

Sycamore Warbler

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Seven Swans a Swimming?

It's a long shot, but you never know what may show up on the Lafayette or Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). For any of you unfamiliar with Christmas Bird Counts, they are a one day (midnight to midnight) count held once a year in a specific designated area. Most are 15 mile diameter circles but others may cover a property such as the Crane Naval Depot here in Indiana.

The Count area is usually divided up into smaller areas, each of which is covered by an individual or a small group. The results of all the birds seen on or over the count area on count day are tallied by the compiler. Ed Hopkins is the compiler for both counts in our area.

These counts were started years ago as an alternative to Christmas Bird Hunts where people went out and shot the birds they saw.



- The **Lafayette CBC will be Saturday, December 16th.** There are three ways to sign up. Email Ed at birder4in@gmail.com, call him at **765-463-5927**, or come early to SAS's December meeting and Holiday Party to get the forms and an area to cover.
- The **Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserve CBC is usually January 1 or 2.** Check with Ed as above if you are interested. This count covers parts of Illinois and Indiana.

Water Issues and Legislation: LEAP & Wetlands

Questions about the LEAP water diversion from Tippecanoe County to the Lebanon area continue to grow as does the opposition. Local State legislators are drafting bills to introduce in the General Assembly and have also met with the Governor. Whether any bill on water diversions or a needed comprehensive water management plan for Indiana will even get a hearing, is uncertain.

Locally, the Tippecanoe Commissioners introduced and passed a new ordinance dealing with water diversions. Entitled "High Water Export and Radial Collector Well Moratorium", the ordinance needs to pass a second hearing on Monday Dec 4th. It creates a nine month moratorium which would be used to study the LEAP issue in more depth. During that period no person could export high volumes of water from Tippecanoe County and no Radial Collector wells would be allowed to operate. High Volume is defined as 5 million gallons a day on average whether from a single well or multiple wells or single or multiple pipes (note: this is a summary of a 4.5 page document that contains much more details than reported here).

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Wetland Protection:

In other action, a new state **Wetlands Bill** is being worked on. No details as of yet, but the tentative name of the bill is **Streamlined Development and Flooding Resilience Act**. It would need to get a hearing, pass committee, and then get heard and pass a vote in both chambers.

For those of you who like to follow bills, the **Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC)** is excellent at keeping track of good and bad environmental bills proposed by our legislators and sending out alerts when pro or con letters to legislators are needed. Contact them to get on their mailing list.

Chapter News

No Partridge or Pear Tree

..but there should be plenty of goodies at the December 14 Audubon Meeting which is also our **Holiday Cookie Party**. Bring something to share or just bring an appetite. Come a little early and you can not only sample the goodies but sign up to get an area for the Lafayette &/or Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserve Christmas Bird Count. See p. 1.

Another Goodbye

This time it is Karen Griggs, SAS's corresponding secretary, who is leaving. She is getting ready to sell her house in West Lafayette and move back to northeast Indiana where she owns a house her daughter had lived in until recently. Her daughter moved to be near her new job leaving the house vacant.

Thank you, Karen, for your efforts on behalf of Sycamore Audubon Society. Karen's earlier environmental activities go back to the early days of *Save the Dunes*. She was also active in the Izaak Walton League and other environmental groups in the Fort Wayne area.

She isn't the only member of her family interested in birds. One of her relatives just got an award from the Fort Wayne Izaak Walton League for building and installing 200 wood duck nest boxes.

Board Donations

SAS's board voted to donate \$500 to the City of West Lafayette to pay for bird seed for feeders at the Lilly Nature Center.

The board also voted to donate \$500 to the Indiana Audubon Society to support the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival which is held in May, along with a donation of \$560 which will pay for a Geotag for the **Chasing Melody** project, this is IAS's Motus Wood Thrush Study, mentioned in the last **Warbler**.

In Other Board Action

In November the board voted to sign on to a letter of support of

The **Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act of 2023**.

This bipartisan Act (H.R. 4389) would increase funding for the existing **Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA)**.

Since 2002, **NMBCA** has helped fund 700+ bird conservation projects in 43 countries.

NOTE: As an individual, SAS encourages you to also send a letter in favor of H.R. 4389 to your your US Representative and Senators.

