

Sycamore Warbler

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BIG NEWS: May Bird Count Morphing to Global Big Day (May 9)

Indiana Audubon Society (IAS) has decided to no longer hold its Annual May Day count. Instead IAS hopes individual counties will coordinate their efforts and become part of eBird/Cornell Ornithology's Global Big Day on May 9th. IAS will promote and encourage all birders in Indiana to count birds on Global Big Day and submit their checklists to the event via eBird. The Society also hopes that some birders might like to try and expand efforts to bird in previously underrepresented counties from year to year. IAS will still create a summary based upon the data to see how Indiana's results compare to other states and previous counts in Indiana.

Sycamore Audubon Society is coordinating counts as usual in Tippecanoe and Warren Counties. Barny Dunning will compile Tippecanoe County & Susan Ulrich will do Warren County. In addition Rick Read is holding a morning count in White County at Camp Buffalo starting at 7 a.m. If you'd like to help with one of these events contact the count compiler (p. 11). It's a lot of fun to spend a day or part of a day outside checking for birds during the height of migration. There are always surprises. The Tippecanoe Count will still hold a compilation party

Individuals are encouraged to get out and see what they can find in neighboring counties too—the more data on what birds are where, the better. If anyone is interested in checking a different county than the 3 mentioned, above, contact Barny Dunning. He may be able to find one or more people interested in helping out. Barny has also volunteered to help with the eBird report filing should help be needed.

Over the last five years, Indiana birders who took part in Global Big Day managed to find an average of 240 species of birds, good for 23rd place overall.

NICHES Celebrates 25 Years

It is hard to believe a quarter of a century has passed since NICHES Land Trust began. It was three Audubon members who looked into starting a land trust 27 years ago. And an Audubon program featuring a speaker from ACRES Land Trust led to the initial group of 25 or so people who dug in to get the land trust up and running with bylaws, not-profit-status, etc. Harry Potter, a past president of SAS, came up with the name as the group's goal was to save "niches of habitat" here and there.

Twenty-five years later those "niches" add up to over 3,500 acres. The land trust itself has expanded from all volunteer to a staff of 6 (but volunteers are still critical—consider helping out) and has gone through the rigorous process of being "accredited" by the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization of land trusts. Looking back it is obvious that having a local land trust resonated with many people in local communities. It finally gave those people who had a desire to preserve more land a way to do so. It also gave people with specific land they wanted to protect the ability to do that. Judging by the successes of the past 25 years, the upcoming quarter century should be exciting to watch.

NICHES is holding 25 events in 2020 to celebrate its first 25 years. The next few of the 25th year events are listed on page 6 inside. It has set some high goals for the year, including adding 250 new members. If you aren't a member, consider joining. In honor of their anniversary they dropped the membership fee from \$50 to (what else) \$25. Other upcoming events and information on NICHES properties can be found at nicheslandtrust.org.



Black Rock: one of NICHES properties along the Wabash River

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CHAPTER NEWS

Feast Report

SAS netted \$3,461 selling Turkey Legs at the Feast in 2019. That was after donating part of the funds to the Purdue Wildlife Club who helped out at the booth.

Wabash River Program

February's program by Seth Harden of The Nature Conservancy was cancellation due to bad weather but has been rescheduled for May 7.

White County Grant Recipients

Rick Read represented Audubon at the White County Community Foundation's December event for grant award recipients. (he's in the red jacket). SAS has been fortunate to once again get support from the **Women Giving Together Fund** for Audubon's after school nature club.



Board Member's Publication Aims to Help Birds

SAS's secretary, Jessica Outcalt, just published a five page PDF called **No Room at the Inn: Suburban Backyards and Migratory Birds**. The PDF is available as a free download from Purdue Extension under the product code FNR-593-W.

Bake & Plant Sale

This spring event runs from April 3-5 at the West Lafayette Public Library. The board will designate which conservation effort to fund at the next board meeting. These sale have raised nearly \$36,000 over the years for a variety of causes.

We always need cashiers. If you can help please contact Susan Ulrich (see p. 11). Shifts are Friday from 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Saturday from 10-12:30, 12:30-3 p.m. or 3-5:30 p.m.; Sunday's are 1-3 & 3-5 p.m. We can also use extra help for a half hour or so closing down at 5 p.m. Sunday.

Donations can include anything edible as well as plants, planters, bird feeders, seeds, etc. Plants can be garden perennials, annuals, or house plants. You can drop plants at the library up to 4 days early (put them on the trays on the windowsills right of the free magazines).

Food can be dropped off starting Friday morning when the library opens at 10 a.m. or during the sale itself. If you need some plant pots or have questions or need to make special arrangements for donations, call/email Susan.

Garden Expo April 25

Garden Expo, put on by the Tippecanoe County Master Gardeners, is held in the Hog Barn at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds on Teal Road between 9th and 18th streets. It's a great event for plant and garden lovers. New species are coming up and need thinning. Donating them is a great way to recycle plants and clean out any equipment you no longer want. SAS and the Indiana Native Plant Society will have their usual joint booth to

sell plants and other items with funds going for invasive species removal & related efforts locally.

