

Sycamore Warbler

Volume 40 Issue 1 Spring 2015

What do Saturday Night Live & Sycamore Audubon Have in Common?

Both began 40 years ago in 1975. On April 10 of that year the Purdue Women's Club Bird Study Group members voted to take steps to become a National Audubon Society Chapter. After getting 35 new NAS memberships, writing a constitution and bylaws, the chapter was then approved and the first newsletter (vol 1, issue 1) mailed out in August.

The first board was made up of Ed Hopkins, president; Roland Winterfield, VP; Delano Arvin, Secretary; Barbara Pinzelik, Treasurer; plus Norma Block, Armin Crain, Randy Gabel, H.D. (Skip) Jackson, Hugh Larimer, John Miller, Larry Miller, Joe Pearson, and Pat Webster.

The group's first program was held September 11th and is essentially the same as our *Bring Your Own Program* today. The first field trip was an Indian Creek Nature Hike Sept 13 at Purdue's Shidler Tract.

Indiana Dunes First Birding Festival

Experience birding as never before on Lake Michigan's south shore. The Indiana Audubon Society (IAS) is hosting this new festival May 7-10. Come for a single day of birding or stay all four days for great field trips, hands on activities and more. James Currie, producer and host of Nikon's Birding Adventures, is the Keynote speaker. The event celebrates the dunes rich biodiversity and bird life.

Registration is coming soon at www.indunesbirdingfestival.com. IAS members will get a special early bird registration before the rest of the public. You can follow the event at www.facebook.com/indunesbirdingfestival.

Big Day Bird Counts May 9th

The most looked-forward-to birding event of the year is the Big Day in May Bird Count held in Indiana on the second Saturday in May to coincide with the peak of songbird migration. This year that date is May 9, one of the earlier possible dates, which could mean more shorebirds and waterfowl hanging around. It could also mean tree leaves will be smaller making visual id of small birds in trees easier.

Regulars and new people interested in helping should contact the appropriate county compiler since SAS's regular May meeting is after the May count this year. Lots of people are needed from new beginners to experts. If your county isn't listed and you'd like to organize a count, contact Indiana Audubon Society to learn what you need to do.

Tippecanoe County— Barney Dunning 765-494-3565; bdunning@purdue.edu
 Warren County — Susan Ulrich 765-583-2275; sueandtedulrich@msn.com
 Cass County — Landon Neumann; landonneumann25@gmail.com

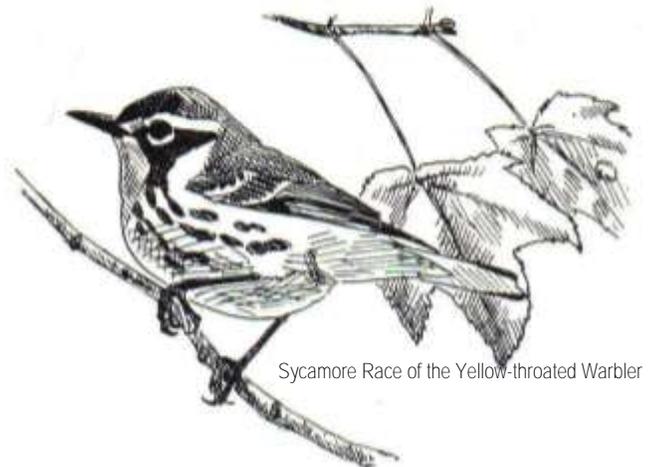
Participation is easy. Simply call/email the compiler who will assign you a territory to cover or you may be able to join an existing field party. Or you can ask for a specific territory: perhaps your property and neighborhood or a local park or more. The compiler supplies you with the bird report

Inside this issue:

Chapter News	2-3
Nature Notes	4
Audubon Calendar	5
Odds & Ends	6
Conservation	7
CBC Results	8
Tidbits & LEED Bldg	9
Earthday Learn & Serve	10

and the time/data forms to fill out and return. Feeder watchers are needed as well. Some birds are more likely to be seen there than in the field. At the end of the day Tippecanoe birders hold a compilation party at the Wild Bird Shoppe where people summarize the days results.

Last year Tippecanoe County ended up with 151 species, Warren with 138 and Cass with 121. Taken together the three counts turned up 170 different bird species.



Sycamore Race of the Yellow-throated Warbler

CHAPTER NEWS

Feast of the Hunter's Moon

The figures are now in: thanks to all the volunteers, SAS made over \$1,800 at the 2014 Feast.

Spring Bake & Plant Sale

This year's bake & plant sale is April 10-12 at the West Lafayette Public Library. As usual, SAS is looking for donations of food items to sell along with plants (outdoor or house plants). Bulbs, birding items, etc. are all accepted too.



Mary Ann McGill & Connie Brown

One other donation is needed: a couple of hours of your time. Please email Susan Ulrich if you can help Friday 6:30 to 9 p.m., Saturday 9:30 to noon or 2:30-5 p.m., or Sunday 1 to 3 or 3 to 5 p.m. Lots of nice people drop by to buy things, and you can visit the big library book sale, too.

