



Sycamore Warbler

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Tenth Year for SAS Turkey Leg Booth

Ten years and thousands of turkey legs sold. To the right is a picture of Joe Hiscox, one of the 20 plus volunteers at Sycamore Audubon Society's Turkey Leg booth at the Feast of the Hunters Moon in 2018.

This Audubon fundraiser is the only SAS fundraiser where the money goes for chapter expenses such as printing the newsletter, PO box rental, insurance, etc. The dates for 2019 are October 5 & 6. SAS is looking for volunteers to help cook the legs, take money, and serve beverages and legs to customers. Help is also needed to set up the booth (either October 2 or 3, depending on the weather forecast) and taking it down on Sunday at 4 p.m. Many hands and vehicles are needed to pack and take Audubon supplies back to town for storage until next year. The Feast is a fun experience, giving people a chance to get better acquainted with other members. Stop by even if you can't volunteer.



Anyone who can volunteer for 4 hours gets a button which gives them free admission to the Feast for both days of events. Volunteers in the public eye do need to wear period costumes. SAS has acquired a number of clothing articles that volunteers can borrow. Barny Dunning has them on a first come, first served basis. Please call him to volunteer (see p. 11) and let him know if you will need a costume.

The feast is well worth a visit—here's loads to see, do, and learn about plus tons of good food available.

Concern for Lake Michigan Infrastructure, Beaches & Access

August 7, Save the Dunes and a number of Northwest Indiana partners went to Indianapolis to speak with Congressional leaders who are part of the Interim Study Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources. They also testified about short-term and long-term solutions to addressing decaying infrastructure and the erosion on Indiana's Lake Michigan beaches. The National Park's Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk is a prime example showing the impact of that erosion: at this site, there is no longer a place to swim and no beach to access. The erosion there is continuing to cut farther back into the dune landscape, threatening a rare wetland habitat known as a *panne* that is home to 20 state-listed plant species. With no beach to absorb the impacts of waves, further degradation of the dunes and sensitive habitat will occur.

The groups support both short-term solutions such as beach renourishment, along with hopes for a long term solution arising from a feasibility study which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is prepared to complete as long as they have funding in place to do so. Save the Dunes and partners asked the committee to place \$1 million in the State Sand Nourishment Fund to address erosion at Portage Lakefront (\$450,000 devoted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study, \$550,000 for near-term beach nourishment). The next legislative session will see if these meetings bear fruit.

Keep the beach out of private hands! While looking for solutions to maintain lakeshore beaches, the groups also continue to support the fight for the rights of Hoosier's to use those beaches for recreation. Reputable sources have said that the next battle of public vs. private is fast approaching. The only way to ensure this right remains is for all of us to speak up (not just Save the Dunes and its partners). Please be sure to check out Save the Dunes website, Facebook, and/or their E-newsletter for action alerts and what you can do to make a difference to keep the lakeshore beaches from falling into private hands .

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CHAPTER NEWS

Bring Your Own Sept 12 Plus Carry-in Dinner

SAS's 2019-2020 program series starts with the popular bring your own program where anyone who wishes can bring 5 minutes worth of digital images or slides to show. The second part of "Your Own" is the annual Carry-In Dinner which starts at 6 p.m. For details see calendar on p.5.

Refreshments 2019-20

Each year SAS asks people to sign up to bring refreshments for one of SAS's monthly meetings. This past year (September to May) the following people signed up: Elsa Janle, Connie Brown, Susan Ulrich, Jennifer Tuttle, Karen Griggs, and Becky Theller. Our thanks to you all, for the good eating with additional thanks to SAS board member, George Kopcha, for supplying coffee, tea and water at all the meetings.

If you would like to volunteer to bring snacks just sign up at one of the meetings or contact Susan Ulrich (see board listing on p.11). Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month from September to May but September is the Carry-in Dinner and December is the Cookie Party leaving October, November, and January to May as options.

Moving to Iowa

Harry Potter and Elsa Janle, both long-time SAS members and volunteers, moved west this July and relocated to Iowa. They were both very active locally for many decades and will be missed. Elsa donated her African Violets and a number of house plants for SAS's Fall sale before leaving. Ann

Piechota and Chuck Tuttle are plant sitting her donations until the sale. Harry and Elsa will keep in touch with Audubon doings through the *Warbler*.

Fall Bake & Plant Sale

It's that time again. The West Lafayette Library's Book Fair starts on Friday October 18 and SAS's Bake & Plant Sale begins that night at 6:30-8:30 p.m. It continues on Saturday October 19 from 10-5 and Sunday, October 20 from 1-5.

It is members who make these sales a success by donating unwanted house plants or garden perennials along with all sorts of baked goods, and other tidbits.

SAS uses the money raised to support local, state & national conservation projects.



Some of the plants at a previous sale

Note: Susan Ulrich, the usual coordinator, will be out of town at a family wedding. Patty Rader Jones has volunteered to fill in.

