

Sycamore Warbler

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Mystery Illness Update

The Indiana DNR recently updated its recommendations for bird feeding in the state. Bird feeding is now back on the agenda for most of the state. To the left is a map showing the counties still under restrictions - counties in Yellow (light areas for black & white image) are the ones where the DNR strongly suggests not putting your feeders up. Locally "no feeding" counties include Tippecanoe and Carroll. Several people have pointed out that this map corresponds to many of the more populated areas in the state - which continues the link of "more people = more feeders = more reports." This doesn't necessarily mean more bird deaths, but the DNR is making its recommendations "out of an abundance of caution."



The cause of the disease outbreak is still unknown. But Barny Dunning thinks the yellow counties probably reflect either the latest documented reports, or the most total reports. Reports of sick birds and deaths are declining, starting in the eastern states where the disease was first reported. A researcher out of Cornell suggests that this is not what might be expected for an infectious disease, so that researcher is leaning more towards something associated with the cicadas, although that hypothesis was given a low probability earlier in the summer.

Reports of sick and dying birds came in from at least 69 of Indiana's 92 counties. Multiple bird species reported as affected were primarily fledgling common grackles, blue jays, European starlings, American robins and other young songbirds. All experienced eye and neurological symptoms, often dying as a result. The epidemic showed the value of transitioning to native plants as bird food sources. Native plants provide more habitat and nutrition for birds, especially babies, and are not as likely to transfer disease from bird to bird, better supporting bird populations for the long-term.

Great Lakes Audubon Organizes Congressional Visit including Local Board Member

August 12th, Audubon staff along with two local Audubon members (Susan Ulrich from Sycamore Audubon Society & Nick Gabry of Wabash Valley Audubon Society) met with Congressman Jim Baird (R-IN-04) and his son, Indiana State Rep. Beau Baird (R-Greencastle), to do some birdwatching on the Baird's family farm in west-central Indiana and to discuss the impact of climate change on birds, and the importance of bipartisan climate and conservation solutions for all Hoosiers.

Indiana is located within the Mississippi flyway, an important migration corridor that brings hundreds of bird species to the state each year. Audubon's science found that rapidly changing climate could lead to population declines and local extinctions for as many as 27 percent of Indiana's bird species if they are unable to adapt. Common sense solutions to the problems of climate change, like the **Growing Climate Solutions Act**, can help protect the majority of birds at risk.

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"Farmers are the original environmentalists. I'm proud to support bi-partisan solutions to climate change like the **Growing Climate Solutions Act**, which help farmers and ranchers...leverage the sustainable practices they already use to boost our rural economies to further protect the environment for birds and people," said Congressman Baird. He appreciated Audubon Great Lakes for helping survey the birds that live on his family farm and for their conservation efforts across Indiana and looks forward to working together on bipartisan solutions that are smart for the economy and the environment.



Left to Right): Adam Former, Policy Director, Climate for Audubon Great Lakes (AGL), Stephanie Beilke, Conservation Science Manager (AGL), Congressman Jim Baird (R-IN-04), Nick Gabry, President of Wabash Valley Audubon, Marlene Urso, Senior Policy Director (AGL), Susan Ulrich, Board Member, Sycamore Audubon, Indiana State Rep. Beau Baird (R-Greencastle), Andrew Mills, Vice President for Political Affairs for NAS.

CHAPTER NEWS

SAS Returning to Lilly NC

SAS is resuming in person meetings as of September 9 for our first program of the year. The Invitational *Bring Your Own program*, and hope you can make it. SAS will try to make this a hybrid program.

There won't be a carry in dinner beforehand because of Covid, but people are invited to bring their own picnic at 6 p.m. and join others at the picnic tables outside and suitably distanced. For the inside program which starts at 7:15 p.m. we do hope everyone will wear a mask out of consideration for others (Lilly does require one in any case for entry to the building).

Volunteers Wanted at Lilly

Now that the Lilly Nature Center nature center is open again, they are looking for volunteers to greet the visitors, talk to people, and read stories to children, etc. Interested? Contact Dan Dunten at

ddunten@westlafayette.in.gov

Turkey Leg Time

Yes, there is going to be a Feast of the Hunter's Moon in 2021 on the weekend of October 9 and 10. As usual, SAS **needs volunteers** to help cook and serve its popular turkey legs.

We also need large ice chests with drainage spouts to hold the defrosting turkey legs before they are cooked. **Please contact** SAS president, Barney Dunning and/or Susan Ulrich (see p. 11) if you can help or have an ice chest to loan. One of the super cold/hot holding types would be especially useful.

If you work at the booth and are in the public eye you need to be in **period costume** (& no blue jeans anywhere). SAS does have costume pieces available, which you can pick up from Barney closer to the event. (below Beth Dunning serving a chicken leg.) Any volunteer who can



spend 4 hours helping out (a 4 hour stretch or two 2 hour segments, etc.) gets a button for free admission to the Feast on both days. They also get our thanks!

The Feast is SAS's main funding support for the chapter. Funds raised cover SAS's liability insurance, PO box rental, newsletter printing, speaker honorariums, etc.

Return to West Lafayette's Farmers Market

The joint Audubon-Native Plant Society's first experience at the WL Market was a success. The two groups return there on Wednesday, September 22, again selling plants with the emphasis on house plants

and garden perennials (both native and non-native). Donations are needed along with helpers to set up, cashier, and take down the booth. See p. 11 and contact Susan Ulrich.

Thank You

Gale Turco for including an extra donation to SAS with your renewal.

Pollinatorpalooza

This event, at Prophetstown State Park, featured a wide variety of pollinator info, including 5 talks, a bird walk (led by SAS's Chuck Tuttle & Barney Dunning), a plant walk, and special events for children. A dozen or so groups, including SAS, had tables. Gail Turco and Susan Ulrich staffed the one for SAS.