Less than 40 species of birds that occur in Indiana every year are birds that are *not migratory*. All the other hundreds migrate, although not all migrate to countries outside of the United States.

Get to the Point off & Running

The first "Get to the Point" event on Sept 17 can be labeled a success. Ten people showed up, 6 members, one Purdue student who saw the event announcement, plus 3 people passing by who stopped to talk about birds.

The group saw 37 species of birds overall, including some seen while walking to or from the point. The highlights included 3 Great Egrets, Northern Shovelers which were the first-of-season for the trip leader, Barny Dunning, eight species of warblers, plus "Grayson" - the gray phase Eastern Screech-Owl in the usual spot it shares with Ruby.

Participants also saw a pair of swimming Muskrats.



Male Wood Duck, by Chuck Tuttle

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.

Invasives: a Global Problem YOU can help with Locally

The problem of invasive species around the globe continues to grow. A recent international report backed by the United Nations estimates that invasive species cost a minimum of **\$423-billion** globally a year. The amount has quadrupled at least every 10 years since 1970 and \$423 is probably a vast underestimate.

The financial damage is caused by destroying crops, polluting waterways, spreading diseases, wiping out native species, and making changes that lead to devastating natural disasters.

Of the 37,000 known plant, animal, insect and other species that have been introduced around the globe, 3,500, almost 10% are known to be invasive, Another 200 potentially invasive species show up in new sites every year thanks to human action.

Locally people can help by not buying and planting invasive species of plants, bringing back possibly infected material from other states to or within Indiana, e.g. firewood and dried plant materials; making sure to clean your boat and trailer before putting it into a new body of water; checking your car after vacations to look for unwanted seeds and insects; and on and on. You may have invasive plants in your landscaping whose seeds are spreading into nearby parks, fields, and natural areas. One of these



is Burning Bush (left: burning bush understory invading a woods). Just grit your teeth, take out the invasives and find some lovely native plants to put in their place.

BE AWARE DON'T BE A VECTOR

There are local groups working to remove invasive plants which can use your help. SAS's RIP Squad and TICT (Tippecanoe Invasive Cooperative Taskforce) for example. Come to one or more of their workdays and learn how to identify the most common invasives plus how to control them. One relatively new invasive, Callery Pear with its lovely white spring flowers, isn't so lovely as it spreads rapidly in local brushy & forest areas. It acts like it will be the new 'bush honeysuckle', by taking away valuable habitat from other species.



Callery Pear spreading in a field

Indiana's Wetland Challenge

As birders, we know that protecting and increasing wetland habitat is crucial for birds and other native species. The Indiana **Land Protection Alliance** (ILPA), formed by the state's Land Trusts and related groups, is asking all Hoosiers to step up and visit one of these special ecosystems and while there take a picture of yourself or selves.



The idea is to visit a nearby wetland, snap a picture with a sign saying "we love wetlands" or something similar, and email it to ILPA. ILPA will turn your photo into a postcard and send it to your local legislators. The idea is to This will let legislators know that wetlands are important a constituent. Land trusts around the state have erected special pro-wetland structures people can use for taking a picture (See photo: Step behind the opening and get your photo taken, no need to bring your own sign.). Locally these can be found at NICHES Miulvey Pond and Prophetstown State Park. There is also one at Kankakee Sands and 33 other sites in Indiana. Get out and let your legislators know **WE CARE ABOUT WETLANDS**. And, as waterfowl and other species are migrating now, you might see a great bird on your visit. <https://www.protectindianaland.org/>

Sycamore Audubon Binoculars

Did you know SAS has a supply of binoculars that can be used for various educational activities? The most recent use was in September when Megan Gunn, an Outreach Specialist at Purdue used them for some bird watching sessions during the Great Lakes Sea Grant network meeting.

If you have an activity where binoculars would be useful contact Barny Dunning or another board member.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Bird Friendlier Buildings

DC and neighboring Maryland are joining New York City and passing bird friendly building legislation to reduce the threat of bird window strikes and generally make cities safer for birds. This makes nineteen jurisdictions and states that have enacted bird-friendly building legislation.

Starting in Oct 2024 buildings will be required to use materials with a **Threat Factor** of 30 or less. The **Threat Factor** is one developed by the *American Bird Conservancy* for the visibility of window materials. The rating for DC corresponds to a reduction of at least 50 percent mortality compared to unaltered glass.

