



Sycamore Warbler

Volume 40, Issue 4 Winter 2015-16

It's Christmas Bird Count Time

This will be the 116th year for Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). Their relevance and importance to understanding the status of birds in the Americas—and the effects climate change has on them—grows with each passing year. However that's not the only reason why most CBC folks devote considerable time and effort to the program during their already busy holiday seasons. They do it because it's a great excuse to get outside and do some birding, often with friends only seen a few times a year. They do it because they know their area and are excited to try to find some unusual species for that area. And they do it in anticipation of experiencing some type of interesting natural event, whether a major irruption of winter finches or boreal raptors.

If you've never participated in a CBC, here's your chance to experience one first hand. Simply contact the compiler of one or more of the counts below for information on how you can help. Feeder watchers are an important component of the count as a first to make sure your feeders are in the official count circle.

Dec 19 (Sat) Lafayette CBC

Ed Hopkins Compiler 765-463-5927

Dec 22 (Tues) Cass County CBC

Landon Neumann, Compiler LandonNeumann25@gmail.com

Jan 1 (Fri) Willow-Slough-Iroquois Preserves CBC Ed Hopkins, compiler

We won't hope for a blizzard, but strangely enough, too pleasant conditions often mean that birds are hard to find. When the weather is bad, birds concentrate in the areas where observers expect to find them during the CBC, but when conditions are favorable they spread out across the landscape and are found one or two at a time. Then too, in bad weather birds aren't as skittish as they are concentrating on finding food.



Red-breasted Nuthatch. Only found on Willow-Slough CBC last year.

November-December Program Swap

Patrick Ruhl, who was to give his program, ***Southern Indiana: 100 years of Research in the Making***, in December, presented it in November instead because Wes Homoya was delayed getting back to the U.S. Patrick gave a great program with lots of slides of birds in the hand and plenty of information about them and the HEE program.

Wes, who had been leading bird tours in South America, was asked by his tour company to go to Australia for a month to become familiar with the birds there, thus his delay in returning to Indiana. He is back and will give his program, ***All Over Ecuador + Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest Equals Birding Heaven*** on December 10th instead. See page 3 for more info. Bring a friend and join us!

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Area Summer Bird Counts

Sixteen people contributed to the Tippecanoe Summer Bird Count. A total of 123 species and 1698 individual birds were reported. Unusual species found included Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Double-crested Cormorants, Black-necked Stilts, Upland Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plover, Greater & Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wigeon, Gadwall, Philadelphia Vireo and Blue Grosbeak.

Warren Count had 1 person report 100 species including Lesser Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpiper, along with Hooded Merganser and a Least Flycatcher.

CHAPTER NEWS



Joe Hiscock Chuck Tuttle
& Barry Dunning at the Feast

Feast of the Hunter's Moon

Once again SAS's Turkey Leg booth did well at the feast. Some legs were leftover due to problems with the grill, but board members managed to sell them at cost. The Theta Chi Fraternity bought 80. The final check isn't in yet, but proceeds look to be higher than usual.

Take a lot of Pictures last Year?

A number of people did to the enjoyment of attendees at the September meeting. Dan Miller showed great pictures from Celery Bog, John Skene had photos from Florida, Celery Bog and elsewhere, Rick and Debbie Read took four different trips including Arizona and South Africa,, Elsa Janle showed photos from New Zealand, and Russ Mumford had photos of insects & more from Celery Bog.

SAS at Walk for Wolves

Walk for Wolves is Wolf Park's annual fundraiser to help support the park in its yearly goals of educating the public about wolves and other wildlife as well as providing assistance for researchers around the globe.

This year the Park invited Audubon to host an interactive display for walk participants. Rick and Debbie Read and

Susan Ulrich attended for SAS and set up a display near the buffalo enclosure. Here's Rick's short description of the experience, "Had a fun morning. Lots of visitors to our table. Binoculars & scope were popular, as were stuffed birds, nests, bones, etc. Field guides - not so much." While there the three saw over 20 species of birds including Blue Birds, Swamp Sparrows and Cedar Waxwings.