Unfortunately, this event was organized too late for inclusion in the last issue of the **Warbler**. People on the **Warbler** email list did get an email about it. If you aren't on that list, but would like to keep up with last minute updates and changes to SAS's activities, simply email Susan Ulrich (see p. 11). You might find you prefer the newsletter in color. Even if you sign up, you can still get the black & white hardcopy in addition if you wish.

Time to RIP it

Autumn is coming and it is the perfect time to work on removing invasive shrubs such as Bush Honey-suckle, Burning Bush and Autumn Olive. As usual the RIP squad will be working in local parks to improve the habitat. The schedule will be ready soon, or you can go out on your own at a more convenient time. A member of the RIP squad can help get you started. **A perfect Covid activity!**

The group needs more active members. Call Patty Jones at 765-463-3050 for info about where and when the group will be working.

Birding on the Fly List...

Don't want to miss an unusual bird sighting nearby or around the state? Barney sends people on the list an email so those interested can pursue the bird by themselves or maybe via a carpool. Contact him to be on the list. See p. 11.

IAS Coming to Celery Bog

For 2021, the Indiana Audubon Society organized a series of 21 field events. This month's trip is Sept. 11 to our own West Lafayette birding hotspot, Celery Bog Nature Park. The focus is on fall migrants, especially warblers.

The IAS group is will be at the Bog from 8:00 am - 11:00 am EDT.



IAS's description of the trip reads: "Join Indiana Audubon for a fall morning of peak neo-tropical migrant migration at West Lafayette's Celery Bog. Celery Bog is an outstanding Indiana Birding Trail site whose four miles of trails circle a complex of marsh and swamp habitats that host both treetop warblers, and ground skulkers as well. Several observation decks also allow for elevated wetland viewing."

Register at Indianaaudubon.org, but if the trip is full, you can still visit the Bog. In fact SAS has a field trip there also starting at 8 a.m. See the Calendar on p.5. The area definitely deserves its rating as the 4th best birding site in Indiana.

PARKE COUNTY INDIGO BUNTING SURVEY

Alan Brunner reports that in 2021 the Parke Co. Indigo Bunting Survey resumed after skipping a year due to Covid. The survey done July 31, involved counting all Indigo Buntings identified by sight or sound while slowly driving roads in Parke Co. No tapes or recordings of calls, songs, etc. were used. Occasionally pishing was used to verify identification of birds chipping in heavy cover.

In 2019 the single party record was established when 661 Indigo Buntings were identified by Alan Bruner and Kyle Rush on 27 July. This record was smashed when 717 buntings were counted from 6:06 AM to 8:57 PM by the party of Alan Bruner, Rusty McIntyre, and Kyle Rush. Two hundred and six miles were driven in the process.

Much of the success was due to the unprecedented weather for this survey as cool temperatures (61-70 degrees F) and overcast skies all day seemed to keep birds active with no mid-day lull.

The record was broken in spite of a one-hour rain interruption. Good counts were recorded for many other species encountered during the day including the following:

Red-tailed Hawk	27
American Kestrel	32
Mourning Dove	1011
Red-headed Woodpecker	37
Chipping Sparrow	515
Song Sparrow	530
Northern Cardinal	301



Female Indigo Bunting



Male Indigo Bunting

Photos courtesy of Google Images

A No-No: Goldfish Swimming Wild

Chuck Tuttle wrote a few weeks back, "Some of us have seen an Osprey carrying a goldfish at Celery Bog (this morning, in fact), or an Eagle snatching one from the Bog. I've been getting stories in my news feed about released goldfish and their negative impact on the native ecosystem." He included a link to one of those feeds which provided the following information about the environmental problems releasing goldfish can cause.

DON'T LET YOUR GOLDFISH GROW UP TO BE BULLIES

As in many places, goldfish owners in MN who are unable or unwilling to care for their pets any longer, have been releasing their fish into lakes and ponds in the state. The Burnsville city employees discovered this after its residents reported a goldfish invasion. It turns out that after being released into new waters, goldfish can quickly become an invasive species that competes with native fish. They thrive in Midwestern waters — perhaps thrive a little too well, according to Brian Sidlauskas, an associate professor and curator of Fishes at Oregon State University. He notes: "The species is native to Asia, not North America". A Goldfish "can become quite invasive outside its native ecosystem, and competes with native fishes for space and resources when released into North American waters."

GOLDFISH "KEEP GROWING UNTIL THEY DIE."

Prosanta Chakrabarty, a curator of ichthyology at Louisiana State U, says a goldfish can also harm native fish species through the introduction of parasites as well as by its voracious appetite. "Goldfish, because they are generalist feeders (i.e. eat anything), can really do a lot of damage to native species that are restricted to a specific diet, and the natives may not have previously dealt with the parasites and diseases that the goldfish bring to an environment,"

Goldfish can also pollute waterways by uprooting plants and sediment as they discovered in Burnsville, MN. It is not the only Minnesota community suffering from a deluge of giant goldfish: The Wood Lake Nature

continued p. 7

CONSERVATION NEWS

Coal Ash Threatens Indiana's Waters

At least 44 million tons of toxic coal ash is stored in unlined pits along Indiana rivers where it is soaking in or in direct contact with groundwater. The ash will be left buried in these pits under plans pending before IDEM or already approved rather than removed.

At other sites millions more tons of coal ash are located where the ash is likely to come into contact with groundwater during seasonal high water flows in neighboring rivers.

This unsustainable outcome threatens future drinking water supplies for millions of Hoosiers.

The Hoosier Environmental Council is challenging these coal ash closure plans, and at two sites they are pursuing legal actions. Hoosiers around the state need to speak out today in defense of our waterways and drinking water supplies.

