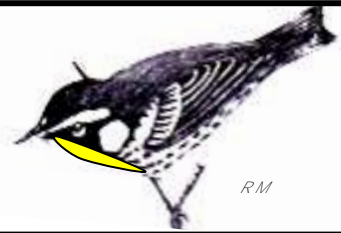


Sycamore Warbler

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Global Study Shows About Half of All Birds in Decline

From an article in *Living Bird*, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

A review of bird population studies entitled *The State of the World's Birds*, revealed that more than 5,200 bird species are known or suspected to be declining, approximately half of the total number of species worldwide. About 3,800 species (39%) appear to be stable, and less than 700 species show an increase.

The review points to disappearing and degraded habitat as the leading driver of bird declines worldwide. On the plus side, the authors of the study cite a 2020 study indicating that restoring just 5% of converted or lost habitat in priority areas could avert 60% of likely extinctions.

Some of the birds which show up in our area, now or historically, that are in the steepest declines are shown below along with their rate of decline. The only two that are year round residents are the House Sparrow and the Northern Bobwhite. All the rest are either summer visitors or winter visitors (even if erratically) or migrants that move through in spring and fall.

Evening Grosbeak	90%
Bank Swallow	89%
Chestnut Collared Longspur	88%
King Rail	86%
Blackpoll Warbler	84%
House Sparrow	83%
Northern Bobwhite	83%
Ruddy Turnstone	80%
Pine Siskin	80%
Rusty Blackbird	79%
Eastern Meadowlark	79%
Least Tern	79%

On page 9 are the figures for the bird species seen on this years' local May Counts. Highlighted species to the left are the ones on this list that were reported.

A number of those seem to be retaining some populations locally except for the King Rail, which used to be an uncommon nester.

Blackpoll Warbler



Wabash River Greenway Funding News

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has just awarded a \$25 million Grant to Tippecanoe County to construct Phase Two of the **Wabash River Greenway** in Tippecanoe County. The county has roughly \$15 million in additional funds from other sources.

Wabash River Enhancement Corporation and its community partners - Tippecanoe County, the cities of Lafayette & West Lafayette, and the Tippecanoe County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) applied for the grant back in February of 2023 with the MPO serving as the formal applicant. Only 162 projects from the 1100 applications were funded. The 162 projects approved totaled \$2.2 of the \$2.3 billion available.

With this grant and funds for RAISE, READI, and NLT Projects, Wabash River Enhancement Corporation and the Wabash River Greenway have over \$51 million committed to fund projects along the five-county, 90 mile corridor that makes up the Wabash River Greenway. Of that total, about \$40 million is committed to fund projects in Tippecanoe County.

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Check pages 2 & 3 for an SAS funding opportunity, plus Get to the Point a new SAS monthly birding event at Celery Bog

Chapter News

SAS Fund Raising Challenge

SAS's is challenging its members to contribute to a fund to help purchase tracking tags readable by Motus towers. Indiana Audubon Society (IAS) is expanding their Wood Thrush study (*Warbler* Vol 47 4). IAS want to buy 25 tags to use on thrush netted at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary and the Indiana Dunes. A tag costs \$250. SAS's board voted to buy one tag to start with, and hopes our members can match or exceed that amount to cover one or more additional tags. The tags are so lightweight, they can even be used on insects.

The data provided is staggering. Tagged birds are tracked as they pass through Motus coverage areas. The towers connect to the internet and download tag ID numbers as they are detected in real time, giving the researchers the whereabouts of that specific bird as that individual migrates or changes location.

Such detailed data is nearly impossible to obtain by other means. More and more towers are going up, and more research birds tagged. Barny Dunning has funding for four local towers which will fill a gap in Indiana's coverage. They will be sited at PU Ag Center, PU Wildlife Center, PU Lugar Farms, and PU Cunningham Farm.

Motus towers set up easily and don't have to have their own tower. They can be placed on the side of a building, an existing tower, or other high structure.

**To support more of this research,
mail a check to SAS's PO Box**

hikes and talks. Their efforts culminated in the city's first Nature Center which opened earlier this year.

Riverfest Event

Two board members (Ann Piechota and Susan Ulrich) plus Rachel Kittleson, who has joined the board, helped with SAS's Riverfest booth this summer.

The day started out with rain, which stopped just in time. Lots of people stopped to chat and pick up literature and the younger visitors enjoyed making owls from toilet paper tubes. Some of those owls were pretty fancy with pink feathers and sequins!

Yes! More New Board Members.

We are delighted to welcome three new people to SAS's board. Rachel Kittleson is SAS's new Vice President and will be organizing the programs. Chuck Tuttle is happy to switch to being "At Large" and handling the new ***Get to the Point*** as well as the old ***Audubon at the Overlook*** events.

The other new additions are Kaitlyn Young who will serve as SAS's Conservation Chair. One of her projects is working with West Lafayette on joining Indiana's Bird City Network. Bea Redfield, our final new member will help with the newsletter and social media.

The board also hopes that Cindy Isom who has worked with Rick Read in Monticello, will take his place as a county representative. If anyone in Benton, Carroll or Clinton county would be interested in a similar position, please let Barny Dunning know.