Fall Bake & Plant Sale

October's sale was an exceptional Bake & Plant Sale. Total raised was \$809.98, the second highest ever. A special donation of 7 super-large plants from Mr. & Mrs. Coleman helped SAS reach that large total. Their donation included two 6-8 foot ficus and a 6 foot Plumeria tree. Jim Klatch kindly picked up the donation and also helped buyers get them to their homes.

So far the board has voted to donate \$500 raised at the sale, leaving \$309.98 for other conservation causes as they arise. Many thanks to all our regular volunteers: Mary Ann McGill, Elsa Janle, Ann Piechota, Dorothy Jones, Karen Griggs, and Susan Ulrich.

Honeysuckle Removal

The Sept. 12th workday got rid of lots of honeysuckle at Ross Hills Park. Our thanks to everyone who showed up. Get out this winter to help at the Feb 7 workday (or if needed on the 21st bad weather back up).

The progress made is really amazing. Plans are to continue west onto Ross Camp, which is also owned by the Tippecanoe County Parks & Recreation Dept.

Congratulations to Judy Gasvoda

The Wild Bird Shoppe in West Lafayette owned by Judy Gasvoda was nominated for the national birding retailer of the year at the Birding Expo in Mexico, MO. It is quite an honor and well deserved.

Recent Donors:

Our thanks to the following:

Dale & Sonya Margerum
Jim Klatch
Barb & Guy Lucas
Charles & Eileen Rhykerd

A Loss in the Audubon Family

Liz Day of Indianapolis died on Friday, September 4, 2015 at age 55 when she was hit by a car that veered off Cold Spring Road onto the sidewalk where she was bird watching near Velodrome Park.

Many local birders knew Liz though her participation in local Bird Counts as well as her many emails on INBIRD.

Audubon At the Overlook

SAS's experiment at Prophetstown went well. Birds were few (though one of two Ospreys sat and ate a fish for half an hour) but many people stopped to talk and pick up information.

Audubon Nature Club

The club has finished for this year but begins again in February with a lesson called *Follow Me*. The focus is tracking, hopefully in the snow. Dates are February 16th (K-2), 18th (3-5 grade), and 23rd (6-8 grade) at 6 p.m. in Lilly Nature Center.

Fall 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.

