



# Sycamore Warbler

Volume 39, Issue 4 Winter 2014-15

## Christmas Bird Counts

**NOTE: Date Change for Lafayette**

**Lafayette Area CBC, SUNDAY, December 14**

**Willow Slough Iroquois CBC, Thurs, January 1**

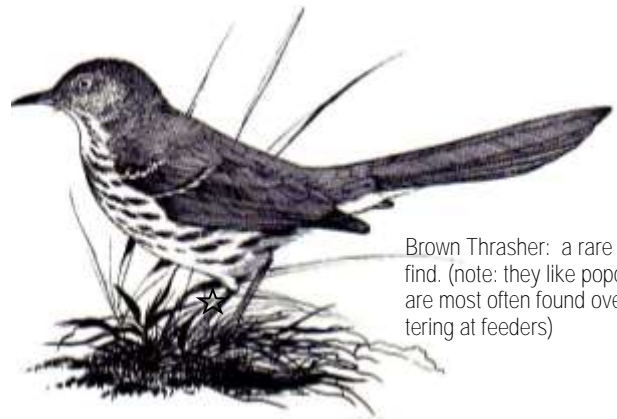
**Cass County CBC: Saturday, January 3**

People are needed to help with the above counts. In order to participate and get an area to cover contact Ed Hopkins for both the Lafayette and Willow Slough counts (765-463-5927). You can also sign up and get the forms you need from him at SAS's December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. Landon Neumann is the Cass County CBC Count compiler (landonneumann25@gmail.com). Data accumulated by these counts is extremely important to see how bird populations are doing over time.

In addition to field participants covering specific areas of the CBC circle, feeder watchers are also wanted. Some rare and uncommon species are most likely to hang out at feeders. Reporting is easy and there is a compilation party for the Lafayette Count at 8 p.m. at the Wild Bird Shoppe.

★ ★ REMINDER: ★ ★

Joel Greenburg's Special January program to SAS will be January 20th at 7:30 p.m. in room 216 of the Forestry Building on Purdue's Campus, rather than in Lilly Nature Center on the second Thursday.



Brown Thrasher: a rare CBC find. (note: they like popcorn & are most often found overwintering at feeders)

## Audubon Report: Birds & Climate Change

You may have seen chapter president, Barny Dunning on TV talking about the new Audubon Report on Birds and Climate Change which was released September 9th. He was interviewed by WFYI in Indianapolis and Channel 18 locally. His comments also appeared on the WBAA home page the following day.

What is this report and what was its conclusions? The report is based on a massive seven-year climate study conducted by the National Audubon Society that found, that unless we act, **more than 300 species of North American birds could face significant threats to their survival** in coming decades. Some once-plentiful species could even face extinction. But the study also finds hope. Here are excerpts from a September 8th letter from David Yarnold, National Audubon's president .

"Tomorrow marks a new day for Audubon thanks to each and every one of you. As global temperatures rise, as weather patterns shift, as vital bird habitats dwindle and disappear, familiar and beloved species will leave for more suitable climates or die out completely. According to our data, the Common Loon will likely abandon Minnesota. The Bobolink, a grassland bird, will find itself unhappily marooned in the boreal forests of Canada. Some birds are projected to lose all of their breeding habitat—and, by inference, go extinct—a fate shared by the Baird's Sparrow and the Chestnut-collared Longspur, the Eastern Whip-poor-will and the Lesser Prairie Chicken.

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For bird lovers, this litany of ills is just tragic. Rampant bird extinctions? Species leaving their home states forever? But within that same data lies hope. For many species, the model has identified so-called "strongholds"—geographic areas that will provide shelter against the decades-long wave of climate change that is already washing over us. Those strongholds will be the key to many birds' continued success in North America. *Continued page 5*

## Another Grant

This has been a banner year for grants for SAS. We're pleased to report that the White County Community Foundation awarded SAS \$500 to help with the 2015 expenses for SAS's environmental education program for elementary students in Monticello, Rick Read, SAS's treasurer wrote the grant application.

# CHAPTER NEWS

**WELCOME to NEW BOARD MEMBER Patrick Ruhl, a graduate student in Natural Resources.**

## October 4-5 Feast of the Hunter's Moon report.

A quick summary is that we had plenty of volunteers and the turkey legs sold out early. So far we haven't gotten our check so can't report exactly what we made. Our thanks to everyone who helped and made the weekend go so smoothly.

