



# Sycamore Warbler

Volume 50 issue 1 April-May 2025

## Looking Forward to the May Bird Count

The 2nd Saturday of May will be here soon. Along with thousands of migrating birds. Time to dust off your bird identification skills. As usual, there are two counts SAS holds that day: one in Tippecanoe County the other in Warren County. You can count birds all 24 hours if you wish to, and participate in both counties keeping data separate.

The Tippecanoe County count is compiled by Barny Dunning. It is a free-for-all meaning you can look anywhere within the county boundaries. Turn in your totals to Barny and he will do his best to eliminate double/triple/quadruple counting of the same individuals to get a final account of the species. His contact info is to the right.

For the Warren County Count participants have their own areas without overlap which makes it easier for Susan Ulrich, the compiler to tally species numbers. Since there are much fewer participants, there are territories that aren't covered. If you would like to get your own area let her know. Some great spots out there. Her contact information is to the right.



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## SYCAMORE AUDUBON SOCIETY 50 YEARS OLD

Sycamore Audubon Society began 50 years ago arising from the Purdue Women's Club Bird Study Group. Over time the group began attracting more people, including husbands and others who had an interest in birds and joined them for their programs and field events.

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Some people floated the idea of starting an Audubon Chapter. Ed Hopkins took the lead in the effort. The first requirement was getting 25 people to become National Audubon Society members. Then the group needed to decide on a name and fill out paperwork requesting Chapter Status. A number of group names were suggested. One was "Sycamore Audubon". During the meeting a 16 year old birder drew a logo and the name and logo was adopted. Ed Hopkins was named the first president and still compiles both Christmas Bird Counts for SAS.

### Willow Slough –Iroquois Reserve Christmas Bird Count Results on p. 3

Eight people participated in the count this year and manage to tally 58 species. Participants were Ed Hopkins (complier); John Cassidy; Richard Garret; Christine Guth & Robert Guth; Jed Hertz; and Lynn Vernon.

## Bird Migration

Ancient man, unable to understand the disappearance and the reappearance of small birds in Europe came up with at least four different theories to explain the phenomenon:

1. Small birds were carried across the Mediterranean on the backs of larger birds.
2. Rails, Swifts and Swallow buried themselves in mud or hid in caves or hollow trees to hibernate.
3. One species changed into another species for a period of the year. (note: Aristotle even stated that the European (Page 5)

# CHAPTER NEWS

## Thank You's

SAS appreciates, and would like to thank, the following individuals who have made donations to the chapter.

Anna Welch

Keri Safronski

Susan Ulrich—iho Homer  
Erickson's 100 Birthday

## Board Actions

The board voted to increase its usual donation to the Indiana Audubon Society for the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival expenses to \$1,000. Expenses are higher this year as the Dunes National Park is no longer able to donate buses and other services for the event. The three keynoters this year are Amar Ayyash, author of

**The Gull Guide: North America**, Dexter Patterson the Wisco Birder and author of **Bird Joy for All**; and Sacha Dench, the "**Human Swan**." A scientist and passionate story-teller. Her recent groundbreaking expedition was **Flight of the Swans**.

The board also voted to donate \$300 to Purdue's **Spring into Nature** event on April 23 at Purdue's Horticulture Park, and to again support the June 4th **Outdoor Explore** program put on by Tippecanoe County Parks. The society staffs a booth there to promote birds as well as bird watching. SAS will also be participating in the **Mind-Boggling Event** at Celery Bog May 18.

### Birding on the *FLY* List...

If there is an unusual bird sighting nearby or around the state Barny sends people on the list an email so anyone interested can pursue the bird by themselves or often via a carpool. Contact him to be added to the list. See page 1.

## Upcoming Programs

Held the second Thursday of the month at the Celery Bog Nature Center in West Lafayette at 7:15 p.m. Dinner for anyone interested at McAlister's in West Lafayette at 6 pm.

April 10 . **Planning your Own Exotic Birding Trip.** Jackie and Travis Vans-Kuss give some hints and advice on how to improve the trip's chances of success and pitfalls to avoid. The pair have visited a number of countries over the past few years, and have shared some of their travels at SAS's September Bring Your own Programs.

May 8. **Birding South –East Africa with Road Scholar.** Larry and Becky Theller. Thinking of going on a Road Scholar tour? Hear all about Larry and Becky's experiences see some of the birds and animals they got to photograph.

At May's Board Meeting the board voted \$1000 for a native Hawaiian Thrush reintroduction under the auspices of the Purdue Forestry Department.

### SAS's Busy Spring Event Season Starting

April and May are full of events for **SAS**. Helpers always are needed, so if you can help, let the appropriate person know.

### April 23 Spring into Nature

SAS will have a table at this event held at Purdue Horticulture Park from 4-7. If you would like to help, call Anne Piechota (p.1).