She'll need a lot if volunteer support—not just cashiers, but also people to help set up on Friday and take down on Sunday, plus someone who can help answer questions about house plants and help with their pricing. If you are available, please let her know. Call 765-463-3050 or email her at:

Removeinvasive-
plants.wcinpaws@gmail.com

Another Volunteer Op

.. is with the RIP Squad who could use more people to take out honeysuckle and woody non-native invaders at local parks. Target species—besides the honeysuckle—are Autumn Olive, Burning Bush, and Callary Pear. The RIP work has really helped increase native plants in the parks which helps our native insects, birds (p. 9), and wildlife.

The 2 hour sessions start Oct. 29th and go to Dec. 19 on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Tuesdays are at Prophet's Rock Park and Thursdays at Ross Hills Park, weather permitting. Contact Patty Jones for a schedule. (see below left).

She'd like love to hear from you. Part of a group looking for a volunteer opportunity? Pick a date and time, RIP usually can provide a volunteer leader and any needed equipment.

Prefer working on your own? **That's fine too. Just tell Patty** how many hours you put in so she can include them in her yearly report.

SAS Outreach

- Riverfest saw Susan Ulrich and Margareta Fong answering questions, passing out info and helping children with both bird and butterfly crafts at the Audubon Society's and Native Plant Society's booths. This year's record crowd keep them both hopping.

- Susan Ulrich also manned an Audubon display at Warren County Community Foundation's second Williamsport Street Fair July 27th.

Birding on the Fly List...

If there is an unusual bird sighting nearby or around the state Barny sends people on the list an email so anyone interested can pursue the bird by themselves or often via a carpool. Contact him (p 9) to get put on the list.

- In Monticello Rick Read and Cindy Isom are busy planning the after-school programs for the Audubon Nature Clubs. Rick also hopes to be able to arrange a short-notice *Swift Night Out*, if the weather and swifts cooperate.

October 26 Rick is leading a bird outing (perhaps by boat on Lake Freeman) for a Bonanza (Airplane) Club that will be flying into Monticello.

Rockport Coal Plant Retiring in 2028

American Electric Power's (AEP) Unit 1 at the Rockport coal plant is due to be retired by 2028. This is the latest chapter in a long-running dispute among AEP, the Sierra Club, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and several states which began in 2007 amid charges that **AEP's expansion of the Rockport plant occurred without proper permits, and without installing the best available emissions controls, as required by federal law.**

Ending pollution from the Rockport Super Polluter Unit 1 is equivalent to taking nearly 2 million cars off the road each year in terms of greenhouse gas pollution. This is win in the fight against climate change, and the result of many people's hard work and dedication over the years. Unit 2 was retrofitted with scrubbers and will continue to operate.



For info on Indiana Audubon's Oct. 4-6 Fall Festival , including accommodations and registration info, go to

indianaaudubon.org/event/ias-fall-festival-2019/

Festival Registration is \$52 for early birds, through September 15. Add the Saturday night keynote dinner for \$25. Youth rates are \$10.

Pine Creek Gamebird Habitat Area in Benton Co.

Trip report by Karen Griggs.

On a warm July morning, as part of the Wednesdays in the Wild programming, fifteen birdwatchers and other nature lovers organized car pools from Celery Bog Nature Park in West Lafayette to the 700-acre Pine Creek Gamebird Habitat Area in southern Benton County, west central Indiana .

Led by Professor Barny Dunning and loaded with all kinds of cameras, spotting scopes, and binoculars, the hikers saw three shallow wetlands and a variety of wading birds, ducks, and dragonflies. Sightings included Great Blue Herons, Killdeer, Solitary and Least Sandpipers, Wood Duck, and a small flock of Blue-winged Teal, along with an array of swallows and other species.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) began land purchases for this area approximately 16 years ago. The property was created in 1993 by purchasing land from several nearby farms. The restoration of the wetlands began in 1996 by building a small dam and cutting off a tile drain. The elevation of County Road 200 N served as another small dam and helped form three shallow wetland basins. Both Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever collaborated on developing the site. A marsh on the north side was named the Robert Feldt Marsh to honor a retired employee of the state Department of Natural Resources. On the south side of 200 N which bisects the Pine Creek Gamebird Habitat area access is very convenient with a mowed parking area and wide mowed trails.

Thomas Braile, Purdue Extension, and Dr. Dunning wrote an introduction to the site and published a detailed description on the Extension website

<https://extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/fnr/fnr-165/fnr-165.html>

They have observed and collected historical records of over 183 bird species on the property. It has great significance as nearly all the native prairie and wetlands in the area yielded to large-scale production agriculture many years ago, leaving the gamebird habitat area and Robert Feldt Marsh as a major migration stopover for geese and ducks. The IDNR sets the dates for hunting seasons, so if visitors are hiking in the fall, they should check the pheasant hunting dates because hunters have priority access at that time.