Over 2,000 plant-hungry buyers attend each year making it a great Way to raise funds, as well as provide environmental information to the community. Entry is free. Hours are 9 to 3. If you can help for a few hours contact Susan Ulrich. Outdoor plants can be stored at the side of Temple Pearson's driveway or brought to the site on Friday from 3-6 p.m. or on Saturday morning

Fifth Grade Bird Hikes

This year's Audubon bird hikes for West Lafayette's 5th Graders are Tuesday, May 5 and Thursday, May 7. A few more people to assist the teachers with bird walks would be appreciated. The students will all have binoculars but many don't have much experience. "Expert" birding status isn't required. Lafayette area helpers can carpool at Celery Bog at 6 a.m. if desired, or they and others can meet the group at the Whitetail Lodge at Camp Tecumseh at 7 a.m. Participants can opt for breakfast too.

Monticello Outreach

Rick Read is giving five talks this spring: *Exploring Antarctica* Feb. 29; *The Birds in our Neighborhood* March 14 & 15; and *Attracting Birds to our Yards* April 2 & 21.

He is also helping celebrate **Earth Day 50** in Monticello Parks with a bird walk April 25 at 7:30 am plus an Owling event at City Park's Shady Rest Pavilion at 9 p.m.

Lastly he will lead a Bird Caravan starting at Shady Rest Pavilion at City Park at 7 a.m. on May 2nd.

Thank You's

A big thank you to Gale Turco and also to Judith Marten for their extra donations to SAS.

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 to be added to the list. See page 9.

SAS Board Signs Indiana Audubon's Balloon Request

SAS's Board voted to support the Indiana Audubon Society's quest to convince the owners of the Motor Speedway to stop holding the world's largest *intentional* balloon release.

Balloon debris has been shown to kill and injure multiple species of birds and other wildlife. IAS has offered to aid the 500 event to find a new tradition that honors the event and also the lives of birds. So far they there has been no response.

RIP Squad Starts Ap 14

It's time to start removing Garlic Mustard and wintercreeper from local parks. RIP is now a TICT volunteer partner (see p. 6) and is expanding its efforts. It is still working on West Lafayette and Tippecanoe County Parks but will add working on Wabash River Enhancement Corp. (WREC) properties on Saturdays.

Special Hours with AmeriCorps

April 14 Happy Hollow Park 9-5 &
April 16 Ross Hills Park 9-5

West Lafayette Tuesdays 3-5

April 21 Michaud Sinninger Woods
April 28 Celery Bog
May 5 Happy Hollow Park
May 12 Michaud Sinninger Woods
May 19 Celery Bog
May 26 Happy Hollow Park
June 2 Where most work needed
June 9 Celery Bog

County Parks Thursdays 3-5

April 23 Prophet's Rock Woods
April 30 Ross Hills Park
May 7 Prophet's Rock Woods
May 14 Ross Hills Park
May 21 Prophet's Rock Woods
May 28 Ross Hills Park
June 4 Prophet's Rock Woods
June 11 Ross Hills Park

WREC Saturday 3-5

Sites still to be determined.

Contact Patty Rader for updates and additional information. Phone: 765-463-3050 or email: removeinvasiveplants.wcinps@gmail.com. Long sleeves & pants, gloves and boots are recommended for workdays.

Indiana Dunes 2020 Birding Festival

Indiana Dunes Visitor Center May 13-17
Chesterton, Indiana, five days of field trips, presentations, activities, art show, and more.

SAS's Rick Read is leading a bird walk and giving two of the presentations.

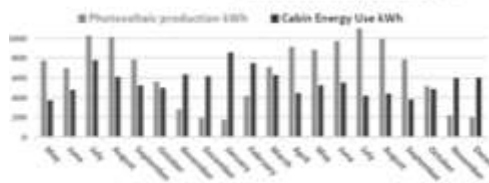
The keynote speaker is author and researcher Scott Weidensaul. Other headliners are Sarah Saunders, Marc Kramer & Eliana Ardila Ardila, Hannah & Eric go Birding, and Adriaan Michiel Dokter.



For more information and registration and fees, go to:

www.indunesbirdingfestival.com

Exceeding its Energy Goals



Purdue's Biology Department's new lab & caretaker housing at the Ross Reserve is meeting its energy goals. Since metering began in April of 2018 the building has produced 2603 more kWh than it used—sufficient to power the rest of the Reserve over the summer. In 2019 the surplus was 1864 kWh. The building is sustainable energy-wise and will reduce carbon emissions and save money over the next 20 some years.

Wetlands is the Theme for 2020 Mind BOGgling Event

As usual there will be lots to do at the Mind BOGgling Event held at Celery Bog Nature Park. The event is Saturday, May 16th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.—four hours that are chock full of activities. It's a family friendly event with lots of crafts, displays etc. for both old and young.



Wetlands (one of the most important habitats for birds) is this year's theme. Audubon is hosting a station at an overlook with scope and binoculars as well as bird info and handouts to answer questions and show people birds. Three other stations will be set up as well: Mary Cutler on macroinvertebrates; Nick Harby on aquatic and wetland plants; and Reuben Goforth on fish found in local wetlands. Each will have a special stamp children can get for their event "passports".

Other groups present with information, exhibits and/or games include Wolf Park, Scouts, Prophetstown State Park, Entomology, Tree Friends, and SAMI (live music including many songs related to Celery Bog). There will be a food truck and Gibson Ice, a general info tent plus children's craft areas.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Big News for Conflict Palm Oil from PepsiCo

PepsiCo just announced a new leading policies and actions to address the destruction of rainforests, the abuse of workers, and the exploitation of communities caused by Conflict Palm Oil.