First Fall Chapter Meeting September 14th.

SAS is starting the 2023-24 season with our annual "Bring Your Own" program. Members can bring 5 minutes of pictures of sightings, vacations, insects, plants, or whatever they would like to share. Meeting starts at 7:15 at the Lilly Nature Center at Celery Bog Nature Park, but come earlier for a **Carry-in dinner** at 6 p.m. for anyone wishing to bring their own meal or a dish to share and catch up with activities of other SAS members

Saying "Goodbye"

One couple that won't be showing slides this year are Rick & Debbie Read. They have moved from Monticello to Florida.

Rick has been active on the board for a long time. He and Debbie shared many birding trips taken over the years by giving programs to the chapter.

They also did great outreach for SAS in Monticello, starting the after school Audubon **Nature Clubs**, and working with the city on their parks and giving bird

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 anyone that is interested can pursue the bird. Contact him to get on the list. See p. 11.

Get to the Point: New Series of Field Events

Sycamore Audubon society is stating this new monthly series of events at Celery Bog Nature Area. It is modeled on our successful Audubon at the Overlook, where we gather for two hours at the observation desk at Prophetstown State Park, look for birds, and talk with anyone who comes by and wants to hear about birding-type stuff. At Celery Bog "The Point" is the local name for the narrow location between the two main wetland basins (see photo). There is an area to stand and a bench along with an interpretive sign. The bench faces the back of the Walmart building to the immediate north of the Bog.

This is a good location because you can see activity on both main wetland basins, and also see birds moving from one to the other. Like the Overlook events, the Get to the Point outings will last for two hours. (see page 5 for dates and times).

We will show birds and talk to whomever shows up. This has the potential of attracting a lot of people, so if we get a crowd, we will have some participants go to the southern observation deck on the main wetland basin. The easiest way to get to the Point is to park close to Lilly Nature Center and take the trail to the east that goes down to the water's edge. "East" is going from the Nature center on the trail that passes in front of the outdoor amphitheater.



Least Terns in Indiana

The interior least tern is one of Indiana's state-endangered migratory waterbirds. Habitat loss and degradation of its habitat of sandbars and sandy islands along rivers and streams where it nests is why it is now endangered in the state. This is Indiana's smallest tern only about 7 inches in size. It migrates back and forth from Indiana to South America each year.



To conserve the species as a nester, the Indiana DNR partners with agencies as well as companies to protect the birds historic river nesting areas.

Some researchers set up least tern decoys in suitable areas to attract live terns to new and

more protected nesting locations. If an area is chosen as a nesting area, shelters to protect the chicks from summer heat and provide coverage to hide from avian predators like hawks are erected. This technique, combined with electric fences to keep land predators away from the nests, increases the survival rate for chicks who may then return to nest themselves.

As an extra precaution, staff, contractors, and volunteers unite to monitor the tern colonies on a regular basis. Conservation truly takes a village. Without such a dedicated community of conservationists, least terns would no longer regularly nest in Indiana.

Hellbender Work Showing Results

In July 2023, biologists with Purdue University's *Help the Hellbender program* and the **Indiana DNR** discovered and documented a young hellbender salamander—a gilled larva—in Indiana's Blue River.

Known as "snot otters" and "old lasagna sides" because of their loose, frilly skin and its mucus-like covering, hellbenders are mostly nocturnal and breathe through their skin.

The discovery was made during a routine survey and is significant because for the past thirty to forty years, only adult hellbenders have been found in the Blue River. Finding a juvenile means there was a successful wild reproduction. It also shows that the extensive conservation and reintroduction efforts funded by Indiana Nongame Wildlife Fund, during the past 15 years are having a positive impact.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Land Protection from Louisiana...

Work has started near New Orleans to restore 17,000 acres of wetlands. In addition, a marsh in the area, facing some of the most rapid land loss in the world, will be nourished and rebuilt. This monumental project – the first of its kind in the world! – will reconnect the Mississippi River with its wetlands and build more new land than any other single restoration project in U.S. history.

This win for wildlife is thanks to the dedicated efforts of advocates who supported this effort over the years to move this restoration project forward.

After decades of studying, modeling, planning, design and multiple rounds of public input, construction of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is now officially underway.

The diversion will mimic natural processes to build up to 40 square miles of land in the Barataria Basin of Louisiana, a region losing land faster than almost anywhere on the planet. The resulting restored marsh and grasses will provide a thriving habitat for wildlife and provide a vital buffer against storm surge for nearby coastal communities.

...To Arizona

Heeding the call of the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition and many environmental groups, President Biden has designated the **Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument**. Baaj Nwaavjo means “where tribes roam” to the Havasupai Tribe, and I'tah Kukveni means “our ancestral footprints” to the Hopi.



Capping 15 years of work to protect this iconic place from new uranium mining, this historic move forever safeguards almost a million acres surrounding Grand Canyon National Park. Besides honoring these sacred indigenous landscapes, the new monument helps endangered species like the California Condor, Mexican Spotted Owl, and the Humpback Chub.

A Bit of Good News on Plastic Waste

Amazon just announced that they're phasing out plastic padded shipping envelopes in favor of recyclable options.

