

Indiana Audubon Society

CARDINAL

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APRIL SHOWERS BRING
**SPRINGTIME
BIRDS!**

IN THIS ISSUE: ORCHIDS, WARBLERS, TRAVEL, AND MORE!

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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.



On the cover:

Hooded Warbler by Ryan Sanderson

JOIN —OR— RENEW TODAY



MEMBERSHIP PERKS								
Access to bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Complete access to Birds of the World online	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
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Register a friend for a trip at the IAS member rate				✓				
➤ Be a part of Indiana Audubon Society! Sign up at: Indianaaudubon.org/membership								



UPCOMING TRIPS & EVENTS

Join Indiana Audubon for an assortment of field trips and workshops being offered this spring and summer. Visit indianaaudubon.org/events for more information or to register for any of these upcoming activities. Additional events are listed on our website and many fill early. See each trip description for specific COVID related restrictions or guidance.

APRIL 1-MAY 27: Indiana Master Naturalist Course- Fridays [Connersville]

APRIL 6: Pints & Passerines: Birding Thailand [Zoom]

APRIL 9: Lye Creek Burn Longspur Trip- FULL [Crawfordsville]

APRIL 9-10: Illinois Prairie Chicken Lek Field Trip- FULL [Newton, IL]

APRIL 12: Building Birder Skills: Bird Songs 101 Workshop [Zoom]

APRIL 16-23: Rio Grande Valley Birding Tour- FULL [Harlingen, TX]

APRIL 30: IAS Spring Gathering at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary [Connersville]

MAY 7-8: Goose Pond Weekend Birding Trip [Linton]

MAY 12-15: Indiana Dunes Birding Festival [Chesterton]

MAY 17: Building Birder Skills: Migration 101 Workshop [Zoom]

JUNE 14: Building Birder Skills: Indiana Birding Trail Workshop [Zoom]

Visit the Indiana Audubon Events Page at WWW.INDIANA AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS to see all the field trips and events now posted for registration. These trips will fill fast!



JOIN THE GLOBAL BIG DAY

Be a part of birding's biggest team! Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you. No matter where you are, join us virtually on 14 May, help celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, and share the birds you find with eBird.

Participating is easy—you can even be part of Global Big Day from home. If you can spare 5 or 10 minutes, report your bird observations to eBird online or with our free eBird Mobile app. If you have more time, submit several checklists of birds throughout the day. You never know what you might spot. Your observations help us better understand global bird populations through products like these animated abundance maps brought to you by eBird Science.



Last year, Global Big Day brought birders together virtually from more countries than ever before. More than 51,000 people from 192 countries submitted 134,000 checklists with eBird, setting four new world records for a single day of birding. Whichever way you choose to participate, please always put safety first and follow your local guidelines.

Will you help Indiana surpass last year's records?
LEARN MORE AT WWW.EBIRD.ORG/GLOBALBIGDAY

ADOPT A SHRIKE IN 2022



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 again in 2022.

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 one hundred 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 over grazed pasture, barbed wire fences, and nest bushes. Overgrazed pastures produce bare ground, which

provides ideal hunting conditions for shrikes who need to spot and capture prey on the ground, but little 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 is 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 for a short-sleeve shirt or \$60 for a long-sleeve shirt and can be purchased through the IAS Online Store.



*Loggerhead Shrike by
Ryan Sanderson*

To adopt a shrike and learn more about the program, visit
WWW.INDIANAUDUBON.ORG/ADOPT-A-SHRIKE

BIRDING THE INDIANA DUNES IN MAY

While many hundreds of birders are making plans for the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival, you don't need to be registered for the festival to make the most of migration in May. Consider these resources as you plan for your spring birding adventure in the Indiana Dunes.

Self-Guiding Your Own Adventure- The Indiana Dunes Tourism maintains a self-guided birding guide that highlights some of the best areas to bird in the Indiana Dunes. It's a handy guide for where to go where to park! Find it at www.indianadunes.com/birding-tour

Birding Backpacks - Many Dunes area nature and visitor centers offer rental binoculars and backpacks. These packs are generally free to use, with a driver's license deposit. Packs can be found at the Indiana Dunes State Park, Visitor Center, Douglas Center, and the Coffee Creek Watershed Preserve.