The First 'Modern' American Birdwatcher



To devotees, the trend was fabulous. To Florence Merriam Bailey, it was murder **most 'fowl'**. **"The birds must be protected; we must persuade the girls not to wear feathers in their hats,"** Florence Bailey wrote in 1889 in *Bird-Lore*, an illustrated magazine then published by the National Audubon Society.

A student at Smith College at the time, Bailey decided to start a grassroots effort, with a simple step: She took her fellow **classmates outdoors**. **"We won't say too much about the hats,"** she wrote in *Bird-Lore*.

"We'll take the girls afield, and let them get acquainted with the birds. Then of inborn necessity, they will wear feathers never more."

It was the beginning of an animal rights campaign that evolved into a lifelong crusade of ecological conservationism and promoted what would become modern day bird-watching. Bailey eventually traveled the country **to write about the pursuit**. **"Florence was one of the first bird-watchers to actually watch birds instead of shoot them,"** Marcia Bonta, a naturalist and author of ***Women in the Field: America's Pioneering Women Naturalists*** (1991), said in a phone interview with the New York Times.

In 1889, at the age of 26, Bailey published *Birds Through an Opera-Glass*, considered the first field guide to American birds. The book, one of many travelogues and field guides she would publish, suggested that the best way to view birds was through the lenses of opera glasses, not a shotgun sight. Her approach, now commonly practiced with binoculars, helped form the basis of our modern bird-watching.

Taken from a *New York Times* article, *Florence Merriam Bailey, Who Defined Modern Bird-Watching* brought to our attention by Rebekka L. Aaron.

Getting People "on" a Bird

Partial summary from a ***Bird Watcher's Digest*** article by Ken Kaufman

There are various ways to describe a bird's location but all are subject to pitfalls. Using a landmark can work if it is truly unique. But if there is a multiple choice of radio towers, fence posts, etc. more is needed such as **"fencepost with the red flowers at its base"**.

The initial challenge is to get people to look in the right general direction. **"Straight ahead" needs qualification, "such as straight ahead right of the trail"**. It also helps if people can identify tree species or types. This makes it easier to describe exactly what tree the bird is in or in relation to, such as **"in the Black Walnut" or "in the large evergreen"**. Again, if there are multiple black walnuts or several equally large evergreens, further modification is needed, e.g. **"left large evergreen"**.

When everyone finally looks at the right tree, think of the leafy part of the tree as a clock face, you can then say **"the bird is at 2 o'clock"** (if it is on the right side about a third of the way down) or **6 o'clock** (if it is at the bottom of the foliage), etc. The % of distance from the edge can help too: e.g. **"the leftmost large evergreen at 2 o'clock, halfway from the edge of the tree to the trunk"**.

Rodenticide Affects Parrots

Earlier this year the University of Georgia Infectious Diseases Laboratory identified the popular rat poison, Bromethalin, as the culprit causing a neurological disease affecting and even killing birds from a well-known feral parrot flock located in north San Francisco's Telegraph Hill area.

The disease was first noted back in 1999. The flock consists of a mix of Red-masked, Mitred, and Red-fronted Parakeets. In 2003 a documentary about the flock was made and a book, *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*, came out in 2005.

The source of the poison and how the birds become infected by it are still unknown.

State of Tippecanoe County's Climate by 2050

Coordinated by the Purdue Climate Change Research Center (PCCRC), groups around the state have been working to develop a series of reports showing how changing weather patterns will affect state and local interests.

The 100+ experts and 50+ participating organizations looked ahead and predict the weather in Tippecanoe County will change by the following amounts by 2050:

- ◆ Number of days over 95-degrees a year will increase from 2 to 37.
- ◆ Average coldest day of the year will decrease from -13-degrees F to -3-degrees F.
- ◆ Average hottest day of the year will increase from 95-degrees F to 105-degrees F.
- ◆ Spring rainfall is projected to increase 16%.