The earth faces a global plastic crisis. Plastic waste is devastating for wildlife, and its production is releasing jaw-dropping amounts of climate-warming greenhouse gas pollution. As the world's largest online retailer, Amazon's packaging is a big piece of the plastic waste

Polar Bears & Greenhouse Gases

A new study in *Science* shows a direct link between greenhouse gas emissions and the decline of polar bears, whose Arctic sea-ice habitat is melting away as the climate warms. This research could help close a massive loophole in the Endangered Species Act that lets the federal government ignore emissions when implementing the law. In 2008 the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service protected polar bears. But at the same time, it released an illegal rule exempting greenhouse gases — the bears' leading threat — from regulation under the Act.

Boundary Waters Wins over Mines

Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness - the lead organization in the **Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters** - plus ten local businesses and four conservation groups—won the lawsuit brought by Twin Metals Minnesota and Franconia Minerals filed in August against the Boundary Waters Protection Act. They sought to force the renewal of terminated mining leases, prospecting permits, and a mine planned next to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Twin Metals' lawsuit was an attempt to revive its rejected plan to build their dangerous sulfide-ore copper mine along rivers, lakes, and streams that flow directly into the Wilderness.

Globally 44% of plastic is used for packaging and is tossed almost as soon as it is used.

puzzle. That's why groups spent years working to get Amazon to get rid of unnecessary single-use plastic packaging -- and now they've started to listen.

A new legal agreement may help species like bull trout, pallid sturgeons, and Oregon spotted frogs. It requires the Environmental Protection Agency and Fish & Wildlife Service to consult and assess how applying pesticides to waters — like rivers and lakes — could hurt protected plants and animals.

Fall Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2023

Meeting programs are currently hybrid: i.e. in person or by zoom. Field Trips are outdoors and obviously in person. Bring binoculars if you have them. Extra pairs available if not.

- 8 a.m. each Thursday **Early Bird Hikes.** 8 a.m. Meet at the gravel parking lot at Celery Bog for a "what's new this week" bird hike at this local birding gem.
- Sept 14 Thursday **Program: You Bring it, We See it .** Presented by our members and friends who bring in pics to share and talk about. 7:15 p.m. Celery Bog Nature Center. There is a 6 p.m. **Carry in dinner** for anyone who would like to join others to eat and meet. Bring a dish to share, or just bring dinner for yourself. Society supplies plates, napkins and utensils as well as some beverages.
- Sept 17 Sunday **Get to the Point.** 6-8 p.m. SAS's inaugural **Point** event at Celery Bog. Several members will be at the point to chat with passer-bys and help them see/hear what birds are there or were their earlier.
- Sept 23 Saturday **Audubon at the Overlook.** 7:30-9:30 a.m. Prophetstown State Park overlook at the end of the park road. Stop by and chat to park goers and see what birds might be around.
- Oct 12 Thursday **Program: Birds of Mai-po Nature Preserve in Hong Kong.** Fritz Davis, birder & Prof. of History, Purdue. Meeting will be at 7:15 at Lilly Nature Center at Celery Bog. Dinner at 6 for those interested and, usually the speaker, at McAllister's in West Lafayette.
- Oct 21 Saturday **Get to the Point.** 8-10 a.m. then a **Waterfowl/Migration Field Trip** from 10 to noon. Waterfowl trip will meet at the gravel parking area at Celery Bog, WL.
- Oct 22 Sunday **Audubon at the Overlook** 1-3 p.m. Prophetstown State Park overlook at the end of the park road. Stop by and chat to park goers and see what's around.
- Nov 4 Saturday **Indiana Lakeshore!** This boom or bust locale can produce many uncommon species if the weather fronts cooperate: odd grebes, loons, gulls, etc. Anyone interested contact Barny Dunning for details. If not enough people are interested, it will be cancelled.
- Nov 9 Thursday **Program: Bird Safe Indy.** Austin Broadwater, Environmental Specialist will talk about the program and his experiences in making Indianapolis safer for birds Meeting will be at 7:15 at Lilly Nature Center at Celery Bog Nature Park. Dinner at 6 p.m. for those interested and, often the speaker, at McAllister's in West Lafayette
- Nov 18 Saturday Go to both or just one. **Get to the Point** from 8-10 a.m. at Celery Bog, and **Audubon at the Overlook** 3:30-5:30 p.m. at Prophetstown State Park.
- Dec 3 Sunday Jasper **Pulaski Crane Extravaganza.** May be 10,000 Sandhill Cranes present at this big staging ground before they head further south. 3:30 p.m. Check with Barny Dunning as we may have a bus for participants.
- Dec 14 Thursday **Program: Forestry for the Birds: achieving a truly bird friendly Maple Syrup Operation.** Rick Hines, owner of Springboro Farm. Learn about Rick's experiences that resulting in his current operation, including useful government programs. Meeting will be at 7:15 at Lilly Nature Center at Celery Bog. Dinner at 6 at McAllister's in W. Lafayette. Sign up for the **Lafayette and/or Willow-Slough Bird Counts with Ed Hopkins** starting at 6 p.m. before the meeting to get an area of the CBC circle to cover.
- Dec 16 Saturday **Lafayette Christmas Bird Count. (CBC)** Cover your area. Any bird seen/heard in the count circle during the 24 hours of the 16th can be put on the list. Compilation party in evening. Note: this is the longest continuous CBC in Indiana.