- Each Thursday **Weekly Early Bird Hikes**. Celery Bog Park, West Lafayette, 8 a.m. These will be held every Thursday morning until freeze-up. Meet at the gravel parking area (first turn to the right).
- December 10 Thursday **Program: All Over Ecuador + Brazilian Atlantic Forest Equals Birding Heaven**. Wes Homoya on his 4 months in South America. Wes will share his incredible experiences which covered various habitats in Ecuador and a long stint at *Reserva Ecológica da Guapiau* in Brazil. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park, W.L. Free parking and refreshments. **People participating in one of the CBC's** (see below) can sign up and get a territory and forms this evening.
- December 19 Saturday **Lafayette Christmas Bird Count. All Day Citizen Science Bird Count**. Meet with Ed Hopkins at the December meeting or call him for assignments and details. This is the 116th year since the first CBC. See the story on page 1. Lots of good locations out there for new counters.
- December 22 Tuesday **Cass County Christmas Bird Count**. Similar to above. Contact Landon Neumann to participate. LandonNeumann25@gmail.com. Often a good count for mild weather birds like Hermit Thrush and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. If there is snow longspurs and Snow Buntings are often found.
- January 1 **Start of Indiana's Bicentennial Year & Maybe its Bison-tennial Year?** Bison are a keystone species in the prairie by keeping grasses under control and help sustain biodiversity. Contingent on raising the necessary funds and working out management issues with their partners TNC hopes to reintroduce bison at Kankakee Sands. Visit nature.org/kankakeesands to read "nature Notes".
- January 1 Friday **Willow Slough-Iroquois Preserves Christmas Bird Count**. Meet with Ed Hopkins at the December meeting for assignments and details or contact him about participating. New help appreciated.
- January 14 Thursday **Program: 200 Years Along the Wabash**. Rae Schnapp, Wabash Riverkeeper. In honor of Indiana's 200th anniversary we will take a virtual tour to view the changing roles of the Wabash River from a transportation corridor to its value as a natural resource. The Wabash Riverkeeper Network provides volunteer opportunities to improve the water quality in the Wabash. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park, W.L. Free parking and refreshments.
- January 30 Saturday **Winter birds**. We will chase whatever is being reported – Snowy Owls, Trumpeter Swans, Lapland Longspurs, Snow Buntings, etc. Meet at 8:30 at the gravel parking lot at Celery Bog, WL. Probably a morning trip (depends on what is being reported and where).
- February 11 Thursday **Program: Soundscapes: Landscapes of Sound & the Birds that Create Them**. MaryAm Ghadiri. The word "soundscapes" is just what it implies— auditory "landscapes" created by all the living and non-living elements contained within a particular location. Our speaker will share insights from a Purdue Center for Global Soundscapes study of how spatial and structural habitat features affect bird diversity. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park. Free parking & refreshments.
- Feb 7 or 21 Sunday **Ross Hills Work Day**. Winter can be a good time for removing woody vegetation as well as escaping the indoor winter blahs. Assuming no more than 1-2 inches of snow on the ground, we will meet at 1:30 p.m. at Ross Hills Park for two to two and a half hours of taking out invasives and improving habitat for returning migrants in the spring. Bad weather reschedule date is February 21st at 1:30.
- February 27 Saturday **Early waterfowl and nesting eagles**. In recent years, waterfowl migration has often started in late February, so mergansers and other diving ducks may be passing through. We will go to areas with open water to see what is moving about. Also, the local Bald Eagles should be on the nest by this time so we will visit at least one nest along the Wabash River.
- March 10 Thursday **Program: Should we bother with the Big Day Anymore?** Barny Dunning. Ornithology has benefited over the years from collaboration with amateur birders. At present these collaborations are called "citizen science" and include the Christmas Bird Count, Indiana Summer Count and the Big Day in May. In 2015, the Big Day was almost cancelled due to a lack of support. Are these projects still worth doing? Who gains? Come to see the results of the 2014 citizen science projects and a discussion of their future. 7:15 p.m. Lilly Nature Center, Celery Bog Park. Free parking & refreshments.

Nature Notes & News

● Aug 12, Peter Waser saw 9 Bald Eagles (8 immature) in the flooded areas between Stair Road & the Wabash River.

● August 26 Barny Dunning had a pair of Baird's Sandpipers along with 3 Sora at Pine Creek in Benton County.

● A nice group of warblers and migrants greeted participants on SAS's first early bird walk. Best birds were Canada, Golden-winged and Blackburnian Warblers—a good start for fall migration.

● Landon Neumann reported that 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers are still along 600S south of Logansport on Sept 7.

● 9/9 Barny Dunning had great looks at Connecticut and Golden-winged Warblers & Northern Waterthrush at Celery Bog.

● SAS's 9/17 early bird walk was attended by 10 people who saw a good array of species. Probably the best bird was a Philadelphia Vireo. An Osprey entertained the group with a close fly-by, while carrying a bright orange goldfish.

● SAS's field trip to Celery Bog the morning of 9/19 produced a number of birds including a Forster's Tern. A large, high flying flock of Chimney Swifts, an estimated 100 birds, suggests that they were gathering for fall migration.

● Russ Allison reports the Osprey is still present at Celery Bog Sept. 21 and having very good luck catching Goldfish.

● John Skene visited the Purdue University--Wildlife Area on the 23rd. He saw 54 species including Ring-necked Pheasant and Lincoln's Sparrow.

● Del Arvin had a black vulture Sept. 25th at his "road kill" buffet. Later in the fall he had a Golden Eagle and a Bald Eagle put in appearances.

● Seven people participated on the Oct 8th early bird walk at Celery Bog. The best bird was an American Bittern Landon Neumann spotted flying along the far edge of the bog near the golf course.