### About the April 26th Garden Expo

If you have garden or bird items or plant pots to donate for Garden Expo, or plan on bringing some plants but need pots for them, contact Susan Ulrich (page 1) or if you can help with volunteering.

Expo is the main fund raiser for SAS. Your donations of plants, as well as garden and birding are why.

The sale is put on by the Master Gardeners of Tippecanoe

County and is held at the Tippecanoe County Fair grounds in the Hog Barn from 9 to 3 on Sat. April 26th. Bring donations that day by 9 a.m. —or on Friday the



25th from 3-5 pm —or drop them at the staging area at 844 Rose Street in West Lafayette earlier that week. Thank you Pan for allowing us to do that again.

We can use help with set up, sales during the event, and moving plants from the staging area to the Hog Barn. (Note: plant trays may be wet or muddy so bring something to protect your car trunk or truck bed.)

We can also use help after the sale with closing down the booth at 3 p.m. and moving any unsold plants back to Rose Street to hold for the Memorial Day weekend sale.

### Fifth Grade Camp Bird Walks in Early May

Each year SAS leads 30-40 minute early morning bird walks for West Lafayette's 5th

# Field Trips

**April 12 :** A "Possible" Lakeshore trip to hit early spring migration. This should be too early for most of our warblers, but there would still be some waterbirds as well as hopefully impressive numbers of robins, blackbirds, etc. in longshore migration. **Call or email Barny ( p.1) if interested.**

**April 26 Saturday. Garden Expo:** See page 2 for details of how you can help.

**April 27 Sunday Audubon at the Overlook** at Prophetstown State Park. Meet at the end of the park road at 8 a.m. for a couple of hours seeing what comes by and talk to passing park visitors.

**May 3. Saturday "Warm-up for Global Big Day".** We have had good luck with early morning hikes at Martell to practice bird song the weekend before the Big Day. Meet there at 7:30 a.m.

**May 10. Saturday Global Big Day.** See p 1. Go out and see what you can find. Warren County counters need to contact Susan Ulrich (page 1) for a territory.

**May 17. Saturday Get to the Point.** Meet at Celery Bog starting at 7 p.m. to see what shows up.

**June 7. Saturday Prairie birds at Prophetstown State Park.** A Morning walk to see prairie specialties found in the park. 7:30 a.m. for 1-2 hours or so..



## Willow-Slough CBS Results

Snow Goose	1
Greater White-fronted Goose	208
Cackling Goose	1
Canada Goose	303
Mute Swan	cw
Trumpeter Swan	8
Tundra Swan	14
Trumpeter/Tundra Swan	9
Mallard	29
Ring-necked Pheasant	5
Rock Pigeon	33
Eurasian Collared-Dove	16
Mourning Dove	20
American Coot	1
Northern Harrier	15
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Cooper's Hawk	2
Bald Eagle	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	5
Red-tailed Hawk	22
Rough-legged Hawk	29
Eastern Screech-Owl	3
Great-Horned Owl	7
Short-eared Owl	4
Red-headed Woodpecker	37
Red-Bellied Woodpecker	18

Downy Woodpecker	16
Hairy Woodpecker	2
Pileated Woodpecker	5
Northern flicker	8
American Kestrel	8
Northern Shrike	1
Blue Jay	171
American Crow	138
Black-capped Chickadee	73
Tufted Titmouse	5
Horned Lark	21
White-breasted Nuthatch	11
Brown Creeper	1
European Starling	2381
East ern Bluebird	5
American Robin	28
House Sparrow	223
American Pipit	70
House Finch	137
Purple Finch	3
American Goldfinch	212
American Tree Sparrow	207
Fox Sparrow	6
Dark-eyed Junco	182
White-crowned Sparrow	21
White-throated Sparrow	11
Savannah Sparrow	2
Song Sparrow	6
Swamp Sparrow	1
Eastern Towhee	1
Red-winged Blackbird	3
Brown-headed Cowbird	42
Northern Cardinal	37

## Chapter News

### Continued from page 2

walks for West Lafayette's 5th grade students at Camp Tecumseh on Tuesday and Thursday morning (1st or 2nd week). Chuck Tuttle gives a bird program prior to the student camp experience. If you can come out and help on one or both days, let him know and get the exact dates and carpool info. More people are always useful. Each group has 1 or 2 teachers going to help out. You are also invited for breakfast if you can stay longer. See p 1 for Chuck.

### **May 18 Mind BOGgling Event.**

This Family Friendly event is held at Celery Bog each year. SAS hosts a table to provide

information which includes something aimed at children as well as adults. We are looking for new brilliant ideas for a craft or other activity a child would enjoy. Please let us know, as we can use some new activities. Contact Susan Ulrich p.1)

### **Outdoor Explore**

Looking ahead to June, SAS will be at this event held at both the Tippecanoe Amphitheater and Bicentennial Park. It showcases different outdoor activities for people looking for new hobby activities. SAS will be at the Bicentennial Park site. Contact Barny Dunning or other board members to volunteer and see what birds we can find during the day as well as talking to interested booth visitors about birding as a hobby.