What an Owl Knows

What an Owl Knows by Jennifer Ackerman is a major 2023 publication event for birdwatchers. This book is so good that you may want to run to your local bookseller or put your name on the waiting list at the public library. The publisher is Penguin Press.

Short, well-written chapters cover the natural history of the owls worldwide, including dramatic adventures as she accompanies scientists who conduct field studies in all kinds of terrain, from forest to Arctic barrens. Dozens of photographs illustrate the various species. Recent discoveries and contemporary threats to owls' habitat alternate with a few chapters on wildlife rehabilitation centers and the veterinary medicine that bird specialists do to save owls that have encountered motor vehicles.

Because owls use tree hollows and, in some cases, nesting boxes, a lot of research sites and banding work have yielded answers to some of the "mysteries" of the owls' life cycles. Courting and breeding, owl "talk," their mating, egg incubation, fledging, and migration are the central parts of the book.

The style of the summary reports is excellent. Ackerman uses lay language to highlight and synthesize the best research published in journals from ethnobiology to forestry and wildlife.

Readers of nature books know the author Jennifer Ackerman very well. She wrote the best-selling *Genius of Birds* and *The Bird Way: A New Look at How Birds Talk, Work, Play, Parent and Think* (2020). She also wrote *Birds by the Shore* (2019). The publisher lists major awards on the flyleaf of the book: a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship; a grant from the Sloan Foundation, and a Bunting fellowship.

Local public libraries have ordered this book. Both the West Lafayette and Tippecanoe public libraries have copies of her *The Bird Way*. Tippecanoe has *Birds by the Shore*.

Review by Karen Griggs, Ph.D.



Protection Restored For Tiny Desert Owl

Thanks to multiple petitions plus several lawsuits by the *Center for Biological Diversity*, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has once again granted protected status to Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls under the Endangered Species Act, 17 years after illegally stripping away their original safeguards.

Threatened by habitat destruction and fragmentation, climate change, and invasive species, the owls first won protection five years after a 1992 Center petition. But when developers sued, the owls lost their protection in 2006. The Center has fought to restore it ever since.

Cactus ferruginous pygmy owls live in Arizona, Texas and Mexico. They are named for the saguaro cacti in which they nest, their rusty-colored stripes, and lastly, their small stature — usually under 7 inches. They're small but bold, preying on birds twice their size and feeding lizards to their chicks.

Most Diversity Per Acre

Porto Santo, a tiny island in the Canary Islands, has a richness of species per acre greater than any other site in the world. The island hosts 15 endemic plant taxa and 104 land snail species.

Access is via a two hour ferry trip going NE of Madeira towards the West African coast. The island is like entering another world. It doesn't fit most people's idea of great habitat for plants or wildlife. It consists of extensive sandy beaches and nearly barren hills. The landscape is closer to the arid scenery of the two easternmost Canary islands, Lanzarote and Fuerteventura.

The Fish and Wildlife Service just removed the Golden Paintbrush from the endangered species list because the plant has successfully recovered. A beautiful plant of the pacific northwest, it is the latest success story for the Act which turned 50 this year.



Puffins in the News

The large showy Tufted Puffin's bills appears to help them shed heat generated by their energy intensive commutes between fishing grounds and their nests.

A study in the *Journal of Experimental Biology* used thermal imaging to measure and compare heat lost by their beaks verses their bodies. The beaks shed heat faster and accounted for 10-18% of heat exchange although they were only 6% of the bird's surface area.

Atlantic Puffins, a close relative, have been documented to use sticks as implements to scratch themselves, thus joining the short list of tool-using animals.

Ecuador's Choco Andes

At the intersection of two of the world's most diverse bio-regions, Ecuador's Chocó-Andes is truly one of the most amazing ecosystems. It is also one of the most threatened.

In 2006, while surveying cloudforests in Ecuador's Chocó-Andes, ornithologist Olaf Jahna noted a pocket-sized bird, which turned out to be a Black-Legged Puffbird, one of Ecuador's rarest hummingbirds, a Critically Endangered species known only from one site. Twelve years later BirdLife's Ecuadorian partner Aves y Conservación returned to the area. Thanks to support from BirdLife's Conservation Leadership Programme, a team extensively surveyed the area, recording the puffleg at four separate locations across the highlands of the Intag-Toisán Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA). Another bird found there was the Black-and-chestnut Eagle (thought to number fewer than 1,000 individuals).

Given its rich natural and cultural importance, protecting these forests is a priority of BirdLife and its two Ecuadorian partners, Aves y Conservación and Fundación Jocotoco. Excitingly, they are in the process of boosting their work having recently developed a *Conservation Investment Strategy*, a comprehensive 10-year plan for the protection of these rugged, wet forests.

Along with being one of the world's most biodiverse regions, the Chocó-Andes is also one of the most threatened. Deforestation and land use change have led to more than 60% of the forests being lost to expanding palm oil plantations and cattle pastures, plus industrial logging and mining. In the lowland forests just three large remnants remain. Mining, a key economic sector in Ecuador, is an increasing threat with around 90 large-scale concessions. The cloudforests of Intag Valley – where the sub-population of Black-breasted Puffleg was rediscovered – is a particular target, a string of concessions being proposed in the area since the 1990s. These have been arduously countered by the local communities defending their land.