● Oct 13 John Skene's visit to the Wal-Mart Mitigation Area in Lafayette turned up 24 species including a Peregrine Falcon, Marsh Wren, & Le Conte's sparrow

● That same morning at Pine Creek in Benton Co Landon Neumann & Frank Stetler had an amazing 83 White-rumped Sandpipers, all juvs, plus good looks at Nelson's and Le Conte's Sparrows.

● Russ Allison watched a fun game of tag at the Celery Bog on the 14th. A Cooper's Hawk & 3-4 Blue Jays seemed to be playing tag. The Blue Jays would

get real close and the Hawk would jump at them. His attacks didn't seem to be serious and after 30 minutes both parties seemed to have had enough and flew off in different directions.



● The Oct 15th early bird hike found the large number of late-fall migrants that one would expect in mid-October. Among the 40 species seen were both kinglets, various sparrows, Tree Swallow, Tennessee Warbler, and Rusty Blackbird plus Gadwall, American Wigeon, both teal, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck and a Ring-billed Gull.

● The October 17th Field Trip ended up going to Pine Creek where good birds were being seen. The northern basin was loaded with shorebirds. Most were Killdeer (over 350) but there were White-rumped Sandpipers still around along with cooperative Sandhill Cranes, Wilson's Snipe, Merlin, multiple Northern Harriers, and Savannah Sparrows. Less cooperative was a pair of *Ammodramus* sparrows, one of which was a LeConte's (but only Barny saw it). Best birds were a small flock of Brewer's Blackbirds which were the first recorded for the property.

● Early bird hike 10/22 didn't turn up loads of individual birds but a lot of species. The group had great looks at Sharp-shinned Hawk, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Rusty Blackbird, plus a few migrant ducks including our first of season American Black Ducks and Ruddy Ducks. Russ Allison was there later in the day and noted he saw "more Golden crowned Kinglets in 20 minutes than I have seen in the past 77 years". He also had an immature Bald Eagle being chased by two Red tailed Hawks

● Good weather meant bad birding at the lakeshore on Oct 24. Nevertheless there were plenty of birds including a male Common Merganser, Sanderlings, a Snow Bunting and a Peregrine plus Rusty Blackbirds and a Red-shouldered Hawk, American Tree Sparrows and Common Loons. The most unusual sighting was a female Northern Harrier flying west well offshore of Miller Beach.

● Russ Allison got close enough to the lingering Rusty Blackbirds at Celery Bog Oct 26 to count a minimum of 50 birds. He also had his first Brown Creeper of the fall. On the 30th he had a lone Snow Goose.

● 10/31 a few days after mentioning he was looking for Pine Siskins at his feeders Barny Dunning finally spent a day at home and, Voila—15 Pine Siskins.

● Ed Hopkins decided to take advantage of the warm weather 11/3 to go to Pine Creek GHA. Thanks to recent rains the north basin had water and produced 7 species of shorebirds including two White-rumped Sandpipers. The SE pond had Sora and an American Bittern.

● Frank Stetler and Landon Neumann worked the SE portion of Benton County Nov 11th looking for longspurs. Good numbers are starting to show up in the area. They had 3 flocks for a total of 95 individuals. Not bad for the date.

● After the strong storm front from the west which can blow Mississippi Valley migrants to Indiana, Chuck Tuttle and Barny Dunning went to Celery Bog. In 40 minutes they found three Franklin's Gulls in the main basin at Celery Bog, just north of the bridge along with hundreds of ducks, mostly Mallards and Green-winged Teal, but also Gadwall, Northern Pintail and Northern Shoveler. Barny saw his first Bufflehead of the season. At one point most of the ducks burst into flight and milled from one part of the Bog to the other. After a few minutes, Chuck spotted the cause: FOUR Bald Eagles (three adults and one first-year bird) were cruising along the wetlands. The geese and swans seemed unimpressed but the ducks and coots were on high alert.

● A visit to Otterbein Lake in Warren County turned up Snow Geese and 2 Greater Scaup for Landon Neumann November 20th.