Maryland and DC's Acts offer subsidies to help offset any extra costs for owners who have trouble affording the higher price. In Maryland all newly built, acquired, or renovated building which get 51% or more funding from the state will be required to follow LEED standards for bird protective windows and shielded night lighting.

Avian Flu Strikes Condors

California Condors are facing a new problem: Avian Flu. In April the US fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) disclosed that 21 condors from the Utah-Arizona flock died in one month. Seventeen tested positive for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

Immediately the Peregrine Fund, an Idaho based nonprofit, partnered with USFWS to help monitor wild condors and test them for the disease. Infected birds were taken to wildlife hospitals. So far there have been no additional condor deaths caused by HPAI.



California Condor
in flight

Gamechanger for Methane Pollution

For years the Environmental Defense Fund, a non-profit, has been concerned about the danger Methane poses to global warming. Now, thanks to their donors and staff, **MethaneSAT**, a new satellite is launching next year. It can pinpoint methane hot spots worldwide to get data that companies and governments need to help reduce and control this potent greenhouse gas.

Data provided will be free of charge to the public, regulators, policymakers and companies. It will show where work is needed and who are the good guys and who aren't.

Funding for Hawaii's Endangered Birds

US Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced a new commitment of nearly \$16-million in funds designated for the *Hawaiian Forest Bird Conservation Keystone Initiative*. The money will fuel efforts to restore the dwindling endemic Hawaiian songbird populations, including Kiwikiu and Akikiki populations which are on the brink of extinction.

Wildlife Groups Sue the FAA

The Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) is being sued by a consortium of Wildlife Organizations over continuing harm being done by SpaceX. They contend that the FAA did not sufficiently analyze and mitigate the environmental harm done by the super heavy SpaceX launches at the Boca Chica site which is within one of America's most biologically diverse regions.

At least 9 rockets have exploded in the last 5 years, including the one super heavy rocket that exploded in April. In 2022 an engine test caused a fire that burned 64 acres in a nearby wildlife area. Another fire burned 150 acres in 2019.

The FAA is allowing SpaceX to launch 20 of their Super Heavy space rockets each year for the next 5 years putting areas of a state park and national wildlife refuge at risk. It also reduces public access to public lands through road closures. These are estimated to be equal to thirty-four 24 hour days. The lawsuit was only filed after the FAA decided not to do a full environmental review of the problem.

Winter 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.

Chuck Tuttle and Larry Theller will hold unofficial *Early Bird Hikes* through December (cold weather permitting). Feel free to join them to see what can be found.

- Dec 3
Sunday** **Jasper Pulaski Crane Extravaganza.** Meet at Celery Bog at 3:30 p.m. to see the thousands of Sandhill Cranes present at this big staging ground before they head further south. Contact Barny Dunning about carpooling.
- Dec 14
Thursday** **Program: Forestry for the Birds: achieving a truly Bird Friendly Maple Syrup Operation.** Rick Hines, owner of Springboro Farm. This is also our *Holiday Cookie Party*. See p. 2. Come for the goodies and learn about Rick's experiences that resulted in his current maple sugar operation, including useful government programs he was able to use. Meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. at Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Nature Area. Dinner at 6 p.m. at Mcallister's in W. Lafayette. **Sign up for the Lafayette and/or Willow-Slough Bird Counts** with Ed Hopkins before the meeting to get an area that needs to be covered.
- Dec 16
Saturday** **Lafayette Christmas Bird Count.** 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.
- January 11
Thursday** **Program: Black Vulture Research Project.** Alex Dudley, President of the Purdue Chapter of the Wildlife Society. Alex is studying how Black Vultures constrict their home ranges with deer hunting. Black Vultures have traditionally been found in southern Indiana but are moving northward thanks to higher temperatures. They differ from our usual Turkey Vultures in habits and appearance. Learn more about this species new to our local area. Meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. at Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Nature Area. Dinner at 6 p.m. at Mcallister's in W. Lafayette.
- January 27
Saturday** **Winter Birds Field Trip.** 8:30 a.m. Celery Bog gravel parking lot carpool. A search for those winter specialties such as Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Rough-legged Hawks. wintering owls, plus other species being reported. SNOW? Contact Barny is weather iffy.
- Feb 8
Thursday** **Program: NICHES Properties: where birds, native plants and other species are welcome.** Shannon Stanis, NICHES Executive Director. Join us for an update on NICHES and its properties. Hear about work documenting plant diversity, invasive species removal efforts, and how SAS members can help provide species information for both NICHES new and older protected areas. Meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. at Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Nature Area. Dinner at 6 p.m. at Mcallister's in W. Lafayette.
- Feb 24
Saturday** **Early Waterfowl Field Trip.** Waterbirds are passing through earlier each year so this should be timed just right for those early species. Meet at Celery Bog gravel parking lot at 8 a.m. Sites visited will include Celery Bog, Bicentennial Nature Area and other local areas where birds are being reported. Half-day trip.
- March 14
Thursday** **Program: Speaker and title to be announced.** Starts at 7:15 p.m. at Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Nature Area. Dinner at 6 p.m. at Mcallister's in W. Lafayette.