In the latest case in March 2023, the provincial court ruled against a large-scale copper mining project in the heart of the Intag-Toisán IBA, citing that the communities' constitutional right to consultation had been violated, as had the rights of nature. The ruling came after months of hearings and delays in a case led by the local communities – with support from the Biodiversity Area Red Flag group – against the concession. The ruling is a testament to the power of local and Indigenous communities, but it also highlights the urgency of safeguarding these forests. To do so, the not for profit BirdLife, and its Ecuadorian partners brought together more than 40 stakeholders to develop the strategy of protection.

Demonstrating the collaborative spirit needed for 21st century conservation, the stakeholders worked alongside the leading Ecuadorian ornithologists and identified 11 flagship species, using them to earmark more than 850,000ha of priority forests to protect and restore. The Conservation Investment Strategy also outlines the major threats facing the 11 species, identifying nine strategies to reduce the threats, ranging from creating protected areas and restoring key habitat to supporting local communities in legally defending their lands.



Choco Toucan
one of
63 birds
endemic
to the
Chaco

Bisons & Plant Diversity

Bison reintroduced into tallgrass prairies increase plant species diversity by 86 percent compared to areas where the animals don't graze, reports Kansas State University biologists in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Large animals (megafauna) have cascading effects on populations, communities, and ecosystems. The magnitude of these effects is often unknown because native megafauna are missing from most ecosystems.

The authors found that reintroducing bison—a formerly dominant megafauna and the national mammal of the United States—doubles plant diversity in a tallgrass prairie. These plant communities had few nonnative species and were resilient to an extreme drought.

Domesticated megafauna (cattle), which replaced native herbivores in many grasslands, produced less than half of this increase in plant species richness.



Nature Notes & News

- Ed Hopkins has a migrating Common Tern at the Bicentennial Nature Area on July 8.
- On July 14 Fritz Davis saw one of the Mississippi Kites at Celery Bog, and on July 21 a Bonaparte's Gull and a fall migrating Solitary Sandpiper.
- Nicholas Glassmaker found a pair of Black-Crowned Night-Herons at the bog July 22nd.
- A Barn Owl was reported from Pine Creek Gamebird Habitat area by Mark & Kyle Arvin on July 30. Other people have since checked without seeing the bird. Everyone should be careful about disturbing a species like this, which is State Endangered.
- Around this time Barny noted a number of rare birds were in Indiana, including Roseate Spoonbill and Limpkin. "After last summer's 'Limpkin invasion', there are individuals of this species all over the Midwest".
- Fritz Davis had 4 Caspian Terns at the Bog on the August 4 and 2 migrating Black Terns the next day at the Bicentennial NA where Ed Hopkins had a Semipalmated Plover.
- Another sighting was Mark Arvin's pair of late migrating (or maybe nesting?!) Black-and-white Warblers at Martell Forest. On Aug 5 he had 5 immature Little Blue Herons at the main wetland basin of the Purdue Wildlife Area along with a Sedge Wren. On Aug 6 he discovered an immature Yellow-crowned Night-Heron near the short boat dock there. Fritz Davis and Barny Dunning went and saw the Little Blues but missed the

night-heron. Later that day Barny had 2 Caspian Terns at Bicentennial Nature Area.

- Barny Dunning wrote on Aug 6 "This is the time of year when herons and their relatives wander widely from their colonies post-breeding. There have been scattered reports of Snowy Egrets and Little Blue Herons in the area over the last 2 weeks." Many were at the Bicentennial Nature Area at small ponds and not the main pond and many reports were for 5 immature Little Blues (immatures are white) and one Snowy Egret.
- Visiting Mulvey Pond on the 6th Fritz Davis saw all 4 members of the resident Sandhill Crane family plus 2 Spotted, 2 Semipalmated and 37 Least Sandpipers. The following day Alex Kittleson had 4 Pectoral and 2 Solitary Sandpipers there.
- Fritz Davis revisited Purdue Wildlife Area on the 7th, and found the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron he had missed earlier.
- The next day Jonathan Bontrager had 2 Sandhill Cranes there, while Karl Woods "catch" was a migrating Olive-sided Flycatcher at Celery Bog.
- Luke McCarty had a Little Blue Heron at the Purdue Wildlife Area on Aug 9.
- August 12 Alex Kittleson turned up a Snowy Egret at Celery Bog.
- Roxie Easter enjoyed August 22. She writes, "Blackburnian Warbler came down to do some foraging in the back garden. I also observed the Cape May Warbler, Baltimore Oriole and many Eastern Wood Peewee's. A hot one out there but still a very good bird day!:"
- Two days later reporting on the Early Bird Walk at Celery

Bog. Barny Dunning wrote, "Given the heat, humidity and overcast skies, I was not expecting much — but we were surprised to have our first cluster of fall migrants." A hackberry tree south of the southern observation deck had. 1-2 Chestnut-sided Warblers, 1 Black-throated Green Warbler, 1 Magnolia Warbler, 1 American Redstart, 1-2 Tennessee Warblers, and a "baypoll" warbler. Associated birds were a Warbling Vireo, 2 Carolina Chickadees, & 5 Cedar Waxwings. He notes: "The Merlin app said there was an Orchard Oriole in the mix, but we didn't confirm that."