● November 21 two Wild Turkeys visited Sue and Ted Ulrich's back yard.

● Barny Dunning took a former student to Celery Bog for some duck identification on the 23rd. Waterfowl were concentrated in a small area of open water. Notable were 3 Wood ducks. Most wood ducks departed the area much earlier.

● 11/27 Apparently thinking it was safe now to wander, a young male Wild Turkey crossed the road near Barny Dunning's home in northern Tippecanoe County. It was the first he'd seen in the area this fall.

Send your nature notes to the editor at
sueandtedulrich@msn.com

CONSERVATION NEWS

In Support of the USDA Wildlife Services

Mick Weeks wrote us the following in response to an article in an earlier *Warbler* about the USDA's Wildlife Services wildlife takings based on a report from the *Center for Biodiversity*.

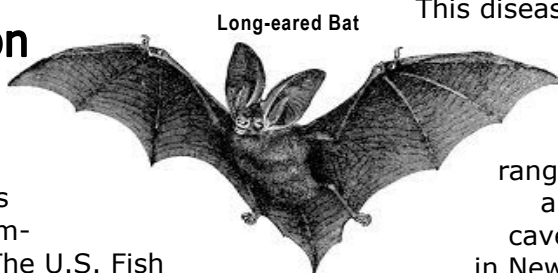
Mick writes, "I'd like the readership to be able to read this and think about such issues".

In reality, Wildlife Services (WS) employ many wildlife biologists who are very sensitive to animal welfare, and the agency serves as the first line of defense to moderate negative aspects of wildlife species impacting human interests. Much research is conducted by them to resolve conflicts, such as controlling invasive Burmese pythons in the Everglades, limiting brown tree snakes in the Pacific, or the sucking of gulls into the engines of your departing flight. Indeed, a goal of WS is "to apply scientific expertise to resolve human-wildlife conflicts". This often involves non-lethal solutions, but occasionally requires killing of problem animals. When the latter is necessary it is done in the most humane manner possible. This approach, and the agency's role as an agent to implement it, is important, because the general public would take the issue into their own hands if WS was not available. Few people are going to stand by while raccoons destroy their attic insulation, bears tear up their apiary, wolves kill their foals and hamstring their mares, or coyotes kill their pets or threaten their children. Their methods would likely not be as humane as those of WS. Furthermore, much of the lethal (and non-lethal) control done by WS is on contract to state DNRs, which don't have the work force or expertise to handle the problems - beavers flooding prime trout streams or county roads, problem bears breaking into cabins, coyotes killing livestock, etc.

One further point, just a reminder to most of you I am sure, things die. The 2.7 million killed sounds like lots, but is a drop in the bucket compared to the "carnage" Mother Nature inflicts on vertebrate populations annually! If a trillion vertebrates are born each year, then ultimately a trillion must die each year for vertebrate communities to remain stable. We tend to not think about these, because we don't witness the vast majority of them - unlike the squirrel we hit on the road or the Cooper's Hawk that plows into our picture window - but they occur and the animals are just as dead as those humanely killed by WS.

100th Anniversary Celebration

2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the first Migratory bird treaty—the 1916 agreement between the United States and Canada for the protection of migratory birds that remains the model for international commitment to bird and habitat conservation. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and numerous partners are commemorating the conservation successes inspired by this and subsequent treaties with the **Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial Campaign**.



Long-eared Bat

Offshore Drilling Leases

October 16th the Department of Interior announced via a press release that they are cancelling all offshore drilling leases in the Arctic Ocean for the next two years. Also, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management denied Shell and Statoil's requests for an extension of their current Arctic leases.

Educating Children about Climate Change

Audubon's climate team and Community Conservation & Education group have created a resource to teach kids about birds and climate change. The colorful poster explains how climate change affects birds' food, habitats, and migration. It also offers ways for kids to help.

An accompanying teacher's guide provides more information. Audubon's excited to share this resource with chapters, centers, and other educators. You can download PDFs of the poster and teacher's guide on **Audubon Works*** or request printed copies via eosullivan@audubon.org.

