

Sycamore Warbler

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Winter 2022



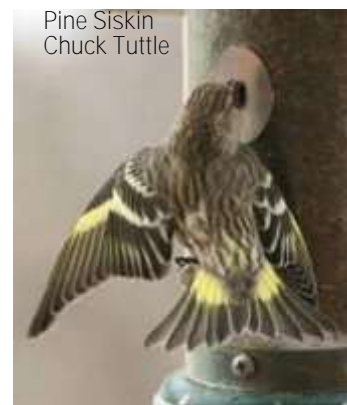
Time for the Christmas Bird Counts

Sycamore Audubon sponsors two counts, both compiled by Ed Hopkins. To participate, contact him at birder4in@gmail.com or 765-463-5927.

- **The Lafayette CBC will be December 17.** Check with Ed to find out about a possible date change if the weather conditions make driving risky.
- **The Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves CBC is usually January 1** (but date is flexible and may change due to weather or participant availability). Again, check with Ed if you are uncertain.

The count always produces surprises. The 15 mile diameter count circle has been used for 50+ years, but development and habitat loss, as well as habitat gain— such as Prophetstown SP and Celery Bog Nature Area—have had an effect on results, along with global warming. Sign up to see what birds you can spot.

Feeder Watchers are also wanted if you live in the count circle (check with Ed Hopkins to find out). Feeders are great spots to see those winter finches. Pine Siskins, among others, are attracted to seed, but hard to find in the field as are other uncommon late fall or winter migrants.



Two Special December Programs to Note

Hoots to Howls December 8

Kim Hoover, a wildlife rehabilitator who specializes in birds, is bringing live owls and other critters to SAS's December program at Lilly Nature Center. Please share this information with others who might enjoy seeing animals up close and personal. This is a kid and family friendly event.



Sandhill Cranes & More December 4



SAS's annual Sandhill Crane event morphed into a multicultural event involving cranes. It includes two lectures, one by Dr. Alice Wang on *Cranes in Chinese Art*, and one by Barny Dunning on *Cranes in Indiana*. Lastly there is a free bus trip to Jasper Pulaski. Sign up ended on Nov. 22 but check with Barny about the bus trip part.

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Reminder: SAS WANTS YOUR EMAIL

WE HOPE to stop printing & mailing hard copies of this newsletter to those of you who can get it via email starting in March. .

We would appreciate your sending your email (if you haven't already) to sycamoreaudubon@gmail.com. If you don't have email, or have other issues, please contact Chuck Tuttle or Larry Theller (see board list on p. 11)

CHAPTER NEWS

Programs Remain Hybrid

SAS programs are still hybrid (but sometimes with difficulty!). Join us on the 2nd Thursday at Lilly Nature Center at 7:15 p.m.

Two New Board Members

SAS has two new board members: Anne Piechota, secretary, and Larry Theller membership. Karen Griggs will move to corresponding secretary and Chuck Tuttle to VP and programs.

If anyone else is interested in joining the board, Conservation and Education are both open.

Grant Request Approved

The Community Foundation of White County, Women's Giving Together Fund, awarded a grant to the Audubon Nature club for \$337.50. They have generously supported this activity for a number of years.

NICHES Thanks SAS

NICHES received a **Next Level Conservation Trust** (NLCT) grant from the state. The funds will help purchase an addition to their Williams Woods preserve. NICHES thanked SAS

and the other groups who wrote letters of support for the project, for their help.



Birds of Winter Seminar

Rick Read's presentation at Norway Gardens drew 51 people. Debbie Reed took the above photo of the event. It was an amazing turnout. His program dealt with summer birds which leave and the winter species that come to replace them. He also added some tips on feeding and attracting birds.

Invasive Work Continues

The RIP Squad (Remove Invasive Plants) has taken out several thousand honeysuckle, burning bush, and other assorted woody invasive plants at Ross Hills and Prophets Rock Park this fall.

In spring Garlic Mustard removal will start at Celery Bog, Cumberland Woods, Happy Hollow Park, Ross Hills and Prophets Rock. Contact Patty Rader at 765-463-3050 for dates and times. The group can use more volunteers. Garlic Mustard is

easy to pull and requires no herbicide but there are a lot of acres out there to cover and more eyes would be very useful.

Thank You to...

The following members who have donated extra funds to the Sycamore Audubon Society in the past few months.