Youth and Family Birding Day, May 14 - You don't need to be registered to take part in the many free activities taking place at the Indiana Dunes State Park nature center on Saturday, May 14. Activities include bluebird box building, nature sketching, live birds of prey, hourly bird walks, and more. There are also options for scouts to earn their birdwatching merit badge.

Scout the Longshore - The most amazing wonder of Dunes migration just might be the amazing morning bird flight that takes place each spring morning on south winds. Visit the Indiana Dunes State Park Longshore Tower, by the West Lot for one of the best spectacles of spring birding. On some mornings 25,000+ birds fly over the tower site. A paid DNR bird counter logs the excitement each morning and posts the results at indianadunesbirding.wordpress.com.

Hit the Indiana Birding Trail - An amazing collection of birding trail sites exist within the Indiana Dunes. Nearly 20 sites lie within an hour's drive of the Dunes. View them all at indianabirdingtrail.com, or better yet, order the printed guide to take along with you!

Bring Birder Impact! - Birders travel to see birds, and with them they spend money into local economies. Make sure the restaurants and hotels you're visiting know that birders are visiting their business.



Photo: Wilson's Phalarope by Michael Topp

For more information on birding the Dunes Country, check out the Dunes tourism website at WWW.INDIANADUNES.COM/BIRDING-TOUR

INDIANA AUDUBON WELCOMES NEW MARSHBIRD COORDINATOR

Indiana Audubon welcomes Lila Fried as the new Calumet Secretive Marshbird Coordinator. Lila joins us from her work with Audubon Great Lakes and will be coordinating the volunteer effort for secretive marshbird studies done in NW Indiana and NE Illinois, as well as coordinating a new acoustic survey for Black Rails at the Kankakee Sands in Newton County. Funding for this year's research has been provided by a generous grant by the Efroymsen Family Fund.

Indiana Audubon is thrilled to have Lila's background in conservation biology as we move into the next phases of the long-term rail, bittern, and grebe breeding study.



Welcome to the team, Lila!

Indiana Audubon

BIRDING TRAVEL

2023-2024

Come on your next epic birding adventure with us! Indiana Audubon is happy to host our next in a series of great birding adventures designed to educate our members to the birds around the world. Indiana Audubon trips bring in conservation and research dollars for Indiana bird projects and we donate a percentage back to conservation efforts in the areas we visit. Travel the world, get new lifers, and give back to local organizations. We hope to see you on our next trip!

THAILAND

BEST BIRDING INTRO

FEBRUARY 7-18, 2023

MICHIGAN U.P.

SNOWY OWLS

FEBRUARY 3-5, 2023

SAX-ZIM BOG MN

NORTHERN OWL TOUR

FEBRUARY 10-13, 2023

RIO GRANDE VALLEY

WOMEN'S TOUR

APRIL 15-22, 2023

COLOMBIA

NORTHERN BIRDING TRAIL

JULY 15-26, 2023

BELIZE

TROPICAL BIRDS

JANUARY 19-27, 2024

FLORIDA

MIGRANTS & MANGROVES

APRIL 13-24, 2024

*Tickets go on sale
starting April 8,
2022!*

INDIANA BIRDING HIGHLIGHT

CELERY BOG

By: Chuck Tuttle

Celery Bog contains 4 miles of paved trails and 2.5 miles of natural trails through woods, savanna, prairie and along the west side of the bog. There are three observation decks on the wetland areas, two of which are accessed from the natural trails. The paved trails connect to the West Lafayette trail system and can be used to access the northern observation deck. Additional observations can be made from the Wal-Mart parking lot. There is a pedestrian walkway on the north side of the Celery

Bog bridge that overlooks the bog.

The natural trails are generally well maintained, but in early spring and periods of heavy rain some areas, especially along the bog,

may be quite muddy to the point of being nearly impassable. Mosquitoes can be plentiful during the late spring, summer and early fall.



