

Newsletter for the Indiana Audubon Society

CARDINAL

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Lakefront Shorebirds

August 12, 2017

Young Birders Conference

August 19, 2017

Goose Pond Shorebirds

September 3, 2017

Eagle Creek Fall Warblers

September 9, 2017

Please visit the IAS website for more information

IN THE NEWS

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RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD:

JOHN LINDSEY



Bird Banding Research at Mary Gray

By Amy Wilms



White-eyed Vireo
Photo: Amy Wilms

Caring for IAS's Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary is one of my and my husband's proudest accomplishments. Not only does the property provide walking trails, research sites for graduate students, and a place to appreciate nature, the Sanctuary also sponsors research about birds through the use of bird banding.

Our current banding research with passerines investigates the potential connections between invasive plant species and bird populations. Using the Monitoring Avian Populations and Sustainability (MAPS) protocol, our goal is to determine if there are variations in species variety and characteristics when compared to a sister MAPS project taking place at Heuston Woods State Park (HWSP) near Oxford, Ohio. Dr. Dave Russell is heading the Heuston Woods project in conjunction with the banding operation at Miami

University. HWSP's forest is heavily infested with bush honeysuckle but is otherwise similar in geological and latitudinal properties to Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary. In contrast, MGBS's MAPS site is significantly less inundated with invasive plants and has greater diversity of vegetation. This year we have documented 39 species of birds breeding at MGBS. As we continue to manage the property to further control invasive plants, we will be looking for any changes in bird species populations as well as comparing our populations with those at HWSP.

The banding of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds is also in full swing this summer. As of this writing, we have placed bands on 188 new birds this summer (110 females, 78 males). Only 7 of the new birds have been birds hatched this summer, but that number is going to be increasing rapidly in the next month. The number of hummingbirds that have been recaptured (meaning they already have a band) is 386, and some of those have been recaptured more than once. The sex of these birds breaks down to 154 females and 232 males, indicating the tendency of the males to protect their territory and are thus get lured into the banding trap with greater frequency. Also, the females are busy catching insects to feed their young rather than sipping the nectar in the feeders.

Mary Gray provides habitat for our feathered friends. We welcome birders to come and observe and/or participate in the banding process. Check the IAS website for banding dates and come join us.



Canada Warbler
Photo: Amy Wilms



Yellow-breasted Chat
Photo: Amy Wilms



Lincoln's Sparrow
Photo: Amy Wilms



Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Photo: Amy Wilms

Meet a Member

By Brad Bumgardner



Tanner Troyer

Sometimes folks stumble into birding, sometimes birding finds you and snags you hard. The birding community has been fast to learn one of our newest IAS members, Tanner Troyer. Meet Tanner!

1) Tell us a little about yourself.

I'm originally from Topeka, Indiana. I went to college at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. After graduating, I moved back to Topeka to become its Clerk-Treasurer. I've recently moved back north to Goshen, Indiana after 8 months living in Indianapolis.

What drew you into birding and birds?

I started dating local bird expert Annie Aguirre and she got me into it. I didn't think much of it at first until I was on a walk and saw a Red-Tailed Hawk clutching a squirrel. A couple weeks later, I got to see and hear a Northern Shrike. I've been hooked ever since.

How long have you been an IAS member?

5 months. I signed up in February 2018.

What is your favorite Indiana birding destinations?

Cowles Bog in the Indiana Dunes and Eagle Creek in Indianapolis.

Tell us about the Golden-crowned Sparrow!?

It started with me peering out of my window and seeing a sparrow that I didn't recognize. Since I was fairly new to birding, I assumed it was something common that I just hadn't seen yet. I asked her (Annie) about it, and we both realized it wasn't a common bird. She went to field guides, I went to the internet, and both of us came up with the ID of Golden-crowned sparrow.

The experience of having so many people visit my house to see this bird was unbelievable. I was awestruck by the generosity and hospitality of the birding community. It has made me a birder for life.

What's your dream birding destination?

Alaska. I'm not a huge fan of summer due to the temperature, so birding in Alaska seems like the best way to get around that.



Get the word out!

Here is the original post on the Indiana Rare Bird Alert Facebook page from Annie Aguirre:

"I believe this is a state first: a Golden-crowned Sparrow. The bird was seen at the feeders of a residence in Northern Indianapolis. There were no other sparrows present. I will upload the camera shots this evening. Observed by Tanner Troyer and myself. First seen at 5:15. Still present at 5:30."