Fall Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2019

- Every Thursday Early Bird Hike. Meet at 8 a.m. at the gravel parking lot at Celery Bog to see what birds are around showed up this week. Thursday hikes continue till the end of Fall migration or until no one shows up!
- September 12 Thursday Program: *Bring your Own* preceded by a Carry-in Dinner. This program starts the new year of programs off with a bang. Everyone can bring 5 minutes of digital pictures or slides to share: birds, **plants, animals, vacation sites, etc.** Last year's program covered the globe. Program begins at 7:15 p.m. in Lilly Nature Center at Celery Bog, but come at 6 p.m. to share a Carry-in Dinner. Plates, utensils, napkins and beverages supplied. Bring a dish to share and enjoy the bounty and company.
- September 14 Saturday Celery Bog Field Trip for Fall Migrants. Early water birds as well as land bird migrants including Fall warblers. 7:45 am start time, meet at the gravel parking lot at Celery Bog. A half day trip.
- September 28 Saturday Audubon at the Overlook. 7:30-9:30 a.m. **One of Audubon's visits to Prophetstown's overlook at the end of the Park Road to see what's around and interact with some of the park visitors. Gate fee may still be being charged.**
- October 5-6 Sat & Sunday **Feast of the Hunter's Moon.** Audubon's Turkey leg booth. Contact Barney Dunning to volunteer for a four hour shift and get free admission for both days of the Feast. See p.1.
- October 10 Thursday Program: Migration Destination. Jessica Outcalt, PhD student, Purdue Forestry and Natural Resources Dept., will talk about her research on this topic. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, WL. Free parking & refreshments.
- October 18-20 Fri, Sat, Sun Fall Bake & Plant Sale. West Lafayette Public Library. Volunteers & donations needed. West Lafayette Library 6:30-8:30 Fri; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sat, 1 to 5 p.m. Sun. Contact Patty Jones (see p. 2)
- October 19 Saturday Early Season Lake Shore Field Trip. **SAS' recent Lake Shore trip have been in November. This year is earlier to see a different group of birds: we won't have Snow Buntings and the late water birds such as scoters, but are more likely to generate a longer list than in November including different lakeshore species unlikely to be seen elsewhere in Indiana.** Meet at Celery Bog at 6:30 a.m. all day.
- November 9 Saturday **Crow's Grove Field Trip.** This NICHES property has relic pre-settlement White Pines. A gift by a member of the Crow family, this 40 A property is in Warren County next to Warren Piece, a large multi-owned area along Big Pine with woodlands and a restored prairie. A chance for fall color and migrating birds as well as seeing and becoming acquainted with the preserve. 8 a.m. Celery Bog gravel parking.
- November 14 Thursday Program: Antarctica is for the Birds. Rick Read. Another interesting birding and travel trip by Rick and Debbie. The snow and ice of Antarctica may make the local November weather seem balmy. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Nature Park, WL. Refreshments and free parking.
- November 16 Saturday Audubon at the Overlook. 3:30-5:30 p.m. **One of Audubon's visits to Prophetstown's overlook at the end of the Park Road to see what's around and interact with some of the park visitors. Gate fee should not be being charged at this time of year.**
- November 24 Sunday Sunday Jasper-Pulaski Sandhill Crane Field Trip. Thousands of Sandhill Cranes to see and hear, along with other bird and animal species, perhaps even a Whooping Crane?? Meet at Celery Bog to car-pool at 3:30 p.m. (Likely to have a Purdue bus for everyone to ride in) and return around 6:30 pm.
- December 8 Sunday Audubon at the Overlook. 2-4 p.m. **One of Audubon's visits to Prophetstown's overlook at the end of the Park Road to see what's around and interact with some of the park visitors. A chance to learn a bit more before the Christmas Bird Count. Gate fee should not be being charged at this time of year.**
- December 12 Thursday Program: speaker and topic to be announced later. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Nature Park, WL. Free parking and refreshments.
- December 14 Dec. 14: Lafayette Christmas Bird Count. Save the date. More in the next newsletter.

Nature Notes & News

● The first week in June, after a weak Ruby-throated Hummingbird return, the Ulrich feeders suddenly were inundated with new birds buzzing around ravenously, emptying 4 feeders in about an hour. Over half the birds were adult males. Susan think the birds had a long-delayed migration--maybe weather fronts weren't suitable or delays were caused by other factors. After 3-4 days things settled down with males thinning out (migrating further north?) leaving the 'normal' number and mix of males and females for her yard behind.

● Mick and Sally Weeks had a similar experience in Fountain Co.. Currently their hummers are going though close to 1.5 gallons of sugar solution a day.

● June 29th John Skene spent the morning at Ross Hills Park. He ran across 55 species which included all six nesting woodpeckers, the 2 cuckoos and seven species of warblers.

● Barny Dunning visited Celery Bog the morning of July 17, hoping for a possible hurricane related waif or two. Kentucky and Tennessee both recorded storm birds (Greater Shearwater and Frigate bird) in the previous days. Alas, no such luck, he mostly had the usual summer birds.

He met Fritz Smith at the end of his walk and they agreed that land birds are relatively visible now as most birds seem to have finished breeding and young are out of the nest and active.

He passed on some condition reports:

1. the mud is essentially gone.
2. Most trails have a new wood-chip coating.
3. Mosquitos are negligible.
4. Water levels are way down.

The latter point about water levels explains why he had 47 Great Blue Herons that day. He suggested watching for "white" egrets and herons, including Little Blues in the days ahead.

● Fritz Davis didn't see any odd herons, but he did have a soaring Mississippi Kite over Celery Bog on July 21. This indicates the species may still be summering in the area, although no one found a nesting pair this year.

● After leading a student trip to Ecuador and Galapagos where he got to see penguins and flamingos (!) along with many other species, Barny Dunning returned and visited Celery Bog on August 20th.

He found water levels were low enough to expose some extensive mudflats at the north end behind Walmart. The area was attracting shorebirds and worth checking regularly especially after north or west weather fronts. On the flats were Semipalmated Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper and Spotted Sandpiper. Other birders reported Least and Pectoral Sandpipers. A Caspian Tern was seen at the Bog just one day earlier.

