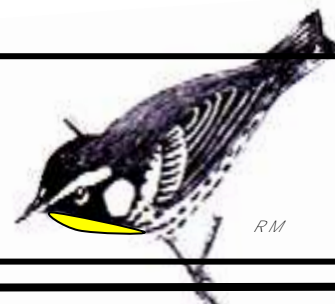


Sycamore Warbler

Volume 45 Issue 4 Winter 2020/2021



Male Purple Finch



Pine Siskin



Male Red-breasted Nuthatch



Male Evening Grosbeak

It's starting to look a Lot Like Christmas Bird Count Time

Short days and cooler temperatures mean it is time to dust off your winter birding skills and get an area to cover for the Lafayette Christmas Bird Count. **The Lafayette count is December 19th** this year. The **Willow-Slough Iroquois Preserves is January 1**. Your area can be as simple as watching your feeder and neighbors' yards, or going out on foot/car/bicycle (or all three) to cover an assigned area of the 16 mile diameter designated circle. Helpers are *always needed*.

Fortunately, looking for birds fits well with Covid 19—no people to worry about if you go on your own or if you are part of a couple. If you go with a friend, wearing masks in the car and staying 6 or more feet apart when walking through habitat has you covered.

Winter Finches: Right now it looks to be an interesting count season thanks to the irruption of winter finches. Local reports of a few Common Redpoll and Evening Grosbeak, and a number of Purple Finch, Pine Siskins and Red-headed Nuthatches mean feeder counters can play a more important part in this year's CBCs. Open water also makes a count interesting. If most water freezes before the 19th there will be fewer lingering waterfowl. Since the advent of Celery Bog Park, the Lafayette CBC has shown a noticeable increase in the number of ducks and other water-loving species. The development of Prophetstown State Park has also helped spice up Lafayette's count. So far this has been a warm December so a few fall and summer species may still be hanging around.

To participate in one or both counts you will need to get an area to cover and the reporting forms. This avoids the same birds being counted twice. If you are a feeder counter you will need to confirm that your feeders are in the count circle. Ed Hopkins is the compiler for both counts. You can reach him at the following and he will get back to you:

Phone: 765-463-5927 Email: birder4in@gmail.com

November Zoom Meeting Worked

SAS's first attempt at holding a zoom membership meeting in November drew 17 people. A very respectable turnout, and more than anticipated. The presenter was Rick Read and the program was on

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Debbie and his trip to Antarctica.

No socializing, tea, coffee or refreshments, but no need to drive and no chance to catch Covid 19. More zoom meetings are being planned along with outdoor field events. Check the calendar on page 5 for what's coming up.

Great Backyard Bird Count 2021

This is the 23rd year for this global event run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Dates are February 12-15. Anyone can take part — beginner to expert. And it can be done anywhere in the world! Simply keep lists of the birds you spot and file your checklists for one or more locations. You can file different lists for the same areas or new ones every day.

Last year 160,000 people around the world submitted their lists online, creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded. This helps researchers at Cornell Lab and NAS to learn more about how birds are doing and how to protect them and the environment they and we share. Visit birdcount.org for more information and resources.

CHAPTER NEWS

Dinner and a Show

September's meeting worked! The weather cooperated—no rain and a relatively mild temperature. So did the "screen" made by Chuck and Jenny Tuttle out of a king sized bedsheet and a wooden frame. It was remarkably good and the outdoor amphitheater benches allowed for plenty of distancing. About 16 to 20 people showed up. No carry-in feast to start but a plethora of great slides by Chuck Tuttle, Susan Ulrich, Rick Read, Debbie Read, Thurmond Best, and Dan Miller.

Don't Forget About MailChimp

This is an option for getting notification of program and field trip changes, from new plans that didn't make the newsletter to cancellations of something on the calendar because of weather or other factors. You will not get bombarded with emails. Hopefully we won't need to use it more than once or twice a year. Get on the list by sending your email to sycamoreaudubon@gmail.com and ask to be added to the MailChimp account. You can cancel anytime you wish.

Speaking of Email Lists

The *Birding on the Fly List* has been getting a workout due to a number of interesting bird species that turned up in the last few months. If you'd like to be notified when an odd bird is around, email Barny Dunning to get put on that list.

And if you'd like to see the Warbler in full color and save paper, as well as SAS's printing and mailing costs, just send your email to Susan Ulrich and Chuck Tuttle (the former to get on the **Warbler Email list**, the latter to

get off the hard copy mailing list). People on these lists will also get cancellation notices, etc.

Board Meets Via Zoom

SAS's board is continuing to meet on the first (or second) Monday of the month via zoom. If you have ever considered joining the board, you could get a taste by joining a meeting via zoom. Let Barny know and he can send you the invitation code.

One action the board took this fall was to donate \$500 to become a sponsor for the Indiana Dunes 2021 Birding Festival. See below.