## September Mini-Programs & "Green" Carry-In Dinner

The carry-in dinner was a big success—24 people attended and the food stretched across 3 tables. Thanks to Zonda Bryant and Karen Griggs for setting up our annual potluck dinner at the Lilly Nature Center with re-usable plates, cups and utensils, cloth napkins and table cloths. Thanks to all of the people who stayed to put away the furniture and clean up afterwards.

After everyone ate, the regular meeting began. Eight people brought programs to share. Elsa Janle started off with pictures from her and Harry's trip to the Galapagos Islands off Ecuador. Chuck Tuttle followed with his photos (birds, places and beautiful sunsets, plus of course a train) from various states he visited and Celery Bog. Elisabeth Kornblum then showed pictures set to music that she took at Sue and Ted Ulrich's property and Ed Zschiedrich showed slides from various natural areas around Indiana including the lakeshore and Cowles Bog.

John Skene had numerous bird pictures from his travels in California, Texas and Florida along with Celery Bog, Dan Miller shared pictures of the many beautiful warblers taken he's taken at Celery Bog; Barb Lucas showed her usual excellent photos of birds around the Rensselaer area including 3 different Snowy Owls; and Rick Read ended the evening with photos from his and Debbie's trip to

Costa Rica plus trips to Alaska and the Holy Land. All in all a fun evening.

## "A Touch of Nature"

was the title for Barb Lucas and Mary Ann Van Soest's exhibit in the Wells Community Cultural Center. The exhibit ran from October 31 to December 5th and featured Barb's wonderful bird and nature photographs along with Mary Ann's intricately pieced and sewn fabric panels. Superb!



## The Blue...in Birds

November 1 Rick Read gave a presentation titled *The Blue...In Birds* to the Indiana Bluebird Society. This was for the society's annual meeting held at Cool Creek Park Nature Center in Carmel, IN. Rick talked about structural color and showed pictures of birds with blue colors he'd taken on three different continents. Rick will be giving this program Dec 4 at 6 pm, at the Monticello-Union Township Public Library and again on Feb. 18 to the *Wednesdays in the Wild* from 1-3 p.m. at Lilly Nature Center.

Rick donated his honorarium to the SAS's Nature Club for elementary school children in Monticello.

## And speaking of donations

Our thanks to Tim and Bev Volkmann for their donation to help build Swift Towers in SAS member counties. And to Jim Klatch for his many years supporting SAS's environ-

mental education work through his contributions to the Pookie Fund, which helps fund both Nature Clubs.

## And speaking of Swifts-

They didn't get the message about *Swifts Night Out!* Evidently it was too early or too warm for them to have started congregating. Rick had 16 people—but only three swifts—show up at their usual roosts in Monticello.

## Honeysuckle Going Down

Removing Honeysuckle is going well at Ross Hills Park. The October 15th workday had 14 Alpha Phi Omega (APO) student volunteers along with the two SAS and INPAWS coordinators, and a November workday had 7 Purdue Biology Club members along with 15 more APO volunteers.

This effort will continue over the coming months. If you or a group you belong to would like to help stack already cut plants or cut more plants, simply email Susan Ulrich, SAS's coordinator (see p. 7). The visual change and habitat improvement is amazing.

## Another \$564 for the environment

SAS's Bake & Plant sale was another success. \$200 of the amount raised will help fund the 2015 *Mind BOGgling Event*. The board will allocate the rest of the funds later.

Many people helped make the sale a success including Jim Klatch who donated freezer space as well as plants, and Mary Ann McGill, Dot Jones, Anne Piechota, Elsa Janle, and Susan Ulrich, who helped staff the tables and contributed a majority of the plants and baked goods.

## Holiday Party December 11th

SAS's December meeting is also our regular holiday party. People are asked to bring cookies or nibbles to share. SAS supplies the drinks, cups napkins, etc.