● Five chapter members and Purdue students traveled to the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary near Richmond IN on August 23 to see hummingbird banding by Amy Wilms, a former caretaker of this reserve owned by the Indiana Audubon Society. One of the Purdue students, a freshman in the Animal Science Department, is a native of Beijing, China. He had been in the United States for only two weeks and had never seen a hummingbird before. Well, that was certainly corrected by the end of the trip!

There were swarms of hummers at the Mary Gray feeders. The group observed the banding of about 15 different birds. Everyone who wanted to was able to help hold and release a hummingbird after it was banded and measured, and hear the birds' heart beats. Also banded were a number of local songbirds, including Eastern Phoebe, Indigo Bunting and an Eastern Towhee. In the early morning hours a pair of cackling Barred Owls awoke some of the participants.

● Fall migrants are being reported at Celery Bog and other places around the state. The August 28 Early bird Hike had American Redstarts, Chestnut-sided Warblers, an Ovenbird and a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Davis Balser had a Golden-winged Warbler.

In that same week, Ed Hopkins had reported seeing Black-throated Green Warblers and Black-and-white Warblers, while Fritz Davis had a Blackburnian Warbler. The shallow water/mudflats at the north end of the Bog near Walmart had refilled with water following the recent rain, but there was a pair of Semipalmated Sandpipers flying around further south on the Bog, so at least some shorebirds are still in the area.

● August 31 Emily Reverman, Tru Best and Barny Dunning went to Pine Creek for the weekly DNR waterfowl survey. Their waterfowl numbers were helped by a group of 50 Blue-winged Teal in the northern wetland. The bigger stars were some songbirds: a Blue Grosbeak, 20 Bobolinks, and a Cliff Swallow.



It's Time to Say "Good-bye"

...to local hummingbirds. Adult male Ruby-throats usually leave by the end of August or early September. Females and young linger until the end of September with a few late individuals being seen until mid-October. At least two birds were around into December.

Late migrants are usually working to build up fat reserves needed for migration. If you have a late hummer, keep feeding. Also check to make sure any birds seen after mid-October aren't a Rufous Hummingbird or other unusual species (if so, call Barny).

CONSERVATION NEWS

Endangered Species Act Weakened

The Trump administration just finalized regulations that significantly **weaken the Endangered Species Act (ESA)**, the nation's bedrock conservation law, and make it much harder to protect wildlife from the threats of climate change. In addition, for the first time regulators would be allowed to conduct economic assessments — for instance, estimating lost revenue from a prohibition on logging in a critical habitat — when deciding whether a species **warrants protection (i.e. bureaucrats get to decide whether it's too expensive to save a species)**.

The new rules also make it easier to remove a species that's on the endangered list and weaken protections for threatened species—a classification one step below endangered, as well as make it more difficult for the regulators to factor in the effects of climate change on wildlife when making listing decisions because those threats tend to be decades away, not immediate.

Over all, the revised rules appear most likely to clear the way for new mining, oil and gas drilling, and development in areas where protected species live. As a lobbyist, David Bernhardt fought the Endangered Species Act in the name of the fossil fuel industry. Now he is secretary of the Interior and adjusting the rules which made the act effective. The *Houston Chronicle's* response to the changes was the headline **"Interior rolls back protections for endangered species, in boon for oil companies."**

Clean Water Act Attacked

In another move weakening environmental standards, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler signed a new rollback of Clean Water Act protections. His goal: to stop states from being able to protect their waterways and their communities from fossil fuel pollution and climate change. In other words, the administration thinks the safety of our water should be secondary to the profits of the fossil fuel industry.

The current Clean Water Act sets a simple standard that polluting into our public waterways is illegal. But the Trump administration has consistently been weakening fundamental environmental protections, including the Clean Water Act, putting business interests, particularly oil and gas, before the safety of air, water and the future of the planet.

Thanks to strong public support—vocal and financial—various environmental groups are able to pursue all available tools to combat these attacks. In this case, to ensure that the states maintain the power to reject dangerous, polluting fossil fuel projects within their borders.

Two Pesticide Suits Filed By Earthjustice

Earthjustice has filed a number of suits against the administration's environmental policies. One deals with the pesticide chlorpyrifos. The EPA has repeatedly found the pesticide unsafe, especially for children (whose brains it affects). It also endangers farm workers. Yet the EPA has refused to take any protective action. The science and the law call for a ban, yet in June, the Trump administration's decided to keep using this pesticide on our food.

In July the administration announced it is putting the bee-killing pesticide sulfoxaflor back on the market. After a previous Earthjustice lawsuit, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that sulfoxaflor was approved without proper studies regarding its impact on honeybee colonies. The announcement about the continued use of the produce came just days after President Trump touted his environmental record and less than a week after his administration's defunded the annual survey on honeybees. Their reestablishment of sulfoxaflor has led to a new lawsuit.