Garden Expo

SAS needs MORE plants + gardening equipment to sell at Garden Expo. Funds raised here go for the honeysuckle removal project. Put on by the Master Gardeners, Expo is April 25th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the **Swine Barn at Tippecanoe County's Fair Grounds**, 1460 Teal Rd. Lafayette. Donations can be left Friday from 3-6 or Saturday after 7 a.m. For other arrangements for donations get in touch with Susan Ulrich (see p.9).

Recent Donations

A big thank you to Judy Marten for her donation to SAS. We will put it

to good use, and thank you, Jim Klatch, for your February donation to the Pookie fund.

Lastly, thank you Russ & Barbara Allison for donating Russ's old spotting scope, along with several tripods. The scope will be kept for use on Audubon field trips, the remaining items will be sold at the plant sale & garden expo.

Honeysuckle Clean-up Update

Cutting honeysuckle in Ross Hills' woodlands continues. The weather didn't cooperate in January or February but hopefully will be better in March for the March 28th workday. NICHES's two stewards have been working under contact with INPAWS & SAS to take out most of the larger plants which now need to be gathered in piles so volunteers can work on the smaller plants. Your help would be appreciated. You can also arrange to work when it is convenient for you—not just on organized workdays.

Kudo's John

John Skene's picture of an American Robin recently appeared on Cornell's facebook page. If you were at September's meeting, you could have seen it there along with many other excellent photos by John and others.

Audubon in Monticello

Rick Red has several birding events planned for Monticello this Spring. The first is March 26, an 8 a.m. **Bird Walk** starting at the Shady Rest Pavilion, City Park, Monticello. Here's a description of the event: "join us on a walk led by Rick Red to see resident and early migrant birds. We'll check out the nest structures built by Kiwanis. Bring your own binoculars" or use the extras that are available.

The next event is April 25th for **Earth Week**. It runs from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and takes place at Altherr Park.

- 8 am and 10 am: Rick Read leads bird walks through Altherr Nature Park. Extra binoculars available if needed..

- 8 am- 12 pm: Hands-on binocular comparisons. Information will be provided about binoculars in general & what you need to know before buying a pair.

- 12 pm: Planting of 300 trees to replace those lost during work on the park.

- 1-3 pm: Earth Day Fair under the tent.

Wednesdays in the Wild

To get the new list of programs, email mohrsamuels@comcast.net.

Fifth Grade Camp Walks

Once again SAS is helping lead early morning bird hikes at the West Lafayette Fifth Grade Camp. Dates are Tuesday, May 5 and Thursday, May 7 at Camp Tecumseh in White County. A few more helpers would be nice as there are more 5th graders than usual. Contact Chuck Tuttle (see p. 9) for info. Chuck presents a pre-camp bird program to the students to spur their interest. Hikes are followed by breakfast if you so desire. A carpool leaves Celery Bog at 6:30 a.m. or meet at the first parking area at the camp at 7 a.m.

NICHES is 20 years old & Clegg Garden is 50 Help celebrate both on April 4

Twenty years goes quickly. SAS was a moving force behind the start of NICHES Land Trust back then. With a few dedicated volunteers, no money, or land, it would have been hard to imagine NICHES would now own or protect over 2,850 acres—nearly 5 square miles—and have 4 employees.

NICHES offices have moved to Clegg Gardens which NICHES now owns. The building is being remodeled, to be ADA compliant. NICHES will use the gardens to enhance their conservation education, and outreach efforts. Clegg is located at 1782 N 400 E, in Tippecanoe County. The building now includes the Roy Whistler Library for the study of natural history, and has space for members to meet, and for holding programs of interest. Stop in on

the 4th to help celebrate and look around. The Ribbon cutting is at 10:30. There will be a full day of Wildcat Creek floats, hiking tours, food & more.

SAS Help Requested

NICHES Land Trust asked SAS's to help plan and put together a bird feeding area at Clegg Gardens once construction is done. If you'd like to help or have feeders or ideas to donate, contact Barny Dunning, see p.9.

RIP Squad

The dates and locations aren't set yet. To get a schedule, Email Patty Rader at patricia.w.rader@gmail.com

Climate & Animal Movement

Dr Julia Earl will give a program *The Effects of climate change on Animal Movement* April 21 at 3:30 p.m. in the Dean's Auditorium, Pfendler Hall, Purdue.

& Mentioning Climate...

For information on predicted effects of climate change on birdlife, email NAS at climatescience@audubon.org or go to audubon.org/climate.

All-New Audubon Website Unveiled

On January 29th a fully re-imaged NAS website was launched with stunning photo layouts and easy to find conservation information along with an over-hauled online Bird Guide. Check it out at www.audubon.org.

SAS Junior Nature Club

Contact Zonda Bryant for additional information on dates, etc. Lilly Nature Center from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Herps Anyone? Tadpoles to take home.
Early March

Rock On Collecting interesting rocks.
Late March/early April

You Bug Me The world of insects
Mid to Late April

Meet the Neighbors Mammal ambassadors
Early May

InSearch of Hidden Treasure (a treasure hunt) Late April to early June.