PepsiCo is one of the largest snack food companies in the world. It was also the biggest laggard on the Rainforest Action Network's ***Snack Food 20 Campaign***. This new commitment by PepsiCo is a critical move for some of the most endangered species in the world, including the Sumatran orangutan, Sumatran tiger, Sumatran rhino and Sumatran elephant as well as the people on the frontlines of illegal palm oil production.



The efforts to get PepsiCo to stop buying Conflict Palm Oil took 6 years. They are now one of 16 of the world's largest corporations to adopt responsible palm oil policies. Their new commitment will help push other supply chain actors across the palm oil industry to help reduce destruction of the Asian rainforests.

Comments Sought

The DNR Division of Forestry is working with conservation groups and forest stakeholders to update the 2010 Forest Action Plan, a 10-year document that looks at the conditions and trends of forest resources in Indiana and provides long-term strategies to address threats.

The plan covers roughly 5 million acres of forestland in the state, 84% of which is privately owned and 16% of which is owned by public institutions. A draft update of the plan is available for public comment at

dnr.IN.gov/forestry/10319.htm

until March 27. The final plan will be released and will be posted online when available. More information is available on the Forest Action Plan webpage:

dnr.IN.gov/forestry/5436.htm.

Old Style Recycling

Companies like Coca-Cola used to collect 98 percent of their bottles back from customers—and re-use them 40 to 50 times. In the US today, only 29% of plastic bottles are collected for recycling, and almost no recycled plastic is being made back into Coca-Cola bottles.

New and old companies are working to lessen the onslaught of plastic upon the land and water, but Coca Cola isn't one of them. Not only is Coca-Cola not ditching plastic, at Davos 2020 Coca-Cola's head of sustainability, Bea Perez, said that Coca-Cola will not stop producing single-use plastics because consumers "still want them."

Coca-Cola is one of the worst contributors to plastic pollution, producing about three million tons of plastic packaging a year - equivalent to 200,000 bottles a minute.

In 2019, it was found to be the most polluting brand in a global audit of plastic waste by the charity ***Break Free from Plastic***.

50th EARTHDAY

Has it really been 50 years since the first Earthday was held? The movement it represented resulted in a lot of positive environmental legislative actions, some of which are now unfortunately being rolled back by the current administration. Battles that were fought and won, now need to be fought again.

We can all help at local, state, and national levels by encouraging politicians to consider environmental factors when voting or writing bills, and supporting national not for profits who fight for the environment.

We can also do little things on a personal level to help. For example, reducing our resource use, making yards wildlife friendly, helping groups plant trees in the community, buying wisely, and joining others to volunteer and take positive actions

There are so many groups that can use volunteers. Whatever you feel needs doing, there is most likely a group already formed that is working to do it—you just need to find it. If you have already found it and are helping, great. Keep it up.



Choose the Blue License Plate.

Money from the Environmental plate helps pay for projects that protect the land, waters, birds, and wildlife of Indiana.

New Banking Policies

The *Rainforest Action Network* is pleased to report that JPMorgan Chase now has a new fossil fuel policy that rules out funding for coal plants and oil and gas projects in the Arctic. This is a major step in the group's efforts to get the finance sector to make the changes needed to heal the climate and protect communities around the world.

In December Goldman Sachs became the first US Bank to announce it would no longer fund any drilling projects in the arctic.

Spring Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2020

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" at the Parthenon in West Lafayette. Field trip times vary.

- March 12 Thursday **Program: Jeop-birdy.** This was such fun last year we Invited Wes Homoya back for a second show. Test your avian skills playing one of the world's most beloved game shows. Wes is a, birder, conservationist, tour guide, and ex-SAS board member. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog, WL. Refreshments .
- March 21 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** Meet at the end of the road at Prophetstown State Park at 8 p.m. We will spend two hours around the overlook to see what flies by and talk to park visitors.
- March 25 Wednesday **Woodcock Walk** a. Meet at NICHES' Granville Sand Barrens at 7:45 or carpool at Celery Bog Gravel Parking area at 7:10 p.m.
- March 26 & each Thursday **Early Bird Walks at Celery Bog.** The official weekly morning walks start up. 8 a.m. start at the gravel parking lot. We bird for about an hour. These walks will continue roughly through May 22.
- April 3-5 Fri- Sat **Conservation Bake & Plant Sale.** 6:30-8:30 Fri, 10-5 Sat; 1-5 Sun. Donations of plants, food items, garden equipment, bird houses, etc. needed to sell. See p. 2.
- April 9 Thursday **Program: Nature Photography.** Alan McConnell, Opera House Gallery. He has taken shots at National Parks, Indiana State Parks, and NICHES areas. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park, WL. Refreshments and free parking.
- April 18 Saturday **Whistler Hare Woods** with Bob Easter, NICHES Stewardship Director. Carpool at Celery Bog at 8 a.m. or meet at this NICHES property at 9. Property has some dramatic topography so dress accordingly.
- April 22 **Earth Day 50. A half century since the first Earth Day in 1970. See April 27th below.**
- April 25 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** Prophetstown State Park 7-9 a.m. Meet at the pavilion at the end of the road. New birds and people to see and talk to.
- April 25 Saturday **Garden Expo 2020** Extraordinary event loaded with plants and information. Swine Barn at the Tippecanoe Co. Fairgrounds 10-3 p.m. Donate or buy a plant or two. Help at the booth also needed. See more on p.2.
- April 27 Saturday **Earth Day in Monticello.** Series of activities to help celebrate Earth Day 2019. See the schedule provided by Rick Read on page 3. Contact him (p. 11) if you have any questions.
- May 2 Saturday **Global Big Day Prep.** Get birding-ready for the Global Big Day next week! Will start at 7 a.m. at Celery Bog areas to review/learn songs and get back into practice for a g day in the field.
- May 5 & 7 Tues/Thurs **Fifth Grade Bird Hikes** at Camp Tecumseh. A few more helpers would be nice. See page 2. Meet at 6 a.m. at Celery Bog gravel parking area to carpool or go on your own & meet at 7 a.m. at the White Tail Lodge.
- May 9 Saturday **Global Big Day.** See story on p.1 Same rules as Big Day in May which this is replacing. People go out in groups or alone in assigned territories and count as long as they can covering various habitats.
- May 13 Wednesday **Audubon at the Overlook.** Prophetstown State Park 7 p.m. We will listen and look to see what we can find in the evening. The overlook is at the end of the park road below the basketball court.
- May 14 Thursday **Program: Restoring the Wabash River.** Seth Harden, Director of the Upper Wabash River Project for the Indiana Nature Conservancy. Come and learn what TNC is doing to improve the river and the important bird and wildlife habitat it provides. 7:15p.m. Lilly Nature Center. Free parking and refreshments.
- May 16 Saturday **Mind BOGgling Event.** Celery Bog Park from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Family friendly. Come out to see what's going on. See story on p.2.
- June 6 Saturday **Birds of the Prairie & Thickets.** Prophetstown State Park. Met at 7 a.m. in the last parking lot at the end of the road near the Overlook. Target birds include Henslow's Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole, late migrants and whatever else we can find. Followed by an **Audubon at the Overlook.**

