, Chuck Tuttle had 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches show up at his feeder. Their super-early appearance caused him to wonder "if it's a good or bad omen about what this winter may be like?".

● Warblers were still moving through at Celery Bog on Sept 13th's Early Bird Hike. Warblers included Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Redstart, and Ovenbird plus Philadelphia, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and

a male Baltimore Oriole. A Bald Eagle sat in a tree directly above the group.

● Oct 13 the 8 people on the Early Bird Hike turned up 44 species in a little over an hour including 10 species of warblers. The numbers were surprising given there was no weather front to account for the bird movement.

● The Early Bird hike on the 27th was also productive with lots of warblers south of the main observation deck. There were Tennessee, and one probable Orange-crowned, plus Black-and-White, lots of Yellow-rumps and some Cape Mays. Landon Neumann and Aidan Rominger had a Golden-winged Warbler and a Gray-cheeked Thrush up by the nature center where there were also 3 Red-breasted Nuthatch. The only migrant waterfowl were Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal but there was an Osprey plus a large number of Chimney Swifts (guestimate of 84) probably massing for migration).

● John Skene spent three and a half hours at the Purdue Wildlife Area on Sept. 30 and had an exciting visit with 66 different species—the best being a Merlin. In addition he had Pectoral Sandpipers and a Wilson's Snipe along with a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. There was one Swamp Sparrow and one Lincoln's Sparrow plus 12 species of Warblers.

● A quick change in weather changed the bird mix for the Oct. 11 Early Bird Hike. There was a sprinkling of late fall migrants (Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 6 species of warblers) and some tardy migrants (Indigo Bunting) mixed in with the Yellow-rumped Warblers. The most interesting observation was a large flock of Rusty Blackbirds that flew north over the parking lot as the group was finishing their walk.

● Russ Allison had two new first of fall species show up Oct. 16 at his home feeders: Dark Eyed Junco and Pine Siskin.

● Another Oct. 16 feeder bird was a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Mark Arvin's—the latest local report sent in..

● The October 18th Early Bird Hike report had the first White-throated Sparrow of the fall. John Skene stayed



Red-breasted Nuthatch

on and birded on his own for a few hours, building the list of birds seen to 50 species. Included were a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 45 Yellow-rumped Warblers, plus a Northern Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and two Palm Warblers,

● Russ Allison went to Prophetstown on the 23rd and had an excellent day finding a lone Cinnamon Teal in the pond with a dozen Mallards.

● Susan Ulrich also had her first White-throated Sparrow on the 12th, a Fox Sparrow on Oct. 19th, then 3 Purple Finch on the 20th. Her first Pine Siskin showed up Oct. 24, White-crowned Sparrow on Nov. 4, and a Brown Creeper Nov. 16,

● Nov. 5 Landon Neumann reported they caught their first Saw-whet Owl after 12 days operating the nets.

● That same day Barny Dunning had 9 Pine Siskins and reported Chuck Tuttle had about the same number of siskins earlier.

● Rick Read sent an email on the 5th saying Red-breasted Nuthatches had been around for about a month, and that morning he had a large flock of about a dozen Pine Siskins.'

● It was a brisk day for an Early bird Hike Nov. 8. Waterfowl diversity was low but there were Ruddy ducks and Bufflehead. Barny noted a flock of European Starlings "balling" near Walmart—usually a sign of a predator nearby. Sure enough, a female Sharp-shinned Hawk was just below the ball. Adding several young Red-shouldered Hawks and an adult Bald Eagle to the mix made it a good hawk day.

● The banding project at Purdue's Martell Forest for migrating Northern Saw-whet Owls is picking up. They have now caught a couple of owls in the past week. A bit more surprising