# Conservation & Environmental News

## New Resident at Kankakee Sands

Following up on their reintroduction of Buffalo here in Indiana, TNC has reintroduced another prairie species, the Franklin's Ground Squirrel to their Kankakee Sands' Efrogmson Prairie.

With help from their partners, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources & Purdue Fort Wayne, twenty five of these burrowers—a state endangered species—are now new residents.



## Tree Health

The Nature Conservancy, the University of Louisville and other partners, united to develop the **Green Heart Louisville Project** hope it would transform how we think about the relationship between nature and health. Anecdotal and observational evidence indicated trees are good for human health, but no direct clinical evidence exists. In 2020 the partners began the process of planting around 8,000 large trees throughout parts of a study area and at the same time tracking the health of 750 residences living nearby and in a control area who had volunteered for the project. This is the first large-scale study to understand if urban trees could improve a community's health.

The project was to plant 8000 trees into a 44 square mile neighborhood. The first step was finding sites to plant the trees: the sites included yards, parks, streets, church parking lots, and even a few commercial properties like gas stations. Residents who opted their sites for trees have since noticed how the traffic noise has improved and that more birds are around.

The first results came out in April of 2024. Within the treatment where there are now twice as many trees, study participants had significantly lower levels of the blood marker C-reactive protein which is a strong indicator of inflammation. Chronic inflammation contributes to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some cancers. This 13-20% reduction in C-reactive protein means lower risk for these diseases. Even people involved with the study didn't expect such a difference in such a short time. More time is needed to continue monitoring the participants health, including blood pressure, immunity and mental well-being. Other studies are looking at environmental effects such as how the trees have affected air pollution, temperature and biodiversity in the study area.

JOIN THE NATIONAL PLANT A BILLION TREES campaign. Every tree makes a difference for human and environmental health.

## Debt For Nature a Win-Win

Ecuador has refinanced over \$1 billion in debt to help fund Amazon conservation.

A debt conversion facilitated by The Nature Conservancy will help develop the 4.6 Million hectare Amazon Bio-corridor Program by securing around \$40 million to conserve land and freshwater ecosystems.

This is the largest debt for nature swap ever, saving Ecuador an estimated \$800 million by 2035. Debt for nature swaps aim to create a stable and long-term funding stream for conservation projects by freeing up money governments would otherwise have spent on debt service and repayment costs over the life of their outstanding debt.



This deal is estimated to generate \$23.5 million per year over 17 years with \$19 million annually going directly to the Amazon Bio-corridor program and \$4.5 million invested via an endowment fund to generate returns. It reduces Ecuador's debt by \$527 million, freeing up \$100 million in net fiscal saving by 2035.

**36%**  
The proportion of US methane pollution that comes from livestock.

# Exciting Local Bird News

## Tid Bits

The Peregrine Falcons which have been hanging around downtown Lafayette are now confirmed nesters! Here is the email from Grace LeCuyer of the DNR, to Barny Dunning.

"Jacki Vance-Kuss, reached out to Barny two seasons ago and now we have an update .... I thought you would like to know how that pair is doing (or at least find it interesting). Originally, Jacki sighted an unbanded bird and U/29, a female banded in 2023 in Anderson, IN, named Kindness. Kindness was too young to breed last year, but Jacki spotted the pair again this year so I went out last week to figure out what was going on.

After scoping for a bit and only seeing Kindness, I began to grow suspicious. Not long after, the unbanded bird emerged from behind three "goddess statues" on top of the courthouse and Kindness popped on top and copulated with it. Needless to say....Kindness is a boy!



Peregrine Falcon from Google images

The unbanded bird, now confirmed to be a female, often goes behind the statues and Kindness comes out and feeds her. I have a sneaking suspicion that pigeons left great nesting material up there and the falcons are nesting behind the watchful eyes of the stone goddesses. Kindness is quite vocal and loves to perch on the signage of the banks nearby. I have included a cute photo of the unbanded female, Kindness with some prey, and the female side-eyeing some pigeons on the statues for you to enjoy.

Hopefully you enjoy this little story like I enjoyed uncovering the mystery. If you want to see them, they are on the east side of the courthouse, directly across from a pub named Digby's.

Grace LeCuyer , DNR

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### *Migration continued from P 1.*

Robin changed into a European Redstart in summer).

4. In 1703 a treatise published in London suggested birds flew to the moon in winter and that the trip took 60 days.

Some birds do hibernate. This includes some of the goatsuckers and swifts. In addition some hummingbirds can also enter a torpid or a hibernating condition .