'Living Bird' Available on Line

Every back issue of Living Bird magazine published by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology from 1962 to 2007 is now available on the internet at no charge. go to bit.ly/living-bird-bhl. Issues from 2008 on are available at Livingbird.org.

Shrinking Birds

Bird numbers are down, but individual birds are also shrinking in size. Back in 1979 an ornithologist at Chicago's Field Museum named David Willard, began picking up birds killed by window strikes at the McCormick Place convention center. He measured, recorded and stored them. They make up 20% of the museum's entire ornithology collection and are being used to help discover if a zoological principle called Bergmann's Rule holds true.

Bergmann's Rule is the generalization that warm-blooded animals, including birds, will be larger in cooler climates and smaller in warmer climates. As researchers began examining the 70,000 birds in the Field Museum's collection, they found that individuals from 52 bird species had shrunk in size by an average of 2.6% between 1978 and 2016.

Until the study began in 2019, no one had any idea that 52 of the most common birds species in North America had gotten smaller.

Fish Die-offs Rising

In June, SE Texas beaches were littered in dead fish. This was one of a number of mass die-offs causing concern among scientists and environmentalists about the health of fish in rivers and oceans around the world.

Another occurred on the Darling Baaka River in Australia. Here carcasses were so dense that the water turned murky green from the rotting flesh.

In these cases, as in most fish die-offs, the culprit is suffocation due to lack of oxygen in the water. All fish species aren't equally affected. "You get the native fish dying off sooner", says Quentin Grafton, director of Australian National University's Centre for Water Economics, Environment and Policy. More resilient invasive species take

their place. Consequently, fish die-offs contribute to a growing biodiversity crisis with one third of freshwater fish species threatened with extinction, Fish die-offs can happen naturally, following extreme weather like droughts or natural blooms of algae. But experts say that by disrupting water ecosystems human are making the die-offs worse, disproportionately affecting native fish, destroying habitats, and poisoning water. In the Darling-Baaka, most of the fish that died were bony herring, a native species. As they lay dead and dying in the water, invasive carp feasted on their bodies.

Disrupting the flow of water

Often, rivers lose oxygen because of human interference

in the surrounding ecosystems. A study showed the amount of water at Darling-Baaka declined rapidly with most of the reduction caused by excessive water for irrigation by upstream farms.

That kind of over-extraction, says Grafton, creates unhealthy" rivers that are vulnerable to extreme weather. For the Darling-Baaka, that came in the form of mass floods early in the year that led to an increase in the number of fish. The floods also washed soil and decaying plant matter into the river, causing a boom in the count of bacteria and microorganisms.

As the flood receded, the bacteria and microorganisms stripped the reduced river of oxygen, causing the already-large numbers of fish to suffocate.

Eyelashes?

Human eyelashes are modified hairs. Some birds do have structures that could be called eyelashes but are modified feathers, not hairs. A student is working with Cornell's Museum of Vertebrates to study bird "eyelashes". So far they have looked at 205 bird families and found 25 of them that have a least one example of lashes. To date, most of the species found possessing lashes tend to be nonmigratory, larger, and nonaquatic.

Why lashes? It is thought they help protect the eyes from particulates when flying, running or burrowing.