# Fall Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2014

*Programs are held on the 2nd Thursday at 7:15 PM in the Lilly Nature Center in West Lafayette. People are invited to come beforehand for "Dinner & Conversation" starting at 6:00 PM at the MCL Cafeteria (WL). Field trip times vary.*

- December 11 Thursday *Program: The Lure of the Galapagos.* Debby Sherman, a biologist by training, and her husband, visited these unique real-life evolutionary laboratories, stopping over at several of the islands each with slightly different flora and fauna. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park, 7:15 p.m. Dinner & Conversation at 6 p.m. with the speaker at MCL Cafeteria.
- Come a bit early for the Annual Holiday Party (bottom p.2) and get a territory and forms for the Christmas Bird Counts. (page 1). Free parking as well as the holiday treats.*
- December 14 Sunday Lafayette Area Christmas Bird Count. Field and feeder participants wanted. Go all day or a few hours. Call Ed Hopkins, the compiler (see p.1) or come to the Dec 11th meeting. The Compilation Party to share results will be at 8 p.m. at the Wild Bird Shoppe. Bring something edible to share.
- Dec. 20-25 December Feeder Count. See page 6
- January 1 Thursday Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves Christmas Bird Count. All day count. Ed Hopkins is the compiler. To participate call him (see p.1) or come to the Dec. 11th meeting.
- January 3 Saturday Cass County Christmas Bird Count. The second year for this CBC. Landon Neumann is the compiler. To participate email him (see p.1).
- January 20 Tuesday *Special January Program.* *Hope is the thing with Feathers: Americans and Three Birds.* Joel Greenberg, author of **"A Feathered River Across the Sky"**. 7:30 p.m. room 216 Purdue Forestry Building (parking in Purdue Garages is free in the evening). This is replacing SS's usual 2nd Thursday meeting at Lilly Nature Center. Joel is also giving a talk to the Forestry & Natural Resource Department at 3:30 p.m., "The Echoes of their Wings: the life and legacy of the Passenger Pigeon in the Deans Auditorium of Pfendler Hall (the old Entomology Building).
- January 20-25 January Feeder Count. See page 6.
- February 7 Saturday Winter Birds Field Trip. **8:30 a.m. Celery Bog Park gravel parking lot. We'll carpool to where the interesting birds are being reported—hawks, longspurs, maybe a Snowy Owl. Local Bald Eagles should have started to nest, too. 1/2 day trip.**
- February 12 Thursday *February Program: Through their Eyes: Female Choice and Male-Male Competition in Peafowl". Jessica Yorzinski,* Purdue postdoctoral research associate. Learn how Peahens choose their mates and peacocks assess their rivals. Jessica's research uses eye-tracking technology to see what the birds base these decisions on. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park 7:15 p.m. Free parking and refreshments. REMEMBER: Dinner & Conversation at MCL with the speaker at 6 p.m.
- February 13-16 Fri-Monday Great Backyard Bird Count. See back cover for more information. Count one day or four, one spot or many and report what you see on line at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>
- Feb 21 Saturday February Work Day at Ross Hills Park. 10 a.m. Weather permitting. Meet at the Ross Biological Reserve (just east of the Park on the left side of the road that runs between the two sections of the Ravine Golf Course. Watch for the small sign). We will work on stacking already cut large honey-suckle and clearing out smaller ones. Email or call Susan Ulrich if you have any questions (see p 7).
- Feb 20-25 February Feeder Count. See page 6.
- March 12 Thursday *March Program: Tentative: BIGBY Birding & Photography.* Joel Hess. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park 7:15 p.m. Free parking and refreshments.
- March 28 Saturday March Workday at Ross Hills Park. 10 a.m. Weather permitting Meet at the Ross Biological Reserve (just east of the Park on the left side of the road that runs between the two sections of the Ravine Golf Course. Watch for the small sign). We will work on stacking already cut large honey-suckle and clearing out smaller ones. Email or call Susan Ulrich if you have any questions (see p. 7).