Take action: Contact Governor Holcomb (govholcomb@gov.in.gov) and urge that he halt any further IDEM decisions allowing closure of coal ash pits where ash is sitting in or threatening groundwater. You can learn more at indianacoalash.org.

Regulating Forever Chemicals

On July 21st, the House of Representatives passed the **PFAS Action Act of 2021**, jumpstarting regulations for the toxic lab-made chemicals called perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

These substances are called "forever chemicals" because they don't break down naturally and leach into our food and water.

For decades PFAS have posed major health risks to communities by contaminating drinking water supplies across the nation. More than 200 million people in the U.S. could be drinking water with PFAS.

Now it is the Senate's turn to act. Urge your senators to vote for the PFAS Action Act of 2021 in order to control PFAS's. Ask that they eject any attempts to weaken the legislation.

Plastic Waste Reduced

The Colorado ecosystem just won a big victory: the US's Centennial State just banned plastic foam cups and containers along with single-use plastic bags.

That's great news for everyone who cares about plastic pollution that turns up everywhere these days.

Environment Colorado is the group that backed the **Plastic Pollution Reduction Act** recently signed into law by Gov. Jared Polis. It phases out two of the most common and dangerous forms of plastic pollution for wildlife -- and also reverses a law which prohibited communities from going even further on reducing plastic trash.

The results will be less single-use plastic in Colorado, which in turn means less waste polluting the state's waterways and parks and harming wildlife.

Oil Extraction Threatens Big Cypress Swamp

While many of Florida's parks and natural wonders are publicly owned, vast amounts of **oil below that ground** are privately owned by powerful corporate interests ready to tear open this ecosystem for even more profit.

Big Cypress National Preserve is the next area in their crosshairs. If they succeed in expanding drilling there, **the endangered Florida panther** — with an estimated population of fewer than 200 — will be pushed closer to the brink of extinction and it cause irreversible destruction on lands vital to the

Indigenous tribes who have already expressed serious concerns about drilling there.

The Natural Resource Defense Council is working to block the Burnett Oil Company from getting final approval on its permits to drill in Big Cypress

Big Cypress is a big deal: besides being a critical habitat for wildlife like the endangered Florida panther, **the 730,000 acres of vital ecosystems act as carbon sinks, helping stem and control climate change.**

NRDC contends the nation is facing both an extinction crisis as well as a climate crisis, so why is an oil company so close to moving forward in such a critical national preserve with an oil drilling plan that is best described as catastrophic? "It is time to move from the legacy of fossil fuels and invest in a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable economy."

Lawsuit over Water Permit

In order to better protect America's waters, health, and wildlife from plastic and pollution, the Center for Biological Diversity just sued the EPA over a sweeping Clean Water Act permit. It affects stormwater discharges from 1,000's of facilities across the country, including chemical and plastic manufacturing.

"Instead of paying attention to scientific recommendations, the EPA just copied and pasted from its 2015 permit," said Julie Teel Simmonds, a lawyer in the Center's Oceans program. The suit is aimed at forcing federal officials to consider mounting evidence that plastics facilities harm essential habitats and communities.

Spring Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2021

Audubon Programming continues to be in flux. Field Trips are outdoors so distancing and masks should be sufficient. Normal programs are in person or zoom (check with Chuck Tuttle) and are expected to remain that way for some time.

- Every Thursday** **Early Bird Hikes.** Meet at the gravel parking lot (first turn to the right) at Celery Bog Park in West Lafayette. These hour or so walks begin at 8 a.m. Start your day by seeing what birds are in the area.
- Sept. 9 Thursday **Program: *Bring Your Own Program (aka What Have You Got?)*.** People are encouraged to bring pictures they've taken. They can be birds, plants, vacation spots, etc. Try to keep it short (5-7 minutes?). We will not have the carry-in dinner but people are invited to bring their own picnic at 6 p.m. Meeting will start at 7:15. NOTE: SAS hopes to make this a hybrid meeting with a zoom option. If you are seeing SAS meetings via zoom rather than in person, contact Chuck Tuttle (p.11)
- Sept 11 Saturday **Fall migration at Celery Bog.** Meet at 8 am at the gravel parking lot. 1/2 day trip.. Should be a good time for Fall migrants. Note: Indiana Audubon Field trip is here also. See p.3.
- Sept. 18 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** At the overlook at the end of the Prophetstown SP road. 6-8 p.m. A chance to see what resident and Fall migrant birds are hanging around the park and share info about birds while interacting with park visitors passing by.
- Sept. 22 Wed. **Farmer's Market in WL Plant Sale.** 3:30-7 p.m. See P 2 for more about this Audubon & Native Plant Society sale and how to donate plants &/or sign up to volunteer.
- Oct. 1-3 Fri-Sunday **Indiana Audubon Society's Fall Festival.** This year it is at McCormick Creek State Park. For additional information and to register, go to Indianaaudubon.org/events.
- Oct 2 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** See above. This one is set for 5:30-7:30 p.m. One never knows what birds may or may not show up. This is a good time for many migrants to put in an appearance.
- Oct 9-10 Sat & Sun **Feast of the Hunters Moon.** Held at Fort Ouiatenon in Tippecanoe County, along the Wabash River couth on South River Road. Historical re-enactors, demonstration craft booths and LOTS OF FOOD—including the turkey legs that SAS sells. See p. 2 to volunteer and get free admission.
- Oct 14 Thursday **Program: *Landscaping Using Native Plants*.** Bryce Patz, West Lafayette Community Forestry and Greenspace Manager. Why West Lafayette is using more native plants and how they help the ecosystem and the community. Lilly Nature Center 7:15 p.m.
- Oct. 30 Saturday **Fall migration at the Purdue Wildlife Area** Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Purdue Wildlife Area parking lot on SR 26 past 750 W, 1/2 day trip. The area is a mix of wetlands, brush, and light woods so provides varied habitat to attract a variety of species.
- Nov. 6 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** A new month to see what birds can be found at Prophetstown SP. See listings for Sept. 18 and Oct 3. This overlook event will go from 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- Nov. 11 Thursday **Program: *Bird Conservation Programs*.** Dan Shaver, NRCS State Forester, USDA. Dan will talk about the different options for landowners for various programs, what they can be used for, and how they can benefit birds. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, WL.
- Nov. 13 Saturday **Late fall Migration at Celery Bog.** A trip aimed to finding water birds, Rusty Blackbirds, sparrows and other late migrants. 8 am at the gravel parking lot at Celery Bog in West Lafayette. 1/2 day trip.
- Dec. 4 Saturday **"Practice for the CBC"** 8:30 am at gravel parking lot Celery Bog. We might go to other areas to practice on sparrows and other Little Brown Jobs. A chance to learn to ID some of the birds you might encounter on the Christmas Bird Counts or your own rambles.
- Dec 9 Thursday **Program: *Beak to Tail: Indiana's Birding Trail*.** Brad Baumgartner, Executive Director for the Indiana Audubon Society. THIS WILL BE A **ZOOM MEETING ONLY**. Please contact Chuck Tuttle or Barny Dunning for a zoom invitation if you wish to see what should be a very interesting program.
- Dec. 18 Saturday **Greater Lafayette Area Christmas Bird Count.** Help out to cover our local CBC circle Lafayette's count is the oldest continuous count in Indiana. Ed Hopkins is the count compiler (birder4in@gmail.com). More info in the next newsletter. Mark your Calendar now so you don't miss it.