Indiana's Terrestrial Plant Rule Goes into Effect April 18

This rule prohibits anyone from selling, gifting, distributing, transporting or in any way introducing any of 44 different plant species in Indiana without a permit from the IDNR division of Entomology and Plant Pathology (DEPP). All 44 species are ranked as highly invasive on Indiana's invasive species list. Other highly invasive species, notably Callery Pear, Burning Bush, and Norway Maple, are expected to be added in the future along with other species as their threat to Indiana's habitat become clearer.



Privet



Some of the species currently on the list are Tree of Heaven, Garlic Mustard, Japanese Barberry, Asian Bittersweet, Crown Vetch, Autumn Olive, Wintercreeper, Dame's Rocket, Privet, five species of honeysuckle, Japanese Stiltgrass, White Mulberry, and Amur Cork Tree. A complete list of all 44 prohibited species is available from local Soil and Water Conservation offices or it can be found online on numerous websites. The entire Official Indiana Invasive Plant list is at

www.entm.purdue.edu/iisc/invasiveplants.html

Why this rule? Invasive plants reduce Indiana's biodiversity of plants, animals and birds, degrade its natural habitats, affect property values negatively, decrease agricultural yields, and impact public utilities, recreation and tourism. Landowners and land managers in Indiana spend over \$8.6 million dollars a year on invasive plant control and what they do is only a drop in the bucket. Currently half of the species are still being sold in the nursery trade which adds to the problem. That at least should stop as of April 18.

Anyone found selling, giving, or contributing to an increase of these plants in the state is subject to a \$500 fine per incident per day. If you see **any of these plants** for sale or distribution after that date, inform the store/person that they are now illegal. If they fail to comply, contact your area's nursery inspector at in.gov/dnr/entomolo/7426.htm.

If you have any of these species in your yard you **are not required** to remove them, but it would be a good idea to do so. Assistance on identification and removal methods is available. See below.



Wintercreeper



TICT-- A Local Response to Invasives

TICT stands for Tippecanoe Invasive Cooperative Taskforce. It is an umbrella organization created in response to a lack of formal coordination between various stakeholders working to prevent, control, and manage invasive species in the county.

The mission: to prevent, control, and reduce invasive species impacts in Tippecanoe County through community education and action.

The aim is to maximize the effectiveness of the various stakeholders AKA partner groups, by providing coordination of support and resources—financial or otherwise—to prevent unnecessary duplication of efforts.

The group has four committees: Steering, Education, Eradication, and Reporting. Its three focus area goals are Prevention, Early Detection, and Management. Anyone interested in joining a committee or signing up to help with workdays, should contact Angela Garcia-Miller at Tippecanoe County Soil & Water:

Wednesdays In the Wild

March 11: Its only Natural: Backyard Habitat & Native Gardening. Mary Cutler 1-3 p.m. Lilly Nature Center.

March 18: Nature's Treat: Woodland Wildflowers: 7-9 pm Lilly Nature Center. Dan Childs (author of *Into the Woods*). Book available for \$15 part of which goes to NICHES Land Trust

March 25: Tour Lafayette's Wastewater Treatment Area. Brad Talley (Lafayette RENEW Superintendent). 1-3 p.m. at Lafayette Wastewater Treatment Plant. 1700 Wabash Avenue.

NOTE: A new program schedule will be out in April. To get a copy email Joan Samuels at

mohrsamuels@comcast.net

NICHES' Upcoming Events

March 14: **Ephemeral Wetlands** Holly Savannah. 2-4 p.m. led by Gus Nyberg, NICHES Executive Director.

April 11 **Tour Birdfoot Barrens** 1-3 p.m. Justin Harbeson, NICHES Land Steward. Environmental maintenance and spring ephemerals.