# Nature Notes & News

- A Golden-winged Warbler seen Aug 29 was Landon Neumann's 1st bird of the fall migration in Cass Co. The next day he found Golden and Black-bellied Plovers at the Logansport Sod Fields—the first recorded Golden Plovers for Cass County. On Sept 6 he and Bud Dodrill found 22 Golden Plovers there.
- Jeff Timmons was at Prophetstown SP Aug 30-31. He saw lots of birds including a Sora, 40 Common Nighthawks, and an Olive-sided Flycatcher.
- Aug 31 Rick Read in Monticello had two "quick little dudes" running around under his bushes. They turned out to be Lincoln Sparrows.
- Joanna Billiard and Ellen Tobias report from Maine that they still have the gray fox pair. They also have 3 Broad Wing Hawks .
- A quick stop at Benton County's Pine Creek Gamebird Management Area Sept 3 produced the first Shovelers of the year for Barny Dunning plus a Cliff Swallow
- A three hour ramble at Ross Hills Park by John Skene that same day turned up 45 species including 9 Red-headed Woodpeckers, a Philadelphia Vireo and two Blackburnian Warblers.
- Highlights of SAS's first "early bird walk" of the fall (Sept 4) were a Great Egret, 3 Black-crowned Night-Heron's, two Red-shouldered hawks, and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.
- Russ Allison ran into flocks of migrating warblers at Celery Bog Sept 6. He identified 11 species but had to pass on others flitting high in the canopy. His yard produced 5 Swainson's Thrush, a Black & White Warbler and hummers.
- Landon Neumann's field trip for the Indiana Young Birders at Cass County's France Park Sept 7 produced 10 species of migrating warblers plus 44 other birds including a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and two Broad-winged Hawks that were perched for easy viewing. A visit to the Sod Farm on the 11th turned up a juvenile Sanderling. It was the first county record and the 20th shorebird seen in Cass County in 2014.
- John Skene spent Sept 7th at the Purdue Wildlife Area and had 57 species of birds including a Connecticut Warbler.
- Sept 14 was Peter Scott's first visit to Celery Bog .From 3 to 4:30 he and Alan Bruner found 35 species of birds including 10 species of warblers, the highlight being a male Black-throated Blue.
- On Sept. 18th Bud Dodrill and Landon Neumann had a very early White-crowned Sparrow.
- There was a good selection of migrant warblers and flycatchers at Celery Bog for the Early Bird Hike Sept 18. Most of the individuals were in the trees right along the water's edge. A large flock of Chimney Swifts were flying over treetop level the whole time the group was there. The first Magnolia Warbler, American Coot, Cape May Warbler and Black-throated Green Warblers for the fall were highlights. A possible Connecticut Warbler was seen briefly south of the southern observation deck.
- Sunday the 21 Jeff Timmons, Mike Timmons, & Aidan Rominger detoured to Celery Bog from Eagle Creek Park. There were warblers everywhere but many were hard to see. Water birds included American Wigeon, Northern Pintail and Blue-winged Teal . They also found a a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and 17 species of Warblers.
- Landon Neumann bushwhacked through the Highway 17 Marshes on Sept 28 and turned up a Marsh Wren and four Soras. Oct 2 he and Bud Dodrill had their first Golden-crowned Kinglet of the fall.
- Taking advantage of beautiful weather Oct. 2, Rick Read took a 5 p.m. cruise on Lake Freeman. He spotted two Ospreys, two Bald Eagles, a Coopers Hawk and a Double-crested Cormorant.
- A number of people had hummingbirds well into October. Larry Miller observed several visits to his feeders on Sunday Oct 5 and at least one on the 6th.
- The first Winter Wren of the season greeted Temple Pearson Oct 10 in Happy Hollow Park, West Lafayette.
- Walking out of class at IVY Tech in Lafayette on the 15th Landon Neumann noted a Pine Siskin fly over the parking lot. He also had a Nelson's Sparrow at the Walmart marsh while on lunch break.
- Susan Ulrich had her first Brown Creeper Oct 16th on a maple tree in her back yard in Warren Co. A male purple finch also showed up to join the female which had been around for several days.

- During the Early Bird Hike Oct 16th Barny reported the arrival of migrating ducks at Celery Bog. They included the first Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Gadwall, and American Widgeon of the season. An old friend, the hybrid Greater White-fronted X Canada Goose made its first appearance in a couple of weeks.
- Landon Neumann and Bud Dodrill were out again in Cass County Oct 18. The highlight was a Blue-headed Vireo,
- On the Oct 23 weekly waterfowl survey at Pine Creek in eastern Benton County a cooperative Northern Harrier kicked up the teal at one point, making them easy for Barny Dunning & Chuck Tuttle to count. Their most unusual sighting was a Great Horned Owl who came out a bit early at 5 pm.
- A rare Barnacle Goose was at the 550N pond in Cass County when Landon Neumann checked it Oct 24. The bird was with a flock of 40+ Canada Geese. Landon believes it may be an escapee rather than a wild bird.