- In mid-August, Susan Ulrich was surprised to see a male Ring-necked Pheasant with three half-grown young crossing Division road between two soybean fields.
- Becky Theller went birding at Bicentennial Nature Area Sept 3 and found 4 visiting Black Terns.



Black Tern
By Rick Read

- Barny Dunning reported 13 people came to the Sept 7 Early Bird Walk. Lighting was poor but people got to see 9 species of warblers. Vivek spotted a Canada Warbler and there were multiple Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, Magnolia, & Chestnut-sided. Other migrants included a Philadelphia Vireo, Swainson's Thrush (Vivek had Veerys before the walk) and several Empidonax flycatchers." The highlight was a Common Nighthawk roosting in the walnut tree next the nature center. It put on a show, spreading its wings regularly to impress a red squirrel that was intruding on its perch.

Urban Greenways Help with Carbon

During summer, trees, grasses and other vegetation in New York City and nearby communities may play a larger than expected role counteracting human-caused carbon emissions. Scientists at Columbia University used high-resolution imagery to map urban vegetation and calculate the daily and seasonal changes, or “flux,” in carbon the plants capture during photosynthesis. They found that on some summer afternoons, carbon absorbed by vegetation may temporarily equal up to 40 percent of the area’s carbon emissions from all sources, or almost all carbon dioxide generated at those times by motor vehicles. Aerial radar revealed many pockets of previously undocumented vegetation. “There is a lot more greenery than we thought,” says co-author and Columbia atmospheric chemist Dandan Wei. In *Environmental Research Letters*, she and her colleagues suggest that without the greenery, overall carbon levels would be greater in summer. “If it matters in New York City, it probably matters everywhere else,” says Wei.

Bacteria May Aid Endangered Hawaiian Birds

Hawaiian forest birds are vanishing, in part due to mosquitoes which managed to reach the islands and are spreading avian malaria. With climate change mosquitoes are able to survive at higher elevations escalating the problem. A particular strain of *Wolbachia*, a bacteria found in insects, may help. If male and female mosquitoes carry strains that are incompatible, the eggs do not hatch, reducing their numbers.

The method has helped to control mosquitoes carrying human diseases and is now being investigated by the Nature Conservancy to see if it will help with the eight species of mosquitoes on the islands.



Maui Parrotbill —Kiwiku

The Company You Keep

How long a mammal lives may depend on the company it keeps. Analyzing scientific papers on body masses, life spans and lifestyles of 974 species, Chinese zoologists found that mammals living in groups generally outlive solitary mammals.

This finding, published in *Nature Communications*, held true for a wide array of species, from group-dwelling and long-lived golden snub-nosed monkeys, naked mole rats, and horseshoe bats to solitary and shorter-lived giant armadillos and short-tailed shrews. The scientists suggest group living may reduce mortality rates by limiting the risks of predation and starvation. But the strong and stable social bonds formed among group members “also have the power to enhance longevity,” writes lead author Xuming Zhou, an evolutionary biologist, at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

By analyzing brain tissue from 94 species—including solitary, pair-living and group-living mammals—the researchers identified 31 genes linked both to longevity and a species social system. Results suggest that mammalian life spans and social systems may have evolved together.

Merlin's Goes Global

Info from *Living Bird Magazine*

Merlin, the popular (and free) bird app for cell phones which was introduced in 2009 by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, just reached a milestone: it now serves a digital field guide and bird identification assistant anywhere you might be in the world. Its latest update this spring of nearly 600 species found in the Philippines means it now covers 10,315 species of birds around the world. In earlier years, birders carted multiple heavy bird books with them to help identify species in exotic locations. Now a simple cell phone can do most of it.

Starting as an idea for a simple way to help people figure out “what’s that Bird I’m seeing”, Merlin has morphed into an incredible tool for bird watchers globally. “The expansion of Merlin to cover all of the world’s birds is really an amazing accomplishment by the global birding community”, said Merlin project leader Drew Weber. All the photos and audio recordings used to ‘train’ Merlin’s identification skills came from partners and individuals from around the globe. Plus, with the collaboration of local birders in 34 countries, Cornell has developed customized bird ID packs in Merlin that are available in 16 languages, including Spanish, Hebrew, Korean, and French. **It is amazing, but not surprising that Merlin has been downloaded over 12 million times.**