Continued on page 6

Fall Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2018

- December 2
Sunday
Sunday with the Cranes. An afternoon field trip to see the remarkable bevy of staging Sandhill Cranes dance, preen, and greet each other before roosting. Who knows, perhaps a Whooping Crane too? Meet at the gravel parking lot at Celery Bog Park in West Lafayette at 3:30 p.m. to carpool to the Jasper Pulaski State Wildlife Area.
- December 13
Saturday
Program: Amazing Galapagos and Other Ecuadorian Gems. Rick & Debbie Read. A travel program of slides and videos from their 4 weeks in Ecuador last winter. A fascinating place to visit with many unique birds and animals. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center in Celery Bog Park, West Lafayette. Free parking. *Come early to sign up for an area for one or more of the Christmas Bird Counts* or call the compiler to make arrangements (p. 1).
- December 15
Saturday
Lafayette Area Christmas Bird Count. What birds can be found in the Lafayette Count Circle this year? Volunteers are needed to find out! Get a territory or sign up as a feeder watcher. Compilation party at 8 p.m. at the Wild Bird Shoppe. See p. 1
- December 22
Saturday
Cass County Christmas Bird Count. Similar to the Lafayette CBC but covering a 16 mile circle in Cass County instead of Tippecanoe. Help needed. Compiler Landon Neumann, p. 1
- January 1
Tuesday
Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserve CBC. Another 16 mile circle to canvas for birds. This circle covers parts of Indiana and parts of Illinois. Compiler Ed Hopkins, see p.1.
- January 1
Tuesday
First Day Hike at Prophetstown. 2 p.m. at the Visitor Center. The hike will go through the prairie and tour the native American Village, wrapping up with some cocoa and cider in the council house at the village. Approximately 1.5 hours in duration.
- January 10
Thursday
Program: NICHES Land Trust, Gus Nyberg, Executive Director. What's new at the local Land Trust? Learn about new acquisitions, progress on stewardship & outreach efforts on NICHES properties. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center Celery Bog Park, W Lafayette. Free Parking.
- January 26
Saturday
Winter Bird Trip. 8:30 start time. Meet at Celery Bog. We will go wherever winter birds are being reported. Possibilities include unusual winter finches, owls, Rough-legged Hawks, and longspurs. A half-day trip.
- February 14
Thursday
Program: From Paper to Pixels. Chuck Tuttle, SAS board member. Figuring out "what that bird is" has become much easier with the use of Apps on phones and tablets. And it continues to get better. Learn what more there is to some apps than just a photo or drawing that you could find in a paper guide. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park, West Lafayette. Refreshments and free parking.
- Feb 15-18
Friday-Monday
Great Backyard Bird Count & local count at Prophetstown Overlook. A program of National Audubon, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Life Canada to count winter birds at home, yard, park, or elsewhere. Go to www.audubon.org/conservation/about-great-backyard-bird-count for more information or go to the count's official website at gbbc@birdcount.org. SAS will do a count at Prophetstown on the 16th. Meet at 9 a.m. at the end of the road.
- February 23
Saturday
Waterfowl Migration Trip. Meet at 8 a.m. at Celery Bog to see if the ducks and geese are on the move yet. We will go to other locations if sightings suggest that would be profitable. Bald Eagles should be on their nests by now, too. Half-day trip.
- March 14
Thursday
Program: Jeop-birdy. Come and test your avian skills playing one of the world's most beloved game shows, hosted by Wes Homoya, birder, tour guide, conservationist and more. His employments have taken him to Maui, Brazil, Galapagos, Hungary, Australia... 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park, WL. Refreshments and free parking.
- March 16
Saturday
Audubon at the Overlook. **Let's see what birds the winds of March brought back.** Meet at the end of the road at Prophetstown State park at 3 p.m. A two hour trip.
- April 11
Thursday
Program: Birding from a German Point of View. Ann Marie Ackerman, ex-SAS member who lives in Germany. **Learn what she's been up to and what birding is like there.** Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park, WL 7:15 p.m. Free parking & refreshments.

SCBI Study links Backyard Bird Decline to Non-native Landscaping Plants

In a Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) study researchers worked with landowners to assess use of nonnative plants in more than 160 yards, and how that compared to the Carolina Chickadee nests, eggs and nestlings that the citizen scientists saw in their yards.

"Landowners are using nonnative plants in their yards because they're pretty and exotic, they're easy to maintain, and they tend to have fewer pests on them," said Desirée Narango, a graduate student researcher at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and first author of the study. "But it turns out that a lot of those insects they see as pests are actually critical food resources for our breeding birds. For landowners who want to make a difference for bird survival, our study shows that a simple change they make in their yards can be profoundly helpful for bird conservation."

The study is the first to directly link the decline of a common resident bird species to the lack of insect prey that results from the use of nonnative plants in landscaping. Narango and colleagues placed nest boxes in more than 160 yards in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and collected data from homeowners monitoring the nest boxes weekly for Carolina Chickadee nests, eggs and nestlings. In those same yards, they also studied adult and juvenile survival by gathering data from the homeowners on individually marked birds they had re-sighted.

The researchers found that the only yards that were able to produce enough chickadees to sustain a stable population were those with a plant composition made up of more than 70 percent of native plants.