Indiana Birding Trail

The Indiana Audubon Society and the Indiana DNR talked about developing an Indiana birding trail for decades. It finally made its debut in December 2019, as the result of an eighteen-month project involving many local Audubon chapters, state and local tourism leaders, and some divisions in the DNR.

The trail showcases 60 of the best birding locations in the state. It is divided into five geographic areas, making for easier navigation. Each site has eBird checklists integrated with it so you can see what species of birds are likely at each site at a given time of year.

Copies are available on the web as well as by hard copy. To see the list of 60 properties and their bird lists, go to: **XXXXXXXXXXXX**

Peanut Butter May Help Black-footed Ferrets?

It sounds unlikely, but the combination of peanut butter and drones are giving biologists renewed hope for the future survival of North America's rarest mammal, the endangered black-footed ferret. Biologists are helping these fascinating animals and their main prey—prairie dogs—fight a deadly plague by dropping peanut butter flavored, vaccine-laced bait into their habitat.



Both prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets are highly susceptible to sylvatic plague, a non-native introduced disease that both species have little natural immunity against. Once a prairie dog colony is infected with plague, the disease can spread quickly, devastating thousands of animals within a few weeks.

While captive-raised black-footed ferrets are vaccinated against plague prior to release into the wild, they only live in prairie dog burrows and prey almost exclusively on prairie dogs. If the prairie dog population crashes due to plague, black-footed ferrets lose their food source and starve. Healthy prairie dogs also provide protection from the plague for ferrets born in the wild and who were not vaccinated

Biologists believe that plague outbreaks are the greatest obstacle to ferret recovery and are working to develop new methods to manage the disease such as this dispersal of peanut butter baits.

Iowa Prairie Strips

STRIPS (Science-based Trials of Row-crops Integrated with Prairie Strips), was started by scientists in 2003 at Iowa State University to study the effects of strategically planted native prairie areas on soil, water, and biodiversity on farms.

After 10 years of research, the team began publishing a series of papers laying out their results. They found that by converting 10% of a crop-field to diverse, native perennial vegetation, farmers and landowners can reduce sediment movement off their field by 95 percent and total phosphorous and nitrogen lost through runoff by 90 and 85 percent, respectively. Prairie strips provided a win-win scenario for farmers and wildlife.

Prairie strips are a technical innovation drawn from the distant past. "It's sort of back to the future," explained farm owner Lee Tesdell. His farm sits on 80 acres that Tesdell's great-grandfather bought in 1884.

As of 2019, over 60 farmer and farmland owner collaborators are farming with prairie strips to demonstrate how the practice functions on different landscapes and soil types. Prairie strips have been established in Iowa, Minnesota,

Neonics: A Migration Threat

According to a study published in *Science* in September, migratory birds were intoxicated and hobbled by neonicotinoid (or neonic) insecticides they encountered as they tried to fuel up at stopovers.

The study recounted sublethal effects on White-crowned Sparrows. Birds ingesting these neurotoxins in their food ate less, built up less weight and fat, and were delayed in their departures. All of which conditions could adversely affect their survival and ability to reach their wintering grounds.

Neonics are also tied to a decline in insects which are a critical food source for birds — making neonics a one, two, punch affecting the species.

States Enact Climate Initiatives

Many states are stepping up to help mitigate the speed of the changing climate. Trump's rollbacks have not stopped the pro-climate momentum across the U.S.

In the Midwest, Illinois' Clean Energy Jobs Act aims to grow the state's renewable electricity supply to 46% by 2030 and 100% by 2050 (the immediate target is 25% by 2025). The act includes improving energy efficiency in buildings and incentives for electric buses and charging stations for cars and trucks. It also removes a subsidy that helped keep coal power plants online. Utilities will be rewarded for improving efficiency and reducing consumer demand during peak hours. In 2018 Illinois added 1,300 solar jobs, a 37% surge

Pennsylvania, one of the largest climate polluters in the U.S., is in the process of developing a plan to cap emissions from its power plants.

Colorado made history in May 019 when it passed a law mandating a 90% cut in climate pollution across its economy by 2050 and at least 50% by 2030. Xcel Energy, one of the utilities in the state is helping. It hopes to go carbon free by 2050. Xcel operates in 8 states. Duke Energy and Michigan's DTE Energy also plan to cut carbon pollution in the state by 50% by 2050. These companies will create a climate benefit by 2050 equivalent to closing 45 coal power plants.

In the west New Mexico has committed to at least a 45% reduction in climate pollution by 2030 and California already has what is probably the best climate legislation in the nation.

Nature Notes & News

● Dec 5 & 6 the Ulrich's in Warren County had an immature male Rose-breasted Grosbeak show up at their sunflower seed feeder.

● The morning of Dec 12 Chuck Tuttle and Barny Dunning saw (independently) 2-3 Cackling Geese among the 100 or so Canada Geese huddled up against the cold at Celery Bog. There were also the usual suspects – a few American Coot, the lingering injured Double-crested Cormorant, one Mute Swan, one Ruddy Duck and a few Gadwall and Northern Shovelers.

● The Lafayette Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, Dec. 14 with Ed Hopkins heading up the efforts. The day produced less than 70 species, as many fall migrants that normally linger had been moved south by cold temperatures. A list of the birds seen is on page 10 along with the list of 61 species found on the January 4 Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves CBC.

● Post CBC sightings included a few Greater White-fronted Geese and Cackling Geese feeding with the flocks of Canada Geese along Kalberer Road near *Walt's Other Pub*. The Northern Shrike at Prophetstown State Park was still showing up now and then, and a Common Goldeneye visited Bicentennial Park sporadically.