Negative Effects from Heat on Birds & Wildlife

Evidence has shown that pollution from plastic can choke and starve marine animals. Now, study shows it could cook them, too.

Plastic debris on the beaches of two islands in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean is raising sand temperature as much as 2.5 degrees Celsius, creating "dead zones" for the animals that live in the sand and changing the reproductive patterns of sea turtles.

Ohio College going Geothermal

Major campus refit will save money, improve comfort with innovative technology

An exciting project is currently underway at the Oberlin College & Conservatory in Ohio to help the college reach an ambitious goal of carbon neutrality by 2025. The project includes a four-year, campus-wide conversion to geothermal energy, positioning Oberlin as a national leader in clean energy.

The \$140 million, four-year project began in May of 2021 with the installation of new heating and cooling systems in the college's South Campus buildings, and ultimately involves the drilling of about 1100 geothermal wells that will effectively heat and cool all campus buildings.

When complete, the project will bring Oberlin within reach of its goal to become carbon neutral—using education, behavior, change strategies efficiencies, and clean energy sources to bring the institution's net release of carbon dioxide to zero—by 2025.

It will replace a failing, century-old infrastructure with a system that brings air conditioning to more buildings, improves the temperature control across campus, bolsters reliability, and saves more than \$1 million a year in energy costs.

"We had to act, so we did this the Oberlin way," wrote Oberlin President Carmen Ambar in a message to students, faculty, staff, and alumni. "We started with a rigorous, exhaustive examination of every possible option. Then, armed with that data, our trustees made a bold decision to fix the problem—it will show other large institutions across the country that it is possible to improve living and working conditions for students, faculty, and staff, while addressing a global challenge that touches all of us."

The educational opportunities it creates is one of the projects most exciting elements. Oberlin students have been an integral part of the project planning since the beginning. The project will serve as a subject for coursework in a variety of fields including environmental studies, geology, psychology, and the new business concentration.

The project is a partnership with Ever-Green Energy, a Minnesota-based company focused on advancing and operating energy systems. For more information about the Sustainable Infrastructure Program including construction updates, visit:

CarbonNeutral.oberlin.edu

The heatwave in the Pacific Northwest coincided with the nesting season of several raptors, causing a "hawkpocalypse" when the baby hawks were unable to fly to escape the scorching heat and fire and did the only thing they could—fall from their nests.

Nearly 50 baby Cooper's and Swainson's hawks were rescued from the ground beneath the towering pines in Washington and Oregon. Above is the picture of one of the rescued chicks.



Citizen Science Strikes Again

Once in a while, Cornell NestWatchers document something that is seldom seen such as a Northern Junco nesting in a nest box. It happened again when Jo Roberts of western Texas recorded the first known instance of a Scott's Oriole reusing the same nest for four consecutive years.

Cornell's NestWatchers program says: "Scott's Orioles are not known to reuse nests between years, but Jo's findings suggest that they will do so if a nest site is particularly attractive. Her story reminds us that even one person can make a difference in what is known about a species."

Scott's Orioles are one of 7 species of orioles that are seen in the U.S. The species occurs in Arizona

but also in parts of its neighboring states and includes much of Mexico.

Unlike most of the US's oriole species, the male Scott's is yellow and black. It is found in high

deserts and the mountain slopes adjacent to them, where it nests and forages in tall yuccas, palms, junipers, and pinyon pines. Its nest, like that of other orioles, is a intricately woven hanging sack built by the female and is usually attached to live Yucca leaves.



Male Scott's Oriole



Female Scott's Oriole

Goldfish From p. 3

Center in Richfield tried to reduce their invasion by releasing panfish and bass which can feed on goldfish. Invasive goldfish are showing up all over, including Lake Tahoe, NV, and Boulder, CO. "They do get pretty big", Chakrabarty says. Goldfish can grow to "more than a foot". In some rare cases they surpass three pounds in weight.