Bird Friendly Cacao

From Cornell's *Living Bird Magazine*

Twenty years ago the Smithsonian National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute established bird friendly coffee. Now it has expanded its certification program to include standards for cacao farming after working with a large private reserve named Zortal (the Spanish word for thrush). Zortal, a 1,019 acre property, was established 11 years ago to protect habitat for Neotropical migrants. Funds for its management come from sustainable cacao production within the reserve.

In 2021 Ruth Bennett, a research ecologist, published research in *Conservation Biology*, showing that cacao farms with 30-40% canopy cover and diverse shade trees had similar bird species diversity compared to the native undisturbed forests. This new certification program guarantees that 100% of the Cocoa in the labeled product comes from farms that protect forests and native shade trees. See if you can find one with the bird friendly certification next time you buy chocolate.



Red-backed Woodpecker
by Wes Homoya

Anyone Home?

The last nesting of a Black-capped Petrel on the island of Dominica was in 1862. However there have been recent sightings of Black-capped Petrels flying over the island giving rise to hope that they might still, or again, be nesting in remote areas.

Getting confirmation of nesting would allow formal protections to be put in place but searches so far haven't discovered any nests. This year they tried a new way to search: a dog named Africa. Africa, a springer spaniel, had been trained to find another species of petrel in Spain. Although Africa didn't sniff out any definitive burrows this year, she did help searchers zero in on potential areas for a try next year when she will have add training finding this species scent before searching.

Digging for Owls

This isn't some unusual underground crop or mining product. It turns out that the rapid growth of Cape Coral, Florida, has reduced the nesting habitat for the town's Burrowing Owls.

Under efforts spearheaded locally by Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife (CCFW), residents in the owl's area have volunteered to mark and monitor owl burrows and to dig "starter burrows" in their own yards. "It's important that people help dig burrows," says CCFW volunteer Jana Charvat. "Otherwise, there will be no room left for the owls. The owls like open sandy areas with good visibility.



Burrowing Owls

First Step a Success

A step forward has been made in the efforts to ensure the continued survival of the Blue-eyed ground Dove, one of the world's rarest birds. Native to central Brazil, only 16 individuals were believed to remain in the wild in 2018. In addition, females were laying few eggs, perhaps due to inbreeding, and only a few of the young survived because of heavy nest predation.

The precariousness of the species survival led to a decision to intervene before the species was lost. In 2019 a research team began carefully by removing two eggs with the hope of being able to rear the young successfully. Their first challenge was to provide the young birds with suitable food. In the wild, doves and pigeons feed their young crop milk, a substance the adults make in their crops. The parent bird opens its mouth so the young can stick their heads in to reach and feed on the substance. You may have seen local Mourning doves feeding their young in this manner.

Feeding the young could have been a major problem, but luckily, the Toledo Zoo and other groups had developed an artificial crop milk — essentially a pigeon baby formula. It worked for the baby Blue-eyed Ground-doves so a captive breeding program may be able to bring this species back from the brink.

Nature Notes & News

- A Broad-winged Hawk passing by was Roxie Easter's photo below for September 9..



- Sep 17, Barny Dunning's lab's Student Banding group did some banding at Purdue's Wildlife Area off SR 26. They caught several Gray-cheeked Thrushes and their second Yellow-bellied Flycatcher for the fall. But the biggest event was the sight of 5 river otters swimming in the main wetland basin.
- Jacki Vance-Kuss spotted a Peregrine Falcon on the east side of the Holiday Inn in downtown Lafayette on Sept 25. Needless to say lots of people on



the *Birding on the Fly list* went to see it. It was a lifer for Roxie Easter.

- Another Peregrine, or maybe the same one had been seen by Vivek Govind Kumer Sept 22. Ed Hopkins had one at Bicentennial Nature Area Nov.20.
- October 28 Barny Dunning had an interesting flock of ducks out at Bicentennial Nature Area.. About 40 birds—with a mix of divers and dabblers including Ruddy Duck, scaup, Ring-neck, Redhead, shoveler & Gadwall.—were all pretty tightly clumped. Only other waterbirds were 11 Pied-billed Grebes elsewhere.
- Larry Theller at Bicentennial replied the next day "Big flock of loons right now". On the 30th, Fritz Davis put the total as 15 loons.
- Larry and Becky Theller had a Dunlin plus several American Pipits at the Bicentennial Nature Area Nov 8. On the next day the Dunlin was still there but joined by 2 Bairds Sandpipers. Larry was able to get a photo in order to document the species. Rachel Munds had reported 2 Bairds at Bicentennial Nov. 4th as well as a Pine Siskin.
- On the Nov 9 morning bird there was a steady flight of Rusty Blackbird heading south over Celery Bog Nature Area. Barny Dunning estimated the total to be around 30 birds. Also seen was a lingering Greater Yellowlegs..
- Snow Buntings are appearing all over the area. A single bird was seen on the island at Bicentennial while others have shown up in fields often mixed in with Lapland Longspurs..