Rainforests

Right now the fires and destruction in the Amazon rainforest are in the news, but it is not the only one of **the earth's rainforests affected**: Big Agribusinesses around the globe are responsible for cutting and burning other vital rainforest habitat for profit.

Rainforests in Asia, especially the Sumatran rainforest, are disappearing with thousands of acres being torn down and converted to Palm Oil plantations. The majority of this destruction is being done illegally.

The Rainforest Action Committee has been sounding the alarm for some time. They call the illegally produced palm oil, "Conflict Palm Oil" and have been lobbying big corporations who buy the oil to stop it and switch to sustainable, legal palm oil. Many snacks including Doritos are made with illegal palm oil. Rainforest Action has asked companies to only buy the legal oil. So far Pepsi-Co who makes Doritos has not. The loss of this rainforest habitat threatens the survival of Orangutans Sumatran Tigers, and Sumatran Elephants, to name just a few species.



Critically endangered, fewer than 1,700 Sumatran Elephants are left in the wild.

Canada's Fraser River Estuary

The Fraser River is the longest river in British Columbia, Canada, flowing from the Rocky Mountains down to a fertile delta on Canada's west coast. The lands and waters of the estuary are the un-ceded territory of the indigenous Coast Salish people who have lived in the region since time out of mind. Despite having already lost almost 80% of its natural habitat, the Fraser estuary continues to support millions of birds and Canada's largest migration of wild salmon. During a well-timed walk along this coast, visitors might happen upon 100,000 Dunlin or 40,000 Snow Geese.

The importance of the Fraser estuary is well known. It has been designated an *Important Bird and Biodiversity Area*, a *Ramsar Wetland of International Significance*, and a *Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Site of Hemispheric Importance* in an effort to ensure Canada provides the level of protection this site deserves. In any other part of Canada, it would be a National Park. However, the delta mouth's strategic location on the Pacific Ocean has seen the area grow into a major transport and trading hub, called "Canada's Gateway to Asia".

There are numerous signs of ecological collapse. A proposed massive container port expansion, the Roberts Bank terminal 2, would contribute to it. Right now there is no overarching legal framework to protect the area. The proposed project is just one example of how Canada puts the Fraser estuary at risk without a strong conservation plan to maintain its function. However, Canada's movement to deliver on its commitments to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and a recent financial commitment to restore salmon habitat in the Lower Fraser gives hope that may change. A "Preserve Our Living Delta" campaign calls on Canada's government not to approve any new industrial projects until a comprehensive conservation strategy for the Fraser estuary is in place. Secondly, existing projects should be managed to restore biofilm (the main food for many migrating shorebirds), migratory bird stopover areas, and salmon habitat.



Pileated Woodpecker with a huge work ethic (arrow points to bird)

Nesting Areas Sought

In May, working off North Carolina's outer Banks, a team for the American Bird Conservancy, captured, banded, and attached satellite transmitters on Black-capped Petrels for the first time. This petrel is an endangered species with many secrets—including where most nest. A few nests have been found in remote areas of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, but nesting on other Caribbean islands is likely as well.

The team particularly wanted to track white-faced birds because no nests for that color morph had ever been found. Four of the 10 birds captured were white-faced, 5 dark, and one was intermediate. The mix may help determine if the color morphs are distinct breeding populations and pinpoint the sites needing protection.

Everglade Birds have Two New Exotics to Fear

In addition to Burmese Pythons, the Everglades has two new introduced reptiles causing havoc: the Nile Monitor (Africa's largest lizard) and the Black-and-White Tegu, an opossum-sized lizard from South America. The latter eats bird eggs and a variety of small animals, the former is threatening Florida's subspecies of the Burrowing owl.

All three species are now well entrenched and likely to remain. State officials and university and state researchers are studying how these new reptiles affect our native bird populations and also trying to improve capture-and-control methods, especially in areas protected for at-risk native species.

A "Tern" for the Better

Habitat restoration and predatory gull management at Roseate Tern breeding colonies seems to be working. The United States population of this species has reached its highest number since 1987 when it was listed as a federally endangered species. The 2018 U.S. population was estimated as 4,552 pairs with 51 pairs for Canada.

The numbers are still below the recovery target of 5,000 pairs and reverses are possible. Climate change affecting prey species, competition for food from commercial fishing fleets and changes in their tropical wintering ranges are possible. Another potential threat could be offshore wind energy development which could displace the terns from certain areas or kill birds via collisions.





John James Audubon Center

On June 4th, Audubon celebrated the grand opening of the all-new John James Audubon Center in Audubon, PA. The beautiful 18,000-square-foot museum and nature center is a tribute to NAS's namesake, the famed ornithologist John James Audubon, his art, and the conservation movement that he inspired. The opening included building tours plus activities for some 50 home-schooled students.

The \$13-million project was a partnership between Montgomery County and the National Audubon Society. The 18,000 square foot museum and nature based facility features Audubon's Artworks as well as nature education facilities. Funding for the expansion came

from the County, a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, along with donations from dozens of individual and foundation supporters.