Mind BOGgling Event: a celebration

Come to Celery Bog Saturday, May 16th to jointly celebrate this wonderful nature park and National Wetlands Month by visiting 2015's MindBOGgling Event. Hours are 10 to 3. SAS will be there along with many other groups. Outdoor programs include "Monarchs and Milkweed" Reni Winter; "Falconry" Tom Hagovsky, and storyteller Doyne Carson. The Emergency Munchie truck will be there for lunch, or bring your own and sit and enjoy being outdoors. You can stop in to view the art show featuring photographs and woodworking or if you have a natural history question, visit the ask-an-expert table. There's loads for children and pre-schoolers, and four nature walks.

If you'd like to volunteer to help set up tents, direct parking, etc. contact Mary Cutler at mcut@msn.com. SAS could use a few helpers as well.

Tour Ecuador's Birdlife?

SAS's vice president, Wes Homoya is planning a birding tour to Ecuador this summer (probable dates are June 18-26 or within a few days of that). If there's a lot of interest, he will consider doing a second tour in July. Tour is limited to 8 people. The main objective is "to get as many quality looks as possible at as many species as possible without killing ourselves." Cost will be around \$3,000 a person.

The focus of the tour is the birds of the cloudforests and lowland rainforests on the western slope, as well as inhabitants of the High Andes. These areas are all places where Wes guided groups this past summer. He expects to encounter ~300 species including 30 hummingbirds, plus parrots, trogons, quetzals, motmots, antpittas, loads of colorful tanagers, and singular birds like Andean Condor, Andean Cock-of-the-rock, and the enigmatic Oilbird.

There's also Ecuador's rich flora and non-avian fauna to enjoy, along with breathtaking landscapes. Because of Ecuador's unique position geologically, the tour is able to stay in only 2 lodges (not counting Quito) thus reducing travel time and fuss. The two lodges are the Tandayapa Bird Lodge (<http://tandayapabirdlodge.com/>) and Guango Lodge (<http://www.guangelodge.com/>). The food at both lodges is excellent.

The tour will be facilitated by Tropical Birding, an awesome international bird tour company and owner of Tandayapa Bird Lodge where Wes stayed and trained during his 2 months in Ecuador last summer. Thus logistical details and any problems will be handled efficiently and locally. Contact Wes (see p.9) for additional information.

Knob & Valley Audubon has Forest Management Concerns

The rate of commercial logging in Indiana's state forests has increased tenfold since 2002. Under the current system, nearly every tract of Indiana's publicly-owned state forests will be logged every 15-20 years. This increased logging activity is accompanied by a rapidly expanding network of logging yards and roads, dramatically increasing the potential for nest parasitism and predation by creating large canopy openings and increasing forest edge throughout the state forests.

The Knob & Valley Audubon Chapter and the Indiana Forest Alliance are advocating for the creation of State Wild Areas, to protect some areas of Indiana's state forests from commercial logging, road building, and other industrial activities that threaten Indiana's last remaining interior forest habitat. These State Wild Areas would serve as a baseline for researchers to monitor how hardwood forests respond to natural disturbances, such as drought, windstorms, and disease, without human disruption. These areas would be open to the public for low-impact, dispersed recreation activities, such as hiking, bird-watching, camping, hunting, and horseback riding.

Knob & Valley asks you to contact your state legislators on behalf of these wild areas.



Barred Antshrike
by Russ Mumford

Nature Notes & News

- Dick Harvey of Attica saw 18 Bald Eagles and 1 Golden Eagle along Pine Creek in Warren County on Dec 11.
- In early December both Carolyn Starkey and Susan Ulrich reported a group of Trumpeter Swans hanging around for several days in a flooded area off Division road between 500 & 575 W.
- Barny heard back from the Bird Banding lab about the Trumpeter Swan with the yellow neck collar seen at Celery Bog in January. It was banded Sept 9, 2005 as a fledgling in Gransburg, WI. That means the bird was 9 years old.
- Dec 4 Landon Neumann noted two Winter Wrens on Logansport's River bluff Trail. On the 7th he had 1600+ Lapland Longspurs flying from a corn field to a bean field along 575N in Cass County.
- Ed Hopkins visited Pine Creek Gamebird Area in Benton Co Dec. 6. He saw a Greater White-fronted Goose and 4 Cackling Geese plus a Black Duck and 8 Northern Pintail mixed in with Canada Geese and Mallards.
- Jeff Ferguson had a Snowy Owl Dec 11th on a utility pole about 60 feet away from him on Dec 11. the bird was on SR 28 outside Frankford. Jeff says 'I never thought that I would see one without traveling a whole lot of miles!!'
- Checking a few Cass Co spots Dec 13, Landon turned up 2 Tundra Swans at Lake Cicott and 7 Purple Finches.
- Larry Miller had a Sharp-shinned Hawk hit his window December 22. The bird appeared to favor its right wing, but eventually appeared to recover and flew away.



Sharp-shinned Hawk by Larry Miller

- On December 26th Tim Street and his wife found a Snowy Owl at exit 158 of I65 sitting on a utility pole just NE of the interchange near an abandoned Harley business. Larry Miller, who lives 5 miles or so away, looked but didn't find it that day but did find it Dec 27th. Janna

Beckerman saw it in same general area Dec 29 as did Clint Murray. Larry Peavler found it the next day, the 30th. Larry Miller spotted it again Dec 31. The bird was still there Jan 3 for Ed Hopkins to find.