December's Zoom

SAS's December membership meeting via zoom, featured Barny Dunning talking about the Winter Finches and irruption.

Something he mentioned was the *Winer Finch Forecast* by Tuler Hoar—a site which predicts which finches will erupt based on the number of seed cones produced by the northern conifers.

Looking it up, here is what the site had to say for this year:

"It looks to be a flight year for several species in the East. Most

cone crops average poor to fair from Lake Superior eastward with Eastern White Pine being the exception. Spruce crops increase west from Lake Superior from fair to excellent in Western Canada and Alaska. White-winged Crossbills and often Pine Siskins prefer to move east or west rather than go south in search of cone crops. Many crossbills and siskins may have already relocated to Northwestern Ontario and across the boreal forest to Alaska where spruce cone crops are abundant."

"White Birch crops are poor to fair across most of the boreal forest implying a flight of redpolls south."

"Extensive spruce budworm outbreaks in Quebec and scattered smaller outbreaks westward through the Great Lakes and Manitoba appear to be providing Evening Grosbeaks and Purple Finches with an abundant food source during breeding season."

"Purple Finches and Red-breasted Nuthatches in the east are currently moving south in numbers. See individual forecasts for other finches and further details."

Then followed individual forecasts for the above species plus Blue Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Bohemian Waxwing.

2021 INDIANA DUNES BIRDING FESTIVAL



The Indiana Dunes Birding Festival is a yearly event hosted by the Indiana Audubon Society in May. It showcases the abundance of migratory birds in northern Indiana's Indiana Dunes area.

Birding in this area is the best the state has to offer. With its rich biodiversity, varying habitats and miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, the Indiana Dunes is a hotspot for migrant birds. The 2021 Indiana Dunes Birding Festival on May 13-16th is being planned as a hybrid festival with in person and virtual trips and programs. Presenters lined up for the 2020 Festival which had to be cancelled, will be there by streaming or in person for 2021. More info later.

Delphi Outdoor Funday

DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS TRAIL WALK.

Saturday, December 26th is "Delphi Outdoor Funday" for family and friends to enjoy the season. This free walk is courtesy of volunteers from Wabash & Erie Canal Association and Delphi Historic Trails.

Cold weather, deep snow or ice may be factors, and COVID protections with masks and social distancing will be the order of the day. Last minute cancellation information can be obtained by dialing the Canal's Hot-line for a recorded message at 765-564-6572. It could be a "long walk or a short walk" depending of the weather.

The longer walk

The longer walk, if weather permits, will assemble at 1 p.m. at the Canal Center, 1030 North Washington Street, then carpool to Freedom Bridge's Bison Plaza, overlooking Indiana 25 at the east edge of Delphi, where the walk will start. Come prepared with proper clothing for the weather— with layers of clothing, gloves, and sturdy shoes or boots. The walk features a trek along the former railbed of the Monon Line paralleling Deer Creek east of Delphi. If you get tired or cold you can leave the group and return to your car by backtracking



The Fouts House: an 1850s home with a garden behind the fence. One of many buildings in the Canal Park Historic Com-

the trail. The trail passes many historic points which will be narrated by the tour leader. This hour-long walk will finally arrive back at Canal Park.

The shorter walk

The shorter walk will be offered if weather conditions disallow the distance of the longer walk. It too will begin at the Canal Center at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, December 26th and will explore the trail section at the northern section of Delphi's canal reach.

This will be an "easy" one mile, slow stroll narrated by Dan or David McCain. The loop trail covers Red Bridge Settlement and the 1857 Hubbard and the Harley lime kilns area near the Canal Boat Warehouse. There was a canal boat turning basin at this point and docks to receive/disperse cargo of the era. These narrated tours bring the history of the Canal era to life.

Further information or photos contact: Dan McCain, Historic Trails Chairman, 765-412-4308, dan.mccain@gmail.com

Shorebirds of Indiana

Info from December 2020 *Indiana Audubon Society Cardinal*

Looking forward to spring and an April trip to look for migrating shorebirds? You may wonder if what you find is an unusual species or an unusual number of that species. How can you tell? Currently there may not be an easy answer but with Indiana Audubon's assistance, a solution will soon be at hand.

In the late 1950's Charles E. Keller wrote a splendid series of scientific articles dealing with Indiana's shorebirds. His papers, appearing in the *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, included an exhaustive literature search as well as field data collected in the state. An update to Keller's work will be made available to IAS members in 2021 and interpreted in the upcoming book "*Brock's Shorebirds of Indiana*".

The updated Keller's work, which includes various maps and tables, will be formatted in easy to access (and downloadable) files. This synopsis is exceptionally data rich. It should provide an excellent reference resource for anyone interested in Indiana's shorebirds. Indiana Audubon plans to place this new 50 page compendium on the IAS website soon, where it can be easily accessed by the current and next generation of Hoosier Birders.