Culum Brown, a professor of biological sciences at Macquarie University, says a goldfish can reach up to 23 inches if released in a large pond. The fish can live up to 30 years, but 10 to 20 years is most likely.

Loon Decline Studied in Canada

The "million-dollar" question being studied is why is loon productivity declining? Data collected by 4,000 volunteers in Canada may help answer it.

The ***Canadian Lakes Loon Survey***, started in 1981 in Ontario and across the rest of southern Canada in the mid-1990s, has generated information from its volunteers on a remarkable 35,000 breeding attempts by Common Loon pairs across Canada. This huge amount of information allowed testing for the influence of over a dozen different factors on loon productivity, in order to support or refute what factors could be driving the mysterious declines. The factors tested included damage from acid rain, fish mercury contamination, shoreline development, boating activity, predation risk from Bald Eagles, competition for forage fish from Double-crested Cormorants, and a suite of weather variables based on temperature and amount and timing of precipitation.



Common Loon with
Babies on its Back

Photo by Mark Peck

To make a long story short: the study ruled out shoreline development, human disturbance, eagles, and cormorants as strong factors to explain the decline in loon productivity across broad scales, such as across all of Ontario or southern Canada. However, some of the factors certainly do play a role on particular lakes. The analysis suggests that a complex interplay between damage from acid rain, mercury pollution, and ongoing climate heating may be at least partly to blame for the loon productivity declines across Canada.

This has been dubbed the "acid-mercury-climate hypothesis" and research to further test if it has merit is underway. Doing so will provide much needed guidance on what to do next to best conserve this impressive symbol of pristine wilderness.

'Scarybird', the Scarecrow of the Seas



A cheap to make and easy to use kite-like scarecrow called "Scarybird" has been a boon to fishermen in their attempts to limit seabird deaths. Set to fly over a fishing boat (see photo), Scarybird has successfully reduced seabird mortality.

Help Stop Illegal Palm Oil Plantations

You can help Sumatran Orangutans, elephants, rhinos and native people plus other species (including birds), by pressuring manufacturers who use palm oil to commit to using only **legally grown** palm oil.

One such company is Ferrero, the big flagship of the world's second largest chocolate and sweets producer. Ferrero makes Nutella—so much of it you could line the Great Wall of China EIGHT TIMES with the number of jars sold in a year.

Palm oil makes up almost 20% of a jar. Given hundreds of millions of jars produced each year, that adds up to a lot of illegal rainforest loss. There are many other products made by Ferrero that contain palm oil, from Kinder Joy and Bueno, to Butterfinger and Baby Ruth.

This is why it absolutely matters to get Ferrero to commit to policies that protect both rainforests and the people who depend on them. If a big player like this Italian chocolate giant cuts ties with the problematic palm oil producers, it sends a big signal to its peers.

And Ferrero's business is growing. New customers linking their products to rainforest destruction is about the last thing the company needs right now. Big, powerful companies like Ferrero are quick to point fingers at other companies that are doing worse, or refer to the actual palm oil suppliers as the ones guilty of burning and bulldozing rainforests and human villages. But as one of the biggest buyers of cheap palm oil, they are a driver behind the aggressive expansion in SE Asia.

**You can contact them by calling:
742-584-4700**

Nature Notes & News

● July 1 Barny reported 8 White Pelicans at Celery Bog. Ed Hopkins reported the pelicans were still there at noon. They were also reported early the next day and were last seen the morning of the 3rd. Photo below by Chuck Tuttle.



● While watching the Pelicans Barny Dunning had a Solitary Sandpiper fly in and perch on a log before flying away south. The bird's was in the narrow window where it is not clear whether it should be thought of as a late spring migrant or an early fall migrant. Barny typically lumps any migrant shorebird after July 4th as a fall migrant, but of course there is nothing magical about that date. Ken Brock's summary of Indiana bird records lists June 5 as the last spring record for Solitaries and states that fall migration begins in earnest about mid-July.

● Barny also wrote that if anyone needs a copy of Ken Brock's database on the birds of Indiana (and has a CD drive on their computer), to let him know – he has a number of CDs that he can give out. All of the information is in the form of pdf files, so they can be opened easily as long as you can access the CD. Ken is the “dean of Lake Michigan birders” and summarized a ton of information.

● Another unusual bird was found on July 1. Temple Pearson saw an immature YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON on private property along Park Lane in West Lafayette.

● Between July 15 and August 15 Susan Ulrich heard a single Sandhill Crane calling from an area south of their house on 8 or so different mornings. The bird was calling from ground level. It is possible the crane was trying to attract a mate &/or establish a territory for nesting next

year. If so, it will be the first Sandhill nest for Warren County in decades. There are two known Sandhill pairs now nesting in Tippecanoe County.

● A possible immature cormorant that was suggestive of a Neotropic Cormorant was at the Bog on Aug 3rd. It sat by two Double-crested Cormorants, at least one of which was an adult. The bird had a smaller head and bill and appeared to have a longer tail (although the view was partially blocked). Most notable about the bird was that the neck and breast were a warm brown, not the gray-brown typical of the immature Double-crested Cormorant.

● Aug 4 Andrei Gabrielov wrote “The Mississippi kite is still around. I saw it several times on its favorite dry tree between Salisbury and Covington, and once on another tree nearby”. In mid-August Andrei got photos of a fledged young kite in the dead tree that was the center of the kites' activity. Best views of the birds are usually from Covington just one block east of Salisbury. Parking is also better there. The kites were still there Aug 21. A second young showed up as well.

● July 6 Barny Dunning wrote: “Now that I have taken down the last of my feeders, the hummers have to find something else to do. Today I saw a male Ruby-throated Hummer (our only breeding species) sashaying back & forth in a courtship dance to a female.” The female's response “It's July, give me a break.”.