- **Nov.18 was an SAS double-header** with a morning **Get to the Point** at Celery Bog and a 3:30 p.m. **Audubon at the Overlook** at Prophetstown State Park.

Barny reports that birds were not prolific. 26 species were seen by the 5 people at the Bog and 22 by the 11 at the Overlook. He noted that waterfowl were scarce. At Prophetstown the only waterfowl were multiple small flocks of Canada Geese seen near the end of the event.

Several uncommon birds were noted, including Rusty Blackbirds and a Purple Finch at Celery Bog along with a Winter Wren at Prophetstown as well as a Bald Eagle. Mammals added interest. A beaver was at the Bog and a muskrat swam past the observation deck at Prophetstown State Park.

Some other sightings Celery Bog Nature Area

- Nov 19 Greater Yellowlegs—Peter Dy-Liacco (late date)
- Nov 18 Hermit Thrush—Vivek Govind Kumar
- Nov 8 Five Long Billed Dowitcher—Karl Wood
- Nov 7 Merlin — Brian Schilling
- Nov 3 Orange-crowned Warbler
Frits Davis.
- Oct 31 2 Pine Siskin —Vivek Govind Kumar
- Oct 30 2 Bonaparte's Gull —Sam Hartzler
- Oct 5 — Fritz Davis
- Oct 4 Black-throated Blue Warbler — Luke McCreary
- Oct 4 Marsh Wren — Brandon Nelson
- Sept 28 American Bittern— Rachel Munds.

Bicentennial Nature Area

- Nov 12 Bonaparte's Gull — Alex Kittleson

Why Sharp-shinned & Cooper's Hawks can Share an Area

Using data from Project Feeder Watch, a partnership between Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada, revealed some of the feeding habits of these two bird eating accipiters. Data collected between 2015 and 2022 from feeder watchers, revealed the five top feeding choices of each. Sharp-shinned, which are smaller, generally took more smaller birds but they also took some larger birds, particularly Mourning Doves and Starlings. The larger Cooper's Hawks took larger birds overall, including Rock Pigeons and Mourning Doves. Looking at the top 5 species for each, Cooper's Hawk most popular species to feed on were Mourning Doves, while Sharp-shinned were Dark-eyed Juncos. Rock Pigeon's didn't make the Sharp-shinned top five list while house finch did. In turn house finch didn't make the top five for Cooper's Hawk.



Impacts of Heat Waves on Nesting Birds

A team at the University of California Davis investigated how extreme heat affects bird nest success and whether it differs between farmland and forests. They used data from **Cornell's NestWatch project** which includes contributions from people across the United States. The study included 150,000 nesting observations of 58 species over 20 years to measure nesting success. Data about the type of habitat where each nest was located, along with the local temperature during nesting was included. The data was analyzed to see the influence heat had on

the likelihood of birds successfully rearing at least one chick.

To understand why birds might be sensitive to heat, they looked at how nest style (cup or cavity) and the conservation status affected a birds' vulnerability. Lastly, they used climate models to predict how nest success might change by 2100, considering the expected rise in the average and extreme temperatures.

When extreme heat waves hit, birds nesting in farmlands were 30% less likely to successfully raise at least one chick. Vulnerable bird species of high conservation concern were particularly affected by heat waves in farmlands. The opposite was true for birds in forests: extreme heat events increased their chances of success. Forests might be crucial refuges for birds, even those that only sometimes nest in farmland or open landscapes. They also discovered that birds with cavity nests had a better chance of fledging offspring during extreme heat.

When they projected nest success for the year 2100 under a business-as-usual emissions scenario (Representative Carbon Pathway, or RCP 8.5), they found that birds nesting in farmlands would see a 4.4% reduction in nest success compared to today. However, under a reduced emissions scenario (RCP 4.5), the reduction was only 1.1%. Lowering emissions could help birds continue to reproduce in farmland areas, potentially helping sustain varied agricultural ecosystems into the future.