Nonnative Plants Reduce Chickadee Nesting Success

A recent study has inextricably linked nesting success in Carolina Chickadees to the ratio of native to nonnative plant biomass in the landscape. This is the first major study comparing the impact of nonnative plants in the landscape to population growth of an insectivorous bird species. As the proportion of nonnative species in the landscape grows, its effect on birds increases. Eighty percent of the U.S. landmass is privately owned and managed (or not managed). The species on those lands will determine the success of future conservation efforts for birds and other wildlife.

Since nonnative plants tend to dominate residential landscapes the researchers felt it imperative to evaluate those landscapes and their contribution to ecosystems relative to the native species they displace. To do so, they measured how nonnative plants influence insectivorous birds by quantifying arthropod abundance, avian diet, reproductive successes, and adult and juvenile survival of Carolina Chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*) across a metropolitan area that varied in its proportions of nonnative plant biomass.

Using monitored survival and reproduction of Carolina Chickadees within residential yards they found that as the % of nonnative plants increased, both insect availability and chickadee population growth declined. They also found that populations could only be sustained if nonnative plants constituted less than 30% of the plant biomass. Over 30% led to population eventual species extinction. "Our results reveal that properties landscaped with nonnative plants function as population sinks for insectivorous birds. To promote sustainable food webs, urban planners and private landowners should prioritize native plants." RIP out and replace those nonnatives with native species to keep bird populations strong.



WEDNESDAYS IN THE WILD

Sycamore Audubon is one of the sponsor groups for the Wednesdays in the Wild Programming. These interesting and informative nature related programs are held each Wednesday. Hours and locations differ. To get an email copy of the current schedule contact Joan Samuels.

mohrsamuels@comcast.net

Hardcopies are usually available at Lilly Nature Center.

Did You Know?

That the federal government guarantees a profit as high as 14% for companies building gas and oil pipelines?

Or that

Charmin toilet paper is still being made 100% from old-growth trees logged from Canada's great boreal forest. A site critical to help meet the world's climate objectives?

"Solar" power Helps Mangroves & People

The 38,000 hectares of mangroves in Guinea's Dubréka prefecture are seriously threatened by salt extraction and sand mining, the main sources of income for nearby communities. The mangroves are cleared to make way for mines or cut down to use as fuel for the extraction of salt from seawater.

Now, a new project is helping protect the mangrove wetlands by showing salt producers, most of them women, how to extract salt from the mangroves sustainably. The new technology uses sunlight and tarpaulins instead of fuel-wood. The *Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund* and the local nonprofit *Développement Pour Tous*, (DPT) is working in partnership with *Fondation Agir Pour l'Afrique* to fund the effort.

To date the project has resulted in regeneration of 13.5 hectares of mangroves and created sustainable livelihoods for 47 people. DPT is currently helping the local women form a cooperative. The new technology is much easier and less dangerous for the salt producers than using machetes to cut the mangroves and then hauling them off to use for firewood.

Sandhill-Powerline Collisions Reduced

Researchers cut the number of crane-powerline collisions by 98% at migration stopovers in Nebraska's Platte Valley using a new technique: near-ultraviolet lights on support structures to illuminate powerlines during low light periods. This system, known as the Avian Collision Avoidance System, is expected to be tested at powerline sites, communication towers and other areas with high bird powerline collision rates.



"Bird-friendly" Building Design

There has been some positive momentum to address bird-friendly strategies for buildings. First, some cities are passing local ordinances to use bird-friendly glass and lighting practices to reduce the risk of bird collisions. A good starting point for local ordinances is the bird-friendly building design LEED credit (SSpc 55) which the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and partner groups helped draft and promote among the architectural community. New and improved building materials and glass give a variety of new options.

San Francisco came on board in 2011. Other cities have followed and Chicago, Washington D.C. and NYC have initiatives in the works.

State legislation is also gaining momentum in New York and Maryland. Minnesota passed statewide

legislation in 2013. And now there is a bill at the Federal level that has the support of ABC, H.R.919. The Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act. This bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives and is gaining bipartisan support. Its aim is to enact bird-friendly building guidelines for new Federal buildings and those being remodeled.

Any reduction for bird-glass collisions is a big win. Up to a billion birds a year are killed in collisions in the United States. Talking to local city and state representatives to get local and state ordinances passed can keep the momentum going, as can contacting Representatives and Senators in Washington.

For more info visit:
abcbirds.org/programs/glass-collisions/learn-more/

143 and Counting

That is the number of lawsuits filed by The Center for Biological Diversity and allies against various Trump administration actions. The 143rd suit was brought against the Interior Department for what the group says is the unlawful approval of an expansion of Colorado's West Elk Mine—the state's largest industrial methane producer.

The Center feels their legal work makes a difference, helping kill the worst proposals, including drilling in national monuments, as well as slowing down the Trump administration blitzkrieg against science-based rules and policies.