Doris Thompson
Kelly Carr
Pawletta Smith
Susan Ulrich

SAS Sent Letters

Since 2014, there has been a rider in place that blocks the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from using any funds to make decisions regarding the listing of Greater Sage-Grouse as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Our Chapter joined other Audubon Chapters that signed on to the letter National Audubon sent to Congressional leaders as they craft the next Appropriations bill for the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. The letter states that **"politics should not be part of wildlife management decisions."**

SAS Treasurer Back Home

Jenny Tuttle who serves as SAS's treasurer, broke her hip while visiting her sister in Greece. As a result, she was there recuperating for several extra weeks instead of returning home. She is now back and catching up with SAS's financial work. **Welcome Home!**

Birding on the Fly List...

Don't want to miss an unusual bird sighting nearby or around the state? Barny 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.

Purple Martin House Re-Homed

Nancy Klusman send out an email asking if anyone wanted their old Purple Martin house that was in fairly decent shape. When no one expressed an interest after several weeks. Susan Ulrich picked it up to store until someone could be found.

Someone was found, or rather "someones". Students in the Purdue Wildlife Society took it to repair and put up at Martell Forest.

Motus Stations Early Results



Great news! Marie T.Y. Gillet, IN Division of Wildlife reports that after having set up 6 Motus stations on Indiana DNR Fish and Wildlife properties at the end of summer, we finally got our first detections. Data show that 3 individual Swainson's Thrushes traveled through Indiana. One thrush was detected on October 3, 2022, two others on October 4th. All birds were tagged this summer by the same research group and came from the British Columbia interior. Here is their journey through the Motus network so far: 2 birds showed the same journey and were picked up by the tower at Kingsbury FWA: (route is the thin white line on map)

To check and see what the Indiana Motus towers are picking up, go to: <https://motus.org/data/receiversMap?lang=en>.

Then go to the map and zoom in on the active towers. Nest, click on the yellow dot and see if a clickable table/timeline exists. If it does, then you've got detections. If not, nothing has been detected yet.

Checklist of Indiana Birds

The Indiana Bird Records Committee 2022 report shows 429 species on the states checklist. Species to be added include :

Black-tailed Godwit	Lazuli Bunting
Limpkin	Golden-Crowned Sparrow
Anhinga	Wandering Tattler
Great Kiskadee	Brown Booby
Mottled Duck	Lesser Sand-plover

Nest Attempt by Whooping Cranes in Indiana in 2015

Amy J. Kearns, INDR Division of Fish & Wildlife, Hillary Thompson, International Crane Foundation, & Marie T.Y. Gillet, INDR Division of Wildlife, published a paper on the first documented case of *Grus americana* (Whooping Crane) nest building in Indiana.

During the spring of 2015, a pair of Whooping Cranes remained on their wintering grounds in Gibson County, IN rather than returning to their summer area in Wisconsin. Three nest platforms were discovered after the death of the female crane. As of now, this is the only documented example of a Whooping Crane pair in the reintroduced Eastern Migratory Population (EMP) building nest platforms outside of Wisconsin.

Three nest platforms were found in the remote interior of a 528 ha shallow water emergent wetland complex that is closed to any public access; therefore, human disturbance at this site is rare. Although no eggshells or eggs were recovered at the site, it is possible that the female had laid eggs. The approximate date of the female's death was April 17 or 18, by which time most of the whooping crane pairs in the EMP have laid eggs,



Although fidelity to the core nesting areas in Wisconsin is strong, and natal dispersal is usually <30 km, this example from Indiana shows that cranes in the EMP might have the potential to pioneer nesting areas far from the core reintroduction areas.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Info on the Inflation Reduction Act, Savings, & Solar Power

John Smiley, the Climate Team Chair for the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Citizens' Climate Lobby .

presented a very informative program to the Tippecanoe County League of Women Voters. It included information about funding available to homeowners, not-for-profits and churches as well as local government entities.

His last segment on solar was equally interesting. Using a fraction of marginal or productive farm land for solar energy production produces multiples more energy than the acres of cropland used to produce corn ethanol. This could free up land for food production without net energy loss, a win-win. That switch from fossil fuels will also result in better yields for farmers as the pollution from fossil fuels reduces crop production.

To see an on line version of his presentation go to:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jDtVZuKI230x-rt4rXixjF2mb4xj2D8CU/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=108501121681740673423&rtfpof=true&sd=true>

The Power point is at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14VaGmA01WfBYAfZqTmtk7WSOvGebGqLN/view?usp=sharing>

Your editor thinks you will find it worth your time.