Note: non-members can join Indiana Audubon Society at:
www.INDIANAUDUBON.ORG



Greater &
Lesser
Yellowlegs



Western
Sandpiper

Nature Notes & News

- Rich Read passed on a report of a pelican spotted August 12 on Lake Freeman. Likely a White Pelican but the report did not specify.
- Mid-September produced lots of warblers at Celery Bog. On Sept. 13 people reported Nashville, Black-& White, Canada, Golden-winged, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, and others. Barny Dunning went the next day and walked the footpath south of the Lily Nature Center parking lot. He got good looks at the birds that were foraging in the trees. He had multiple Tennessee Warblers along with Redstarts, Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Chestnut Sided, and Blackpoll, along with Red-eyed Vireos and a young male Rose-breasted Grosbeak.
- Fritz Davis reported an Olive-sided Flycatcher who was consistently seen from "the point" (where the bench is along the side of the Walmart basin) in the late afternoon in mid-September.
- By September 24 Barny Dunning reported that migration activity and elsewhere had died down. There were still migrants around. The *Castor Aralia* in Horticulture Park was in fruit and attracting thrushes. Five Swainson's showed up within 3 minutes of his stopping by to check.
- Del Arvin, and his son Kevin, had 3 Sandhill Cranes the morning of Sept 28 north of Battle Ground near the golf course - two adults and an immature. This is probably the family from Prophetstown State Park. The birds were feeding in soybean fields right after the crop was harvested. ● On his regular weekly check of Pine Creek Gamebird Management area in Benton County on Sept 30, Barny Dunning noted Shovelers and Northern Pintails had showed up.
- Chris Cumberworth found an immature Bald Eagle near the water retention pond behind the West Lafayette Meijer store on the 30th.
- After the October 1st Early Bird Hike Barny: "Some decent birds at the Bog today, highlighted by a Stilt Sandpiper and a Common Gallinule. Both were seen south of the Lindberg bridge. The sandpiper was first

reported last night and was present this morning around 9:30. Fritz Davis got a photo. The gallinule was seen this morning by John Skene (also photographed). The sandpiper is molting into winter plumage. There were also a few peep sandpipers and 9 Great Egrets in the area south of the bridge.:" He added "waterfowl are starting to move through. ... Northern Shoveler, Gadwall and American Black Duck were all present this morning." The warbler show was dominated by Yellow-rumps and Palms, although there were also Nashville, Tennessee and Parula 'warbler along with a brief sighting of a Philadelphia Vireo. Chuck Tuttle reported the Stilt Sandpiper was still at the bog at 10:24 and Larry Theller saw it and got a photo at 1:15 p.m.



- Chuck Tuttle still had Ruby-throated hummingbirds on Oct 5, the same day Barny Dunning saw his first of fall Dark-eyed Juncos.
- By October 6 a number of reports of flocks of Purple Finch with daily totals over 50, were coming in. Pine Siskins similarly were showing up all over. Jessica Outcalt had a flock of 10-15 fly over their house by Battle Ground.
- Oct. 7th a Dunlin showed up at Celery Bog and on the 8th there was a male Canvasback and 3 American Wigeon. Early for the Canvasback but right on schedule for the wigeon.
- October 16 Barny emailed "At this time of year when I am driving around in the county, I look at the edges of freshly harvested fields where they back up against forest." You can often see Wild Turkeys feeding on waste grain after harvest. This morning I saw one - but not in

the fields. It was along North Ninth Street, just north of where the road crosses the Wabash River. Standing on someone's mowed lawn."

- Oct 22 John Skene had a Peregrine Falcon at Celery Bog, plus 57 other species including 4 warblers and 11 different species of ducks and geese.
- Fritz Davis had a run of interesting birds at Celery Bog in late October, starting with 3 Eared Grebes. On the 25th he spotted an Evening Grosbeak behind the Nature Center. Then on the 26 he found 15 swans. After checking them out people who went to see them believed 14 were Whistling Swans and one was a Trumpeter. Ed Hopkins, looked at each bird pretty carefully and put in a report to eBay.
- Gale Turco saw the swans on the 27th along with 2 Bonaparte's Gulls. Her comment: "If there was a Trumpeter among them I wasn't able to pick it out but I'll look through my photos when I get home. It was drizzling and they were feeding so I mostly saw swan butts!" On the 27th Fritz scored again seeing an adult Franklin's Gull.
- A late Magnolia Warbler came to the peanut-suet at Susan Ullrich's feeders on Oct. 27. She saw another one on the 30th at Weiler Leopold, just a few miles away. Same bird??
- Oct 28 John Skene stopped at the Bog found the 14 Tundra and 1 Trumpeter along with two Eared Grebes, a Sora, and a pair of Rusty Blackbirds.
- Barny Dunning's weekly waterfowl survey at Pine Creek Oct. 29 was mostly a bust (5 Mallards + 1 Wood duck). But he did have 7 species of shorebirds including 22 Dunlin, a late Solitary Sandpiper, and a juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher. eBird labeled both the Solitary and the dowitcher as late for this date. It said the same thing about the Palm Warbler he saw. Other birds included his first Rough-legged Hawk and Bonaparte's Gull of the fall along with a pair of Northern Harriers.
- A young Merlin was spotted at the entrance to the soccer fields N of Kalberer on Salisbury St, Oct 31. Barny Dunning saw it at 5:20 p.m.
- Karen Griggs sent in the photo to the right of a male Green-winged Teal that she took while visiting at Celery Bog on November 11.