Barnacle Geese

- Ed Hopkins checked out Celery Bog on the 29th. He tallied 15 species of water-birds including over 1700 American Coots.
- A week later on the 6th of Nov, Barny Dunning, Chuck Tuttle, & Michael Levine spent an hour at Celery Bog in West Lafayette. Waterfowl and coot numbers were noticeably up with large groups of Bufflehead and Ring-necked Ducks. They also had the first Horned Grebe for fall.
- Wes Homoya noted a very early Snow Bunting at the Purdue Wildlife Area off US 26 on Nov 4th.
- The Nov 7th weekly waterfowl survey at Pine Creek turned up lots more waterfowl including 145 Gadwall and a pair of swans. The swans bill profiles were consistent with those of Tundra Swans.

# CONSERVATION NEWS

## What a Large-Scale Habitat Restoration Can Accomplish

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, local Soil and Water Conservation districts, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, and local land trusts have all been working for a number of decades to reforest the floodplain of the Wabash River. In fact, since 1970 nearly 30,000 acres have been restored to forests and wetlands. Adding in the huge Goose Pond complex in south-west Indiana and it was enough to make the birds fly in and take notice.

Birds have taken so much notice in fact, that a new flyway is developing that cuts across southwest Indiana. It breaks away from the Mississippi flyway and extends southeast to the Carolina coast. Mary McConnell, State Director of the Indiana Nature Conservancy had this to say in a recent letter to members:

*“Migration staging areas don’t happen in small systems. Even a wetland of several thousand acres cannot support such a phenomenon. The birds are here in Indiana because the entire complex provides lots of opportunities to forage and rest. If one area is frozen over or lacks food, the birds have many other places to go within the complex. Different species have different needs so it takes a large variety of habitats at scale. It takes the acquisition and active management of large conservation areas like Goose Pond and the vision of the Wabash River corridor restoration to provide the variety and scale necessary for this migration to happen in Indiana.”*

## Mounds State Park and Nature Preserve Threatened by Dam

An idea that needs to die is a proposal to build a dam on the White River near Anderson. The plan would flood 1/3 of Mounds State Park (all the ravines & lowlands, plus the road to the campground ) and destroy an irreplaceable rare and diverse fen with an incredibly high floristic quality index — one of only 250 dedicated nature preserves in Indiana—in the process. This latter is unprecedented: nature preserve have the highest legal protection in the state. If weak reasons for ‘taking’ this nature preserve hold up, no land in the state could be certain of protection. The plan also takes 400 homes.

None of the reasons given for the dam hold water (and neither might the dam, according to some respected geologists who say the soil and hydrology of the area isn’t suitable). The original reasons given for the dam were dropped after initial negative comments and the dam was repurposed as a “water supply project” in spite of Indianapolis having an abundance of water for decades to come. The dam has the signs of a classic boondoggle to benefit a few people while taking away recreational land owned by the people of Indiana. The plan would eliminate thriving canoe and kayak usage on that area of the river, excellent small bass fishing, threaten the park’s relic native American mounds through bank erosion at the edges of the reservoir, and flood one of the states best mountain bike parks built by thousands of hours of volunteer labor. Between 7 and 10 miles of high quality clear, clean flowing water would be spoiled by an impoundment that would promote algae growth—all for a dam that has no useful purpose.

For more information go to [www.moundslakereservoir.org/panel-discussion-May-12](http://www.moundslakereservoir.org/panel-discussion-May-12). While on their site, sign the petition too. The best action all of us can and should take is to contact our state representatives and senators and tell them to oppose and vote against this project.



The dotted line shows the new flyway that cuts across southwest Indiana—breaking away from the Mississippi flyway—on its way to the Carolina coastline.

## NAS Climate Report continued:

“This focus on climate looks a lot like our work in the 1960s to combat the effects of DDT on eagle populations. It mirrors the work we did to support groundbreaking legislation in 1918 to stop the slaughter of birds for their feathers for hats and clothing.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which still protects birds, laid the foundation for our reputation as a science-based bird conservation organization. Just as it was in those two cases, the data is in, and the message is clear: It’s time for us to act—each according to our means, but urgently—to mitigate the impact we’re having on our planet, and to preserve the habitat birds will have left in a climate changed future.