Indiana ranks 4th in the US for solar power thanks to solar field installations.

It also has the 5th dirtiest air in the nation.

Avi Kwa Ame Proposed as NM

Nevada's Avi Kwa Ame region, nearly 459,000 acres, is a crucial migration pathways for bighorn sheep to travel between the protected areas that surround Spirit Mountain. These migration corridors are threatened by large scale development. Permanent protections and restoration of Avi Kwa Ame as a National Monument will safeguard bighorn sheep as they make their journey across these lands.

Avi Kwa Ame is the Indigenous name for Spirit Mountain and is home to amazing wildlife including desert bighorn sheep, the desert tortoise, and golden eagles, along with sacred Indigenous sites and cultural treasures. It is nestled between the Mojave National Preserve and the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, so it provides the means for wildlife to move from one area to the other. Monument designation will ensure that these migration routes don't become fragmented by development. It will also protect ancient Joshua tree forests, preserve the rich history told through rock art and other cultural sites, and expand opportunities for recreation, which will boost the economies of nearby communities.

Contact President Biden and Interior Secretary Haaland and ask them to designate Avi Kwa Ame as a national monument so wildlife habitat can be restored and migration corridors can be protected.



Wyoming, Court Affirms Feds' Halt of Oil Leases

In good news for western public lands and the species who live on them — from greater sage grouse to pronghorns — a federal judge in Wyoming has confirmed the Biden administration decisions, made in 2021, to postpone oil and gas lease sales.

"Allowing any new fossil fuel projects on federal lands, including oil and gas leasing, is a dangerous mistake," said the Center for Biodiversity's Taylor McKinnon who brought the legal action. "We need to save our public lands for the wildlife that depend on them. And protect ourselves from climate catastrophe by keeping oil and gas in the ground."

Migratory Bird Treaty Act Restored

In Oct of 2022 the US Fish and Wildlife Service removed the Trump Administration's action removing incidental take from the regulatory authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty act.

Perfect timing as an oil spill had just gushed off the California coast, reminding people just why incidental take, not just intentional take, needs to be included.

Better Air for New Mexico

Every year in New Mexico - the 2nd largest oil producing state - the oil and gas industries emit over 1.1 million tons of methane, plus 300,000 tons of volatile organic compounds.

Now, new rules passed by Governor Michelle Grisham's administration will slash this pollution and require frequent inspections of wells and compressor stations, especially those near homes and schools.

Fall Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2022

Meeting programs are currently hybrid: in person and by zoom. Field Trips are outdoors and obviously in person. Bring a mask if you desire, and of course binoculars if you have them. Extra pairs available if not.

- Dec 4
Sunday **Bus Trip to Jasper Pulaski** to see the amazing congress of Sandhill See p.1 and 3. Anyone can drive to J-P and tag along at 2:30 p.m. to see the Sandhill Cranes or check with Barny to see if there are any extra bus seats available.
- Dec 8
Thursday **Lafayette CBC Sign Up.** Want to help with the longest continuous running CBC in Indiana? You can sign up with Ed Hopkins, the compiler, for a territory or to help with a territory at 6:30 PM at Lilly Nature Center just before the **Hoots to Howls** program listed below. Or contact Ed via one of the following: email: birder4in@gmail.com; phone: 765- 463-5927) .
- Dec 8
Thursday **Hybrid Program: Hoots to Howls.** Kim Hoover, a wildlife rehabilitator from Star City who works mostly with birds will be the speaker. She gives a kid-friendly program with live raptors and likely her favorite turtle. SAS will be making a donation to Kim's center, **Hoots to Howls**, which costs her \$2,000 every other month to run (given inflation, probably more now). Anyone who would like to contribute and donate can do so at the meeting. Rick Read who saw one of her presentations said, "This is a not-to-miss program". Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park 7:15 p.m. Dinner at Parthenon at 6 p.m.
- Dec 17
Saturday **Lafayette Christmas Bird Count.** If you didn't sign up at the Dec. 8th program, give Ed Hopkins, the compiler, a call or drop him an email (birder4in@gmail.com; 765- 463-5927). There are always uncovered or lightly covered areas that could use someone's attention.
- January 1
Sunday **Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserve CBC.** Give Ed Hopkins, the compiler, a call or drop him an email (birder4in@gmail.com; 765- 463-5927) if you would like to help. There are always uncovered or lightly covered areas that could use someone's attention.
- January 1
Sunday **First Day Hike at Prophetstown.** Check with the park to make sure they are doing it again this year.
- January 12
Thursday **Hybrid Program: Behind the Park.** Jenna Parks Freeman, Prophetstown Naturalist. the history of the area before the park, background on developing the park, current activities at the park and what the future may bring. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park 7:15 p.m. Dinner at Parthenon at 6 p.m.
- January 28
Saturday **Winter Birds Field Trip.** Our annual 'risk a major snowstorm' event. Meet at 8.30 AM at the gravel lot at Celery Bog for carpooling.
- Feb 9
Thursday **Hybrid Program: Estimating Forest Carbon Change .** Bowen Li, a graduate student in Forestry and Natural Resources. His research uses remote sensing data to estimate carbon change in central Indiana's hardwood forests. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park 7:15 p.m. Dinner at the Parthenon at 6 p.m.
- Feb 18
Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** Prophetstown State Park 8-10 AM at the end of the park road to see what birds may be around and talk to park visitors passing through.
- Feb 25
Saturday **Waterfowl & More Field Trip.** Meet 8 AM at the Gravel parking lot at Celery Bog to carpool to local sites. May visit Eagle nest too. As they should be on eggs.
- March 9
Thursday **Hybrid Program: To be Announced.** Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park 7:15 p.m. Dinner at Parthenon at 6 p.m.
- March 18
Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** Prophetstown State Park 8-10 AM at the end of the park road to see what birds may be around and talk to park visitors passing through.