Nature Notes continue on p. 8

Spring Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2020

Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday at 7:15 PM with the program starting at 7:30 p.m. Because of Covid 19 meetings are currently by zoom. For an invitation to join, contact Barny Dunning (see p. 11). Field trip times vary.

- December 10 Thursday **Zoom Program: *Winter Finches & Other Irruptives: Who and Why.*** Barny Dunning, Purdue Forestry and Wildlife Dept. and SAS president. Contact him for the code needed and join us.
- December 19 Saturday **Lafayette Christmas Bird Count.** Our local all-day bird count. See info on P. 1 for how to contact Ed Hopkins, the compiler, etc. Always interesting. This year no compilation party because of Covid 19.
- January 1 Friday **Willow-Slough– Iroquois Preserves Christmas Bird Count.** SAS sponsored count to our north. Again, check p.1 for how to contact the compiler, Ed Hopkins to make arrangements for an area to cover.
- January 14 Thursday **Zoom Program: *Birding and Other Useful Apps for your Phone.*** Chuck Tuttle, SAS membership chair & long-time app user. What are the good, the bad, the strength or weakness of various options? Contact Barny Dunning for the code needed to log into this zoom program and join us.
- January 16 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** Prophetstown State Park sunrise. Meet at the pavilion at the end of the road. Depending on conditions and activity, we may move down towards the pond or to the south along trail 2.
- February 6 Saturday **Early Waterfowl (& Other bird) Migration.** Meet at 8 a.m. at the gravel parking lot at Celery Bog. We will check out the area and carpool further depending on what is reported where, including possibly checking out local Bald Eagle nests. 2-3 hour trip
- February 11 Thursday **Zoom Program: *Saw-whet Owls & What Banding Tells Us.*** Tabitha Olsen & Helen Nesius, Purdue Wildlife Department, talk about our smallest local owl and how the banding program, financially supported by SAS, is providing new info about their migration to and from our local area from breeding sites further north. Contact Barny Dunning to get the code needed to sign into this zoom program and join us.
- February 13 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** Prophetstown State Park sunrise. Meet at the pavilion at the end of the road. Depending on conditions and activity, we may move down towards the pond or to the south along trail 2.
- March 11 Thursday **Zoom Program: *To Be Announced.*** It is possible we can go back to having in person programs at Celery Bog in March, but unlikely. Barny Dunning will supply the code upon request if it is a zoom meeting. Update in the March newsletter.
- March 13 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** Prophetstown State Park sunrise. Meet at the pavilion at the end of the road. Depending on conditions and activity, we may move down towards the pond or to the south along trail 2.
- March 18 Thursday **Early Bird Hikes Restart.** Meet at Celery Bog at 8 am on Thursdays at the gravel parking lot for an hour (or so) of birding before work, classes, or chores. These popular walks will continue through the spring migration season until at least late May.