I65 Snowy Owl

- Mike Yough heard, and then saw, a very vocal Peregrine Falcon soaring over Purdue's Memorial Mall on Dec. 29.
- Bud Dodrill & Landon Neumann spent a slow morning in Cass Co Jan 17. Highlight was 2 dark-morph Rough-legged Hawks.
- That same day Russ Allison had a number of hawks: Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk and Rough-legged Hawk, plus some robins at Prophetstown State Park. A stop at Celery Bog added an assortment of waterfowl which included American Coots, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Redheads, Great-blue Herons and of course, 110 Mallards and 160 Canada Geese. On the next day Russ returned to the Bog, adding 2 Common Goldeneye. In the woods he came across a Red-tailed Hawk on the ground eating an unidentified animal.
- John Skene took a short walk at Prophetstown on the 18th and discovered a Long-eared Owl.
- That same day Lisa Kelsey reported a Long-tailed Duck was on the Wabash River in Fountain County around the Route 32 bridge by Perrysville. Common Goldeneye were also seen in the area.
- Jan 19 Russ Allison revisited Prophetstown finding a pair of Mute Swans, 6 Gadwall & 6 Mallard on Lake Harrison.
- Barny Dunning & Chuck Tuttle had great looks at various diving ducks at Celery bog, including both male and female Canvasbacks on Jan 29. Birds seen included 3 Greater White-fronted Geese, 3 American Black Duck, 6 Canvasbacks, 8 Redheads, 1 Lesser Scaup, and 10 American Coots.
- Russ Allison checked out several birding areas Jan 30, his best bird was the Long-eared Owl at Prophetstown.
- February 4 Landon Neumann saw a large flock of over 250 Snow Buntings at the Logansport airport. A few Horned Larks were mixed in. On the 7th there were still 100 Snow Buntings there and 40 Common Goldeneyes and 8 Common Mergansers on the river by Georgetown road. On the 12th he and Bud Dodrill found a nesting Great-horned Owl at France Park. They also had 26 Turkey Vultures and a Northern Mockingbird.
- Feb 10 Andrei Gabrielov saw the following ducks on Celery Bog: Goldeneye, Redhead, Canvasback, Common Merganser, Ringneck, Scaup (probably, lesser), & Green-winged Teal.
- Two Red-headed Woodpecker showed up in Sue & Ted Ulrich's yard up in Warren County Feb.10 & have stayed around.
- Feb 17 Barny Dunning checked out a white goose at Celery Bog whose identity was in question. He reports: "I watched the goose for a few minutes this morning, but it had its head tucked under its back feathers and wings for warmth so I only got a few brief glimpses of the head. My impression was that it is a Ross's Goose," Ed Hopkins concurred. He found the bird still hanging around February 26th.
- Russ Allison wrote on the 17th, "It is really rough for the fish-eating Bald Eagles to fish among the ice floes on the Wabash. I watched one at the Williamsburg Apartment complex for over an hour yesterday. After 4 dives it caught one fish. The 8 Mallards that were also floating among the ice were having a lot better luck."
- Feb 19 Bud Dodrill spotted a Golden Eagle in Cass Co off Georgetown Road. Landon and he relocated it on the 20th
- On the 22nd, Landon Neumann birded along the Wabash River. His highlight was 5 greater Scaup. He also noted a buildup of waterfowl along the river. His days tally included over 150 Common Goldeneyes.
- The dapper little Green Heron, denizen of wetlands coast-to-coast, is the American Birding Association's 2015 bird of the year. Subtly beautiful and surprisingly adaptable, this species is often overlooked as it sits immobile waiting for prey along the waters edge. It will eat anything it can swallow from grasshoppers to small snakes. It is usually a solitary nester building a flimsy nest with 3-6 eggs.

Spring Sycamore Audubon Calendar 2015

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.