● Snow Buntings put in a brief appearance for Susan Ulrich just east of the Warren County—Tippecanoe County line on Dec. 16—one of the species missed on both CBC's.

● December 29 Barny Dunning spotted a Merlin perched on the powerlines along Kalberer Road in West Lafayette. The bird was west of the fire station on Kalberer Road – basically the stretch of road where the farm fields have hosted flocks of geese this winter and last.

● In late December & early January several people reported decent numbers of Greater White-fronted

Geese at Prophetstown State Park and Celery Bog. On January 3 Barny Dunning visited Pine Creek in Benton County and had 150 White-fronted Geese along with 350 Canadians.

● Marilyn and Jim Anderson had Wild Turkeys showing up repeatedly in their yard this winter. Sue and Ted Ulrich had a few wandering around for a couple of days late in Dec.

● The January First Day Walk at Prophetstown drew a huge crowd. One of the birds seen by people that day was a late season Savanna Sparrow.

● There were several reports in early January of Hermit Thrush and Yellow-rumped Warblers sightings in the area. Both these species were missed on the Christmas Bird Count.

● Another bird not seen on either CBC was a Mockingbird. Mickey Penrod had one coming to her feeders in southern Tippecanoe County this winter. In February the one bird was joined by a second.



● Jan 15 a Black Vulture was seen and photographed in Warren County north of Williamsport by a friend of the Behelers who forwarded it for the Nature Notes category. This species has been in the southern part of Indiana for years and has been expanding its range northward. For the past few years there have been multiple reports from Fountain,

Warren, and Tippecanoe Counties. The species may even be nesting. Keep an eye out—the flight pattern and silhouette differ from the usual Turkey Vulture.

● Mark Arvin reported up to two Long-eared Owls at Prophetstown State Park the first week of February. He also noted the Northern Shrike was still present as of the weekend of Feb. 1 along with a few Redheads on the pond.



● February 2 while taking out shrubs of honeysuckles at Weiler-Leopold in Warren County, Susan Ulrich heard and saw her 1st Sandhill Cranes going north and also a group of 80 Snow Geese.

● Barny Dunning saw 3 Turkey Vultures soaring over Purdue's main campus February 7. His comment: "either spring migration has started early or my students' midterm exams were particularly bad."

● February 7 was also the day Fritz Davis was lucky enough to see a Merlin at Celery Bog.

● Nick Harby stopped to visit TNC's Kankakee Sands on Feb 8 and noted 3 separate Northern Harriers.

● That same day (the 8th), Barny Dunning reported a nice collection of diving ducks in the main basin at Celery Bog. Stopping by at 1 pm he had 4 Canvasback (3 male & 1 female), 7 Redheads, a single male Common Goldeneye plus a large flock of Ring-necked Ducks and Lesser Scaup. Fritz Davis visited separately and saw several Hooded Mergansers. He also confirmed that the wing-injured Double-crested Cormorant was still around.

Don't Focus on Disaster & Doom Predictions

It's easy to become disheartened by the constant barrage of environmental doom and gloom. They capture attention, but can create apathy: if birds are doomed, why try to save them? Actually there are many bird conservation success stories but only a few isolated ones make the news. A new research report co-authored by BirdLife's Chief Scientist Dr. Stuart Butchart, has developed a more thorough measure of bird extinction rates by taking into account the changes in the **extinction risk category** on the IUCN Red List, rather than just measuring bird extinctions over time.

This new method revealed that global conservation efforts reduced the effective extinction rate of birds by an astonishing 40%. Thanks to conservation over the last three decades, Critically Endangered species (the highest risk category) are twice as likely to improve in status and move to a lower threat category as they are to deteriorate and become extinct. Without these conservation efforts, the opposite would be true. This is something anyone who has ever donated to a conservation organization or spread the word about an environmental issue—along with on the ground researchers and field workers—can be proud of.

What's more, it's a minimum estimate. The success rate is likely higher because the study only included

conservation efforts resulting in species moving to a **lower risk** category on the Red List. It didn't reflect efforts that allowed species to **remain in the same** category rather than moving to a higher one, further towards extinction.

Good news, but much still needs to be done. The 40% reduction has mainly been achieved by preventing Critically Endangered species going extinct, and not by preventing low risk species from moving to higher risk categories. In practice, it is more effective to protect bird species with healthy populations from threats in the first place and thus reduce the number of birds in immediate need of urgent – and often costly and difficult – efforts.

"World governments will meet in 2020 to develop a new framework for tackling biodiversity loss through the **Convention on Biological Diversity**. The results show it is critical that this includes commitments to prevent extinctions but also to keep common birds common," said Butchart. The urgency comes from another of the study's findings that unless the world increases conservation action, a worse wave of extinctions than previously anticipated may occur. In the past 500 years, 187 of the world's 11,147 bird species are believed to have gone extinct. Without action the projection suggests in the next 500 years, 3x as many - 471 species - may disappear.

● February 10th Larry Theller noted that the number of Canvasbacks at the bog had increased to a dozen and that they were amid the Goldeneyes and Redheads near the bridge.