← Green-wing Teal by Karen Griggs

Peregrine Falcon by Dan Miller →



October ebay Big Day Results

Species	White	Warren	Tippecanoe	Species	White	Warren	Tippecanoe
Canada Goose	28	173	50	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	1	0
Wood Duck	0	2	40	White-breasted Nuthatch	1	3	8
Mallard	7	45	125	Carolina Wren	2	3	3
American Black Duck	0	0	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	0	5
Blue-winged Teal	0	5	50	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	0	4
Northern Shoveler	0	0	50	European Starling	0	55	220
Gadwall	0	0	25	Northern Mockingbird	0	0	1
American Wigeon	0	0	4	Eastern Bluebird	0	8	15
Northern Pintail	0	2	19	Hermit Thrush	0	0	2
Green-winged Teal	0	0	18	American Robin	8	2	38
Lesser Scaup	0	0	2	Cedar Waxwing	1	0	8
Ring-necked Duck	0	0	15	House Sparrow	0	6	6
Ruddy Duck	0	0	3	House Finch	4	3	9
Wild Turkey	7	0	0	Purple Finch	0	1	2
Pied-billed Grebe	0	0	9	Pine Siskin	30	1	12
Double-crested Cormorant	0	0	9	American Goldfinch	2	6	49
Great Blue Heron	0	0	13	Chipping Sparrow	0	0	4
Great Egret	0	0	1	Field Sparrow	0	2	3
Turkey Vulture	8	8	18	Dark-eyed Junco	0	1	1
Northern Harrier	0	1	2	White-crowned Sparrow	1	0	11
Cooper's Hawk	0	0	2	White-throated Sparrow	1	9	10
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	0	1	Savannah Sparrow	0	0	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	1	Song Sparrow	0	5	12
Red-tailed Hawk	0	2	5	Lincoln's Sparrow	0	0	1
Bald Eagle	0	0	2	Swamp Sparrow	0	3	7
American Coot	0	0	220	Eastern Towhee	0	0	2
Killdeer	50	2	11	Eastern Meadowlark	0	2	1
Spotted Sandpiper	0	0	1	Red-winged Blackbird	0	12	255
Least Sandpiper	0	0	3	Brown-headed Cowbird	0	52	5
Still Sandpiper	0	0	1	Tennessee Warbler	0	0	1
Greater Yellowlegs	0	0	4	Orange-crowned Warbler	0	0	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	0	0	1	Cape May Warbler	0	1	0
Willet	0	2	0	Palm Warbler	0	0	4
Ring-billed Gull	26	0	0	Yellow-rumped Warbler	6	11	60
Rock Pigeon	0	0	28	Northern Cardinal	1	5	11
Mourning Dove	0	4	3
Belted Kingfisher	0	1	3	Total species:	25	46.	81
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	0	0	1	Individuals:	193	475	1666
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	4	7				
Downy Woodpecker	2	3	8				
Hairy Woodpecker	0	1	1				
Red-headed Woodpecker	0	1	0				
Northern Flicker	1	4	2				
Pileated Woodpecker	1	0	2				
American Kestrel	0	3	0				
Phoebe	0	1	5				
Empidonax sp	0	1	0				
Blue Jay	1	14	39				
American Crow	0	11	39				
Horned Lark	0	0	1				
Carolina chickadee	0	3	14				
Tufted Titmouse	2	6	9				
Tree Swallow	0	0	25				



Overall 88 species of birds were tallied.. The most numerous species was the Starling (above) with 275, closely followed by the Red-winged Blackbird (right) with 267 and Canada Goose with 251 .

Participants:

White County: Rick Read

Warren County: Susan Ulrich

Tippecanoe County: Davis Balser, Fritz Davis, Barny Dunning, Peter Dy-Liacco, Drew Hoffman, Lars Hovde, Ron Shavaliar, Larry and Becky Theller, Travis Vance, and Chris Wiles.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Ocean Warming Exceeding Predictions

Ninety percent of the heat absorbed by the Earth goes into the oceans. Because they're vast, it takes a massive amount of heat to raise their temperature even one degree. So it's disturbing that they are heating up faster than earlier thought. In fact even the deepest, darkest, coldest water at the bottom of the sea is heating up at an alarming rate.

Marine wildlife -- at all depths of the ocean -- can be devastated by rising temperatures. Even small and short-lived shifts in water temperature can be harmful -- for instance, one single degree Celsius rise can cause coral to "bleach," and expel the symbiotic algae that live inside their tissues which can be fatal for the coral.

This carnage doesn't stay underwater. Warm water molecules expand, causing sea levels to rise. It also leads to more devastating storms that pose a threat to humans and inland wildlife. See:

Emily Holden, "[Temperatures of deepest ocean rising quicker than previously thought](#)," *The Guardian*, October 14, 2020.

Alejandra Borunda, "[Ocean warming, explained](#)," *National Geographic*, Aug 14, 2019.

Two to Be Thankful for:

1) Bristol Bay is safe from the threat of Pebble Mine. The Army Corps of Engineers officially denied a permit for the proposed mining project, dealing a fatal blow to an enormous gold & copper mine that would have changed the face of Bristol Bay forever. This is an incredible win for the irreplaceable ecosystem. If the mine had been developed to its full extent, it would have been the largest open-pit mine in North America -- and its silt and toxic runoff would have smothered the world's largest sockeye salmon run, as well as affecting millions of creatures living downstream.

2) Three weeks after Trump's defeat, GM announced its withdrawal from for the Trump administration's lawsuit attacking clean car standards. Now it is time for Fiat-Chrysler and Toyota to do the same.

Court Nixes Trump's Greenlight for Arctic Oil Scheme

In what has been described as a magnificent win for the wild Arctic, a federal appeals court rejected the Trump administration's approval of what would have been the first offshore oil-drilling development located fully in federal Arctic waters.

Hilcorp Alaska got approval in 2018 to build and operate its controversial "Liberty" project, an artificial drilling island and underwater pipeline that could have spilled oil into the sensitive Beaufort Sea and harmed Arctic wildlife and communities. Conservation groups filed suit to stop it.