One bird migration sighting had historic implications here in the Americas. It changed Columbus's landing site from mainland North America to San Salvador. On Dec 9 or 10 of 1492, the Captain of the Pinta while looking for land, observed a movement of land birds far at sea and talked Columbus into modifying his course so that he ended up in San Salvador.

◆ There are at least 5 different types of bird flight: flapping, gliding, soaring, fluttering, and hovering.

◆ Hovering requires a fresh headwind. The tail is usually fanned and pointed down and the angle of the wing adjusted to support the bird while preventing the wind from pushing it backward. Some birds that regularly hover include Osprey, Rough-legged Hawk, Bonaparte's Gull, and Belted Kingfisher.

◆ Fluttering is when a bird hovers in place without the aid of a headwind. Hummingbirds are masters at this. Others, including warblers & flycatchers, often flutter when picking bugs off a twig. Some birds flutter in flight doing their flight songs to attract a mate such as Skylarks, Purple Finch, and Woodcock.

◆ Hummingbirds have the fastest wingbeats of all birds. Slow motion indicates their wings can beat at 50-70 times a second.

◆ Birds prefer to take off into the wind.

◆ The tail of a bird aids in balancing, steering as well as regulating the amount of sail surface.

◆ A soaring bird such as a hawk merely needs to tilt its tail to change direction. Birds with short tails such as ducks, grebes, and loons, cannot make quick turns. Swifts which have essentially no tail, seem to be able to move parts of their wings at different speed and angle to produce its speedy, but erratic flight.

## Nature & Trip Report Notes

- Feb 15 Menards on the east side of Lafayette, had a good assortment of diving ducks in late afternoon. At 4:40 pm Barny Dunning had a male Canvasback, male Bufflehead, two male Common Goldeneye, 13 Redheads (both sexes) and an assortment of Ring-necked Ducks, and Lesser Scaup.

Shane Guerin had a female Greater Scaup there earlier in the day. Also two American Black Ducks mixed into the 250+ Mallards.



- Feb 24 a pair of American pelicans were seen in the northernmost part of Celery Bog about 5:45pm. The numbers since have gone up and down but a dozen were still there on April 5th.

- As the weather moderates birds are starting to move. On Feb 26 a group of gulls was seen resting on the ice at Bicentennial Nature Area with up to 50+ Ring-billed Gulls and (of more interest) a varying number of American Herring Gulls. There were initially 8 Herring Gulls including 6 adults and 2 immatures at 9:30 in the morning, but only two immatures by 11:15 a.m. Also present was a Ruddy Duck and an early spring Tree

Swallow. A Wood Duck was seen in the morning by Doug Wade.

- The high winds on Feb 28 did not keep geese and swans down. Kyle Gephart reported 16 swans in the main pond of Celery Bog (north of the bridge). They were either Tundra or Trumpeter Swans

That same morning at the Purdue Wildlife Area, Barny Dunning had 184 Canada Geese, 53 Greater White-fronted Geese and 10 Snow Geese, along with multiple pairs of Sandhill Cranes, one pair of Wood Ducks, large flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds and also Common Grackles as well as 30 Rusty Blackbirds.

- Unfortunately the field trip led by Larry and Becky Theller on the next day, was cold and windy and the birds did not choose to participate –Celery Bog had little, and Bicentennial Park had a scattering of Canada Geese, Mergansers, plus a small assortment of ducks including Wood Ducks, but no swans or unusual geese. Sandhills flew overhead as did an eagle and some Turkey Vultures.

- March 3rd Patrick Ruhl, Barny Dunning, and Kaitlyn Young banded birds at PWA to try to catch more White-throated Sparrows to attach with transmitters (caught two). While banding they recaptured a banded American Tree Sparrow. Barny looked up the



Male Tree Swallow

band number - the bird was first captured on March 5, 2023 and banded as an ASY adult. That means it was over 1 year old when first captured (almost 2 years ago to the day) and is more than 3 years old now. Not bad for a species with a probable 50% annual survival rate.

- March 6 Karen Griggs, now living in northern Indiana, sent in the following “Another year of the Falcon Cam officially started after a pair of peregrine falcons were spotted atop the Indiana Michigan Power (I&M) Center preparing a nest. The pair, named Moxie and Jamie, have nested within the nest box atop the I&M Center since 2013 and have hatched more than 30 chicks in that time. Each year the community gets to name the chicks, and the chicks receive leg bands that help track their migration once they leave the nest.”

- Susan Ulrich finally had a Sapsucker show up in early March, meaning all 7 species of Indiana’s Woodpeckers were in her yard for that day. The first Phoebe was on territory by the 12th and the next week she saw her first Eastern Meadowlark in a nearby. Grassy field.