● Major movements of Sandhill Cranes began around the middle of February with many people sending in sightings. The Thellers had 350 sandhills at Prophetstown on Feb. 15 and around 1000 right over their house in Battle Ground (plus a wedge of Greater White-fronted Geese) on the 17th in just one hour. The next day they saw 300 sandhills in the fields around Walts' Pub with a couple of Greater White-fronted and 100+ Canada Geese. Most of the sandhills lifted off around 11:30 a.m. and headed north but there were maybe 100 left along with 2 Wild Turkeys by the trees when the Thellers departed. At Bicentennial Nature area they found 200 gulls and 6 eagles standing on the ice.

To get your Warbler via email , contact
sueandtedulrich@msn.com.

You are invited ...

to join League of Women Voters members on May 5 to attend the Lafayette Noon Rotary Club by special invitation. The speaker is Janet McCabe, Director, Indiana University's Environmental Resilience Institute who will take us to the challenging frontier of issues being addressed by the Institute.

To attend contact Liz Solberg (765-743-5955; jsolberg@earthlink.net) by Thursday, April 30th, to make a reservation (\$16). Rotary's meeting venue is now the Lafayette Country Club, 1500 South 9th Street, Lafayette. A buffet lunch begins at 11:15 a.m., with the meeting and program starting at noon.

They noted "We do, by the way, love being retired".

● Chase Anderson walked his dog around the pond at the bridge by the Wabash River in WL and had 6 Bald Eagles hunting for fish. Two were juveniles, and the rest were adults.

● Barred Owls were heard hooting somewhere on the west side of Happy Hollow Park on Feb. 23 by Nick Harby.

● Another owl was reported by Ed Hopkin that day: a female Snowy Owl near Goodland in Benton Co.

The bird was seen on the following day by several people.

● On the 26th—after the overnight and morning snow—33 Cardinals were seen at Lilly Nature Center's feeders at once. There was also a Red-tailed Hawk sitting in the tree over the feeders for more than 3 hours waiting for an unwary squirrel.

● White Pelicans moved through the area on March 2. Mike Triplet took a picture of them on Lake Shafer in White County, and a flock of 30 were reported at Celery Bog along with a Whooping Crane.

Christmas Count Comments

The Lafayette Christmas Bird on December 14, 2019, and the Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves count on January 4 of 2020., were both compiled by Ed Hopkins who provided the final information on the results. There was no Carroll County count this year as the compiler moved away.

The Lafayette count produced under 70 species, largely because cold weather had moved many late fall migrants that sometimes linger, south, including a number of duck species. The lack of reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches, wintering owls, winter finches etc. this winter are also reflected in the totals. Some species seen before and after count day were added as CW (count week).



Lafayette Participants: compiler Ed Hopkins; Kevin & Mark Arvin; Mike Brattain; Fritz Davis; Barny Dunning; Amruta Imamoar; Amy Krzton-Presson; Larry & Becky Theller; Chuck Tuttle; Susan Ulrich; Susan Zeyher; and Zijun Zhou;

Willow Slough-Iroquois Reserve
Observers were: compiler Ed Hopkins; Ken Brock; John Cassady; Jed Hertz; Lynea Hinchman; Jeff McCoy; Bronson Ratcliffe; John Skene; and Lynn Vernon.

Area Christmas Bird Counts 2019

Species Name:	Laf	WS-I	Species Name:	Laf	WS-I
Greater White-fronted Goose	6	0	Downy Woodpecker	74	34
Cackling Goose	3	0	Hairy Woodpecker	9	14
Canada Goose	2000	168	Northern Flicker	18	20
Mute Swan	1	0	Pileated Woodpecker	11	3
Trumpeter Swan	CW	2	American Kestrel	7	13
Gadwall	25	0	Merlin	0	1
American Black Duck	8	0	Northern Shrike	1	0
Mallard	1022	60	Blue Jay	94	67
Northern Shoveler	74	0	American Crow	99	459
Northern Pintail	2	0	Horned Lark	26	51
Lesser Scaup	1	0	Carolina Chickadee	71	0
Common Goldeneye	2	0	Black-capped Chickadee	0	17
Ruddy Duck	CW	0	Tufted Titmouse	66	12
Northern Bobwhite	0	8	White-breasted Nuthatch	100	34
Ring-necked Pheasant	CW	16	Brown Creeper	6	5
Wild Turkey	0	18	Carolina Wren	45	8
Double-crested Cormorant	1	0	Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	1
Great Blue Heron	21	5	Eastern Bluebird	34	27
Turkey Vulture	1	0	American Robin	1320	62
Golden Eagle	0	2	European Starling	6007	352
Northern Harrier	4	29	Cedar Waxwing	10	20
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	1	Lapland Longspur	0	13
Cooper's Hawk	4	4	American Tree Sparrow	176	174
Bald Eagle	12	3	Field Sparrow	3	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	4	0	Fox Sparrow	0	4
Red-tailed Hawk	26	23	Dark-eyed Junco	266	201
Rough-legged Hawk	1	20	White-crowned Sparrow	7	4
American Coot	30	0	White-throated Sparrow	34	10
Sandhill Crane	0	4	Savannah Sparrow	2	2
Wilson's Snipe	1	0	Song Sparrow	105	35
Ring-billed Gull	33	0	Lincoln's Sparrow	1	0
Rock Pigeon	474	37	Swamp Sparrow	31	13
Eurasian Collared Dove	0	9	Eastern Towhee	3	0
Mourning Dove	140	31	Northern Cardinal	145	80
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	10	Red-winged Blackbird	1	77
Great Horned Owl	2	9	Brown-headed Cowbird	106	155
Barred Owl	0	3	House Finch	79	4
Long-eared Owl	0	1	Pine Siskin	1	0
Short-eared Owl	1	2	American Goldfinch	58	172
Belted Kingfisher	6	1	House Sparrow	518	253
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	2	Total Individuals	13538	2882
Red-bellied Woodpecker	89	16	Total Species	68	61

Old Bird Provides New Information

The carcass of a ~46,000 year-old bird discovered in NE Siberia's permafrost was determined to be an ancient Horned Lark. The exceptionally preserved bird is helping scientists understand the evolution of larks, which can in turn help determine past climate events. The discovery was published in an article in the **Communications Biology** journal.