White-nose Continues to Spread

White-nose syndrome in bats is spreading westward. The fungus causing it has been confirmed in Nebraska, where it was found on northern long-eared, tricolored and big brown bats last winter & now is reported in New Mexico.

This disease has been called the worst wildlife health crisis in recent memory, causing mortality rates ranging up to 100 percent among bats in affected caves. Since it was found in New York in the winter of 2006 it's affected bats of seven different species in 26 states and five Canadian provinces.

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. The next series schedule is being determined now. For a complete description of the new programs when the schedule is ready, email Joan Mohr Samuels at mohrsamuels@comcast.net or pick up a schedule at Lilly Nature Center in Celery Bog Park.

Cornell's Macaulay Library of Sound

Celebrating it's Centennial in 2015, the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology with over 175,000 audio and 60,000 video recordings of birds and other animals is one of the world's largest collections of media documenting biodiversity.

Not only that, the technology to listen to media has improved tremendously. In 2004 site visitors with broadband internet connections could link to video clips of bird behavior from the library. With today's computing power, the main requirement is the scientific name of a species. That will retrieve audio, video, and maps related to the animal. There's also a feed from the Macaulay Library Facebook page, where an audio quiz is posted every few days, inviting visitors to identify bird sounds. The Library is currently partnering with NPR on the Decoding Nature Project <http://www.npr.org/2015/07/31/427990342/here-s-how-to-identify-sounds-you-hear-in-nature>. Listeners can record a clip of a bird or other animal sound in their backyard, send it to NPR, and the Lab will identify the source. Follow along at #decodenature on Twitter.



150 Years of Indiana Wild Animal Protection & Management Upset

From an October 30th letter from the *Indiana Wildlife Federation*

The Indiana Court of Appeals handed down a flawed decision on February 2, 2015, suggesting that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) does not have authority to regulate any privately-owned wild animals. The case was part of the decade-long fight over whether "canned hunting" of captive white-tail deer should be legalized in Indiana

In a surprisingly broad decision, the court ruled 2-1 that **the DNR does not have authority over ANY wild animal that is privately owned**. The court's analysis flies in the face of decades of wildlife management practice in Indiana and is counter to the wildlife-management principles of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation that have been in practice across the United States for over 150 years. It undermines DNR's ability to assure ethical treatment and secure containment of privately-owned potentially dangerous wild animals, puts the public safety at risk, threatens the environment, and hinders the preservation of Indiana's wild animals.

What began as a case about canned hunting of captive-raised deer has ended with a court assessment that eviscerates DNR's ability to enforce its protective regulations as to any privately-owned wild animal, including tigers and lions, bears, venomous snakes, and threatened and state endangered wild animals. The court proposed that the DNR may not regulate how a privately-owned wild animal is treated, fed, handled, secured, or used. Out-of-state animal buyers and traders now see Indiana as an easy source of supply since DNR's ability to enforce its protective restrictions has been eroded.

The court's opinion clearly has "unintended" consequences. This "anything goes" approach is not what anyone in Indiana wants, regardless of where you stand on the canned hunting issue, and needs to be addressed. The Governor should ensure that DNR continues asserting its authority over **all** wildlife, and the Legislature should pass clarifying language to reinforce what has always been Indiana's wildlife management approach to conservation of both publicly and privately owned wildlife. The State Court of Appeals wrongly decided this case. Governor Pence and the Legislature must fix it.

Volunteer for Wildlife

If you are looking for a way to get involved in projects benefitting fish, wildlife and habitats, the Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife is looking for you! Projects are listed as they become available so be sure to check back often. To explore the current opportunities please visit:

www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/8301.htm.



100,000th Acre in 2016

The Indiana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy will reach an impressive milestone during Indiana's Bicentennial year: 100,000 acres protected in Indiana. The conservancy doesn't own all those acres, many have been transferred to other organizations and governmental agencies. One local transfer was the 100-acre Black Rock Barrens given to NICHES Land Trust (photo above).

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). Contact SAS's membership chair for information. 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.