Celery Bog is a 195-acre nature park located on the northwest side of West Lafayette. The wetland area is approximately 100 acres in several pools and ephemeral ponds. There have been 260 species recorded on eBird at the Celery Bog.

How the Celery Bog got its name: For much of the twentieth century, the Celery Bog was a large vegetable farm which supplied fresh produce to more than 80 grocers in the region. It's easy to guess that celery was one

of the major crops. Onions, carrots, tomatoes, potatoes, green beans, peas and cabbage thrived there as well. Immigrants from northern Holland farmed the Celery Bog, using experience with similar soil in their native land. They tilled many acres, all by hand - watering with sprinkler cans when necessary. The Bog contains five wetland basins covering 105 acres. It is listed by DNR's Indiana Natural Heritage Program as one of the "significant sites" in the state. *[excerpt from Visit Lafayette]*

TIMING

Typical Time to Bird

Site: 1 hour for the primary wetland areas and 3-4 hours for the entire park.

Best Time to Bird:

Spring and fall migrations are the best. Mornings and evenings are the best times for birding. Summer activity on the wetland area is limited and the bog surface often becomes covered with algae and other aquatic plants.

Hours: The park

is open from dawn to dusk. The Lilly Nature center is open Wednesday – Saturday 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday 1-5 -pm. Closed Monday and Tuesday. The nature center is also closed on the days of home Purdue football games and various holidays.

GETTING THERE

Address: 1620 Lindberg Road, West Lafayette, IN 47906.

Directions: The park entrance is just west of the Celery Bog

Bridge on the north side of Lindberg Road. Lindberg road can be accessed from the east off Northwestern Avenue or from the west off of the US 231/52 West Lafayette bypass.

Parking: Paved parking is available near the Lilly Nature Center. There is an alternate gravel lot available that is accessible from the entrance road before getting to the nature center.

SITE LOGISTICS

Admission: Free

Ownership: West Lafayette Parks and Recreation

Restrictions: Fishing, boating, and drones are not permitted. Pets must be on a leash. Cycling on paved trails only.

Accessibility: Handicapped parking is available at the nature center and at the gravel lot. The nature center and paved trails are handicapped accessible

Nearby Amenities:

Restrooms are available at the nature center when it is open. Food, additional gas stations and other amenities are available in either direction on Northwestern Avenue

CONTACT INFO

Website: westlafayette.in.gov

Phone Number: (765) 775-5172

eBird Hotspot Link: ebird.org/hotspot/L248276

meet a MEMBER DAN BARRIBALL



Q TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF. WHERE ARE YOU FROM? FAMILY?

I grew up in Chesterton, Indiana, where I live today. I have no kids of my own but I'm uncle to many nieces and nephews. I work at St. Patrick Church and School as the IT Director, helping students from grades K-8 with their computers.

Q WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN BIRDS AND BIRDING?

I lived in the Detroit, Michigan, area for about a decade. My go-to park while I was there was Lake Erie Metropark at the mouth of the Detroit River in Brownstown. They have a large fall raptor migration there and a festival to celebrate it, Hawkfest, which included raptor banding. Those raptors first piqued my interest. The interpretive naturalist at the park, Paul Cypher, taught me some of the first fundamentals of birding. I like to say that since birds are the one group of dinosaurs that survived the K-T extinction, my interest in birding is really an extension of my childhood obsession with dinosaurs.

Q BESIDES BIRDING, WHAT OTHER PAST TIMES OR INTERESTS DO YOU HAVE?

I am an amateur astronomer. Some of my best astronomy nights have been followed by listening to the dawn chorus. I enjoy hiking and being outdoors in general.

Q YOU ARE AN ACTIVE VOLUNTEER IN THE INDIANA DUNES AND RECENTLY WON THE OUTSTANDING INTERPRETIVE VOLUNTEER AWARD FROM THE GREAT LAKES REGION. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?

Interpreters connect visitors to the natural, historical, and cultural resources in a way that deepens understanding and broadens the perspective of visitors. I enjoy connecting visitors to the wonders of the Indiana Dunes and showing how everything is interconnected. I love seeing the wonder in a child's eye the first time they really see something, such as the moon in the eyepiece of a telescope.