"Because more than 90 percent of herbivorous insects will only eat one or a few native plants, the use of native plants in landscaping is essential to ensure breeding birds have enough insect prey to eat. For the same reason, native plants are also likely critical for other resident birds, endangered species and migratory species — and not just in backyards on the East Coast. These novel, artificial suburban landscapes are found across the country," Narango continued. "But a ginkgo that you plant in D.C. and a ginkgo that you plant in L.A. are doing the same thing for bird conservation — nothing. By using native plants, we can provide food for not only our common North American species, but we're also providing vital stopover habitat and resources for migratory birds during their perilous journeys."

"Urbanization is one of the primary ways we're losing natural habitat around the world, and it remains essential that we figure out how we minimize our impacts while maximizing the protection of biodiversity," said Pete Marra, director of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and co-author of the paper. Resources on native plants can be found online at National Audubon's Native Plants Database, National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder, and the United States Department of Agriculture's Plant Hardiness Zone Map.

Supreme Court Nixes Attack on Grand Canyon Uranium Ban



Grand news for the Grand Canyon: The Supreme Court has rejected an industry challenge to the 20-year ban on new uranium mining in and around the canyon.

The Havasupai Tribe and a coalition of conservation groups, campaigned to win the ban — which they have been defending for years.

Field Notes Continued from p. 4:

was a calling Long-eared Owl near the net sites, according Landon Neumann. Contact him (p.1) if you'd like to attend a banding session when they resume next Spring.

- Fritz Davis spent 2 hours at Celery Bog on Nov 10. Highlights included a very late White-eyed Vireo (im.), an adult Trumpeter Swan and a blue morph Snow Goose. Waterfowl diversity was high with a dozen species of ducks plus 6 assorted waterfowl present.

- Thanksgiving week a lone Evening Grosbeak came to a feeder south of Lafayette but only stayed for one day.

Help Protect Native Plants & Bird Habitat FOREVER

A good way to provide that permanent native plant habitat for birds and other species is by protecting natural areas—but you also need to provide permanent funding for maintenance and upkeep of those areas and the organization that protects them.

NICHES Endowment Foundation (NEF) was formed to support our local NICHES Land Trust. It's another basket in which to store financial eggs to help ensure NICHES has the funding it needs in the decades ahead. NEF president, Susan Ulrich says "I'm a great believer in Endowments as a way to ensure an organization's continued success. My husband and I are including both NICHES and NEF in our wills." If you would like more information on NEF or on making a donation or including NEF in your estate plans, please contact her.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Red wolf proposed 10j rule announcement

America's Red Wolves face a real threat of extinction. With an estimated population of 30 wolves left, the Trump administration's Fish and Wildlife Service wants to shrink the wild population to fewer than 15 individuals. It also **wants to reduce the wolf's range from a five-county area to only the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and Dare County Bombing Range—a reduction in range of 90%.** Even worse the plan allow anyone to kill any wolf spotted outside the reduced range. And those who kill a wolf would not be required to report the kills to the Service unless the wolf is wearing a tracking collar. **Google 'Red Wolf 10j rule' to read it for yourself.**

This is a plan FOR extinction in direct opposition to the Endangered Species Act. There are many requests for people to write letters, but this case is especially dire. Please send a letter to the US Fish and Wildlife Service telling them to abandon this plan and instead do their best to protect the existing wild population and resume the reintroduction of captive-bred wolves.

Attacks on the Endangered Species Act Continue

The series of attacks on the U.S. Endangered Species Act in the Senate **haven't ceased. Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming, who's leading the charge, is pushing a bill that would transfer endangered species' management to states — even those that don't have the funding or authority to protect them. It shouldn't be a surprise, Barrasso has voted against the Act almost a dozen times. He's sponsored nine legislative assaults on the Act in just two years.**

Since Republicans retook the U.S. House of Representatives in 2011, we've seen nearly 350 anti-Act attacks. Audubon and other groups such as The Center for Biological Diversity have been fending them off while pushing to ensure funding to save and recover endangered species. You contacting your Representative and Senator can help.

