

A close-up photograph of a bird, likely a sparrow or similar small bird, feeding its young chick. The adult bird is positioned above the chick, with its beak open and touching the chick's beak. The chick is covered in soft, downy feathers and has a prominent, spiky tuft of feathers on its head. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting foliage. The text is overlaid on the top portion of the image.

Indiana Audubon Society
CARDINAL

NEWSLETTER • JUNE - JULY 2020 • Vol. 51 No.3

In this issue...

FIELD TRIP UPDATES • PEREGRINE FALCON BANDING • BIRDING TRAIL SPOTLIGHT • MEET A MEMBER • SOCIETY NEWS & MORE!

Production Team

Executive Director
Brad Bumgardner

Editor & Graphic Designer
John Lindsey

Editor
Mark Welter

Contributors
Brad Bumgardner
Carl Wilms
Karen Lindsey
John Lindsey
Annie Aguirre
Mark Welter
Sam Warren
Nancy Lightfoot
Dan Barriball

Layout Designer
Annie Aguirre

The Cardinal Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication of the Indiana Audubon Society. Its purpose is to share stories and conversations so that members and the birding community beyond can stay meaningfully connected both to birds and to the people dedicated to their protection.



Cover Photo:
LEAST BITTERNS
(John Lindsey)

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MEMBERSHIP PERKS	Individual	Family	Contributing	Cardinal Club	Life	Library	Fledgling	Student
Access to bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Mailed printed copies of bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters			☑	☑	☑	☑		
Complete access to Birds of North America Database	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑			
Discounted Field Trips & Programs	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑
Special Access to Mary Gray Birding Sanctuary	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑
15% discount on all IAS online store merchandise				☑	☑			
Register a friend to any IAS field trip at member rate				☑				

➤ Be a part of Indiana Audubon Society! Sign up at: Indianaaudubon.org/membership



UPCOMING TRIPS & EVENTS

Due to COVID-19, all upcoming IAS Field Trips through August 1 are currently canceled or postponed. However, IAS is adding impromptu and scheduled online events and programs through both our Facebook page and Zoom Conference app. Check the IAS website for the latest activities as we adjust week to week with the current health crisis.

Mark your Calendars for the 2021 Indiana Dunes Birding Festival!

The 2020 Indiana Dunes Birding Festival may have been canceled this year, but we are happy to report that all of our keynote and headline speakers will be back for the 2021 event. Mark your calendar now for May 13-16, 2021.

Scott Weidensaul will be back to present "A World of Wings: Migratory Birds on a Changing Planet," at next year's festival. Even as scientists make astounding discoveries about the navigational and physiological feats that enable migratory birds to cross immense oceans or fly above the highest mountains, go weeks without sleep or remain in unbroken flight for months at a stretch, humans have brought many migrants to the brink. Based on his forthcoming book "A World of Wings," author and researcher Scott Weidensaul takes you around the globe - from researchers in a lab probing the limits of what migrating birds can do, to the shores of the Yellow Sea in China, to the remote mountains of northeastern India where tribal villages saved the greatest gathering of falcons on the planet, to the Mediterranean, where activists and police are battling bird poachers - in order to learn how people are fighting to understand and save the world's great bird migrations.

Learn more about the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival at indunesbirdingfestival.com.



Indiana Audubon Adjusts to COVID-19 Crisis



In these uncertain times, Indiana Audubon has been heartwarmed to see the response from members like you who have helped donate to keep our many programs, research projects, and activities going without interruption.

We're confident that never did the Society's founding members envision this new world in which we are living. A world where the simple act of birding together can't happen for our own health and safety. But at the same time, we're reading that our very own hobby, birding, is perfectly suited for this uncertain time. It allows for observation outside, often close to home, and is ideal for enjoyment alone. Birding can be virus proof!

Indiana Audubon has taken some basic but important actions to help stop the spread of the virus. We have canceled all trips and tours and have suspended all non-essential travel. We are also postponing all scheduled workshops, bird banding demonstrations, and presentations around the state.

If you have not yet found us online yet, we are reaching out with our digital education toolkit to spread the Audubon message. Our many online workshops and Coffee & COrVID events have been a great avenue to stay connected.

We are continuing to pay our staff and contractors. Much work has been done at home, but when safe, work is being conducted in the field, including our bird surveys and marsh monitoring program around the state. We have applied for the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program like many other non-profits and small businesses. There is much work going on behind the scenes with both our staff and dedicated Board of Directors. We are confident that Indiana Audubon's leadership will continue both locally and around the state.