Featured Hotspots

Cont. next page



Prairie Warbler
Photo: Mark Welter

Sodalis Nature Park

by Mark Welter

In 2011, a collaborative effort between Hendricks County Parks and Recreation and the Indianapolis Airport Authority, in cooperation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, established Sodalis Nature Park in southeastern Hendricks County. This 210-acre tract lies within 2200 acres of land acquired by the Airport Authority for the purpose of wetland conservation and habitat protection for the endangered Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*), after which the park is named.

The park, located at 7700 S. County Road 975 E., Plainfield, IN 46168, features a covered pavilion, picnic area, and a

wildlife viewing deck. Three miles of dirt, grass and gravel trails crisscross the property's mix of wooded and prairie habitat. The trails are marked, but the layout can be confusing for new or occasional visitors. A trail map is available on the Hendricks County Parks website: http://hendrickscountyparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Sodalis_Park_Trail_Map.pdf.

Once opened to the public, Sodalis quickly became known as one of the most productive birding hotspots in Hendricks County. eBird records show that 157 species have been reported in the park, including 34 warbler species, 12 sparrow species, both cuckoos, and all the vireo, swallow and woodpecker species expected in Indiana. One of the park's specialties is Prairie Warbler; several pairs nest in the park annually, and can be easily seen and heard along the Oak Trace trail. Sodalis is my go-to spot for this bird, and I eagerly anticipate their return to the park each Spring. Another notable species for the park is Mississippi Kite; one bird was reported to eBird beginning on May 12 of this year, but it was joined by a second in mid-June, leading to speculation that the pair was nesting somewhere on the property or nearby.

Early Spring through mid-Summer is the best time for birding at Sodalis, as migrating songbirds move through and breeding species arrive to establish their territories. Plan your visit for the early morning, while the birds are most vocal and before the park gets busy with picnicking families, dog-walkers, joggers, fishermen and other human activity. Note that some of the park's interior trails can become extremely muddy after only moderate rain, which can make access problematic, and mosquito and other insect activity can be quite heavy at certain times of the year. Under normal weather and birding conditions, allow 2-3 hours to make a complete circuit of the major trails through the park.



Mississippi Kite
Photo: Mark Welter

"Lovely are the fields and meadows, That reach out to hills that rise
Where the dreamy Wabash River wanders on . . . through paradise."

State Poem by Arthur Franklin Mapes

Wabash River Birding

by Kimberly Ehn



Considered the longest free-flowing river in the country, the Wabash River flows 475 miles from the northeast corner of the state, westward through its central plains, and becomes the border between Indiana and Illinois until it merges with the Ohio River near Evansville. The Wabash Heritage Road Commission (in.gov/wrhcc/) was authorized by the Indiana General Assembly in 1991, charged with the mission of protecting and enhancing the natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources of the corridor. The network of streets and roads along the river are being plotted for inclusion in a GIS document leading toward a virtual river travel guide. "It's been a long project," commission president Dave Hacker explained. Birding along the river is dependent

upon seasonal habitat and water/road travel. Helpful boating access points are described on WabashRiver.us

Species checklists for nearly all of the 19 counties the river passes through can be found on eBird. The Wabash River starts its journey through Indiana in Jay County with first access at New Corydon, and continues into Adams County with lots of curves and turns. At Rainbow Bend Access Site, 62 species have been reported. To the west is Wells County, where the river borders Ouabache State Park. In Huntington County, just west of I-69 on Division Road, the river is dammed to create the J.E. Roush FWA, home to spring warblers and Bald Eagles. The Little Wabash River tributary begins in the wetlands and marshes of Allen County. The Little River Wetlands project (Irw.org) manages 1200 acres for The Nature Conservancy. The shallow water wetlands, sedge meadows, prairie and forests are home to 218 bird species, including Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Black-necked Stilts, and American Bittern.

In Wabash County, Salomonie River State Forest and Mississinewa River and Lake capture birders' attention. US 31 extends across the river in Miami County for a quick look, and intersects W. River Road which parallels the Wabash.

In Cass County, where Landon Neumann recently undertook a Big Year effort, shared with me two of his favorite river spots. The Wabash/Eel River Confluence is located in downtown Logansport. "This location is fantastic for waterfowl. Every species of goose that occurs in Indiana has been found here during the winter," he explained. France Park/Georgetown Road is along US 24 a few miles west of Logansport. "The park is good for warblers. Cerulean Warbler breeds in the back here. It's also good for grassland birds such as Bobolink," Landon advised. Northern Shrike winters across from the Georgetown bridge and numerous waterfowl are seen when the river freezes.