Cold Adaption now a Hazard



As tough as they are tiny, **American pikas** are superbly adapted to the cold climate of the high-elevation boulder fields and alpine meadows in the mountains of the U.S. West. But the very adaptations that help them survive make them extra sensitive to climate change. Now, research shows that pika populations at the lower

elevations in the Great Basin — and also at higher elevations in the California's Sierra Nevada — are disappearing. A recent Nevada report confirmed pika sightings in only 22 of the hundreds of the state's mountain ranges.

2020 Oil Spill Damage Worse than Estimated

The Colonial Pipeline spilled 2 million gallons of oil into a nature preserve in 2020, according to the latest estimates.

New findings reveal the pipeline leak in Huntersville, North Carolina, was 32 times larger than initial estimates --making it one of the largest onshore oil spills in U.S. history.

New Program for Western Monarchs

Due to the drastic decline in the Western Monarch population, Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, announced a one million dollar grant to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for Western Monarch grants.

In addition she announced a **Pollinator Conservation Center** will be established by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Their first hire will be a western monarch coordinator.

Suit Filed to Help Lesser Prairie Chickens

The foot-stomping dances of the Lesser Prairie Chicken are no longer seen or heard from all but a fraction of their earlier habitat in eastern New Mexico and Texas.

The Center for Biodiversity is now suing the Fish and Wildlife Service to make it take action to protect them.

The Center's Michael Robinson says, "It's haunting to think that videos of the lesser prairie chicken's intricate dance may be all that's left for future generations." He blames the oil and gas industry fighting against any safe guards and the Fish & Wildlife Service for slow-walking every step of the process.



Shafer Freeman Lakes ECC & Mussel Needs Reach Compromise Agreement

Over the last few months, Shafer Freeman Lakes Environmental Conservation Corporation (SFLECC), US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFW) and NIPSCO have been in discussions about modifying USFW's mandated dam operation rules for Oakdale Dam. These discussions stem from SFLECC's court hearing in the Washington DC Court of Appeals, and the subsequent Judges' order and opinion.



Purdue photo of Endangered Indiana Mussels

The panel of judges on the DC Court of Appeals essentially told the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and USFW to determine if the USFW's mandate is only a "minor change" to the operation of the dam. In May of this year, USFW acknowledged that the 2020 drought that caused Lake Freeman to be drained for an extended period of time was not a "minor change". This lead USFW to start the discussion that lead to this compromise.

On August 26, 2022, NIPSCO filed for a License Amendment with FERC to incorporate the compromise that SFLECC, USFW and NIPSCO had discussed, studied and agreed to implement. This compromise consists of reducing USFW's mandated minimum flow from Oakdale Dam of 500 cubic feet per second (cfs) to a minimum flow of 315 cfs.

"This was a compromise that all the entities involved could agree to," said Gabrielle Haygood, SFLECC Executive Director, commenting on the requested License Amendment. Also commenting on the Amendment, John Koppelman, SFLECC Lake Level Task Force Chair said "our calculations show that this minimum flow reduction will significantly reduce the frequency of entering into Abnormal Low Flow events."