Thank you for helping make Indiana Audubon's work possible.

Piping Plover Documentary Debut

The now famous Piping Plover duo that took up residence in Chicago in 2019 is being featured in a documentary called "Monty & Rose." While the documentary has been shown in a few locations this spring, many of the showings (including at the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival) were canceled due to the coronavirus epidemic. The documentary has, however, recently gotten airplay on WTTW and other PBS stations.

Stay tuned for further updates on how Indiana Audubon members can see this interesting story. You can get more information on Monty and Rose at montyandrose.net or on their Facebook and Twitter pages.



Hummingbird Migration Celebration

Indiana Audubon has yet not made a final decision regarding the status of this year's Hummingbird Migration Celebration at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, currently scheduled for Saturday, August 8. While we would certainly like the 3rd annual event to be held, we want to put everyone's health and safety first. The event draws more than 300 people to the grounds of Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary for a wonderful day of watching hummingbirds up close, great nature hikes, and beautiful vendor work.

The Indiana Audubon HMC planning committee hopes to make a final decision by July 1 regarding this year's Hummingbird Migration Celebration. You can always get up to date information on the Indiana Audubon website.



meet a
MEMBER
Nancy Lightfoot



Q Tell us a little about yourself. Family?
Where do you live and work?

I grew up in a big, outdoorsy family in Wisconsin. If you're not spending a lot of time outside in Wisconsin, you're missing some pretty great opportunities. We grew up canoeing, skiing, skating, hiking, biking, sailing, walking dogs, and generally spending as much time as we could outdoors. I went to school in upstate New York, came to Bloomington for grad school, and now I am fortunate to be working as an editor at Indiana University Press. I have a lot of really talented colleagues who understand my birding obsession and share the stories of their bird encounters. It's a great life, but I sure miss the snow and all the lakes and people around Madison. And cranes everywhere in spring!

I share my home life with three (possibly four now) adopted parrots and a parrot co-parent. He loves nature but isn't a birder. He says he just has to know the birds are ok; he doesn't need to know all the species. He's learning a surprising number of yard birds, though, and loves Northern Flickers. Today he asked what the Brown Thrasher call was like. There's always hope! And he's very patient with my interest in birds and time spent birding. The parrots also go birding if the weather is good. They have harnesses and screened backpacks. They think the lake is the coolest, but if I stay out too long, they get bored and start to eat their backpacks. I get it. If I'm not four hours late getting home from birding, I get brownie points. With our digital education toolkit to spread the Audubon message. Our many online workshops and Coffee & COVID events have been a great avenue to stay connected.

We are continuing to pay our staff and contractors. Much work has been done at home, but when safe, work is being conducted in the field, including our bird surveys and marsh monitoring program around the state. We have applied for the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program like many other non-profits and small businesses. There is much work going on behind the scenes with both our staff and dedicated Board of Directors. We are confident that Indiana Audubon's leadership will continue both locally and around the state. Thank you for helping make Indiana Audubon's work possible.

Q What got you interested in birds and birding?

My dad shared birding and binos with my big brother, and it was pretty clear that was their special thing. But when I got my first apartment after college, I bought a bird feeder, and my dad bought me a Peterson guide, and I loved it! I could still watch feeder birds forever. A few years later I was hitting a rough patch with lots of personal losses in my life, and I decided to take a class - I wanted to learn about ecology or ethology. The biology advisor accidentally sent me to Susan Hengeveld, who teaches ornithology at Indiana University Bloomington. I challenge you to take Susan's class and not come out a birder! I ended up assisting in the class, and I still go on field trips when I can. I got most of a degree in biology, and I bought binos. I bought a scope. Then I got a camera. It's really hard not to get more and more obsessed with birding. Birds are so beautiful and fascinating to watch, and you get to do it outside!

Q Any current bird issues or threats you are passionate about?

I'm concerned about habitat loss and global climate change, because I feel like they are the biggest existential threats to our environment. I am motivated by any opportunity to contribute to the birds and conservation through citizen science, habitat preservation or restoration, outreach, or fundraising. It's a hard time to be a nature lover right now, and taking action feels necessary and extremely rewarding. The birding community is outstanding at getting people to participate in nature and conservation.

