

Newsletter for the Indiana Audubon Society **CARDINAL**

December 2016 - January 2017 | USPS 129-810 Vol. 46, No. 6 | ISSN 0162-8186
www.indianaaudubon.org facebook.com/IndianaAudubonSociety

UPCOMING EVENTS

IAS Christmas Bird Count
Connersville, IN
January 1, 2017

IAS Winter Owls UP Trip
St. Ignace, MI
February 3, 2017 - February 5, 2017

Please visit the IAS website for more information

MARY GRAY EVENT RECAP

INLAND BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION MEETING
(PAGES 1-2)

CONSERVATION NOTES

RICHARD LIEBER AND BIRD CONSERVATION
(PAGE 3)

BOOK REVIEW

NATURAL AREAS OF SOUTHERN INDIANA
(PAGE 3)

WINTER BIRDING

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH
(PAGE 4)

MARY GRAY UPDATE

LENDING LIBRARY OPENS
(PAGE 5)

MEET A MEMBER

LONDON NEUMANN
(PAGE 5)



SNOWY OWLS ARE BACK!

(PAGE 2)

Photo by John Lindsey

INLAND BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION (IBBA) MEETING HOSTED AT THE MARY GRAY BIRD SANCTUARY

By Amy Wilms



More than 100 participants, 4 Northern Saw-whet Owls, and banders from as far as Texas and Canada descended upon the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary from November 11-13. The Inland Bird Banding Association (IBBA) meeting was hosted by the Indiana Audubon Society (IAS) and showcased the Sanctuary's birds, walking trails, and meeting spaces as well as offering many presentations and educational opportunities. Friday evening kicked off with Carl and Amy Wilms welcoming the participants who packed into Brooks Hall with their presentation about the Sanctuary and the current projects underway. Carl highlighted the Sanctuary's land, history, invasive species eradication work and research efforts. In connection with the Sanctuary projects, Dr. David Russell of Miami University spoke about how his banding efforts at Hueston Woods State Park (OH) educate and connect to the Sanctuary. The two locations are beginning a research collaboration to help determine connections between invasive plant species and birds.

Events Included:

- **Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Demonstration with banders: Jess Gwinn & Maureen Forrest, Indiana**

Two years ago, the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary started participating in Project OwlNet, banding Northern Saw-whet Owls. Jess and Maureen demonstrated the banding process and how to age and sex the owls.

Birding Tour at Brookville Reservoir /Dunlapville with Sam Fitton (OH) & Ryan

Northern Saw-whet Owls. Jess and Maureen demonstrated the banding process and how to age and sex the owls.

- **Birding Tour at Brookville Reservoir /Dunlapville with Sam Fitton (OH) & Ryan Slack (IN)**

Birding the Dunlapville area at Brookville Lake is enjoyable any time of year!

- **Learning the Molt! Woodpeckers & American Goldfinches with Dr. David Russell – Miami University & Avian Research and Education Institute, Indiana & Ohio**

David Russell gave a short talk to offer tips and tricks when aging and sexing woodpeckers and American Goldfinches followed with a hands-on demo.

- **Banding Demonstrations with Brenda and Rich Keith, Michigan** - Feeder Birds! Sometimes the most common birds are the toughest to age and sex.

- **Ohio Bird Banding Association (OBBA) Meeting**

- **Tracking Golden-winged Warbler Migration with Geolocators Reveals Populations Specific Timing, Routes, and Wintering Areas - Henry M. Streby, Gunnar R. Kramer, Sean M. Peterson, Justin A. Lehman, David A. Buehler, Petra B. Wood, and David E. Andersen, Ohio**

Golden-winged Warblers (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) are Neotropical migrants experiencing very different population trends across their breeding range, but those trends are not explained by breeding-grounds factors (e.g. habitat is available, nest success is generally high).

- **Banding as a critical tool in documenting the biology and restoration of peregrine falcons in the midwestern United States - John Castrale, Retired Nongame Bird Biologist, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Co-authors Patrick Redig and Amber Burnette, Indiana**

The presentation discussed the growth and distribution of the Midwest Peregrine Falcon population, as well as productivity, pair bonds, site fidelity, survival rates, age distribution, longevity, and dispersal.

- **The Future of Boreal Owls in Alaska: How will climate change effect a common, elusive owl of the north? - Aaron Anderson, Miami University Graduate Student, Ohio**

Boreal Owls (*Aegolius funereus*), inhabitant high latitude forest and are a species of special concern as they depend upon old growth forests for abundant prey items. Will this increase in wildfires, projected to dramatically alter the forest composition of

of the boreal forest effect the breeding success of an elusive denizen of the north?