"This is a huge victory for polar bears and our climate," said Kristen Monsell, oceans legal director at the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the groups that sued. "This project was a disaster waiting to happen that should never have been approved. I'm thrilled the court saw through the Trump administration's attempt to push this project through without carefully studying its risks."



Dicamba's Zombie Act

The last *Warbler* mentioned that an appeals court struck down the EPA's assessment of the chemical dicamba but the Trump administration's EPA just went ahead with dicamba's approval anyway.

Dicamba only works when farmers use genetically modified seeds that are dicamba-resistant, so their crops won't die when sprayed with the chemical. But crops in neighboring farms, and surrounding nature, aren't so lucky. Dicamba has killed tens of millions of trees across the U.S. Midwest and South. Even in wildlife refuges and conservation areas, you can see symptoms of dicamba's damage.

If the chemical can shrivel leaves on trees, imagine what it can do when it contaminates the crops that we eat. Dicamba exposure has been linked to an increased risk of cancer in pesticide applicators and can cause nervous system damage. An EPA risk assessment of dicamba shows that toddlers are the group most heavily exposed to dicamba contamination in their food.

Recycling: the Second, Third, or Fourth Life

Contributed by Amy Krzton-Presson, Tippecanoe County Solid Waste Management District

For many people the entire recycling industry is somewhat mysterious. Understanding what products are made from recycled materials helps to demystify recycling, and allows us to make better decisions about what we purchase and what we put in the recycling bin.

The only plastics we can recycle here in Tippecanoe County are bottles and jugs. Bottles, like water bottles or soda bottles, are typically made from PET plastic, designated by a #1 resin code. These are typically made into new plastic bottles, or polyester products such as carpet or fleece clothing. Some brands of fleece even tout the fact that their jackets are made using recycled bottles.

Jugs, such as milk jugs or laundry detergent jugs, are often made from HDPE and have a #2 resin code. These are often recycled back into new jugs, plastic lumber for decks or picnic benches, plastic flower pots, or plastic crates. The number of times that plastic can be recycled varies depending on who you ask. Several environmental websites state that plastic can be recycled only 2-4 times, while a plastic manufacturer website stated it can be recycled 9-10 times. Either way, there is a limit on the number of times plastics can be recycled.

Paper and cardboard are also only recyclable a limited number of times. Recycling these materials requires the fiber to be long enough to maintain its structural integrity. **This is why paper products such as paper towels and napkins are not recyclable.** They are simply not strong enough and break down too easily. Each time paper is recycled, the fiber lengths are shortened. After approximately 5-7 rounds their fiber lengths are too short to be made back in to printer paper. At this point, paper products are pulped and live their last life as egg cartons, toilet paper, or paper towels.

Metals such as steel food cans or aluminum drink cans are considered infinitely recyclable. They are often turned straight back in to food and drink containers and can be back on store shelves in as little as two months. Recycled metals are also used to make car parts, aluminum baseball bats, and bicycles.

Along with metal, **glass is also infinitely recyclable.** However, the only glass products we can recycle locally are bottles and jars. If you have a broken drinking glass or used candle holder, those should go in the trash unless you can find a way to re-use them. Glass bottles and jars are often made into new bottles and jars as well as in fiberglass products such as insulation.

The terms **circular economy** and **recycling loop** are starting to pop up in the environmental lexicon. Understanding what is recyclable, and what things get recycled helps all of us to be able to make choices in buying products that are recyclable and/or made from recycled materials. When we do this, we are helping to "close the loop" and reduce the impacts on natural resources. The more resources we can recover from our recycling bins, the fewer natural resources are needed to make new products.



Nature Notes continued:

- On Mon, Nov 16, Dan Miller wrote: "A spectacular aerial waterfowl display at the Celery Bog this evening was capped off by a crazy close Peregrine Falcon fly by. (See photo on bottom right of calendar page.)"
- A non-birder friend of Barny Dunning saw 3 American White Pelicans circling what looked to be a retention pond for a housing development about 5 pm Nov. 15th. She said the location was "near TSC and Riggs".
- The following info came from Barny on Nov 18 for people missing ebird notices (ebird was down for maintenance). There have been a few interesting sightings from Celery Bog today or yesterday. The Eared Grebes are still there, a pair of Trumpeter Swans were seen this morning and Fritz Davis had a young Black-crowned Night-Heron yesterday.
- Sandhill Cranes attracted a lot of attention November

21. Carolyn Starkey reported a large flock flying overhead near Granville Bridge in Tippecanoe Co. That same day Larry Theller counted 800 passing over Battle Ground in a single hour flying in the direction of Prophetstown SP. He heard one suspicious call but didn't see a Whooping Crane among them. Two days later, lots more Sandhill Cranes moved through. Jessica Outcalt who lives in Battle Ground counted up to 600 of them flying over in an hour and a half. Del Arvin who lives near Buck Creek, counted 3,000 of the birds by noon.