I'd like to see Indiana birders get involved with the Nightjar Network, and I'm trying to organize to fill up routes to survey these rapidly declining birds right here in the heart of their habitat. Most of our data on nightjars (Eastern Whip-poor-wills, Chuck-Will's-Widows, and Common Nighthawks) is from Breeding Bird Survey routes, but these data miss a lot of points because they're morning surveys, and nightjars are nocturnal or crepuscular species. I hope Hoosier birders will consider signing up or creating a route. Nightjar calls are easy to learn, so any level of birder can do this! The time commitment isn't much, and it is magical to be out in the woods at night.

But really, I am passionate about all of the birds and all of the conservation concerns. What drives my interest in birding the most is a love for the outdoors and wildlife. If I

cont.

mentioned grassland or wetland birds, and you said what about neotropical migrant songbirds, I'd say, "Absolutely! Them too!" And because we live with captive parrots, I'm also especially passionate about ending the wildlife trade. They all belong in the wild, and we need better enforcement and economic incentives to stop poaching. Unfortunately I believe it is second only to the drug trade in profitability among illegal activities, and parrots are an extremely threatened family. There are areas where literally all the babies are stolen from nests.

And I think one thing that sets me a little apart as a birder is my commitment to new birders and keeping common birds common. I will always love those feeder birds, and will never, ever, ever get tired of looking at your picture of a Canada Goose or Northern Cardinal. Those are our gateway birds and, honestly, our parrots are no prettier than a Blue Jay. Not much out there is. And I love sharing the excitement of new birders so much. It's the best.



What are your favorite birding destinations? Favorite birds?

I am pretty tied down with work and the parrots and just recently lost my parents, so travel has not been on the agenda. Top of my list going forward is the Dunes Festival and Black Swamp Bird Observatory big week - both for next year, because of the coronavirus situation. But for now, I love to bird around south-central Indiana because I can make a day of it and not get in too much trouble at home. I love all the areas around Lake Monroe, Lake Lemon, Goose Pond, the Sycamore Land Trust properties, Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests, and the Hoosier National Forest. Honestly, I love getting lost and tromping around in any wetland or the woods - I have a good sense of direction. And depending on how much time I have, I love just driving around the country roads and listening to Northern Bobwhites, Eastern Meadowlarks, and Dickcissels (and Grasshopper Sparrows and Bobolinks if I'm lucky).

Right now, I'm warbler and shorebird obsessed because it's spring. I love the Sandhills and Whooping Cranes - late in his life, my dad invited me to do the crane count with him in Wisconsin. That was huge, and he ended up being so proud of my birding skills. It was among the happiest times we spent together. I urge everyone to go up to Wisconsin around tax time - the crane calls fill the air. I'm hoping to increase my involvement with the International Crane Foundation, but in the meantime, we dedicated our Bird-a-thon funds to them. And I do the Eagle Watch program and shore cleanup at Lake Monroe with Jill Vance. I love the Bald Eagles and Jill is an inspiring person to work with.



You were recognized recently by the Sassafras Audubon. Tell us about the award?

In 2019, I received the Donald R. Whitehead Conservationist of the Year Award. Don Whitehead was an awe-inspiring birder who we unfortunately lost not all that long ago. Don was a friend to everyone in the community, organized and participated in numerous bird counts and Breeding Bird Survey routes, organized Indiana's first Breeding Bird Atlas, and taught so many people to love birds and nature. I never met him, but everyone I know loved and respected him. I followed his eBird lists and think of him and his wife Betsy every time I bird Fairfax, one of their favorite haunts and mine. His reports were what got me curious about gull diversity, and they are such fun birds to watch, especially on a windy day. Don had an illustrious research career at Indiana University Bloomington, where he ended up studying the effects of forest fragmentation on songbirds. Sassafras Audubon recognized him with a special award "given for a lifetime of commitment and dedication to the cause of conservation in south-central Indiana." At that time, they also established this award in his name. To receive an award in Don's name, for avian conservation... well, it just can't get much better than that. I still can't get over it.

It also meant so much to be honored by my fellow birders - they are the people who really get it, and they are such wonderful friends. You care about what you're involved with, and my goal is always to build a bigger boat for nature and birds. The Bloomington and Sassafras Audubon Society communities are all doing an outstanding job of getting people involved with birding and nature, and I couldn't be more grateful to be a part of those efforts. To get an award for what brings me the greatest joy was amazing.