Emperor Penguins Win Protection

Following more than a decade of legal work by the Center for Biological Diversity — and more than 63,000 comments from supporters — this week the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *finally protected emperor penguins under the Endangered Species Act*. CBD first petitioned for these iconic birds in 2011, then sued successfully in 2019 to prompt this decision.

Protection comes not a moment too soon. Emperor penguins need reliable sea ice for breeding and raising chicks. Whole colonies are declining or vanishing in parts of Antarctica as a result of melting ice. Meanwhile krill, one of their main food sources, are also disappearing for the same reason, ocean acidification and industrial fisheries.

"The decision is a big win for these beloved, iconic penguins and all of us who want them to thrive," said the Center's Climate Science Director Shaye Wolf. "Their very existence depends on whether our government takes strong action now to cut climate-heating fossil fuels and prevent irreversible damage to life on Earth."



Google Images

How to Count Birds

(Just in time for the Christmas Bird Counts) by Karen Griggs

Did you ever try to count a big flock of ducks or geese? Cranes? Outside on a late fall day, or in December, you may see a few late migrants such as a pair of sandhill cranes or a flock of many birds.

In order to enter a simple record of your bird sightings in ebird, take a few minutes to learn tips for counting birds.

For instance, using Google, I entered the search term "e-bird" then "help" at the top of the page. Next, I entered "count," and the expert showed some simple examples and the reasoning behind each strategy.

For instance, the expert said to keep in mind that a precise count is not always possible, but bird watchers should be conservative about the number recorded.

If you see a large flock, first count a group of ten on the edge of the flock, estimate the proportion of the flock that those ten birds represent, and then estimate the flock size.

For more information, use this link. Just copy or type it into your search window. Then hit "enter" to read more about counting and experiment with photos of flocks.

<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000838845-how-to-count-birds>

A Winter Finch Year?

Given sightings so far this winter, the prognosis is that this may be a good year for visiting winter finch. One rarity to watch



for is the Pine Grosbeak. This species has a circumpolar distribution and is not a true "grosbeak" but actually a large finch nearly the size of the American Robin. It has the typical short stubby bill of a finch, rather than the large "gros" beak of the true grosbeaks.

Another potential rare winter visitor is a true grosbeak: the Evening Grosbeak. It is slightly smaller than the Pine Grosbeak and has a pale bill. The head pattern of

the male is somewhat similar to Michigan State's football helmet, the female looks somewhat like a large winter goldfinch. If you have some come to your feeders this winter, sock up on sunflower seeds—they are voracious eaters and normally travel in flocks.

Male below. Female right.



Nature Notes & News

● Fall birds continued to be reported from area sites in early September. Mark Arvin found a flock of warblers near the Lilly Nature Center early the morning of Sept 3. He also discovered a Snowy Egret among the Great Egrets south of the Lindberg Bridge at the Bog. A number of Red-breasted Nuthatches were around and calling. Barny Dunning had a Red-breasted Nuthatch on the Purdue campus on Sept 2. And Andrei Gabrielov reports the juvenile Mississippi Kite is still hanging out in its usual area on Covington Street south of Cumberland Avenue in West Lafayette.

● Brandon Nelson had a Bob-white and a Clay-colored Sparrow at Prophetstown SP on Oct 2.

● Susan Ulrich visited a privately owned wetland in Warren Co Oct 8. Sightings included a pair of Great Egrets and a pair of Sandhill



American Avocet

Cranes plus 36 Wood Ducks.

● A single Avocet was found at the Purdue Wildlife Area off US26 on Oct 10 by Liam Beheler.

● The last reported Ruby-throated Hummingbird was by Karen Griggs on Oct. 13. She spotted it at Celery Bog feeding on the very popular (for hummingbirds) Blue Salvia by the Nature Center.

● Three people went on the Waterfowl Field Trip Oct. 15. Most of Indiana's dabbling ducks were present. Only American Wigeon was missed. Male Blue and Green winged Teal along with Northern

Pintails were coming back into breeding plumage. Diving ducks included Ring-necked and Ruddy Ducks. Also noted was a Merlin, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, an Osprey, and scores of Rusty Blackbirds.