Around 50 mg of the bird's tissue was used for DNA extraction and genome sequencing. It found a 100% match with the Horned Lark. The bird was radiocarbon-dated to an age of between 44,163 and 48,752 years. Finding an entire frozen carcass provides more opportunities for testing than skeletal remains do, as it provides molecular identification of the sex of animal remains and "investigations into the behavioral ecology of extinct species....Pleistocene tissue remains recovered from permafrost ... have the potential to become instrumental in better understanding processes such as biological regulation and gene expression in relation to past climate **change.**"

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): _____

☐ **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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Potential Help for the Amazon Forest



In September the California Air Resources Board endorsed a new tropical forest standard: a set of stringent criteria aimed at reducing deforestation more effectively. If California opens its carbon market to forest credits, tropical states would need to meet the standards in order to participate.

The criteria were developed with help from the Environmental Defense Fund. Their Senior Director for tropical forest policy, Dr. Steve Schwartzman says, "These program incentives make forests more valuable alive than dead. It's a powerful signal to rainforest nations that the world values the climate and ecosystem services they provide." The new California standards require that deforestation be reduced over an entire state or province and indigenous peoples be fully involved in the program's design and implementation.

New Bird for Tippecanoe County

A Painted Bunting, photographed at a feeder in Tippecanoe County last May 16 by Anne Lewis Brown, was Indiana's fifth state record for this colorful species. It was also the first female Painted Bunting confirmed in the state, as all previous sightings were of the more easily recognizable male.

Like the Black Vulture and some other species the Painted Bunting's range is slowly moving northward.



Tidbits

♦ 29% of US Carbon emissions now come from transportation.

♦ In 2019 43 states took actions related to a desire to increase electric vehicles.

♦ The term "ecology" was coined in 1866 by Erns Haeckel, a German biologist. It's from the Greek *oikos* meaning 'house or habitation'.

♦ Eat more seafood. It is one of the animal proteins with the lowest carbon footprint.

♦ 90% of global trade moves by ship.

♦ Concentrations of microplastics in Arctic sea ice are higher than in the Great Pacific garbage patch—and they are turning up in the stomachs of arctic bird & mammals.

♦ Most birds feed their young insects which are high in protein (2x the protein in beef) and also contain fats/lipids for rapid growth.

♦ The Rock Sandpiper, which can be found in winter along Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline, is the hardiest member of its family, wintering farther north than any other Sandpiper.

♦ In 2016 the number of charging stations for electric cars in Japan surpassed the number of gas stations.



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

Birdwatching for Beginners Part 2a by Karen Griggs

Meadow and Marsh

Editor's Note: part one of *Birding for Beginners* was published in the fall 2019 issue

Once you have a field guide, use it in different habitats such as along the meadow north of Kalberer Road, near the West Lafayette fire station, or on a trail along a marsh such as the Celery Bog Nature Park. A free gravel parking lot is in the park just north of Lindberg Road, and the Lilly Nature Center is open Tuesday through Saturday. On one regular Thursday morning bird walk along the marsh I saw a pair of kingfishers on a snag in the water. In the open space between little oak trees I saw a Red-tailed Hawk coasting along looking for a mouse. By reading a field guide you can learn a lot. I learned that the "white-fronted" goose has a broad white stripe on its face above the bill, unlike the Canadian goose with a broad white "chin strap."

Also, you may want to download a free field web-based guide from the National Audubon Society website to use with a smart phone. You can then enter a search term like "hawk," and the web-based field guide will display a good photo plus an icon so you can hear very short sound recordings of the bird's song for example, a screech, a hoot or a "cheep-cheep" call.

Birds are Everywhere

Whether you are a native Hoosier or a new resident, you may be astonished at the variety of birds in different ecosystems; for instance, you may see thousands of migrating Blue Jays one morning at the Indiana Dunes State Park, a bright blue Cerulean Warbler in the Hoosier National Forest or a small flock of mixed warblers moving through the Indiana Dunes National Park. Or perhaps you might discover a nesting pair of Sandhill Cranes at Wing Haven Nature Preserve, east of Pokagon State Park where an eagle nests on the shore of Lake James. An Indigo Bunting may be seen at the swimming hole along Wildcat Creek north of Lafayette, and teal frequent the Pine Creek Gamebird Habitat Area.

Both novice and advanced birdwatchers can use published aids to develop their skills: ***A Guide to the Indiana Birding Trail*** is a free 62-page magazine published by the Indiana Audubon Society. The Guide includes detailed descriptions of nature preserves and other bird habitats in five regions of Indiana. Illustrated with detailed maps and good photographs, the Guide is free at the Lilly Nature Center in the Celery Bog Nature Park on Lindberg Road. At the **2019** Indiana Dunes Birding Festival's Visitors Center on St. Rd. 49, I picked up a free booklet about warblers and a National Park Service brochure about eight beaches along Lake Michigan.

Part 2B will be in the next issue