Together, Audubon represents more than four million people. Another 43 million say they enjoy watching birds. Your passion, your dedication and your desire to save birds is the story of National Audubon. Remember, to a bird, you are what hope looks like.”

for more info go to

<http://climate.audubon.org/article/storm-gathers-north-american-birds>

Or contact Barny Dunning (p.7)

## Nature Notes continued from p 4.

- 11/7 A cancelled morning class had Landon Neumann headed to Celery Bog. On the way he spotted a Peregrine Falcon on a light pole on US 52. The bird was still there hours later at 3 p.m.
- Many people are reporting Purple Finch and Pine siskins at feeders this year. In Nov Del Arvin had a Common Redpoll at his feeders near Buck Creek another showed up at his son Mark's house outside West Lafayette.
- Rick & Debbie Read took a boat ride on Lake Freeman. They had a number of species including 8 horned grebes but their best bird was a rare Western Grebe.



- On the 13th Landon Neumann birded a couple of Cass's ponds. The highlights were a Horned Grebe and a Merlin.
- Joan Mohr Samuels sent a photo of a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker enjoying her suet Nov 13th. She was delighted! Sapsuckers have been very rare visitors to her feeders over the past 17 years
- The Nov 14 weekly waterfowl survey by Barry Dunning and Chuck Tuttle at Pine Creek produced more ducks than have been seen there for several years (due to two years of drought). Most were Mallards, but the first American Black Ducks of the fall were present as were the two Tundra Swans seen last week..
- The first American Tree Sparrow turned up in Cass County Nov 14. Bud Dodrill and Landon Neumann spotted it along with the first Ring-billed Gulls on the Wabash. Other species included 40 Lapland Longspurs and a dark morph Rough-legged Hawk. On the 16th on River Bluff Trail, Landon found a late Orange-crowned Warbler which may have been eating honeysuckle berries.
- Ted & Sue Ulrich had a female Rusty Blackbird at their feeders Nov 17 which stayed for several days. A Sharp-shinned Hawk hit their kitchen window Dec 3 but recovered and eventually flew off.

## Wednesdays In the Wild

Weekly programs on various natural history topics for adults and interested young people. Usually from 1-3 p.m. or 7-9 p.m. Sites Vary. For a complete description of these programs email Joan Mohr Samuels at mohrsamuels@comcast.net or pick up a schedule at Lilly Nature Center in Celery Bog Park. The new schedule will be out around late December.

## DVD Recommendation

Karen Griggs recommends "Winged Planet: An Earth Flight Film" which is available in the "new" DVD bin at the West Lafayette Public Library. She says "I learned about birds and turtles, marine mammals, flights in the Grand Canyon, the skyscraper canyon of New York City, Baja, and other wonderful things."

## SAS Junior Nature Club Programs

Junior Nature Club Meetings are held from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog, WL

Lesson Topic: Project Green Planet (Recycling)  
 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grades                                5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grades  
 Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>                                        Dec 9<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>

No January Meetings

Lesson Topic: Knock on Wood (Life cycle of a Tree)  
 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grades                                5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grades  
 Feb 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>                                    Feb 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>

## Winter Bird Feeder Count for Indiana

If you feed birds, here's something easy to do that adds interest to what's coming to your yard. The Winter Bird Feeder Count is sponsored by the Indiana Audubon Society and provides yearly data for birds seen at feeders in Indiana during winter.

The count is a simple one page form and covers birds seen during the 20th to the 25th of November, December, January and February. All you need to do is to count and record the maximum number of birds of each species seen at your feeders during those periods. The form is available at SAS meetings, or you can get it via email from Susan Ulrich (see p. 7), or you can contact John Castrale, the compiler, at jscascastrale@gmail.com.

- Nov 20 John Skene discovered 6 Trumpeter Swans at Celery Bog Park. They were still there the next day.
- Barry Dunning noted 8 Snow Geese flying over the Purdue Stadium during the Nov 22nd football game.
- Landon Neumann succeeded in finding the Northern Shrike reported by another birder near Georgetown in Cass Co Nov 28th. It is only the 2nd one ever reported for Cass County.
- Native swans appeared at several sites. Rick Read had 8 in White County Nov 30. The majority of the field marks suggested Trumpeter Swans. Dec 2 Susan Ulrich had 5 Trumpeter Swans at a wet area on South River Road.
- Del Arvin noted large flocks of Lapland Longspurs coming to grain spills during the last week in November.
- December 1st was a big day for southward movement of Sandhill Cranes. Del Arvin had flocks near Buck Creek, and Larry Miller saw several thousand birds flying south of Lafayette.

### Join Sycamore Audubon Society!

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

You can support national conservation efforts by joining the National Audubon Society (NAS). When you join NAS, you will receive *Audubon* magazine **along with automatic chapter membership in SAS**. Since NAS dues primarily support national projects, we encourage all national members to ALSO become Friends of SAS. As a Friend, you contribute directly to our local chapter and its projects.