● Oct 16 During his weekly waterfowl sure at Pine Creek in Benton County, Barny Dunning noted low numbers of waterfowl but many species of interest. His list tallied two adult and a juvenile Trumpeter Swan plus four juvenile White-fronted Geese. He also had flyby Rusty Blackbirds.

● A baker's dozen White Pelicans showed up Oct. 16 at Celery Bog late in the afternoon.

● Oct 19 Barny Dunning noted two Greater Yellowlegs and two Pectoral Sandpipers were on the "mudflat island" south of the bridge at Celery Bog at 6 p.m.

● Oct 20 Barny Dunning found 4 (joined by 2 more later) American Avocets in the morning at Celery Bog. They remained all day. Ed Hopkins saw them at noon, others including Aidan Remingers got to see them as well. The birds were still present at 5 p.m. No reports on the next day.

● Four people, Barny Dunning, Vivak Govind Kumar, George Kopcha, and Susan Ulrich, went on the SAS field trip to the Dunes Lakeshore on Saturday Oct 24. The group stopped at Jasper Pulaski both going and coming to check out the Sandhill Cranes.

To quote Barny Dunning, the trip results were spectacular, if "completely unexpected". The weather was too good for most of the lakeshore oddities though Red-



throated Loons, a Horned Grebe, flyover Snow Buntings, and Red-breasted Nuthatches made the list.

What was spectacular and unexpected was the Fork-tailed Flycatcher which was still present in the area and **very** cooperative. It was a life bird or North American life bird for all four participants. The photo above is by Vivak G. Kumar.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher live in South America. Each year a few apparently migrate northward rather than south to southern South America. Congratulations to Barny for selecting this ideal date three months in advance.

● A Mockingbird and 20 Cedar Waxwings were among birds seen at Prophetstown Nov 1 by Doug Wade.

● A woodcock was reported by Joh Skene Nov 3 at Celery Bog.

● Nov 7 Mark Arvin reported his bother, Kevin, had 7 Evening Grosbeaks at his feeders near Buck Creek. This species has become a rare visitor to the area in recent decades.

● Alden Dauby had 3 Northern Harriers and a Savanna Sparrow at Prophetstown SP on Nov 11.

● That same day Larry Theller found 15 Ring-billed Gulls there.

● Mark Arvin visited the park on the 15 of Nov and had a flock of

Red Means Growth

A NASA satellite has recorded the amount of red light reflected by the Amazonian rainforest since 2000. Plants absorb red light when undergoing photosynthesis and reflect green light. Thus, the less red they reflect, the more the plants are growing and greening up.

According to the data from the satellite, a team at the University of Arizona in Tucson found that the greenery (i.e. growth) increased by 25% in the dry season. But where people had converted the forest to agriculture or other uses, the satellite detected exactly the opposite effect. In those areas the red light reflection indicating no growth.

Why? Rainforest trees have deep roots that can reach water and grow whenever there is sunlight. Vegetation in the disturbed areas can't reach water and thus dries up in the dry seasons.

45 Cedar Waxwings.

- In spite of cold winds, the Nov 17 Earlybird hike produced a number of waterfowl for Barny Dunning and Vivek Govind Kumar who were brave enough to dare the elements.

The highlight of their visit was a Tundra Swan. In addition, two Cackling Geese were found among the flocks of Canadas as well a female Gadwall and an American Wigeon. Also present were Greater White-fronted Geese, the Fall's first Bufflehead, Hooded Mergansers, and a number of Lesser Scaup.

- Ed Kaplan was at Celery bog that day and saw a Fox Sparrow. A number of people had them coming to their feeders about that same date.

- Susan Ulrich saw her first fall Rough-Legged Hawk along the Warren County-Tippecanoe Co line on Nov 12.

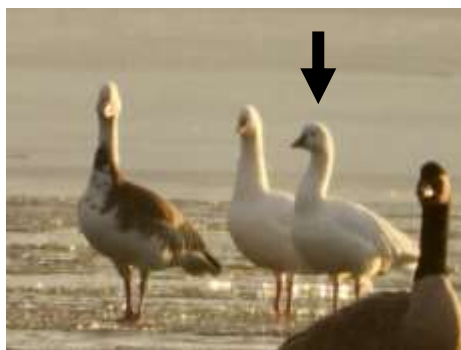
- Nov 24 there were 12 white geese standing on the ice of the main wetland basin Celery Bog at 8:10 in the morning. The photo at lower right by Chuck Tuttle includes the one Ross's Goose (see arrow).