Some Good News & More Good News

- **A federal judge threw out the Trump Administration's approval of the Keystone XL pipeline, sending TransCanada back to the drawing board. But keep tuned in: every time it seems dead, this zombie pipeline rises again.**
- **Indonesia's largest food company, Indofood, was SANCTIONED by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), the world's largest certification system for "sustainable" palm oil.**
- As the only marine monument in U.S. Atlantic waters, the new Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument is a critically important winter breeding and foraging habitat for Atlantic Puffins and nineteen other species of seabirds. Last month, a federal court dismissed **a lawsuit challenging the monument's creation, confirming that the President has the authority to use the Antiquities Act to protect special places in the ocean.**
- Voters in Florida approved Amendment 9 which prohibits oil and gas exploration three miles into the Atlantic Ocean and nine miles into the Gulf of Mexico, protecting birds, sea turtles and coastal areas from oil spills.

Dale, IN Coal to Deisel?

A Riverview Energy Corporation facility to turn coal into ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel has been proposed for Dale, in northern Spencer County. The county is ranked 23rd for toxic releases among all United States counties. Indiana ranks 1st in terms of total toxic chemicals released per square mile.

The facility would use a process called direct coal hydrogenation. In October State environmental officials said the project would not contribute significantly to ozone and fine particulate pollution in the area and that it posed very little cancer risk.

However residents question the **plant's economic feasibility as well as its pollution output.** John Blair, of the Evansville-based Valley Watch questioned the results of the state's air quality analysis because no projects similar to Riverview's have been done in the U.S. "Where does the **emissions data come from?**"

Riverview president Greg Merle said the process liquefies pulverized coal using heat and pressure, then adds hydrogen to create the fuel: an estimated 4.8 million barrels of diesel + 2.5 million barrels of naphtha (used in plastics, solvents, gasoline). Sulfur removed during the process would also be marketable. No waste would be stored on site.

The fuel produced would have less sulfur content than the 15 parts per million mandated by the EPA.

March 15, 2017 New Zealand's Whanganui River became a legal person. A local Maori tribe had fought for nearly 150 years for the river to be recognized as an ancestor. On March 20 in India, the heavily polluted Ganges & Yamuna Rivers received the same status as a human. Legal guardians can now represent the waterways in court.

National Audubon News



November's *Year of the Bird* bird action was: *Take Your Best Shot*: i.e. photograph birds! It was a perfect match for SAS's November program featuring Dan Miller's bird photography. All his pictures were taken at Celery Bog Nature Area. Dan set the photos to music with a few comments thrown in about the shot or the bird.

To see more of Dan's work go to his blog birdsofthebog.com. A number of people asked questions about his photography and what equipment he used. In response to one question, Dan noted he had photographed 115 different bird species at Celery Bog. Dan certainly epitomized this month's activity: he took LOTS of best shots.

Raptors from p.9 continued:

tion or collision with powerlines. But as it is with most bird species, unsustainable agriculture and logging are the primary threats.

The main recommendations call for better site protection and the need to strengthen and enforce laws against illegal killing and unsustainable hunting. Other priorities include education and awareness-raising; improved regulation on the use of poisons, and safety measures for dangerous powerlines. For migratory species, international co-operation is particularly important.

Spix's Macaw heads list of first bird extinctions confirmed this decade

Eight bird species, including two species of macaw, appear to have their extinctions confirmed following a new assessment of Critically Endangered species. The findings reveal a worrying new trend: for the first time, mainland extinctions are outpacing island extinctions.

The assessment reviews 51 Critically Endangered species, three of which it said should be re-classified as extinct. These include the Glaucous Macaw and Pernambuco Pygmy-owl, while the third species, Spix's Macaw, should be treated as Extinct in the Wild. Another four species should be moved to 'Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct)'. Additional searches are needed to confirm their status.



Historically, most bird extinctions have been driven by the impacts of invasive alien species (46%) and hunting/trapping (26%) on islands. However, habitat loss through deforestation played a major role in the latest extinctions. Five of the eight are from the South American continent, four of them in Brazil, reflecting the devastating effects of the high rate of deforestation in that area.

That's 4 Billion (with a 'b')

For the first time ever we have an idea of just how busy the skies are during migration. Most birds migrate at night, out of sight and beyond earshot. To count these enormous flights, Cornell Lab of Ornithology scientists used weather radar and big data analyses. Their estimates also give us an idea of the birds' overall survival rates

Fall migration will bring 4 billion birds into the skies over the United States. That's not a guess—it's hard data, gleaned from the first-ever national bird count using weather radar. Cornell Lab of Ornithology scientists picked through data from 143 weather radar stations from 2013 to 2017 to provide the first large-scale counts of migratory bird activity across the United States. Their research, published in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, provides a peek into how many migratory birds use American airspace.