• **American Kestrel Research: Building Nest Boxes, Determining Success, by Michael Hall, MGBS Resident Caretaker, Indiana**

Michael Hall shared his work on a long-term project to determine breeding success of the American Kestrel after constructing and installing nest boxes on privately owned properties.

• **Kalamazoo Valley Bird Observatory: Interesting Visitors to the Banding Station & Hummingbird Nest Surveys, Michigan**

Rich and Brenda Keith talked about the interesting bird molts and plumages of some birds banded at their active banding stations. Allen Chartier shared his banding efforts at a homeowner's location after finding more than 30 nests!

• **Bird Banding Lab Update by Bruce Peterjohn, Bird Banding Lab, Maryland**

• **Bendire's Thrasher: A Research Project in New Mexico – Allison Salas, Tennessee**

• **Celebrating 100 Years of Bird Conservation: Migratory Bird Treaty – Katie Koch, Regional Migratory Bird Biologist, USFWS, Michigan**

• **Worm-eating Warbler Breeding Demography and Post-fledging Habitat Use in South-Central Indiana – Patrick Ruhl, Graduate Student, Purdue University, Indiana**



Patrick Ruhl

Patrick Ruhl is conducting research about Worm-eating Warbler breeding demography in the Brown County Hills region of Southern Indiana.

• **Hike the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary with Carl Wilms, Brad Bumgardner, and Ryan Slack, IAS Members, Indiana**

• **Bird Banding Lab: "Permit 101" – Bruce Peterjohn, Maryland**

• **Loggerhead Shrikes in Decline and What Bird Banders Can Do to Help Them - Allisyn Gillet, Nongame Bird Biologist, Department of Natural Resources, Indiana**

Through many years of monitoring, the Indiana DNR has developed several research questions that, when answered, can help conserve this species across its range.

The weather, food, and fellowship, made for an excellent weekend. IAS members are to be congratulated for providing such a marvelous venue for the event. Amy spent many long nights organizing the meeting and Carl and Michael had the facilities ready to go. Many volunteers (see below) tended to last minute details. Afterwards Amy and Carl received a very thoughtful note:

"The meeting went off without a hitch from my point of view. The presentations were fabulous, and I learned so much. The owl was the cutest thing ever! I am inspired to carry on." -Kathy, Nashville, TN

Many THANKS! to our IBBA meeting Volunteers:

Brad Bumgardner, Indiana

Terri Cochran & Vane Lashua, Indiana

Michael Hall, Indiana Kathryn Henman, Indiana

Bob & Jan Holmes, Ohio

Barbara & John Kell, Tennessee

Cynthia Routledge, Tennessee

Sally Routh, Indiana

David & Jill Russell, Indiana/Ohio

Mary Yandell, Kentucky

Carl & Amy Wilms, Indiana

Kathy, Nashville, TN

FIRST SNOWY OWL OF THE SEASON SPOTTED



Photo: Carol Bardos Johnston

A Snowy Owl was spotted in Tipton County on SR 19 just north of Tipton by CR 100N in the first week of December. Snowy Owls can be found perched on the ground or on poles in open areas well into March. Keep an eye out and please report any sightings to the IAS website or the IAS Facebook page. When viewing Snowy Owls, please consider the following tips on viewing etiquette.

Don't get too close to a perched bird.

If the bird is looking directly at you with its eyes wide open you are WAY too close. Back away and give the bird some space.

Don't intentionally flush a bird.

Flushing owls can be dangerous to the health of the bird. When flushed, the bird expends energy unnecessarily and the potential of collision with objects just as structures or a vehicle increases. No picture is worth the life of this treasured bird.

RICHARD LIEBER AND BIRD CONSERVATION

By Terri Gorney



Richard Lieber is considered the “Father of Indiana State Parks.” He was one of our greatest conservationists. Much has been written on him in regards to the state parks, forestry conservation and protecting our natural resources, but little has been written on his efforts for bird conservation.

At the Annual Indiana Audubon Society Convention in 1920, Lieber was the keynote speaker. He was the Indiana Director of Conservation, a forerunner to the DNR. The convention was held May 20-22 in Martinsville at the Colonial Hotel and Sanitarium and the local high school auditorium. In his journal on May 21, 1920 was a simple line “To Martinsville - Audubon Society.” He put his invitation to the convention and a newspaper clipping about the convention next to this date. At this meeting, Lieber stressed education about our native birds. He felt there was an absence of natural nesting places, too many boys robbing nests, and a problem of wandering cats, that all worked to the detriment of birds. He felt publicity and law supplemented by public co-operation were vital factors to increase song and insectivorous bird life in the state.