2023 Global May Bird Count May 13

Species Name:	War Co	Tip Co	Species Name	War Co	Tip Co	Species Name	War Co	Tip Co
Trumpeter Swan	2	0	Blue Jay	33	63	Lincoln Sparrow	1	7
Canada Goose	76	243	American Crow	90	68	Swamp Sparrow	0	1
Mute Swan	1	2	Horned Lark	9	5	White-throated Sparrow	0	4
Wood Duck	16	59	Purple Martin	1	15	White-crowned Sparrow	12	18
Mallard	7	62	Tree Swallow	16	70	Eastern Towhee	24	26
Blue-winged Teal	6	7	No Rough-winged Swallow	18	20	Yellow-breasted Chat	8	23
Ring-necked Duck	0	5	Bank Swallow	13	30	Bobolink	5	7
Hooded Merganser	1	0	Cliff Swallow	128	116	Eastern Meadowlark	64	30
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	5	Barn Swallow	87	57	Common Grackle	175	83
Wild Turkey	15	10	Carolina Chickadee	7	33	Brown-headed Cowbird	99	110
Northern Bobwhite	5	5	Tufted Titmouse	48	50	Orchard Oriole	9	14
Double-crested Cormorant	0	21	Red-breasted Nuthatch	0	1	Baltimore Oriole	50	61
Great Blue Heron	11	43	White-breasted Nuthatch	19	25	Summer Tanager	4	7
Great Egret	0	13	Carolina Wren	16	26	Scarlet Tanager	15	8
Green Heron	6	13	House Wren	42	69	Northern Cardinal	102	126
Black-crowned Night-heron	0	1	Sedge Wren	3	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	30	29
Black Vulture	0	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	1	Blue Grosbeak	3	4
Turkey Vulture	90	93	Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	42	44	Indigo Bunting	89	87
Osprey	1	1	Gray Catbird	36	89	Dickcissel	62	35
Bald Eagle	12	7	Mockingbird	2	2	Total birds counted	3513	4254
Cooper's Hawk	1	4	Brown Thrasher	16	19	Species Reported	139	154
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	15	Eastern Bluebird	9	14			
Red-tailed Hawk	5	11	Veery	10	7			
American Kestrel	5	1	Gray-checked Thrush	0	4			
Sandhill Crane	1	0	Swainson's Thrush	8	59			
Sora	0	2	Wood Thrush	26	41			
American Coot	0	1	American Robin	122	210			
Semipalmated Plover	2	6	European Starling	88	114			
Killdeer	49	38	Cedar Waxwing	0	22			
Spotted Sandpiper	5	15	House Sparrow	130	92			
Solitary Sandpiper	2	7	House Finch	16	91			
Greater Yellowlegs	1	0	American Goldfinch	62	77			
Lesser Yellowlegs	16	3	Blue-winged Warbler	6	3			
Semipalmated Sandpiper	8	2	Golden-winged Warbler	1	0			
Least Sandpiper	0	11	Tennessee Warbler	67	63			
Pectoral Sandpiper	2	0	Orange-crowned Warbler	2	9			
American Woodcock	8	1	Nashville Warbler	1	0			
Ring-billed Tern	0	10	Northern Parula	24	26			
Caspian Tern	0	3	Yellow Warbler	35	49			
Forster's Tern	0	4	Chestnut-sided Warbler	2	5			
Rock Pigeon	17	14	Magnolia Warbler	3	8			
Eurasian Collared Dove	6	0	Cape May Warbler	1	1			
Mourning Dove	149	84	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1	3			
Black-billed Cuckoo	0	4	Black-throated Green	2	5			
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	6	9	Blackburnian Warbler	5	2			
Eastern Screech Owl	0	1	Yellow-throated Warbler	9	8			
Great Horned Owl	1	1	Pine Warbler	1	1			
Barred Owl	2	3	Prairie Warbler	2	1			
Common Nighthawk	0	14	Palm Warbler	0	1			
Chimney Swift	26	71	Bay-breasted Warbler	2	8			
Ruby-thrt Hummingbird	10	7	Blackpoll	10	17			
Belted Kingfisher	3	4	Black & white Warbler	9	1			
Red-headed Woodpecker	27	21	American Redstart	16	25			
Red-bellied Woodpecker	37	53	Prothonotary Warbler	2	4			
Downy Woodpecker	10	25	Ovenbird	2	5			
Hairy Woodpecker	3	6	Northern Waterthrush	2	4			
Northern Flicker	8	14	Louisiana Waterthrush	5	3			
Pileated Woodpecker	9	13	Kentucky Warbler	11	8			
Eastern Wood-Pewee	39	32	Connecticut Warbler	0	1			
Acadian Flycatcher	9	7	Mourning Warbler	0	1			
Willow Flycatcher	1	2	Common Yellowthroat	87	78			
Least Flycatcher	2	14	Hooded Warbler	1	0			
Eastern Phoebe	14	17	Wilson's Warbler	0	3			
Great Crested Flycatcher	56	31	Canada Warbler	0	3			
Eastern Kingbird	17	18	Chipping Sparrow	8	45			
White-eyed Vireo	4	16	Field Sparrow	4	54			
Bell's Vireo	1	1	Lark Sparrow	15	5			
Yellow-throated Vireo	10	11	Vesper Sparrow	24	0			
Blue-headed Vireo	1	2	Savannah Sparrow	0	4			
Warbling Vireo	31	46	Grasshopper Sparrow	37	4			
Philadelphia Vireo	1	1	Henslow's Sparrow	66	5			
Red-eyed Vireo	37	40	Song Sparrow	4	65			

Overall 164 species were found in the two counties, led by three species of Terns and 32 species of warblers (33 if Chat's hadn't been moved between Towhee and Bobwhite).