Vulnerable bird species of high conservation concern were particularly affected by heat waves in farmlands. Offering protection from extreme heat in farmlands could be especially critical for those species. An additional discovery was that birds with cavity nests had a better chance of fledging offspring during extreme heat compared to those with exposed cup nests. So, the type of nest mattered.



- Nov 8 Merlin — Ed Hopkins
- Nov 1 9 Tundra Swan — Brian Shilling
- Oct 31 Black Vulture — Karl Wood
- Oct 31 Herring Gull — Em Green
- Oct 17 Blue-headed Vireo — Michael Rossetti
- Oct 16 11 Black Scoter +Lincoln Sparrow — Lucas Wilson
- Oct 6 Winter Wren — Doug Wade
- Sept 4 Broad-winged Hawk — Rachel Brent

Audubon Action Items

Earlier this year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) introduced a Public Lands Rule to support balanced management of our public lands, helping more than 300 bird species that depend on BLM lands and waters. The new rule would put conservation on equal footing with other uses, such as the development of energy, livestock grazing, and timber harvesting, and guide responsible development and balanced use. But now some in Congress are trying to block this rule before it is even approved.

Tell your Members of Congress to reject legislation that undermines balanced management of public lands.

For this Audubon Action item plus others go to:
<https://act.audubon.org/a/oil-and-gas-leasing>



Indiana Wildlife Federation Report:

In early September the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Advisory Council held a public meeting to discuss various topics and get public input as well as DNR's perspective on proposed changes.

One issue discussed was a proposed rule changes to allow easier harvest of invasive carp. Invasive carp in Indiana consist of: Bighead, Grass and Silver Carp. They have proven highly problematic throughout the Midwest and have completely inundated the Wabash River, often outcompeting native species. The DNR is looking at options that

will incentivize commercial harvesting of "copi" that can be processed for both human consumption as well as commercial animal food and fertilizer.

Kentucky and Illinois are far ahead of Indiana on this issue and the proposed changes will bring Indiana in line with them as the states work together to reduce this invasive species in our waters. Incidental by-catch was addressed by DNR biologist Craig Jansen who showed that if attended by professional fisherman, by-catch is nearly negligible for most species.

Hoosier Opinion Poll On Renewable Energy

A Nature Conservancy poll of Hoosier's came up with these results:

71% want the state to increase solar energy

66% are favorable to solar energy production including **64%** of those living in areas which are prime for solar projects.

61% Want increased wind energy projects

63% are favorable to wind projects including **55%** of Hoosiers living in areas prime for wind projects.

California Protects Wildlife by Restricting Use of a Toxic Rat Poison

California just passed a law to better protect wildlife, children and pets from dangerous rat poison after a letter campaign urged action.

Co-sponsored by the **Center for Biological Diversity** and **Raptors Are The Solution**, the new law restricts the use of the rodenticide *diphacinone*, which kills rats by preventing their blood from clotting. Sadly it also sickens animals who eat poisoned rats — at least 38 of California's iconic species—including the imperiled San Joaquin kit foxes, Northern Spotted Owls, California Condors and California mountain lions. The famous Los Angeles mountain lion P-22 suffered from rodenticide poisoning before dying last year. The pesticide hurts people too, especially children.

"Rat poison indiscriminately harms animals up and down the food chain, making them more susceptible to disease and causing internal bleeding and death." said Center's Tiffany Yap. "It's heartening to know that California will take the necessary steps toward ending this."

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Sycamore Audubon Society

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



Splash

Stopping Plastic and Litter Along Shorelines (**SPLASH**) has removed more than 30,000 pounds of trash from beaches, bayous and other waterways along the Texas gold coast since 2020.

That effort will increase thanks to the nonprofit *Texan by Nature*. The *Texan by Nature Conservation Wrangler program* is giving **SPLASH** 12 to 18 months of tailored support in program management, including strategic planning, marketing strategy, metric capture, and analysis.

Penguins on the Edge

Peter Farewell of the British Antarctic Survey is the lead author of a new study that predicts a dire future for Antarctica's penguins.