Lieber is quoted as saying, “The problem of bird conservation is beset with many difficulties. The encroachment of civilization, the extension of industry, railroads, highways, the advent of the automobile and truck, have seriously upset the balance of nature.”

Lieber recommended Brown County – in its entirety – be purchased as a state reserve and consequently a bird sanctuary. He wanted a state park in each county in Indiana, and he wanted his audience to follow the precedent set by the people of Owen County, who assisted the state in purchasing McCormick’s Creek, our first state park. Other areas that he wanted to see saved as reserves for nesting and migrating birds were the Dunes and Kankakee areas of the state.

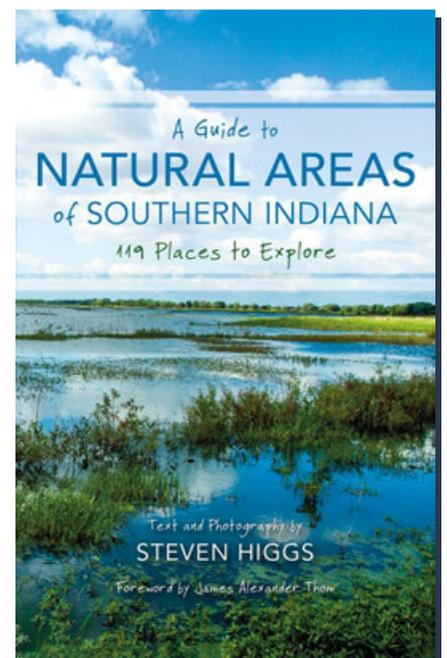
The focus of the 1920 IAS convention was bird conservation and creating bird sanctuaries in Indiana. Other speakers included Dean Stanley Coulter of Purdue University and Frank Wallace, State Entomologist for the Department of Conservation. Frank Wallace was the State Entomologist because Gene Stratton-Porter wrote a letter to the Governor in 1915 to ask the governor to appoint Frank to that position. He had worked for Gene and she was impressed with his knowledge. It was a position that he would hold for forty-three years. Gene and Frank would remain lifelong friends. Frank married Gene’s secretary, Lorene Miller.

I wish today that we could have a person like Richard Lieber leading the charge to save and protect natural areas. It must have been an incredible meeting and one, I think, most of us wish we could have attended.

BOOK REVIEW: A GUIDE TO NATURAL AREAS OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

By Karen Lindsey

I picked this book up on a whim to try and get a little more familiar with the natural areas in Southern Indiana, and maybe find a few new birding honey holes. Within a day of scanning through the book for the first time, I found a new area along the White River that is a quick ATV ride from my house in French Lick, IN. If you are looking to explore the southern portion of the state I would highly recommend this book. One thing I found extremely helpful is that it lists State Parks, Nature Conservancy Properties, and land trust properties that are open to the public. For each destination, the book lists a description of the property, directions, and activities available. In addition, for each book purchased, the author donates a portion of the proceeds to Sycamore Land Trust. Not only does it include great birding destinations, but also places to camp, canoe, hike, and go caving. It was much to my surprise when I received my copy that it was personally inscribed and signed by the author.



WINTER BIRDING: A LOOK AT PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

By Kimberly Ehn



Purple Finch • John Lindsey



Fox Sparrow • John Lindsey

Watching Bird feeders in the winter can provide some welcome enjoyment while staying inside a warm and cozy house. Observing and recording these birds can also provide data as part of the IAS Winter Bird Feeder Count and Cornell's Project FeederWatch.

Project FeederWatch, operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada, began its 30th season on November 12, 2016 and runs through April 7, 2017. Participants pay a fee of \$18 to receive a Research Kit of goodies, including digital access to Living Bird magazine, Winter Bird Highlights summary publication, an identification poster, handbook and instruction booklet.

This program has its origins in 1976, when Dr. Erica Dunn at Canada's Long Point Bird Observatory (now called Bird Studies Canada) started an Ontario Bird Feeder Survey. After 10 years, a partnership with Cornell Lab of Ornithology allowed all of North America to be included in this citizen science project. In 1987-88, there were 4,000 participants. Now, more than 20,000 backyard birders participate. The website www.feederwatch.org provides information on more than 100 bird species. The data tracks weekly changes in distribution and abundance, including long-term trends and provides expansion and contractions in winter ranges of feeder birds, including the timing and extent of seasonal irruptions of winter finches. Winter survey data was used by researchers to expose an Evening Grosbeak range-wide population decline as reported in 2008 in *The Condor*.