● On July 7, Mark Arvin emailed that his brother Kevin, had a male Western Tanager in his yard for a brief period of time. It did not return though Mark keep a feeder vigil for

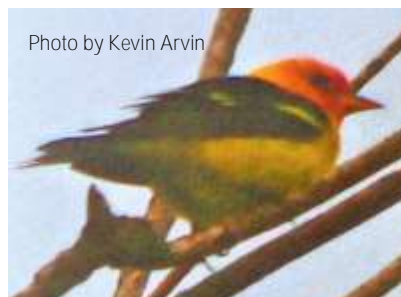


Photo by Kevin Arvin

the Indiana rarity.

● At **Audubon at the Overlook**, July 11, Chuck Tuttle, Karen Griggs, and Barny Dunning hosted about 10 members of the public. Birding was not spectacular but they had very nice conversations during the lulls. Best views were of a pair of Orchard Orioles that gave repeated looks and a distant view of a Pileated Woodpecker. They also heard at least one—elusive—Sedge Wren.

● Black-crowned Night-Herons, Snowy Egrets and Little Blue Herons were all reported from Celery Bog the second week of August. At least one of the Snowy Egrets was an adult, with a black bill and dark legs ending in yellow feet and there was at least one immature Snowy Egret.

An immature Little Blue Heron was also being seen consistently in the wetland basin at CR50 and CR550E which is SE of Meijer's on the east side of Lafayette.

● Barny Dunning checked Celery Bog on the 13 of August. The most exciting thing he saw was an Osprey carrying around nesting material.—a suggestion the Osprey was prospecting in advance for nesting next year. If so it would be the first record for Tippecanoe County since bird records dating back to 1940 were kept.

● August 17 an immature Black-crowned Night-heron was still present and seen by many people in the main southern basin at Celery Bog. Black-crowned Night-herons are believed to breed in only one location in the state- the Lake Michigan shoreline-where they are mixed in with colonies of gulls and other herons. Late summer is the time for the herons and egrets to wander, so this is a fairly typical time for this species to show up locally.

● Another bird being seen a little further away is a Swallow-tailed Kite which has been reported at Willow-Slough State Fish & Wildlife Area in Newton County for some time. It was still there Aug 15 and has been seen most reliably soaring near the gun range.

At Orchards and Vineyards, Birds Outdo the Pesticides

Info below is taken from an article in *LIVING Bird* by Greg Breining; It is a multi-page article going into great detail and covers different bird species and various crops in different countries.

Studies ranging from orchards in Michigan to vineyards in California and New Zealand show that birds, including American Kestrels, Barn Owls, and Western Bluebirds, are **better than chemicals at reducing pest damage**.

Jim Nugent grows cherries on his 40-acre orchard in Leelanau County, MI, an idyllic peninsula of dunes and tree-covered hills jutting into vast blue Lake Michigan. The surrounding water moderates the worst of the frigid winters here, and the rolling topography drains cold air from the upland orchards. Cherries thrive in the sandy soil.

"The fruit belt in Michigan is pretty tight to the coastline of Lake Michigan," says Nugent. In that limited geography grow nearly half the U.S. production of tart cherries, and quite a few sweet cherries, too.

Despite ideal growing conditions, the cherry orchards here are beset by pests—a plethora of insects; deer mice and voles that gnaw the bark and roots of fruit trees; and flocks of fruit-eating birds that swoop into orchards, especially as sweet cherries ripen in early July.



American Kestrel, Male

A 2013 study showed that fruit crop damage from birds alone ranged from \$104 per hectare in Oregon tart cherries, to \$7,267 per hectare in Washington Honeycrisp apples. Yield losses to rodents and birds in several high-value crops in California were estimated at 5% or greater.

So orchard owners are always on the lookout for better pest control. Thirty years ago, when Nugent worked for the Michigan State University Extension Service, he heard a professor of fisheries and wildlife recommend putting up nesting boxes to attract American Kestrels for controlling fruit-eating pests. Nugent built and set up his own kestrel box, which was occupied right away, and says he saw immediate results: "From the time I started getting nesting kestrels, I sure observed a decline in [pest] problems."

Across America and beyond, farmers and vineyard and orchard owners are enlisting wild birds—from raptors to songbirds—in a sustainable battle against pests. They erect nest boxes, install raptor perches, or plant inviting native cover—all of which offer less expensive natural pest control than other traditional methods. In addition, birds are environmentally benign, while poisons are not. And pest-controlling birds stay on the job, while pesticides must be reapplied, and the effect of bird-scaring balloons, hawk silhouettes, and propane cannons quickly wears off.

Catherine Lindell, an associate professor of biology at Michigan State University, studied Cherry Bay and other orchards in the area between 2012 and 2016 and found that kestrels reduced the number of fruit-eating birds by killing some and scaring others away. Every dollar spent on nest boxes saved from \$84 to \$357 of sweet cherries from fruit eating birds. Orchards with active kestrel boxes also had fewer mice and voles. "It really is a low-cost thing that farmers can do to add to their integrated pest-management strategy," says Lindell.

Farmers aren't the only ones averse to pesticides. Research with Lindell's Michigan State colleague Phil Howard showed consumers liked learning that raptors, rather than pesticides, had played a role in the growing of fruit. "Consumers were really enthusiastic about [farmers] using kestrel boxes or falconry to manage pest birds, so we encouraged growers to let their customers know about that," Lindell says. Attracting beneficial birds could also be a draw for "agritourists," she says, which is allowing some growers to develop a birdwatching side to their business.

- Fall migration started becoming noticeable in the 3rd week of August with reports of seeing Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, American Redstart, and Black-and-White Warbler in addition to an increase in numbers (or visibility) of Baltimore Orioles and Warbling Vireos.