- March 7
Saturday Waterfowl & Raptor Tour. As soon as ice melts, hundreds of thousands of antsy waterfowl and other early migrants will head north. At this same time we should see Bald Eagles on their nests. Meet at Celery Bog's gravel parking area to carpool at 8 a.m. This should be a half-day trip.
- March 12
Thursday Program: *BIGBY Birding & Photography*. Joel Hess. Joel did a big bird year around the United States by bike. He had a number of interesting experiences along the way and lots of birds from the common to the rare. Come see photographs taken on his journeys and hear some of his stories. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park 7:15 p.m. Free parking and refreshments.
- March 28
Saturday Honeysuckle Workday at Ross Hills Park. 10 a.m. See p. 2. Weather permitting. Meet at the Ross Biological Reserve (east of the Park watch for the small sign on the left side of 875 W, the road that divides the Ravines Golf Course). Email/call Susan Ulrich if you have any questions (see p. 9).
- April 4
Saturday Winghaven Tour. Leader Karen Griggs. Carpool 9 a.m. Call Karen (p.9 or at 260-418-4410) or meet her at the two-story log cabin artist's studio at Winghaven north of Angola at noon. Winghaven is on the Seven Sister's Lake Chain & is a paradise for birds. Go to acreslandtrust.org for more info.
- April 9
Thursday Program: *Our Friend, the Bat*. Bats are often misrepresented. In reality they play an important ecological and economic role in our lives. Jody Nicholson, an ecologist based out of Indianapolis, will clarify the misconceptions about these social critters, discuss research techniques, and state and federal protective measures to preserve these fantastic bug-catchers in the face of White Nose Syndrome, habitat loss, and other threats. Lilly Nature Center 7:15 p.m. Free parking & refreshments.
- April 10-12
Fri to Sunday SAS Spring Bake & Plant Sale. Bring donations to the West Lafayette library on Friday after 10 a.m. or on Saturday morning. People are needed to help at the tables, too. See p. 2.
- April 22
Wednesday Earth Day Stewardship Forum and Stiltgrass Foray. See story on back cover. Start the day at 9:00 a.m. at the John S. Wright Conference Center at Martell Forest or join activities later.
- April 25
Saturday Clegg Gardens Field Trip. Meet at the Clegg Garden parking lot at 7:30 a.m. We will tour this **NICHES' area looking for birds and other species of interest. After, stop by Garden Expo to say 'Hi'.**
- April 25
Saturday Garden Expo. **Put on by the Master Gardener's, this is a must-go stop for anyone who loves plants or gardens.** SAS will be passing out information and selling donated plants, garden equipment, and bird items. Donations needed. See story p.2. Tippecanoe County Fair Grounds east side of Teal Road.
- May 5 & 7
Tues & Thurs Fifth Grade Camp Bird Walks. Leaders and assistants needed for 5th grade student bird hikes. The kids are great. Meet at Camp Tecumseh at 7 a.m. or at Celery Bog at 6:30 to carpool. See p. 2
- May 2
Saturday Big Day in May Warm-up. Martell Forest 7:30 a.m. A chance to learn to identify birds by sound as well as sight & a great refresher for rusty ears & eyes. Entrance is on E side of Tippecanoe Co 725W.
- May 9
Saturday Big Day In May Bird Counts. Rain, sun, snow or fog, large leaves or no leaves, this is the day birders all over Indiana and other states go out to count birds in their area. We have several counts locally and all can use people to help. See more on page 1. The compilation party for the Lafayette Count is at the Wild Bird Shoppe at 9 p.m. Bring a snack to share. Beverages, etc. provided.
- May 14
Thursday Program: ***Indiana's Other Dunes: the Restoration of Prairie Border***. Derek Luchik, North Central Indiana Field Steward for The Nature Conservancy, works to protect and restore some of our state's most unique and imperiled habitats. Tonight's focus is the oak savannas and wetlands of the Eastern Kankakee Sands formation and its unique and imperiled wildlife. Lilly Nature Center 7:15 p.m. Free parking & refreshments
- June 13
Saturday Bird Ramble at Prophetstown. **Grassland nesting species such as the Henslow's Sparrow should be back on territory while some migrants may still be lingering.** Meet at the eastern parking area with the basketball standards at 6:30 a.m. Birds seen will be included in the Tippecanoe Summer Bird Count.

Protective Fence Built in Hawaii

Rare native plant and animal communities that have inhabited a roughly eight-acre area at the Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge—including imperiled bird species found nowhere else on earth—will be protected from predators thanks to the installation of a predator-proof fence that stretches almost a half-mile in length. The state-of-the-art fence took about three months to construct and will keep introduced mammalian predators, including cats, dogs, rats, and mice, out of the area so that the native species such as the endangered Nēnē (Hawaiian Goose), the Laysan Albatross, and rare plants can flourish again in a protected environment. In addition, the absence of introduced predators make this restored site an appropriate translocation site for the threatened 'A'o (Newell's Shearwater) and for the reintroduction of rare native plants.

Methane Emissions to be addressed

January 14, the White House unveiled a new greenhouse gas reduction goal, this time targeting methane emissions. With methane being a potent contributor to atmospheric warming, this new move is an important component of the country's climate strategy. The plan also highlights the promise of using industry know-how and participation to contribute to these reductions. Aiming for a 45 percent reduction by 2025, the administration has identified actions to be taken by several federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy

Red Knot finally given Endangered Species Status



The Red Knot—a robin-sized bird that migrates 9,300 miles—just won Endangered Species protection. This epic traveler depends on horseshoe crabs' eggs for the energy needed for its twice-yearly trips between South America and the Canadian Arctic. As crab populations declined due to harvest by the fishing and biomedical industries, so did the population of red knot's. The bird is also threatened by habitat destruction and climate change.

In 2005 the Center for Biological Diversity, Audubon, and other groups petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for emergency protection of the species, but the agency stuck the bird on the "candidate" list, where it languished for nearly a decade. Now, because of the Center's 2011 agreement, the Service has finalized protection for this singular bird. "With the decision to protect the red knot, our children and grandchildren just may have the chance to marvel at one of nature's greatest spectacles -- the marathon migration of the red knot," said the Center's Mollie Matteson.

Wolf Targetting Continues without letup

The newest wolf-kill tally is in: More than 3,400 wolves have been hounded, gunned down, or trapped since politicians took away protection in six states -- 641 wolves since September alone. Each kill can shatter a pack and destroy a family.