The Wabash River takes a turn near Delphi in Carroll County with US 421 and W Bicycle Bridge Rd crossing it. Agricultural and private lands prevent access through the rest of this county. The Wabash Heritage Trail (tippecanoe.in.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/Wabash-Heritage-Trail-16) extends for 13 miles in Tippecanoe County. The eBird hotspot "West Lafayette Sewage Outflow" is located at a bend of the Wabash Heritage Trail and exhibits a good selection of waterfowl and birds of prey during the winter months. DNR boat access sites offer the best views of the river in Warren County and Fountain County. The Wabash Conservation Area and Wabash Valley Wetland in Vermillion County are eBird hotspots that frequented by birders for warblers and waterfowl in the fall and winter months. Cayuga Generating Station holds an Bald Eagle viewing day each January. The town of Montezuma in Parke County has park land next to the Wabash River. In Vigo County, Wabashiki FWA manages river floodplains for waterfowl, Bald Eagles, and migrating shorebirds. Bluff Park in Sullivan County looks over the Wabash River. At Ouabache Trails Park in Knox County, birder Vern Wilkins has identified suitable habitat for the Prothonotary Warbler along the river. In Gibson County, the Patoka River and nearby Gibson Generating Station attract large numbers of birds and birders. The Wabash River enters the Ohio River in Posey County, but there is no public land access there. Birding the entire Wabash River would require a commitment of many days, but each county may hold a new winged creature to behold and a lesson for future conservation needs.



IAS OUTREACH

by Brad Bumgardner



Matthias Benko

Grants/Scholarships Awarded this Year

The Indiana Audubon Society is pleased to announce several awards in the Mumford and Keller Grants/Scholarship Program in 2017. This program is for individuals and organizations that are seeking funding for activities related to Indiana's natural resources, particularly those related to Indiana's avifauna. This year's funding has been set aside for applicants in many categories, including, but not limited to: research, bird preservation, workshop attendance, and youth birding activities.

Receiving awards this spring were: Matthias Benko (\$240) to attend the ABA Camp Colorado for youth birding and Kimberly Ehn (\$260) to support the north chapter of the Indiana Young Birder's Club with new binoculars from Eagle Optics.

For more information about the Mumford and Keller Grants/Scholarship Program, visit the Indiana Audubon Society website (www.indianaaudubon.org). For questions about possible funding projects, email IAS Awards Chair, Brad Bumgardner, at bbumgardner@indianaaudubon.org.

Nominate an IAS Member Today!

Indiana Audubon Society members are encouraged to nominate a member you know for one of two annual awards the society bestows each year. The Earl Brooks Award is given to an individual "for advancement of conservation of natural resources in Indiana." The award recipient does not have to be an Indiana Audubon Society member. The James H Mason Service Award is presented to a member of the Indiana Audubon Society who has dedicated themselves through service to the society. It serves as an inspiration and focus for others to work with such individuals. More information on each award can be found at: <https://indianaaudubon.org/about-ias>

IAS Sponsoring Birding Crash Course Workshops Statewide.

IAS is sponsoring a special 3-hour introductory birding workshop this upcoming fall and winter at seven locations throughout the state. Indiana Birding: Crash Course will offer birding techniques, how to use best use and choose appropriate optics, an introduction to the history of ornithology and birding, as well as its popularity today. The workshop will also introduce participants to the common birds found throughout the state. Each workshop has indoor and outdoor sessions in a fun and informational setting. See the locations and dates for a workshop near you. Registration is on the IAS website and is limited. We hope to see you there. (note, see flyer on next page)

Purchase IAS Merchandise online!

A brand new IAS online store as been added to the IAS website. All of our merchandise is now online for sale. If you visit the IAS page, you'll see links in the side bar. You can also purchase Indiana Dunes Birding Festival merchandise on our online store. IAS merchandise makes a great gift and the money from our sales go a long way to promote birding and bird conservation throughout the state. Your support is greatly appreciated! Please visit indianaaudubon.org and click on the About IAS tab to view our merchandise.



INDIANA BIRDING: Crash Course!



Join Indiana Audubon Society for one of several three hour introduction to birding workshops held throughout the state. Learn birding techniques, the best optics, common birds, and more in a fun and informational setting.



Dates

9/16
10/21
11/18
12/9
1/27
2/24
3/10

Locations

Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
Cool Creek Park
Brown County State Park
Potato Creek State Park
Limerlost State Historic Site
McCormick's Creek State Park

Workshops are \$15/person.
IAS member discounts available.
Visit indianaaudubon.org to register today!

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*Pied-billed Grebe by Shari
McCullough*