- Another exciting bird which is rarely seen in this area, a male Common Redpoll, it showed up at Kevin Arvin's feeders near Buck Creek. The Redpoll stayed at Kevin's on the 22nd, but was gone on the 23rd. It was replaced by female Evening Grosbeaks. This is another finch species that has been showing up in small numbers this winter. It's the first time they have been reported in north central Indiana in

Continued on page 11

EU bans Lead Ammo in Wetlands

On November 25 in Brussels, the European Parliament voted to ban the use of lead ammunition in wetlands across the EU. 362 MEPs voted in favor of the ban, 292 against, and 39 abstained.

This followed the REACH committee vote to ban lead in October because of its highly toxic properties. Two groups, the far-right *European Conservatives and Reformists* (ECR) and the *Identity Democracy* (ID) had filed several objections.

Lead has been used in ammunition and fishing tackle for decades despite knowing the terrible impact lead has on humans, wildlife and nature. Lead shot, used as ammunition by many, consists of tiny bullets which are sprayed out of the rifle as opposed to shooting just one bullet. As a result, only a small proportion of the lead fired hits its target. The rest is scattered in nature. It is estimated that around 21 – 27,000 tons of lead is dispersed into the European environment each year.

Lead affects the IQ of humans, especially children's, but one of its major affects is the death of over one million European waterbirds annually which

is why this ban was applied to EU's wetlands.

Ariel Brunner, the Senior Head of Policy, for BirdLife Europe was pleased by the vote. "It's a relief and encouraging to see MEPs refuse to fall into the trap of disinformation and scaremongering that was spewed around on this issue."

"Everyone knows lead is toxic. We call on MEPs to continue listening to science and reject the near identical opposition tabled by the ID group today. Following the final approval of Member States, the EU can finally remove lead from our wetlands and save millions of wild birds from slow painful death. And hopefully that will be the steppingstone the EU needs to ultimately ban lead ammunition everywhere."



Greenway Corridor Master Plan Launched

December 7, WREC (Wabash River Enhancement Corporation) announced a regional planning project to develop a Wabash River Greenway Corridor Master Plan. The Greenway will cover a 90-mile, five county section of the Wabash River corridor. The counties

included are Fountain, Warren, Tippecanoe, Cass and Carroll. The project is part of the Wabash Heartland Innovation Network ten county regional economic development initiative funded by the Lilly Foundation.

WREC has retained **Kimley-Horn**, a national planning and engineering firm to lead the 18-month

planning and public outreach project. Planning guidance is also being provided by a steering committee consisting of stakeholders from the corridor project area. The plan will lay the groundwork for a quality Indiana destination offering recreational, historical and cultural experiences. The development of the Greenway will encourage economic development, improve water quality and celebrate local history and culture, as well as foster active living and healthy habits to improve the health of Indiana residents.

This next phase of the project will provide the public with opportunities to learn about the project

and its progress to date, and, thru local Pop up Planning Stations, provide feedback guiding the greenways development. These stations have been set up at public sites in each county in the corridor. The sites chosen enable current COVID-19 protocols to be practiced, provide residents with the opportunity to learn about the project and offer input on their vision and development of the Greenway.

Planning stations will be open at the following public locations until December 21, 2020

Logansport Cass County Public Library
616 East Broadway, Logansport, IN 46947

Delphi Opera House
109 S Washington St, Delphi, IN 46923

West Lafayette Public Library
208 W Columbia St, West Lafayette, IN 47906

Tippecanoe County Office Building
20 N 3rd St, Lafayette, IN 47901

Williamsport-Washington Twp Public Library
28 E 2nd St, Williamsport, IN 47993

Attica Library
305 S Perry St, Attica, IN 47918

Covington Public Library
622 5th St, Covington, IN 47932

Residents can explore more about the project at www.wabashrivergreenway.com.



Vesper Flights by Helen Macdonald

Book review by Karen Griggs

In one of the most exciting collections of nature essays in recent years, Helen Macdonald demonstrates her enthusiasm for the history of science and conservation of natural areas. Both her *H is for Hawk* (2015) and *Vesper Flights* (2020) are beautifully written with a broad audience in mind.

In *Vesper Flights*, Macdonald describes her own childhood interests in the flora and fauna near her home, collecting interesting bones or feathers nearby, thus becoming a naturalist. In *Vesper Flights* she ranges widely from birdwatching to non-fiction reporting while enjoying observer status on a scientific exploration of training sites for Mars astronauts in a harsh South American volcanic zone.

After college, she spent four years living and working on a primitive farm with other young scientists on a bird project. They worked together, but she eventually left the farm with its cattle, ostriches, and sheep because of the hardship and its irrelevance to her scholarship.