Nine of the remaining geese were white phase Snow Geese, and the last two were blue phase

Snow Geese. All the geese flew away, heading north, shortly after they were spotted. Most of the rest of the waterfowl were in the north-most basin off of Cumberland Drive. The group included two male Northern Pintail, Northern Shovelers, Gadwall and some American Black Ducks.

- That same day Barny Dunning stopped briefly at the Bicentennial Nature Area on his way home. It had more open water than Celery Bog but the only birds of note were 4 Hooded Mergansers.

- Tyler Ficker had 150 Sandhill Cranes fly over Clarks Hill on Nov 25th.



If you didn't think the platypus was weird enough...

1. The males have hollow spurs on their hind legs connected to a venom secreting gland. Also, the venom is lethal.
2. They are mammals that lay eggs, making them a monotreme species.
3. Under UV light, they have a biofluorescent green-blue glow.
4. They can detect electric fields generated by all living things. So they can hunt for food underwater with their eyes and ears closed.
5. The webbing on their feet is retractable.
6. They use gravel as makeshift "teeth".
7. They don't have stomachs.



- Becky Theller had a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker show up at the Battle Ground Nature Center on Nov 25.

- Rachel Munds ran across a Winter Wren at the Bicentennial Nature Area the following day.

- A visit to Prophetstown on Nov.26 produced a Double-Crested Cormorant along with 38 late migrating Tree Sparrows for Mark Arvin.

- Also on Nov 26 there were 20+ swans near County Rd S 500 E, near the sod farm. Chuck Tuttle could see they all had black bills so were Trumpeters or Tundra. He returned to take some photos but the swans were gone.

- And lastly, on the 26th Andrei Gabrielov reported a female Goldeneye & two Pintails on the north pond at Celery Bog, along with 8 Snow Buntings next to the trail on his way there.

See something interesting? Send it to sueandtedulrich@msn.com

The State of Wild Birds

A report from *BirdLife International*, the largest world conservation partnership, uses data on birds to assess the condition of the natural world. Their conclusions:

Agricultural expansion & intensification: this is the single biggest threat to the world's birds, affecting 73% of all threatened species.

Unsustainable logging and forest management: the loss of over 7 million hectares of forest each year is impacting half of all threatened bird species.

Climate change: 34% of birds that are threatened species are already impacted and the changing climate will rapidly become even more of an issue.

Manatee Numbers

In the past dozen years, as many manatees have died as are alive today.

This sad fact puts the current ongoing mortality crisis of Florida's sea cows in a stark new light. And the factors behind this die-off -- including degradation of habitat due to human pollution -- continue to threaten the 7,000 or so manatees that survive today

Birds Transport Toxicity

A study of sediment cores by researchers at Queen's University found that remote ponds in the high Arctic had elevated levels of various pollutants.

A pond visited by Arctic Terns that prey on fish had higher concentrations of mercury and cadmium. Another pond visited by Common Eiders contained higher levels of lead,

A 22-year Fight Succeeds

After more than 50 years, Maine's longest river, the Penobscot, is finally getting cleaned up. From 1967 until 2000, the HoltraChem plant dumped up to **13 tons of mercury into the river**, rather than disposing of it as hazardous waste. Mercury, a neurotoxin, is especially harmful to the developing brains of children and fetuses. The Penobscot is one of the largest watersheds in New England and a major producer of shellfish and fish.

In April of 2000 the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) filed a lawsuit with the Maine People's Alliance (MPA) against Mallinckrodt US LLC, the successor to the plant's first corporate owner, and brought the issue to the public's attention. A 9-year scientific assessment confirmed elevated levels of mercury in the river with surface sediment mercury levels 18 to 20 times higher than other sediments in the region. Wildlife, including lobsters, black ducks, eels, and marsh songbirds also had high levels of mercury. As a result Maine issued an advisory for pregnant women against eating waterfowl and closed sections of the lobster and crab fishery at the mouth of the Penobscot.

Twenty-two years after the suit was filed, a federal district court approved a settlement that will at last set in motion a cleanup plan, long-term monitoring, and funding for projects that would benefit the environment and communities affected by the pollution. Importantly, the settlement also holds the corporation accountable: Mallinckrodt must pay \$187 million, with an extra \$80 million in contingency funds, to jumpstart the Penobscot's recovery.



aluminum, and manganese. Source of the pollutants was bird poop. The heavy metals corresponded with those recorded in the tissues of those two species and results from their diets. The terns feed on fish while eiders eat mollusks.