The plaque that came with the award said it was "for unrivaled passion in Indiana bird conservation." I'm not the best birder, but I try hard, and I care so much. If you have a volunteer opportunity, I will show up for the birds. I am especially honored to be on the Stewardship Committee at IAS and President of the Board at Sassafras Audubon Society. I do every count I can, I do Saw-whet Owl banding, I did Barred and Eastern Screech surveys for the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment for years, and I'm hoping to do Marsh Bird Surveys this summer.

Photo ID Quiz!

Take a shot at identifying this quiz bird. Submit your guess to swarren@indianaaudubon.org to be entered into a drawing for some IAS prizes. All guesses must be submitted by July 25 to be eligible.

Thanks to Heath Harlan for providing our photo quiz bird this issue. **Good luck!**



FINDING BIRDS NEAR YOU

Sam Warren



Birding is just like any other hobby: practice makes you better. But, what if you're just getting into birding? What if you just moved to a new place? Since birding is also a very regionally specific hobby, many people encounter these questions. It's sometimes difficult to figure out which species are found near you. I just moved to Indiana a month ago, and my first question was: "what birds can I expect to see?"

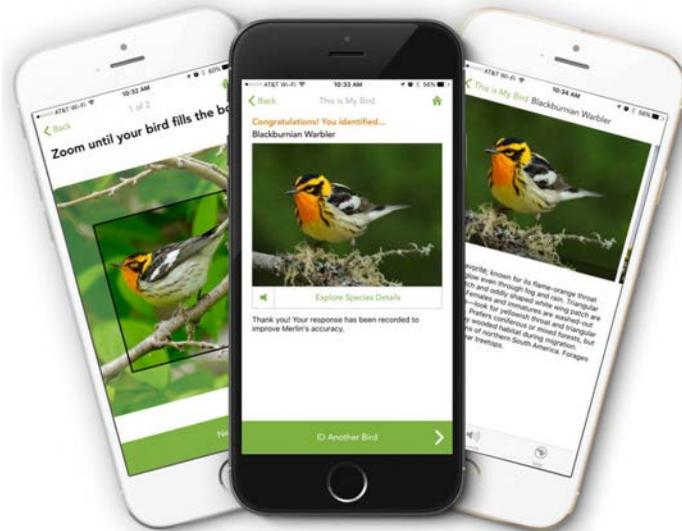
Finding birds near you isn't a scary task! Luckily, technology is here to help us. There are many wonderful websites, apps, and guides out there. Sure, you can look through your field guide and study the range maps, but, if you're just beginning this hobby and/or want to know broadly what to expect, check out the resources below!

Merlin Bird ID - App

One of the handiest tools for species ID if you're in a pinch or have no idea where to start with a field guide. I particularly use this app when I'm out doing non-birding activities (like walking my dog) and I encounter a species I can't identify.

The app is from folks at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and asks for some information about the bird you see and your location to give you a list of possibilities. You can see various pictures and hear songs as well. Here's how to get started with the app:

1. Download from your app store.
2. Open the app and download a "Bird Pack" for your area. Make sure to allow location services, at least while using the app. It will likely prompt you to do this and give you a recommended bird pack, based on your location. The packs take up some storage space and take a bit of time to download, so make sure to do this before you actually need to use the app. Downloading a bird pack is required for use.
3. Spot an unknown bird and "Start Bird ID". Get outside, spot a species you don't recognize, open your app, and begin your ID process. Here are the things you will need to know/remember for this app to help you successfully ID your species:
 - a. **Location** - if you're using the app in real time, you can choose "current." Otherwise, search for the location where you saw the bird.
 - b. **Date** (if different than the current)
 - c. **General Size** - it will give you options as to what size you thought the bird was. When in doubt, choose the middle option.
 - d. **Colors** - pick at least 1 and no more than 3 colors of the bird
 - e. **Bird Activity** - the app will ask "what was your bird doing?" and give you examples, such as if it was in a tree, on the ground, or flying
4. Identify your bird. After a few moments, the app will spit you out a list of possible species, based on your data. The most probable options will be toward the top, and as you scroll, they become less likely (although not impossible). You can click on a specific species to learn more about it, listen to its song, and see its range map.



Birds Near Me - App

This app is awesome for giving you an entire list of species that have been spotted near you within the past month. It uses data from eBird (see below for more info on this resource). Basically, it's a condensed version of searching through the eBird data, all in a little app on your phone!