Membership Application Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

SAS's treasurer would appreciate payments in Aug-Sept to make it easier to keep track, however renewing Friends memberships will be credited to whatever month a Friend originally joined.

New member  Renewal

**I would prefer to receive the chapter newsletter by:**  e-mail or  paper copy.

**National Audubon Society membership** \$20 for first year\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Special introductory offer for new members (renewals otherwise \$35/year)

**Additional contribution to SAS** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 For \_\_\_\_\_ (if specific purpose)

**Total enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to Sycamore Audubon Society, PO Box 2716, West Lafayette, IN 47996-2716

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## Egyptian Goose added to ABA's Official Bird List

In August the ABA Checklist Committee officially added the Egyptian Goose to the ABA Checklist on the basis of a robust breeding population in several south Florida counties, namely Martin, Broward, Palm Beach, and Miami-Dade where a survey by Bill Pranty & Valerie Ponzo tallied 1,204 geese at 181 separate locations. The addition brings the ABA checklist up to 986 species.



Egyptian Geese have been resident in Martin County, Florida since 1994. Numerous breeding observations were compiled throughout Florida, with most of these occurring in recent years. The previous newest species added were three species resulting from taxonomic splits that were added last July resulting from splits: Salvin's Albatross, Ridgway's Rail, and Kamchatka Leaf Warbler. Prior to those three was the addition of Zino's Petrel in November of 2013.

Several Egyptian Geese were photographed in Warren County about 10 years ago. They are easily identified by the dark red oval around the eye and the black and white wings in flight. The birds are pictured in most field guides issued in the past 15 years.

## Tidbits

Amy Kearns, Indiana's non-game biologist, reports that Ruffed Grouse numbers are projected to drop below "viable population levels" within the next couple of years in portions of the bird's existing range in south central Indiana. Annual roadside surveys continue to find little or no presence of grouse in many stops along control routes.

No drumming male ruffed grouse were heard on the 14 roadside survey routes (15 stops per route) during the 2013 survey period and only one grouse has been heard on these routes in four years. The five-year (2009-2013) mean drumming index for the control routes was less than 0.01 drummers per stop (about 1 drummer heard every 190 stops), which is less than 1 percent of levels recorded during the peak years of 1979-81. For the eighth consecutive year, no drumming activity centers were located on the Maumee Grouse Study Area where population monitoring began in the early 1960s.

Advancement of forest succession (maturity) is a major reason for decline of the ruffed grouse. Prospects for the population's recovery are dismal and extirpation seems possible. The loss of "young forest" habitat is thought to be the major driver for the decline of grouse in Indiana.



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Northern Shrike

# Great Backyard Bird Count 2015

## February 13-16, 2015

<http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

Here's a look back at the record-breaking Great Backyard Bird Count for 2014. For a more complete look check the website.

Number of checklists: **144,109**  
Species observed: **4,296**  
Countries participating: **135**  
Number of participants: **142,051**

Rank	Country	# Checklists
1	United States	124,310
2	Canada	3,458
3	India	3,358
4	Australia	908
5	Mexico	546
6	Chile	356
7	Costa Rica	256
8	Puerto Rico	196
9	United Kingdom	162
10	Portugal	149

The wildly successful Great Backyard Bird Count for 2015 is coming up in February. Participation is easy. All you have to do is go out and count birds or stay in and count birds. People can turn in multiple lists, both by area and by day. For example you could turn in a yard list each of the four days, a list of birds when you visit a local park (again all four days if you'd like), a trip to another state or country. People all over the globe are taking part as you can see by the information to the left which is why an amazing 4,296 species were reported in 2014. That's nearly half the species found in the world.

What's fun about seeing what birds you can find is what amazing and unexpected species you can come up with. It's a case of "If you look you will find". An area you drive by every day may look uninteresting, but if you get out and walk, you may flush up an uncommon sparrow or see a Yellow-rumped Warbler feeding on poison ivy berries. And when you enter your data you can check the maps and see the results for Indiana, neighboring states, and the world in all sorts of ways. It's a great teaching opportunity using computer skills, math, and natural history all in one.

Indiana's totals will be a drop in the bucket of the 4,000 plus species seen this year, but the information is priceless and the accumulation of that information is both educational and fun.