But that isn't enough for the wolf-haters. On Feb 12 a bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives would strip Endangered Species Act protections from 4,000 gray wolves in four states and open them up to more hunting and trapping. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ended protections for wolves in the Great Lakes a few years ago -- and more than 1,600 wolves died as a result. Federal judges later overturned that action by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, but this new legislation would override those court orders and again put the fate of wolves in Wyoming, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan in the hands of state wildlife agencies eager to resume wolf-killing.

Audubon & the 114th Congress

It's a new year, a new Congress—and new political dynamics in Washington, D. A year that will have important impacts for birds and their habitats over the next two years.

Control of the U.S. Senate is with the Republican Party, which also expanded its majority in the U.S. House. Over the next two years of the 114th Congress, and the final two final years of President Obama's term, Audubon will be engaged in key policy issues and debates that affect bird conservation, including hundreds of millions of dollars in conservation funding, the protection of our nation's bedrock environmental laws, and defense of our spectacular public lands.

Funding Conservation

The annual federal budget process began in February. In the weeks ahead, Congress will set funding levels for critical conservation programs that protect and restore habitat and wildlife populations. Audubon's priorities are the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, as well as key regional projects such as Everglades restoration and sustaining water resources in the Colorado River basin.

Protecting Bedrock Environmental Laws

Expect a clash over foundational laws such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which has helped save birds like Bald Eagles and Brown Pelicans from extinction. Expect Congressional efforts to blunt the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a key tool for public engagement on environmental issues, and the Antiquities Act, which allows the President to designate new National Monuments.

Defending Public Lands

In the new Congress, the perennial battles over public lands will return to the fore, including renewed efforts to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development. Congress may also attempt to force building a destructive road through protected Wilderness in Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, a globally Important Bird Area. There will be numerous opportunities for Audubon advocates to take strong stands in support of conservation funding, legislation to benefit birds and wildlife, and bedrock environmental laws protecting the environment and public health.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Fossil Fuel takes Hit in Germany

A new report from the big global investment bank HSBC predicts *"conventional energy generators will be the biggest losers from the upcoming energy storage boom, as both consumers and grid operators look to battery and other storage technologies."*

Already under pressure from rapidly declining prices of rooftop solar collectors and large-scale solar and wind generation, the declining prices of battery storage portends greater challenges ahead for **traditional fossil fuel based electrical generators**. HSBC's new analysis claims the boom days for the fossil fuel generation are over. **"There is no prospect of any return to anywhere near the level of profitability seen in the latter part of the last decade in generation,"** . Its major conclusion is that affordable battery storage will increase distributed generation – solar panels on household and business rooftops – and further reduce demand from the grid. Grid operators are also likely to use large-scale battery storage to balance demand and supply and for **smart grid enhancements**. **That's more bad news for conventional power generators**. Once again, it says, the revolution will be led by Germany, notwithstanding the major initiatives in California and China.

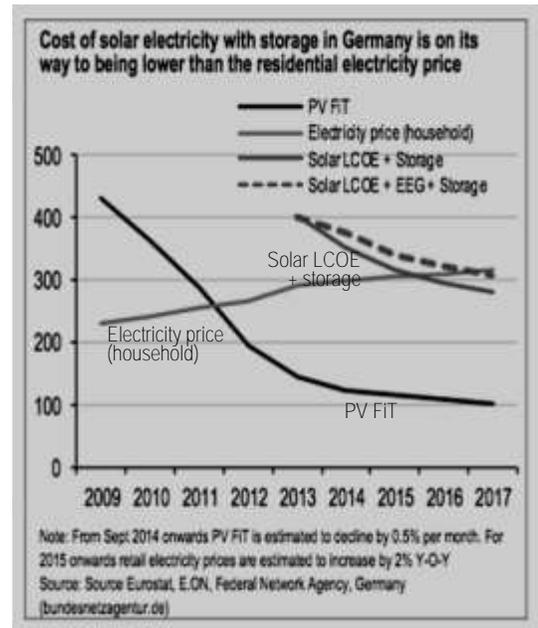
"The German energy transition encourages the retail customer to become a 'prosumer'," HSBC notes. And it says domestic storage of solar-generated power is set to take off. ... **"We believe that in markets such as Germany, households who are in ideological agreement with the drive towards renewables, who wish to be more in control of their own power supply and consumption (ie less of a "consumer" and more of a "prosumer"), and who are aware that the financial commitment is as long as 20 years, will be prepared to embrace the battery storage principle."**

The graphs shows combined solar storage and battery systems reaching grid-parity in Germany in late 2015—what the author calls "storage parity"—enabling consumers to become independent of the grid day or night.

As if this is not sufficiently challenging to traditional producers, Jim Algar of *Tech Times* tells us how researchers at Ohio State University have combined a solar collector and battery into a single device, improving efficiency and reducing cost. "The state of the art is to use a solar panel to capture the light, and then use a cheap battery to store the energy," lead inventor Yiyang Wu, a professor of biochemistry and chemistry, says. "We've integrated both functions into one device. Any time you can do that, you reduce cost."

The mesh in the OSU battery belongs to a class of devices known as dye-sensitized solar cells, where colored dyes are used to tune the wavelength of light a cell captures. Light hits the mesh solar panel which creates electrons that, inside the device, are involved in chemical decomposition of lithium peroxide into oxygen and lithium ions. The oxygen is released while the lithium ions are stored within the battery.