Researchers are concerned that for the past two years, several colonies of the Emperor Penguin (the world's largest) have failed to reproduce. Warmer oceans are causing the sea ice where the birds breed to shrink. This failure to reproduce because of sea ice loss is affecting all penguin species that breed in Antarctica to various and increasing degrees



Tips for a Greener Home

Don't heat an empty house. Set your thermostat at 68 degrees in winter when you are home and 55 degrees when you are away or at night.

Your computer may go to sleep but it is still using energy. Turn the computer and monitor off at the end of the day or when you won't be using them for awhile.

Tidbits

◆ The lowest temperature recorded in any living bird is 39 degrees Fahrenheit. The species, a Black Metaltail hummingbird, lives in the Peruvian Andes.

◆ The Black Metaltail is one of 6 hummingbirds living at over 10,000 feet in the Andes. that go into state of temporary torpor with reduced metabolism and temperature.

◆ Researchers suspect the Black Metaltail can survive at even lower temperatures than the 39-degrees recorded.. .

◆ Over 25 new methane terminals are being planned along the Gulf Coast.

◆ While most banks are reducing fossil fuel financing, Bank of America is providing \$275 billion for fossil fuel projects.

◆ Bumble bees are great pollinators because they "buzz pollinate". By producing vibrations to loosen hard-to-get pollen they create an explosion of pollen that provides the bee with food and also boosts pollination of the plant.

◆ Bumble bee colonies only exist from spring to fall and can number up to 1,000 bees.

◆ Rusty patch bumblebee queens produce worker female bees until late summer, then begin to produce males and new queens. Only the new queens survive the winter.

◆ All rusty patch bumble bees have entirely black heads, but only workers and males have a rusty patch on their backs

◆ Bumble bees are important pollinators of many crops including blueberries, cranberries and clover. Bumble bee are the predominate group of insects responsible for pollinating tomatoes.



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

<http://www.sycamoreAudubon.org>
Email: sycamoreaudubon@gmail.com

Address Service Requested

2023-2024 Board of Directors

Barry Dunning, President, **Field Trips**
(C) 765-412-8760 (W) 765-494-3565
jdunning@purdue.edu

Rachel Kittleston, Vice President, Programs
Rachel.Kittleston@outlook.com

Brian Shilling, Treasurer
267-495-7158

Anne Piechota, Secretary
apiechota224@gmail.com

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

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

Bea Redfield, Media/Publications
civet@live.com

Larry Theller, Membership
Gideonbyrd@icloud.com

Chuck Tuttle, at large
586-4806 chuckt1708@gmail.com

Susan Ulrich, Publications
765-583-2275 sueandtedulrich@msn.com

Kaitlyn Young, Conservation
Young411@purdue.edu

Historic Grid Infrastructure Funding Announced

The largest direct investment in critical grid infrastructure in U.S. history, was announced In October by the Department of Energy. The investment of \$3.46 billion funds 58 projects to strengthen electric grid reliability .

It is part of the program created by President Biden's ***Bipartisan Infrastructure Law***, The investments are designed to improve energy reliability and resilience in the face of extreme weather and ensure that communities across the country receive clean, affordable energy. The investment will bring 35 gigawatts of clean energy online, provide good paying union jobs, help reduce outages in disadvantaged communities, and will also support 400 microgrids plus create community hubs resilient in the face of grid emergencies like wildfires and winter storms. Lastly it provides for tribal ownership of transmission facilities that enable clean energy development on tribal lands and increase their revenues.

"Robust investment in grid infrastructure is a key part of achieving U.S. climate and clean energy goals, and we're pleased to see the Biden Administration acting to ensure Americans will have clean, affordable, and reliable energy for decades to come," said Casey Roberts, Sierra Club Senior Attorney. "These projects will help deliver reliable and resilient power to communities across the country while advancing the president's Justice40 initiative." She continued. "We applaud the Biden-Harris Administration for this historic investment in our country's electrical grid.... . these projects will reduce costs for ratepayers, increase reliability during extreme weather, and help the Midwest transition off of fossil fuels."



One project, costing \$464 million, includes coordinating the planning, design, and construction of five transmission projects across seven states in the Midwest. It will help optimize regional transmission solutions. The Minnesota state government will spend an additional \$1.3 billion for its share of the project's costs.