Using the app is really quite simple and it has an explore feature which lets you check out hotspots in your area. Here's how to use it:

1. Download from your app store.
2. Allow the app to use your location. For accurate results, this is necessary.
3. Explore species and hotspots in your area. The app will give you a list of species that have been seen near your location within the past month. You can also click on the "Hotspots" tab on the bottom bar to get some ideas of popular birding areas near you. I find this to be extremely helpful when in a new region!
4. Using bar charts for species frequency and timing. At this point, you will have a "Bird Observations" green bar chart. The X-axis of the chart has each month, while the Y-axis has species. Basically, the more green you see, and the bigger each bar is, the more often the species has been sighted. At the top, you will see a "Date Range" option. I like to change the date range to at least 2000-current, just so I'm getting more recent data and have a better understanding of which species I may see. You can also play around with the date range to filter for things like breeding season or change it to the current year only to see which species have been spotted thus far.

There are really an endless amount of apps and online resources out there that can help you get a feel for which species are near you and help you identify unknown ones. I also keep the Sibley Bird and Warbler Guide apps on my phone, for more of a field guide experience. It's also helpful to check out some social media groups, such as the Indiana Audubon forum or Birding in Indiana on Facebook, if you have more questions about birding or just want to know what others are seeing.

There are so many species of birds that it can be daunting to start birding or learn about a new area. But with all these resources at our fingertips, you should have everything you need to successfully find birds near you!

If you have any questions about birds in your area or birding in general, you can always email me (Sam Warren, IAS Education & Outreach Specialist) directly at swarren@indianaaudubon.org.



Peregrine Falcons Get their Bling

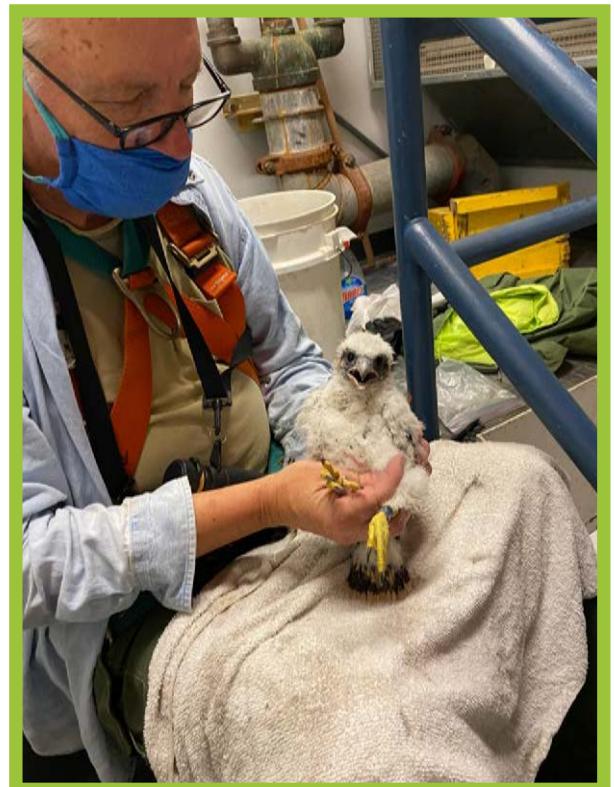
By Brad Bumgardner

Since the late 1980s, the Indiana DNR has coordinated the annual banding of Peregrine Falcons around the state. From atop various skyscrapers, smokestacks, and power plants, Indiana falcons have made a comeback from near extinction during the days of DDT. Retired avian biologist, John Castrale, has been banding falcons around Indiana for 30 years and though retired, continues the project today. Angry chicks are carefully extracted from high nest boxes while mom and dad swoop and dive to protect their young. Fledgling chicks receive a standard USGS bird band, as well as a special colored band that makes identification easier when viewing the birds.

In Fort Wayne this spring, parents Moxie and Jamie nested upon the AEP building downtown. Four young were banded in May, three males named Bolt, Unity, and Artemis respectively, as well as one female named Carla. This year was the eighth consecutive year that both falcons have produced chicks from atop Fort Wayne's tallest building. Their nest box has a commanding 450 foot tall view over the summit city.

Though COVID-19 has prevented traditional banding viewing for the public, the work continues, and the bands provide researchers the ability to track the movement of Midwestern peregrine falcons, who can travel thousands of miles before settling in a new home of their own.