When the battery is discharging, it consumes oxygen from the air to re-form the lithium peroxide. "Basically, it's a breathing battery," Wu says. "It breathes in air when it discharges, and breathes out when it charges."



Neonicotinides & the Bees and the Birds

Neonicotinides have become the focus of the bee colony collapse disorder. A growing body of research undertaken since 2006 shows that even at low doses these compounds have **"sub-lethal effects on bees**.

Birds aren't immune either. A study in the Netherlands found a troubling link. As neonicotinoid levels rose in wetlands, the populations of insect-eating birds declined: the pesticides appear to have eliminated the insects on which the birds rely.

Caspar Hallmann, one of the researchers, said **"These insecticides appear to be having more profound effects than just killing our pollinating insects."** They found the presence of neonicotinoids was connected to population declines in 14 of 15 birds whose main diet was insects.

Above a 0.0194 parts per billion level, (a level over most of the Netherlands) bird populations shrank an annual average of 3.5%.



Eastern Meadowlark—
seen on 2 of the 3 CBC's
this year.



Panama Bay Victory

On February 2, huge whoops of joy could be heard in the offices of **Audubon's International Alliances Program**. They had just gotten the news that new Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela had signed a law designating the Bay of Panama wetlands complex as a protected wildlife refuge area, after years of their effort to save this Global Important Bird & Biodiversity Area.

In 2012, Panama's Supreme Court suspended the Panama Bay's status as a conservation wildlife refuge, opening the door to mega-hotel and golf course construction. With the globally-significant Important Bird & Biodiversity Area in grave jeopardy, the Panama Audubon Society launched a campaign to save the Bay with support from the National Audubon Society. Thousands of you wrote to key decision makers in Panama.

In 2013, the Bay got a reprieve when the Supreme Court reversed its decision, but the Panamanian government continued to investigate reducing the size of the protected area. With the announcement from President Varela's the Bay is protected, a huge win for the birds of the Western Hemisphere.

Area Christmas Bird Counts

Species Name:.....Laf WS/I Cass

Pied-billed Grebe	1	0	0
Double-crested Cormorant.....	1	0	0
Great Blue Heron	31	1	16
Greater White-fronted Goose....	5	0	0
Snow Goose.....	45	0	0
Cackling Goose.....	1	0	0
Canada Goose.....	2488	24	860
Mute Swan	3	0	0
Tundra Swan.....	11	0	0
Gadwall	21	0	1
American Black Duck.....	4	0	1
American Wigeon.....	0	0	1
Mallard	885	10	170
Northern Shoveler.....	26	0	0
Ring-necked Duck.....	7	0	0
Green-winged Teal.....	0	0	1
Common Goldeneye	0	0	4
Bufflehead	1	0	0
Ruddy Duck.....	cw	3	0
Turkey Vulture.....	0	0	1
Bald Eagle.....	8	1	8
Northern Harrier.....	4	11	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	2	0	2
Cooper's Hawk	6	0	4
Red-shouldered Hawk.....	2	0	6
Red-tailed Hawk.....	56	18	13
Rough-legged Hawk.....	1	10	5
American Kestrel.....	15	6	14
Ring-necked Pheasant.....	3	7	0
Wild Turkey	cw	10	65
Northern Bobwhite	0	12	0
American Coot	30	0	0
Sandhill Crane.....	40	0	0
Ring-billed Gull.....	2	0	341
Herring Gull.....	0	0	3
Rock Pigeon.....	610	11	64
Eurasian Collared Dove	0	0	6
Mourning Dove.....	453	9	113
Eastern Screech-Owl	7	2	1
Great Horned Owl	2	1	0
Barred Owl	1	2	1
Short-eared Owl.....	1	0	0
Belted Kingfisher	7	1	2
Red-headed Woodpecker	2	12	cw
Red-bellied Woodpecker.....	119	15	16
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.....	1	0	2
Downy Woodpecker	108	10	8
Hairy Woodpecker.....	14	2	1
Northern Flicker.....	24	4	6
Pileated Woodpecker	16	0	1
Blue Jay	119	208	91
American Crow.....	875	243	200
Horned Lark	17	58	79
Black-capped Chickadee	0	8	0
Carolina Chickadee.....	119	0	32
Tufted Titmouse	89	9	19
Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	0	3	0
White-breasted Nuthatch	126	30	25
Brown Creeper	37	0	8