- An immature Black-billed Cuckoo was the highlight of Barny Dunning's visit to Celery Bog Aug 21. Also seen was an immature Little Blue Heron (with 8 Great Egrets). He had reports of two Common Moorhens up near the observation deck near Walmart among the water lilies but did not spot them.

- Rick and Debbie Read and a friend went to see Chimney Swifts returning to one of Monticello's chimney roosts — the one at *The Taco Shoppe*. They counted 90 swifts flying in. The last one entered shortly before 9:05 p.m.



Black-billed Cuckoo

Wednesday's in the Wild-Celebrating its 20th Year!

REGISTRATION is required by noon on Monday prior to program:

Call 765-567-2993 or email mcutler@tippecanoe.in.gov

****Facial coverings and/or physical distancing are strongly encouraged. ****

Natural History Talks/Workshops/Field Trips: 1-3pm EDT or as Noted

SEP 1 7-9pm Insect Songsters

Outdoor pgm—Celery Bog

Insects don't just sing for fun, they do it for a reason. Professor Emeritus **Tom Turpin** will shed some light on this yearly phenomenon. Dr. Turpin taught Entomology for 45 years at Purdue University, and also was instrumental in the formation of the annual Bug Bowl at Purdue's Spring Fest.

Maximum of 30 participants.

SEP 8 6-8pm EDT (5-7 PM CDT) Exploring and Enjoying Unit J at Kankakee Sands

Carpool leaves LNC at 4:45 pm -- outdoor program.

Stephanie Frischie (Botanist with Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation) leads the hike at this Newton County Nature Conservancy property to learn about the restoration of one of the most diverse units of the property. We'll walk and talk about what has grown from the seeds that were sown, and how the site was prepared and has been managed. This Unit is a delight to visit, as it features many plant species not usually found in prairie restorations!

Maximum of 20 participants.

SEP 15 1-3pm Fall Composites and Cranes at Prairie Border Nature Preserve

Carpool leaves LNC at 11:45am -- outdoor pgm —Prairie Border Nature Preserve. Join Fire Manager **Stuart Orr** (Nature Conservancy IN) on a tour of this Jasper County Nature Conservancy property highlighting the yellows, purples and blues of the fall composites, along with the beginning of bird migration. Sandhill cranes begin to stage in the area in early fall and many other species pass through. Bring binoculars; (Jasper Co. **noon-2pm** Central time). Maximum participants 10-20.

SEP 22 1-3pm I Spy: How to See the Unseen Wildlife on Your

or woods. But what about the host of wildlife species that are active at night or spend most of their life hidden? **Jarred Brooke** (Purdue University Extension Wildlife Specialist) will showcase a variety of easy techniques that wildlife researchers use to see unseen wildlife.

Maximum of 30 participants.

SEP 29 8-10pm Fall Constellations

—outdoor program —Tippecanoe Amphitheatre. Join members of the **Wabash Valley Astronomical Society** as they talk about fall constellations, including some Native American mythology. Following the talk, we'll do some naked-eye constellation-finding and view Jupiter, Saturn, star clusters and the

Andromeda galaxy core through WVAS members' telescopes. Maximum of 30 participants.

OCT 6 1-3pm Apples for the Tasting. **Perry Kirkham** (Owner of **Wea Creek Orchard** in southern Tippecanoe County) will share how apple trees are managed through harvesting, then follow this up with discussion and sampling of various apple varieties. Interested individuals may then take a wagon ride and learn about bees, additional crops on the site, and other related topics. Held at the Wea Creek Orchard. Maximum of 30 participants.

OCT 13 10am-noon Heading South: Migrants and their Motivations

--- Bring binoculars/**morning** program --- outdoor pgm—Celery Bog. **Susan Ulrich** (Sycamore Audubon Society) will give a short introduction to the seasonal strategy of migration and we'll journey out on the Celery Bog trails in search of birds moving through or beginning to return here to spend the fall and winter. Maximum of 20 participants.

OCT 20 1-3pm Forecasting the Forest: The Effects of Weather and Climate on Tree Ranges and Diversity

--- outdoor pgm—Celery Bog. **Chad Evans** (TV18 Chief Meteorologist) will couple his love of the natural world with his expertise as a meteorologist to explore the role that weather and climate play in shaping the occurrence and diversity of Indiana's forest ecosystems. On this hike along the Celery Bog trails, he'll identify the trees found there and share how the occurrence of different tree species (and their health) is connected to not only soils, water and nutrients, but to climate and weather events, too. Maximum of 30 participants.

OCT 27 1-3pm Hiking Through Fall at Wright Rock Creek Nature Reserve -- Carpool leaves LNC at noon -- outdoor pgm—NICHES Wright Rock Creek property. **Bob Easter** (NICHES Land Trust Stewardship Director) will lead this hike at this Warren County property, where fall colors and late-blooming wildflowers are sure to be abundant! The geology and beauty of Rock Creek, with its sculpted sandstone cliffs, will be highlighted along with the history of stewardship of this property. Maximum of 20 participants.

If you bird or hike at Purdue's Martell Forest

please note:

The gate code keypad has gone bad. A replacement has been ordered. Until then, the gate will be unlocked all the time but the aluminum gate will be closed between 5 PM and 7:30AM and on weekends.

This gate will not be locked but has a sliding device to secure it. Hopefully, a new key pad will be installed soon.

Join Sycamore Audubon Society!

You can support **Sycamore Audubon Society's** local educational and conservation work by becoming or renewing as a Friend of SAS. Friends become chapter members of the Sycamore Audubon Society and receive our quarterly newsletter, *The Sycamore Warbler*.

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

SAS Chapter Membership Application **Date:** _____

Name : _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone(s): _____

Send to : Sycamore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2716, West Lafayette, IN 47996-2716.