To learn more about peregrine falcons, visit: <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/3365.htm>.



INDIANA BIRDING TRAIL HIGHLIGHT

BOOT LAKE NATURE PRESERVE

BY ANNIE AGUIRRE

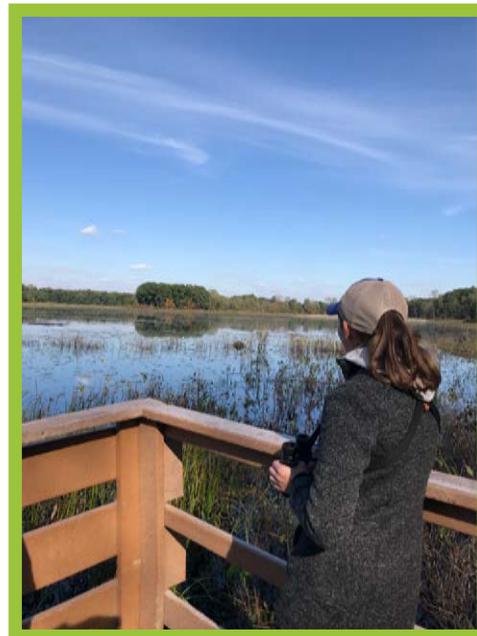
Walk the trails of Boot Lake Nature Preserve and you might not guess it has an unusual past. Just a few short miles from Elkhart and the Michigan border, the preserve offers upland woods, native prairie, and emergent wetlands – all rolled into a nice 300-acre bundle. Here, a birder can be a true explorer.

Observe carefully, and you'll be rewarded with intimate encounters with rarities found few places in the state. In the native prairies, hear the hiccups of Henslow's Sparrows and the rapid-fire chatter of Sedge Wrens coming deep from within a jungle of towering sunflowers and blades of bluestem. The overlook platform in southern prairie grants birders commanding views of restored grassland. Near sunset, the view here gets even more epic as flocks of waterfowl and majestic Sandhill Cranes soar low overhead as they descend onto the lake.

A portion of the site has a unique story, having been reclaimed from the city's sludge farm. The transformed site is now a state-dedicated nature preserve, protecting Indiana's rare and endangered plants and wildlife.

The preserve is named by the National Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area and it's not hard to see why. With over 200 species logged onsite, Boot Lake's reputation as a migration magnet is well-deserved. Hike the woods during mid-May, and you won't need to put your binoculars down as a kaleidoscope of warblers dance in front of your eyes. Time things right during migration, and you can find some truly elusive birds here. Along with tough-to-find warblers, like Mourning, Connecticut, Golden-winged, and Prairie in the spring, fall attracts some truly special finds – both Nelson's and LeConte's Sparrows have been found on-site.

As water levels on the lakes drop, eye-catching shorebirds may also drop in – like Wilson's Snipe, Semipalmated Plover, and White-rumped Sandpiper.



TIMING

Typical Time to Bird

Site: 1-2 Hours

Best Time to Bird:

Brimming with birds during migration and sprinkled with rarities throughout the rest of the year, Boot Lake Nature Preserve is the perfect pick for any bird treasure-hunter ready to explore and snag some rare gems.

Hours:

Preserve open at 9:00AM and closes between 5:00PM AND 8:00PM depending on the season.

GETTING THERE

Address:

51430 CR 3
Elkhart, IN 46514

Directions:

Boot Lake Nature Preserve is located one-mile northwest of Elkhart. Take C.R. 5 north from C.R. 6. At the intersection of C.R. 4, continue C.R. 5 for .25 miles. Turn right onto C.R. 3 for .4 miles, then turn right onto Williams Lane. Follow the lane east to the Preserve's parking lot.

SITE LOGISTICS

Admission: FREE

Ownership:
Elkhart County Parks

Accessibility:

The preserve features a 0.4-mile ADA-accessible gravel trail that runs through upland woods to the southern prairie.

Restrictions:

Please obey all rules and regulations.

PARK & STAY

Parking:

The gated parking lot is free to use and open during seasonal hours.

Nearby Amenities:

The preserve has a picnic shelter and portable restrooms. Nearby Elkhart has fuel, food, and lodging six miles to the south.