Chapter Membership Application

Date: _____

Name : _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Send to : Sycamore Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2716, West Lafayette, IN 47996-2716.

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

SAS's treasurer would appreciate payments in August-September to make it easier to keep track, however Friends memberships are credited to whatever month a Friend first joined.

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

I would prefer to receive the chapter newsletter by ☐ email ☐ paper

☐ **Additional contribution to SAS for** _____ \$ _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

Sycamore Audubon Society 2015-16 Board of Directors

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Greenland Glacier Destabilizing

A study recently published in *Science* reveals that a major glacier in Greenland, which holds enough water to raise sea level by more than a foot and a half, has begun to crumble into the North Atlantic. Beginning in 2012 the enormous *Zachariae Isstrom* glacier began receding *three times faster* than in previous decades, at a rate of around 410 feet per year.

The glacier has now become detached from a stabilizing sill and is losing ice at the during the 4 count days alarming rate of 4.5 billion metric tons per year. If it and its neighboring large glacier melt completely, they will contribute more than 3 feet to global

Webinar Series on Monarchs

Check out these two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Monarch Webinar Series." Both of the webinars are free and online, with no registration necessary. Monarch populations have dropped drastically the past few years. Let us hope that the summer of 2015 was a better year for this lovely butterfly's reproduction and survival.



Monarch Biology – Recording of Webinar One
Presented by US Fish and Wildlife
Visit: <http://nctc.adobeconnect.com/p4cdj3fryd4/>

Monarchs in the Classroom— Recording of Webinar Two
Presented by Sarah Weaver, Monarchs in the Classroom Community Program Specialist
Visit: <http://nctc.adobeconnect.com/p64j9nyurid/>

Tidbits

- Rhinoceroses are now extinct in Mozambique.
- The Pine Grosbeak has a circumpolar distribution and is not a true "grosbeak" but actually a large finch nearly the size of the American Robin. It has the typical short stubby bill of a finch, rather than the large "gros" beak of true grosbeaks.
- A study of sediment cores by researchers at Queen's University found remote ponds in the high Arctic had elevated concentrations of pollutants. A pond used by Arctic Terns that prey on fish had elevated levels of mercury and cadmium. Another pond visited by Common Eiders had higher levels of lead, aluminum and manganese. Source of the pollutants was bird poop. The heavy metals corresponded with those found in the tissues of the two species and results from their diets. The terns feed on fish while eiders dine on mollusks. The locations—thought to be pristine—are not so pristine after all. The birds are unwitting vectors of human pollution.



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

Indiana Winter Feeder Count 2015-16

These counts are held over 6 days in each of 4 months: the 20-25th of Nov, Dec, Jan, & Feb. You DON'T have to count every day; you DON'T have to count every month. What you do need to do is record the number of individuals and species of birds that show up at your feeders (no flyovers-only count) and only count the maximum number of individuals of each species that you can be sure of. You are also asked for the temperature range and inches of snow, types of feeders, etc. Send the completed reporting form (email or snail mail) by March 15th to John Castrale (jsascastrale@gmail.com), 780 Lawrenceport Road, Mitchell, IN 47446.

The form you need is available on the Indiana Audubon Society website below (or at SAS meetings)

<http://www.indianaaudubon.org/Activities/WinterFeederCount/tabid/259/Default.aspx>

Great Backyard Bird Count is Coming Feb 12-15, 2016

Greetings from the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) team at Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada! They want to remind you to mark your calendars for the 19th GBBC, coming up February 12 through 15, 2016. Because the GBBC is integrated with the eBird program you can start practicing id now using eBird. During the 4 count days you can submit daily checklists from as many sites as you wish, its not limited to backyards.

Last year's GBBC set more new records. Over 144,00 checklists were submitted and an astonishing 4,396 species reported. Checklists were submitted from 135 countries and over 142,000 participants were involved.

Note: It may be another 'Snowy' Winter. There are signs that the number of Snowy Owls in the lower 48 may again be higher than usual in the coming months, possibly matching the big irruption in 2013-14.