Check: biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/trump_lawsuits/

Multiple Law Suits Result from Recently Proposed Energy Rule

Ten environmental and health groups on Wednesday, August 14th, filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration over its new carbon emissions rule that replaced the Obama-era Clean Power Plan.

The groups argue that the new rule, called the *Affordable Clean Energy Rule*, but referred to by many as the "*Dirty Power Plan*", violates the Clean Air Act because it does not set legal standards for carbon pollution reduction or other air pollutants. The rule, which was finalized in June, directs states to develop their own plans for power plant emission standards, but it does not include reduction targets.

The Environmental Protection Agency likely has a long legal battle ahead. Wednesday's lawsuit came just one day after a lawsuit brought by a group of 29 states and cities. These two lawsuits join the first one which was filed against the Trump administration over the rule in July by the American Lung Association and the American Public Health Association.

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 Audubon Society's (NAS)** national conservation efforts by becoming an official member of NAS (\$20). Contact SAS's membership chair for information. When you join NAS, you receive *Audubon* magazine **along with automatic chapter membership in SAS**. Since NAS dues primarily support national projects, we encourage national members to ALSO become Friends of SAS. As a Friend, you give directly to our local chapter and its projects.

SAS Chapter Membership Application **Date:** _____

Name : _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone(s): _____

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 Friend member ☐ Renewing Friend

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

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

Total enclosed \$ _____

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Lights out for the Birds

During the last two years, more than 2,700 communication operators have turned off steady-burning tower lights that cause up to 7 million bird deaths annually. Switching off these lights reduces bird-tower collisions by up to 70 percent, saving hundreds of thousands of birds each year. Many migratory species, such as the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, account for a large proportion of tower-related deaths and stand to benefit the most.

12 Mile Prairie Info

Chad's Blog (TV 18) has a long article on the 12 mile prairie and smaller local prairies based on early land survey notes plus pioneer notes & maps Go to:

<https://www.wlfi.com/content/news/Chads-Garden--Twelve-Mile-Prairie--the-Prairies-Around-It-200-Years-Ago-558036341.html>

Wabash River Sampling Blitz

Sept. 13th - Semi-annual tributary sampling. Further info and registration info at www.wabashriver.net/blitz-registration/Oct.

INPS Programs: 7 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog.

Sept. 23: *The Regal Fritillary Butterfly & Other projects at Kankakee Sands.* **Alyssa Nyberg**, Restoration Ecologist at Kankakee Sands. One of her responsibilities is coordinating research on the property.

Oct 28: *A Deeper Look at Milkweeds In Late Summer.* Stephanie Frische, *Xerxes Society*. The Xerxes Society works to protect native insects which are intimately tied to native plants such as Indiana's many species of milkweed.

Tidbits

◆ It is estimated that plastics currently cover 40% of the world oceans' surface.

◆ 30% of native bees nest in tunnels in stumps & snags. Leave dead wood in your landscape. You can also drill holes in blocks of untreated lumber for bee habitat. Face it SE.

◆ Madagascar was home to the flightless Elephant bird, the world's largest, weighing over a thousands pounds.

◆ There are 68 recognized eagle species worldwide. The continental US has the Bald and Golden Eagles. A third eagle, the White-tailed Eagle is a rare species found in Alaska.

◆ Tundra is the most rapidly warming biome on Earth.

◆ On average today's children can recognize 1000+ corporate logos but just a handful of local plant or animal species.

◆ In a normal feeding day, hummingbirds consume more than their body weight in nectar and insects.

◆ Transportation is now the largest source of carbon pollution in the United States, replacing power generation at the top of the list.



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Nest box "Penthouses"

The Barba Azul reserve in Bolivia was established by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and its Bolivian partner, Asociación Armonía, to help provide habitat for the rare Blue-throated Macaw, so it was frustrating that the birds completely ignored the nest boxes put up for them for 8 years, while the species readily used identical boxes at a similar height (13 feet) and size on a reserve further south. Nest cavities are a scarcer resource than most bird-nesting sites so providing suitable ones can significantly help endangered and rare cavity nesters.



The Macaws used the reserve, but didn't nest there. A search in 2017 revealed the birds went further north and nested at the top of isolated 40 foot high dead Royal Palm trees, a wildly different choice than that of the southern birds that preferred lower sites near large forests.

As an experiment, 5 "penthouse" nest boxes (photo to left) were erected on the reserve in 2018 using 40-foot-long eucalyptus poles. Five more were added in 2019. To increase the likelihood of the birds noticing them, the tall boxes were placed in the flight path used by the macaws to reach their nighttime roost.

The new boxes seem to have done the trick. A few months ago Carlos Roca, the guard at the Barba Azul Reserve, reported that he had seen a pair of Blue-throated Macaws investigating a penthouse nest box. A week later, Tjalle Boorsma, Conservation Program Director for Ammonia, observed three different pairs of Blue-throated Macaws—not just perching on the new nest boxes—but entering the hole and squabbling over the prime real estate.