Here's how Project FeederWatch works. After signing up, you determine your Count Site as a location that your feeder area is visible from one vantage point. Each week, you must pick the

2 consecutive days that will be your Count Days. The website states that there is flexibility in which weeks you gather data. You record the maximum number of each species seen at the provided food/feeders, at the plants, and in your view. Predatory birds are included, but flyovers aren't. Detailed information on how to count bird species is given on the website or the handbook/instructions.

The IAS Winter Bird Feeder Count was initiated in 1990 by John Castrale with IAS Board support. Originally offered as a simplified, free alternative to Cornell's program, it has obtained information about numbers and types of birds that visit Indiana feeders in the winter, and documents changes in populations of feeder birds. The data provided by IAS members was and is still summarized by John each year in the *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*.

A number of observations have been quantified over the years. Many species have consistent regional differences in their winter abundance in Indiana. Fewer species show differences among the count periods. Some species show long-term trends in relative abundance. 90% of the 2015-16 counts included Northern Cardinal, White-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed Junco, Downy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. Data provided shows "irruptive" species numbers may vary dramatically from year to year. There were fewer than average Purple Finch and Pine Siskin in 2015-16. For the first time in 23 years, no Red-breasted Nuthatch were reported last winter.

On the IAS website's Winter Feeder Bird Count page (www.indianaaudubon.org/winter-feeder-bird-count/), members can use the link at the bottom of the page to download the reporting form. This is a standard form of the common 45 feeder birds usually found in Indiana, with room for write-ins of the unexpected. During the months of November, December, January, and February, the Count Days are from the 20th – 25th. During any one observation period during those dates, the maximum number of each bird species is to be tallied. If you see more of a bird species during another observation period (during those dates), then that is your maximum number to report. Other information you should provide includes the number and type of feeders, kind of food offered, and environmental factors, such as min/max temperature and snow cover. While the observation period concludes in February, John allows you time to collate your data with final submission by March 15th. Predatory birds are included, but flyovers and birds only eating berries from shrubs aren't. Detailed information on how to count bird species is given on the website or you can contact John directly.

I have participated in the IAS Winter Bird Feeder Count for a few years, and during my spare time this winter, I hope to read back issues of the *Indiana Audubon Quarterly* to discover interesting facts about previous winter bird counts.

MARY GRAY UPDATE: MINI LENDING LIBRARY NOW OPEN

By Carl Wilms



Many IAS members know Marjorie and Dwayne Carmony. They have donated part of their vast library of bird and nature books to Mary Gray. Amy and I were thrilled to receive them. We had previously discussed the idea of building a mini lending library so visitors could use reference books while at MGBS. The two inspirations were a natural fit. Marjorie enthusiastically endorsed the concept, and the "Carmony Lending Library" has been built and stocked with books. The library was built using residual materials from the Markle Barn's siding and roofing projects. Additional donations from Alan King have been added to the "stacks."

MEET A MEMBER! SPOTLIGHT ON LANDON NEUMANN By Brad Bumgardner



The Indiana Young Birder's Club, modeled after the Ohio equivalent, has led the way in introducing our youth into birding, and alum Landon Neumann exemplifies the Club's work in not only his passion for birding, but the desire to contribute to both research and conservation. We're proud to introduce our fellow IAS members to Landon.

1) Tell us a little about yourself?

I'm currently a sophomore at Purdue University double majoring in Wildlife and

2) What drew you into birding and birds?

I started getting into birds in the 4th grade and have been into birding ever since. I got interested through a science program at my school that was about birds. Since then I've birded across the state and the country. I have also become interested in plants, butterflies, and dragonflies.

3) You've done bird research recently. Which species work has been your favorite?

I have worked with Black-capped Vireos and Northern Saw-whet Owls. I worked with Black-capped Vireo this past summer. I helped conduct surveys and monitor nests on a military base in Oklahoma. This past fall I helped start a Northern Saw-whet Owl banding station at Purdue at one of their properties. I'm not sure which is my favorite to work with. I have banded both species, so I have seen both in the hand. Honestly, I just like doing research so I can't say that I really have a favorite. Both have been extremely cool to work with.

4) What are your favorite Indiana birding destinations?

My favorite destination in Indiana is definitely the lakefront. There is so much to offer there from phenomenal songbird migration at the traps to the active waterfowl migration at Miller Beach. There is always something to see.

5) What nemesis bird are you really wanting to see in Indiana?

I don't really have a nemesis bird at the moment. For years I could not get Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Indiana. I finally got that this past summer. I guess at the moment any ibis species would be it. However, it's not really a nemesis since I rarely chase ibis. It is bad though since I've birded Goose Pond in the summer enough now that I should have at least one.

6) What's your dream birding destination?

I would really like to bird Alaska. I really enjoy seabirds and there are many up there.