3500 Species

Mosquitos annoy us and can carry diseases. But only a fraction of the 3,500 skeeter species in the world feed on humans and mosquitoes play an important role in ecosystems. Research on them

keeps turning up new facts.

Most recently, for the first time ever, a team of scientists captured slow-motion videos through a microscope showing different species of mosquito larvae that evolved lightning-quick hunting techniques.

In one species, larvae can "launch their heads, literally, from their bodies" (as a researcher put it), elongating their necks to harpoon their prey. Another species can whip their tails around to guide prey into their mouths. The attacks all happen within 15 milliseconds, so the team needed a camera that captured 4,000 frames per second.

Vicious killers as larvae, some *Toxorhynchites* genus species turn into iridescent, nectar-eating adults that study coauthor Robert Hancock called "gorgeous."

Join Sycamore Audubon Society!

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

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

SAS Chapter Membership Application **Date:** _____

Name : _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone(s): _____

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

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

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

☐ New Friend member ☐ Renewing Friend

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

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

Total enclosed \$ _____

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The Most Important Environmental Law, You've Never Heard of

NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, is under attack. Why weaken one of our country's bedrock environmental laws -- a law that has been crucial to protecting some of the country's most precious lands and most endangered animals? Because it helps protect areas such as Minnesota's **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness**, a place cherished for its vast maze of interconnected waterways and amazing diversity of wildlife.

This area is under threat of a mine that will pollute the area.. NEPA provides the basis for the areas protection from the project. Signed into law in 1970, NEPA requires federal agencies to **assess the environmental impacts of their actions before they take them**. That means before the government can, for example, grant a permit allowing drilling or mining on federal land, it needs to see if the project won't keep man and nature from coexisting in harmony.

This law has provided a foundation for protecting the wildlife and wild places in America. This year, it contributed to a decision to halt plans for new coal mines on public lands. **NEPA has done so much to protect our planet's special places from destructive development. Now, it's time to protect NEPA.**

The Trump administration attempted to weaken the law, and lawmakers in Washington, D.C., are still trying to so, in part to help advance fossil fuel production.

Tidbits

♦ Solar is the cheapest energy in history.

♦ Flood risk across the United States will increase about 25% by 2050 even with the actions being taken to stabilize the climate.

♦ The Rufous Hummingbird has been showing up more frequently during Fall migration in Indiana and other eastern states. It is also the hardest North American hummingbird, breeding as far north as Alaska.

♦ Nearly half the world's population (3.5B) depend on wild species — animals, edible plants, trees for firewood — for survival.

♦ Concealment is key for nesting cardinals. They prefer dense shrubs and trees.

♦ Increased levels of CO2 have been shown to benefit growth of poison ivy, making plants lusher. It also increases the strength of urushiol levels in the plant. This is the chemical that causes the allergic reaction in people.

♦ All fossil-fuel powered autos in Norway will be banned by 2025.



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

Think Globally Act Locally with New Conservation Bird App Tool

Nearly half of all bird species worldwide are declining, according to the **2022 State of the World's Birds** report. How do you tackle a challenge that big?

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is doing it with the release of a game changing tool called **eBird Trends**—the most expansive and detailed visualizations ever produced to show the trends of bird populations.

For the first time, people around the world, including conservationists, can zoom in to within an 8-mile radius to see exactly where each of 586 bird species is increasing or decreasing—providing localized insights needed to restore rapidly declining bird populations and habitats.

"You can't solve what you can't see," said Daniel Fink, senior research associate at the Cornell Lab and science lead of the eBird Status and Trends project. "We've never been able to see population change with this level of detail across continental extents for so many species. With so many bird species in decline, the insights gained from eBird Trends are sorely needed."

Trend maps for 586 species are currently available, mostly for the United States and Canada, where the necessary data exists. That number will keep growing as more data comes in from more locations through eBird, the Lab's massive global database of bird observation.

Highly detailed visualizations from eBird Trends can make a difference for localized conservation, and can satisfy the curiosity of bird lovers. "Raw eBird reports of species' presence and numbers for every week of the year begin the process," said Tom Auer, Cornell Lab geospatial data science lead. "We add in satellite data for such things as topography and weather. Then we apply cutting-edge statistical models and get an interactive individual species map showing localized population trends, from 2007 through 2021."



For the full article go to:

<https://phys.org/news/2022-11-globally-locally-bird-tool.html>

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