☐ **Friend of the Sycamore Audubon Society** \$15/year x _____ year(s) \$ _____

SAS's treasurer would appreciate payments in August-September to make it easier to keep track, however Friends memberships are credited to whatever month a Friend first joined.

☐ New Friend member ☐ Renewing Friend

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

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

Total enclosed \$ _____

Sycamore Audubon Society 2019-20 Board of Directors

Barry Dunning, President, Field Trips
7509 N 75 E, W Lafayette, 47906
(C) 765-412-8760 (W) 765-494-3565
jdunning@purdue.edu

Chuck Tuttle, Vice President, Programs
1708 Maywood, W Lafayette, 47906
(c) 586-4806 chuckt1708@gmail.com

Jessica Outcalt, Secretary
133 Jodiah Place, Lafayette 47909
616-920-9312; jtinklen@purdue.edu

Jennifer Tuttle, Treasurer
1708 Maywood, W Lafayette, 47906

Paul Brooks, Webmaster
219-221-0254
paulbrooks@gmail.com

Karen Griggs, At Large
100 Thorn bush Drive, W. Lafayette 47906
463-5215

George Kopcha, At Large
gkopcha@gmail.com gkopcha@indot.in.gov
(c) 765-714-5126

Rick Read, At Large
402 E Terrace Bay, Monticello 47960
574-583-3431 rickread.in@gmail.com

Susan Ulrich, Publications
11907 E 500 N, Otterbein, 47970
765-583-2275
Sueandtedulrich2msn.com

Tidbits

Florida's Wildlife Corridors Strengthened.

Florida's governor signed into law a bill to strengthen and expand the state's corridors for wildlife, including the endangered Florida panther. The \$400 million Florida Corridor Wildlife Act recognizes the interconnected web of green spaces throughout much of the state that includes forests, swamps, fields, pastures, timberlands, and even the edges of suburbs.



The bill was championed by National Geographic Explorer, **Carleton Ward Jr.** and the National Geographic Society. "Hopefully the success of this project will inspire change throughout the country and the world," says the society's CEO, **Jill Tiefenthaler**.

EPA Withdraws Approval for Radioactive Roads

Following a 2020 lawsuit and petition by the Center for Biodiversity and others, the Environmental Protection Agency just announced it is reversing its earlier rule allowing toxic waste in road construction. Made under Trump, the approval allowed the use of phosphogypsum — the radioactive waste from fertilizer production — as a road-building material in parts of the United States prone to sinkholes and erosion.

"The agency's approval was a boneheaded, shortsighted favor to the industry," said the Center's Jaclyn Lopez. "The withdrawal is consistent with 30 years of science showing that phosphogypsum poses a substantial risk to humans and the environment."

♦ One opossum can consume around 5,000 ticks in a single season. This summer scientists are recording record numbers of ticks **which emphasises the opossums' importance** for disease control. Not only do the omnivores protect us by eating disease-carrying ticks, they also clean up ecosystems by eating rotting plants and dead animals.

♦ Heatwaves may lack the drama of extreme weather events like named storms but they are the deadliest of all severe weather events.

♦ When a carnivorous Venus flytrap chomps down on a victim, it was recently discovered that a small magnetic field is created

♦ 28-million children in the USA do not have a park in their neighborhoods

♦ The Indiana state record for poison ivy was a plant with a nearly 15-inch diameter stem.

♦ You may need to think again before calling someone a "rat". A neurobiologist at the U of Chicago, found rats so distressed by the discomfort of trapped friends, they ignored chocolate in their haste to help.

♦ Seabirds spend nearly 40% of their time beyond national borders.

♦ Don't recognize the new name? McCowan's Longspur is now known as the "Thick-billed Longspur".



Sycamore Audubon Society
P. O. Box 2716
West Lafayette, IN 47996

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Email: sycamoreaudubon@gmail.com

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

Solar Energy can benefit Nature, too

The Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC) has been a long-time, vocal advocate for renewable energy, whether that has been in conferences, workshops, forums, testimony in the Indiana legislature, or comments to the press, including working for the enactment of a renewable electricity standard, the extension of the PTC/ITC, and the establishment of carbon pricing. Furthermore, throughout its thirty-seven year history, HEC, has been a strong supporter of local control for environmental-related decisions such that locals can enact stronger protections than the state or country. Protecting land and water (through good policy and practice) is part of the organizations DNA.

THE LAND FOOTPRINT OF THE EMERGING INDIANA SOLAR INDUSTRY

Over the course of the 2020s, Indiana is expected to install 8,500 Megawatts (MWs) of solar energy. With a MW of solar energy requiring anywhere from 5 to 10 acres of land, that means that Indiana's solar farms could have a land footprint the size of Indiana's state parks. Obviously, these farms, which generate new tax revenues for struggling rural counties and create carbon-free, air pollution-free electricity, use a lot of land.

HEC, other Indiana groups, and regional organizations have been publicly advocating since early 2020 that such farms be pollinator friendly, for the sake of our wildlife, soil and water conservation, reduced stormwater runoff, and beauty. Such landscapes also create greater community support for solar farms, which can be 1,000+ acres in size. Learn more about HEC's efforts to advance environmental-friendly solar farms by going to their webpage.

Such environmentally sustainable approaches to the land under solar panels can be cost-competitive, taking into account both start-up and operating costs, with conventional/default perennial grass approaches to the land and smart seed mix design.



Section 14, as passed out of the Indiana Senate Utilities Committee and the Indiana Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee, does enable counties to continue to establish local standards for the habitat and water quality benefits that can be incorporated into these solar farms, *however* it allows private property owners (who are leasing their land to solar farms) the ability to veto a county's decision.