An average of 4 billion birds passed from Canada across the north border of the U.S. in autumn, with 2.6 billion birds returning across the Canada-U.S. border in spring. Activity across the southern border was even higher: an average of 4.7 billion birds left the U.S. for Mexico and points south each autumn, with 3.5 billion birds heading north across the U.S. southern border each spring.

The numbers provide a measure of year-to-year bird survival. By comparing the number of birds moving back and forth each autumn and spring, researchers were able to determine an average annual return rate. For birds crossing the U.S. northern border—which includes many short-distance migrants such as sparrows, Snow Buntings, and Dark-eyed Juncos that fly from Canada to spend winter in the Lower 48 states—the average rate of return was 64 percent. But for birds crossing the U.S. southern border—which includes more of the long-distance migrants such as warblers, tanagers, and orioles that travel to Central and South America, three to four times farther than the short-distance migrants—the average rate of return was 76 percent.

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, (\$20 minimum) 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.

Chapter Membership Application

Date: _____

Name : _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

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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National Hwy Scientists: 7 Degrees Warmer by 2100

Trump denies the reality of climate change and dismisses the desperate need for action — **but his policy analysts don't agree.**

Buried in a 500-page document about Trump's weakening of fuel-efficiency standards for cars and light trucks, there lies a prediction by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration scientists that by century's end, we'll see a *7-degree Fahrenheit* temperature rise if the world takes no meaningful action to curb carbon pollution. That number has actually been used as a justification for doing nothing, essentially saying the planet's fate is sealed.

But such a temperature rise would bring catastrophe: millions of people displaced by rising seas, superstorms, and massive species extinctions. Most world leaders have agreed to try to keep warming to less than 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit.

Over half the World's Raptor Populations are Declining

Birdlife International and the Peregrine Fund undertook the first assessment focused specifically on the status of raptors. They found 18% of raptors are threatened with extinction and 52% have declining global populations: far higher proportions than for birds in general. In particular raptor species that require forest are more likely to be threatened and declining than those that do not, and migratory raptors were significantly more threatened than resident species. South and South-East Asia had the most declines.

Toxic effects of the veterinary drug diclofenac have decimated Vultures in South Asia. In Africa, vultures and owls are killed for their body parts used for supposed medicinal benefits. Many other raptors are vulnerable to electrocu-

Continued on p. 8

Tidbits

♦ 97 percent of U.S. residents have measurable quantities of toxic flame retardants in their blood.

♦ When a cattail marsh freezes over, the broken **brown stems from the summer's growth become** snorkels for the underground root system keeping the roots supplied with oxygen.

♦ A water sample stored under the Cologne cathedral about 1,450 years ago is "purer than any water which exists today", according to chemists at the University of Bonn. The water cannot be duplicated today, even synthetically.

♦ The dense roots of prairie plants are like a giant sponge, greatly increasing infiltration of rainwater into the groundwater aquifer reducing runoff and flooding as well as recharging the aquifer.

♦ The Calliope Hummingbird is the smallest long-distance avian migrant in the world. Some individuals travel up to 5,600 miles annually.

♦ **The feet of muskrat (*Ondatra zibethica*) aren't** webbed, but have stiff hairs between the toes which aid in swimming. So does their tail which is flattened on both sides and serves as a rudder.



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

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum

This January give your tree a second life and use it again— this time for the birds. No electricity or lights needed.

Tie your tree to a sapling or a post in the ground near your feeders, the birds will appreciate the extra protection from predators and weather even if you don't decorate it. In fact, even lying on the ground it can serve as a nighttime roost or daytime cover. However if you then decorate the tree with 'ornaments' the birds can eat, they will be extra happy and give you more of a show to watch on those gray, snowy winter days.

To decorate, you and your family can use your imaginations. A half rind of a grapefruit or orange can be turned into a basket to hold seed, pieces of bread, fruit or nuts. Tie on an ear of corn, fill a net bag with suet, make strings of popcorn (don't use fresh popped, let it sit overnight) with raisins, peanuts, pieces of apple or bread (birds don't seem to like cranberries but they do add color). You can make cut out cookies or cut shapes out of bread you lightly toast. Ice them with peanut butter or melted fat and sprinkle with a variety of bird seeds, sesame seeds, nuts, etc. note: Aldi's has 2 & 1/2 lb. jars of peanut butter that work out to \$ 1 a pound. Depending on your bird visitors, some foods you try will be in more demand than others.

Squirrels or other animals may also enjoy the tree. If they become a problem simply remove the food items and use the tree for cover.