CONTACT INFO

Website:

elkhartcountyparks.org

Phone Number:

(574) 535-6458

eBird Hotspot Link:

ebird.org/hotspot/L161396



My Wanders with the Woodcocks

by Dan Barriball

Whether you call it the timberdoodle, bogsucker, Labrador twister, night partridge, brush snipe, hokumpoke, twitterpate, or crazy straw, the American Woodcock has fascinated us for as long as people have lived here. That catalog of nicknames testifies to the hold that *Scolopax minor* has on our imagination. A friend calls them “nature’s lovable weirdos,” and truly I have been enchanted by them.

It all began in late March of 2019. I was just south of the bird observation tower on Trail 3 in Pageant Blowout in Indiana Dunes State Park. Blowouts are a unique feature of the Indiana Dunes where wind and waves have broken through the foredunes, scouring out whatever was there before and leaving an open area of sand. That open area is first



colonized by marram grass, sometimes called beach grass. On that March evening, I was standing in the marram grass when I heard that first peent. Soon, I was hearing peents from several birds in the area. My curiosity was piqued. A few minutes later, I heard the twittering sound of a flight display. First there was one, then another, then a third, all up in the air at the same time, dancing in the sky. I was enchanted! I found myself drawn back to the blowout night after night to watch this spectacle.

I began to use the eBird app to log what I was seeing and to help me learn more about the woodcocks. I noticed that the time when the males started peenting depended on how cloudy the skies were. If skies were cloudy, the peenting started earlier. Light levels seemed to drive their activity. There was a woodcock that nightly took his station about 30 feet down the trail from where I usually observed. I watched that bird arrive, peent, flight display, and challenge other woodcocks. The woodcocks would face each other with raised wings, aggression cackles sounding between them. The woodcock displays continued all through April and May, into the beginning of June. On June 4th, the displays suddenly ended as if they had run out of gas.

To my surprise, people saw my eBird checklists and began coming out to view the woodcocks. There was a couple that came out on a rainy night. Despite the rain, the birds put on a show. The couple had never seen woodcocks sky dancing, and they loved it. Another night, two women from Germany came to the blowout. They were in the area and wanted to see how American Woodcocks compared to Eurasian Woodcocks. They said that American Woodcock displays were considerably more dynamic than the Eurasian.

In 2020, I was determined to discover when the woodcocks would arrive back at the Indiana Dunes. I began my evening checks in mid-February. For a couple of weeks, I heard nothing. Then on March 1st, I heard one peent, then another, and then a flight display. They were back! More arrived over the next several days, and there were territorial disputes aplenty while they figured out who would be where.

There are still a few things I would like to learn about the woodcocks of the Indiana Dunes. Where do they go to feed when they are not displaying in the marram grass? How many females nest successfully? Where do the Dunes woodcocks go for the winter? I may never find the answers to these questions, but I’m going to have fun trying! The next time you are out in the evening from March to May, check out the grasslands and open forests. You may hear the woodcocks, begin watching them, and be fascinated by these birds as people have been for generations.





Adopt a Shrike!

Help save the shrike! Indiana Audubon, in partnership with the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Loggerhead Shrike Working Group, have teamed up to help provide shrubs for shrikes in the Adopt a Shrike program.

The Loggerhead Shrike is a state-endangered species that has experienced precipitous declines in recent years. In the late 1980s, Indiana's Loggerhead Shrike population consisted of nearly 100 breeding pairs. Ongoing monitoring efforts now identify fewer than ten breeding pairs annually in the entire state. Habitat loss due to changes in land use is likely a contributing factor, as much of the grassland habitat in their historical range has been developed or converted to large-scale agriculture.

Remaining shrike breeding pairs now tend to occupy small farms with overgrazed pasture, barbed wire fences, and bushes suitable for nesting. Overgrazed pastures produce bare ground, which provides ideal hunting conditions for shrikes - which need to spot and capture prey on the ground - but little in the way of nesting trees and shrubs. The DNR's current efforts are working to provide shrike nesting habitat by focusing on nest bushes and shrubs along fencerows. In helping with this initiative, IAS and the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife Non-game program are teaming up for the Adopt a Shrike program. Donors will receive a special adoption certificate highlighting the shrike research and conservation being done, an annual report detailing all the year's shrike banding efforts, and a commemorative "Never met a shrike I didn't like" T-shirt. Each adoption is \$50 and can be purchased through the IAS Online Store. Visit indianaudubon.org/adopt-a-shrike to learn more.



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