She uses a few carefully chosen historic events to explain the popularity of birdwatching as it grew in the United Kingdom during and after World War I. She describes large flocks of swifts at sunset, carefully explains the devotion of a wildlife rescuer rearing orphan swifts for release, and tells about the airplane pilot who discovered sleeping swifts in

the high clouds—the crucial feature of the life cycle of swifts.

Birdwatching adventures include a eulogy for her falconer friend Stu who led her to experience the calls of nightjars in a forest. Macdonald details her experience of using a hide or blind for photographing birds and all kinds of wildlife. Many readers will be caught up in the drama of her experiences. For example, she had an emotional encounter with a wild swan that snuggled up to her, and she had sudden sympathy for a near-comic fox hound that came through a drain to try to catch up with its pack.

Natural wildlife habitat restoration efforts in England are growing; a code of conduct developed along with them. Good naturalists nowadays enjoy birds and other wildlife without disturbing them, but collections of eggs and nests still exist and fill her with horror.

Natural thunderstorms and restored fens are central to the dramatic experiences that she shares. She puts the decline of the ash tree in context while a few chestnut trees are still living and trying in vain to grow from shoots. She has such expertise as a scholar in the history of science that readers will learn for the first time about the practice of swan “upping” from her explanation of a painting and the cultural events that surround what is, today, a census of the birds.

Vesper Flights is a book to enjoy over a period of days because the short chapters are so rich in detail and original in their narratives.



NICHEs Black Rock Preserve

The Indiana Nature Preserves saw a similar jump in visits as people flocked to their trails and viewing stations. One family passed on their normal summer out-of-state vacation to a national park and instead happily visited a different state nature preserve each week.

People have also gotten involved more with nature. During this pandemic, various citizen science efforts have seen a flurry of activity. Contributions to NestWatch, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website where people send in records and information on bird nests, increased by 41% from the same time last year. (Editor's note: people looking at birds seems to have also risen judging by the reports for Nature Notes).

But as more Hoosiers clamor to enjoy the state's parks and nature preserves, state budget constraints have made that more difficult. Like all state agencies, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources is coping with a 15% budget cut for BOTH the current fiscal year AND the next proposed biennial budget. On top of that, the \$100 million in funds approved last year to go for the much-needed delayed maintenance of park infrastructure and state lands is now mostly on hold as the state's revenue have plummeted.

Give Me Land, Lots of Land

One byproduct of Covid 19 has been an increase in the use of, and appreciation for, parks and preserves. That mirrors the big increase in people visiting local parks and NICHEs properties. No hard data, but one non-scientific estimate based on the number of cars in parking lots indicates an increase of 50 to 100%.

There is harder data on the increased use of Indiana's State Parks. The not-for-profit Indiana Parks Alliance reports an 84% jump in gate admissions for June. And over 14,000 more visitors bought annual gate passes thru mid-September. Trail usage also increased—by 45% in April and 108% in March.



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Lessons from the 2nd Ed European Bird Atlas

In what may be the largest compilation of citizen science data ever done, the Second Edition of the European Bird Atlas is now out. Over 120,000 people accumulated the data over the past 5 years. It covers almost every single territory from Cadiz to Finland, from Georgia to Ireland. Its usefulness should be high because it is based on and uses something that all of us can easily understand—MAPS. The atlas does not contain complicated formulas or charts. You turn a page and get a superb illustration, a short text indicating changes on the bird's distribution and a beautiful map. No more, no less. You don't need anything else because when science is solid, it can be easily explained. Looking at the species maps from a regional perspective, this Atlas sends some very powerful messages:



It confirms that farmland species, such as the Ortolan bunting, or the Great Bustard (picture to right), suffer from agricultural intensification. Their ranges have been reduced, because their key habitats and food are disappearing.

It tells us that land abandonment has favored the regrowth of forest plant species, which has also meant improved habitats for species such as the Black Woodpecker.

It proves that Climate Change is happening right before our eyes. We have seen a mean northward shift of 28km. Some species have shifted more than others, but imagine the implications of this shift, especially for far distant migrants who are being pushed to the limit in their search for food and shelter.

It tells us that nonnative and alien species keep spreading. Illegal or insufficiently regulated trade have meant an expansion of the range of these species, with direct, and in many instances negative, impact on native species.

Conservation does work. When key habitats such as wetlands were protected, improved distribution of waterbirds has been shown. Similarly, those species listed as Annex I on EU Birds Directive or protected under the Bern Convention have done better. This is incredibly important, because if the species improve, so do the services they provide (plague control, seed planting, carrion removal..). In other words, when we invest in nature, nature pays us back in spades.

It shows government officials, and potential donors and investors, the key regions in need of urgent action. Pick your favorite species and you will see where and why their distribution has changed. Tailoring specific conservation projects, ensuring that infrastructure takes their presence into account, and guiding sustainable investment can now be done more effectively and wisely.