Tippecanoe found 25 species not found in Warren County, and Warren county found 10 species not found in Tippecanoe.



Golden-winged Warbler
Roxie Easter

11 Warren Participants: Brian, Amanda, Liam, Phoebe, & Callum Beheler; Shelly fForan, Ellen Tobias, Susan Ulrich (compiler); Kent Walters, Sage Walters-Sharma. Roen Walters-Sharma.

24 Tippecanoe Participants: Fritz Smith, Chuck Tuttle, Barry Dunning (compiler), Larry & Becky Theller, Mark Arvin, Joey Mayfield +4 others, John Skene, Barb Brown, Jill Evans, Tatana Sato, Trumand Best, Sara Coapstick, Danielle Shively, Nicolas Renteria, Chris Wiles, Kristen Jones, Holden Green, Peter Dy-Liacco, and Ashley Baldwin.

Our newsletter, *The Warbler*, has gone digital.

To subscribe to the **free** digital version of *The Warbler*, enter the link below in a web browser or point your phone camera at the QR code to the right.

Either method takes you to a landing page where you can subscribe.

The newsletter has many interesting features about birding and conservation both regional and national. The calendar includes SAS events in our six-county region. The newsletter is released 4 times a year as a PDF. We will no longer mail a paper version.



https://mailchi.mp/0e91de230b4e/sas_newsletter

Sycamore Audubon Society

a local Indiana chapter of the National Audubon Society serving members in Tippecanoe, Warren, Benton, Clinton, White, and Carroll counties

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Blue Carbon

Blue carbon is the carbon that is captured and stored by the world's oceans and coastal ecosystems. To date, that has accounted for **30% of all human carbon emissions worldwide**. One problem, is that the oceans themselves are warming, affecting the population of seaweeds such as kelp that gobble up carbon. The warming also affects the ocean's ability to *store* carbon, and if it continues to warm, it may begin releasing carbon instead.

Coastal wetlands have been disappearing. Mangrove forests, salt marshes and seagrass meadows sequester carbon 10 times faster than a mature tropical forest, but they are disappearing 4 times faster. As they continue being degraded by development and overfishing, they will change from being carbon sinks to being carbon and methane producers.

Mangrove forests are historically one of the most efficient global carbon capture areas. Unfortunately, many have been lost to development but now efforts are underway to restore areas and to slow that loss. Below is a picture showing a mangrove forest.

Salt marshes also sequester carbon at a much higher rate than land ecosystems. But their numbers have dropped 50% globally. Restoration is possible and is very effective.

Seagrass meadows occupy only a tiny fraction of the ocean's total coastal areas but store over 10% of the ocean's buried organic carbon.



Tidbits

- ◆ The word "gorget"—which is applied to the throats of hummingbirds—comes from the name for a piece of armor that protected the neck, shoulders, nape and upper chest .
- ◆ The production of the eggshell in Passerine birds takes place mainly at night.
- ◆ Depending on the species, eggshells can have from a few hundred to tens of thousands of pores.
- ◆ Air cells in newly laid eggs are smaller than those in older eggs so young eggs float in water while older ones sink.
- ◆ There are over 100 antimicrobial enzymes found in an egg's albumen.
- ◆ Up to 10% of calcium used for eggshell formation can come from the bones of the female bird.
- ◆ The egg of an Ostrich is the largest living cell on earth.
- ◆ The Black-capped Petrel, endemic to the Caribbean, is locally known as "diablotin" or "little devil" because of its eerie nocturnal calls.
- ◆ Over half (51%) of all known fish species live in freshwater. 30% of them (17% of all fish species) are threatened.



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Big news!

The Biden administration canceled leases that were issued under the Trump administration for oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, eliminating a significant threat to drill within the Refuge's 1.6 million-acre Coastal Plain. But this does not include the Willow Project, a climate-wrecking disaster expanding drilling in another part of Alaska's Arctic.

Barny's Email Musing on a State Study of Urban Goose Control

You know how we all say that the breeding Canada Geese in our area are non-migratory (gratuitous Monty Python reference: "non-mi-grate-tory") because of the history of how the species was reintroduced into the state? Well I am reading a new paper published in the *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, giving an update on a multi-year study being done on urban goose populations around Indianapolis. One of the goals of the study is to determine the impact of population removal of nuisance geese. The study hopes to determine if goose "depopulation" efforts merely create an opening where other geese can move in, reducing the effectiveness of the control program.

One way they are doing this is to find breeding females on the nest, capture them and mark them with geolocators (high tech similar to radio transmitters, but you have to recapture the bird later to download), then destroy the nest. The hope is that the females will then abandon breeding for the season and move to a location at which they will molt their flight feathers. Such a movement is called a "molt-migration" and is becoming more and more common as we gain the technology to follow birds like this. The hypothesis of the goose study is that females with failed nests may move to the depopulated areas during the molt-migration, reducing the effectiveness of the efforts for local control.



Results so far is that few of the females really showed a movement pattern that fits the molt migration idea. But the two that did – one went to the shores of Hudson Bay, while the other went to southern James Bay in Canada.

**Remember when I said our geese are assumed to be non-migratory?
What are they doing in sub-Arctic Canada?**