Species Name:.....Laf WS/I Cass

Carolina Wren	38	1	4
Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	12	0	4
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	0	1
Bluebird	25	21	20
Hermit Thrush.....	1	0	1
American Robin.....	1890	3	99
Brown Thrasher.....	0	0	1
European Starling.....	8270	236	852
Cedar Waxwing	2	28	3
Yellow-rumped Warbler.....	0	0	1
Eastern Towhee.....	2	2	0
American Tree Sparrow	178	122	171
Chipping Sparrow.....	0	0	2
Field Sparrow	2	0	1
Fox Sparrow.....	1	1	0
Song Sparrow.....	56	2	14
Swamp Sparrow.....	14	0	3
White-throated Sparrow	46	14	13
White-crowned Sparrow.....	18	18	24
Dark-eyed Junco	174	305	194
Lapland Longspur.....	1	479	0
Snow Bunting.....	0	0	0
Northern Cardinal.....	188	59	101
Red-winged Blackbird	26	28	0
Eastern Meadowlark.....	6	0	2
Common Grackle	2	0	20
Brown-headed Cowbird.....	1	2751	26
Purple Finch	0	10	1
House Finch	84	55	58
American Goldfinch.....	76	257	41
House Sparrow.....	682	166	194
Total Individuals.....	18,260	5,495	4,047
Total Species	77	52	66

cw species seen During Count Week only

Lafayette Participants: Delano, Kevin, & Mark Arvin; Mike Brattain; Beth & Scott Chandler; Kimberly Cheesman; Barny Dunning; Roger Hedge; Wes Homoya; Ed Hopkins (compiler), Elsa Janle; Joe & Heather Kallevig; Barb Lucas; Harry Potter; Rick Read; John Skene; Larry & Rebecca Theller; Chuck Tuttle; Susan Ulrich.

Willow-Slough/Iroquois Reserve Participants: Ken Brock, John Cassidy, Jed Hertz, Ed Hopkins (compiler); Randy Pals; Susan Ulrich.

Cass County Participants: Landon Neumann (compiler). Kevin Cornell, Warren (Bud) Dodrill, Connie Doud, Rodney Ervin, Wes Homoya, Robert Ripma, Lee Scheidler, Susan Ulrich, Chad Williams, and 8 others.

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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LEED Platinum Environmental Education Building Planned

Plans for a LEED Platinum building to be sited at the Purdue Biology Department's Ross Biological Reserve are underway. It will enable them to expand their numerous environmental outreach programs. The building itself will be part of the message as the students will see a practical display of ecological efficiency. The design for the building involved student output from Purdue's *Ecologic Principles in Building* course.

At this point the department is seeking the remaining funds needed to begin construction. For more information on what is pledged and how much is still needed, or for additional info on the building, contact Kerry Rabenold (rabenold@purdue.edu).

Swap & Trade Up

The Wild Bird Shoppe is giving you a chance to upgrade your old feeders. Simply bring in an old feeder before June 5th and you will get 20% off a new feeder of your choice.

What's going to happen to your old feeder? Bird Shoppe personnel will repair and refurbish what they can and then hold a Garage Sale June 5th & 6th to sell them at very low prices. Proceeds from the sale will be given to SAS. So bring in those older squirrel-damaged items and get a new feeder at 20% off.



Tidbits

- One tablespoon of mercury a year deposited in a 20-acre lake can make fish in that lake unfit to eat.
- Canned white or albacore tuna on average has three times more mercury than the less expensive chunk light tuna but avoid the cans marked "gourmet" or "tonno".
- More solar energy strikes the Earth in ONE HOUR than the world uses in one year.
- In 2013 residential, non residential, and utility scale solar installations in the US added 4,863 megawatts of electricity, 2nd only to natural gas. Coal power only added 1,507 megawatts. In the first half of 2014 53% of all new electrical capacity installed came from solar power.
- There are an estimated 100,000 species of solitary wasps in the united States. Most are tiny parasitic wasps that lay their eggs on or in a specific species of insect.
- Curious about an insect? There is a Purdue website that can help with identification and info about insects as well as spiders. Go to Extention.entm.purdue.edu/publichealth



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

A Chance to Learn & Help the Earth: Earthday April 22

This Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22nd, join NICHES Land Trust, Purdue's Department of Forestry & Natural Resources, Purdue's Department of Botany & Plant Pathology, The Nature Conservancy, Tippecanoe County Park & Recreation Department, The IDNR Division of Nature Preserves, Sycamore Audubon Society, West Central Chapter of the Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society (INPAWS), and its RIP (Remove Invasive Plants) Squad volunteer group for a day of conservation, education, and recreation in western Tippecanoe County.

The day begins at 9:00 a.m. at the John S. Wright Conference Center. The Center is located in Tippecanoe County at 1007 North 725 West (east side of road). It is on the grounds of Martell Forest, approximately 7.5 miles west of the West Lafayette campus.

The Center will be the base of operations for the day, with an educational session on the stewardship work being done in the natural areas west of Lafayette by the above listed and the new threat posed by Japanese stiltgrass that is starting to show up in Tippecanoe County. Following the educational session, representatives from the groups listed above will lead volunteers through designated areas to scout for emerging stiltgrass populations from SR 26 down to the confluence of Little Pine Creek and the Wabash River. Any stiltgrass found will be marked for control later in the summer when efforts are most effective.

In the afternoon participants have the opportunity to join in on garlic mustard pulls in the area with NICHES Land Trust and students from Purdue's BTNY 110 course at a NICHES property or with INPAWS and its RIP Squad volunteer group at Ross Hills Park.

This will also be a great opportunity to spend some time to explore the fantastic and diverse local natural areas that we are working hard to protect! Contact Bob Easter rb Easter@nicheslandtrust.org for the answer to any questions about the event or to confirm your involvement as a group leader or participant.



Photo of Stilt Grass: a rapidly spreading annual