Q MANY PEOPLE KNOW YOU AS THE WOODCOCK GUY. WHAT INTRIGUES YOU THE MOST ABOUT WOODCOCKS?

I was first drawn to them by their flight displays, of course. This may sound strange, but what intrigues me most about woodcocks is their goofiness. The nicknames alone are funny, such as timberdoodle. Then there are their ridiculous adaptations, such as those eyes set so high on their heads, those flight displays, and their rocking dance. Then comes that wonderful moment when you realize that those adaptations, goofy-looking to human eyes, enable these birds to survive and thrive in their habitats.

A HOOSIER ORCHID BIG YEAR

BY: WES HOMOYA

This piece is not about birds (gasp!). You've been warned. Read on if you dare...

As you likely rather astutely have surmised from the title, this tale describes a different kind of Big Year than the ones you're familiar with hearing about usually. It all began with a conversation I had with my parents, Mike and Barb, sometime in 2019. That year, and in the few years prior, my "biocuriosity" progressively expanded from our beloved birds (I know, traitorous!) to non-feathered biota, principally kinds that I could forage and eat, but also in large part to orchids. These famous members of our floral community had been on my radar for some time- how could they not when your father is the author of "Orchids of Indiana", after all?

Despite this fortuitous filial connection, my experiential relationship with our state's orchids had been relatively minor. So, after much deliberation and discussion, perhaps a touch of arm-twisting by yours truly, and with vast hopes and plans to see all of Indiana's extant native orchids in the wild in one calendar year, we geared up for an epic 2020. And then, well... you know how THAT turned out for so many interpersonal and travel-related dreams.

The pandemic only temporarily delayed us, of course. In 2021, the availability of vaccines allowed us to be together again for long periods of time in close proximity in enclosed spaces (like cars), and just in time for spring. We could begin our quest! On the last day of April, during a guided hike we'd donated for an Amos Butler Audubon fundraiser, we set eyes on our first species. Nestled amongst a mauve and azure sea of spring beauties and bluebells, a petite cluster of pastel-hued showy orchis adorned a sun-dappled slope. We were on the board, and after savoring the moment, snapped what would be the first of many family/orchid "selfies". The moment was made even more special by it being at one of our favorite natural areas, Big Walnut Nature Preserve, and by sharing it both with our companion Ruth Ann Ingraham, who'd made the winning bid for the excursion, and with a recently returned Louisiana Waterthrush, which repeatedly regaled us with

its sweet, slurry song reverberating throughout the ravines.

May is my favorite, and subsequently most hectic, month each year, primarily thanks to morels, spring migration, birdathons, my birthday, and last but not least, the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival! This May, though, had an added bonus- a full dozen mind-blowing orchidaceous gems for our contingent. I'm realizing already that I probably should make a quick aside- Brad told me I had an unlimited word count for this, but I can't imagine your patience- or my writing ability- is equally boundless, so I won't burden you with the tale of every species and will instead attempt to only touch on a few select highlights. Having said that, I apologize in advance for my loquaciousness and verbosity.

Half of the aforementioned May orchids were the fan favorite lady slippers, beheld in a variety of dimensions and white, pink, and yellow tones. Our only foray into the east-central portion of the state was nevertheless one of the most memorable, as nephew/grandson/sidekick Soren joined us that day (not that he had much choice where his babysitters were taking him). We like to think maybe a little love for flora rubbed off on him as we basked in the glory that is a quiet hillside carpeted with large whorled pogonias. In one of the more remarkable twists of fate in this journey, old friend and colleague Bob Easter of NICHES Land Trust chanced upon a rare frog orchid during his restoration work, and was kind enough to share its location with us so that we could add it to not only our Big Year list, but our Indiana Native Plant Society's Florathon tally as well! Memorial Day Weekend drew the month to a close in fine fashion as it granted us 5 new species, including a brace of



twayblades and the first of many ladies' tresses.

By June, the distraction of morels and migration had passed, but we still had "mission drift" from time to time in the form of Brood X periodical cicadas, chanterelles, and kitchen remodels, besides the usual social and vocational obligations. Despite all odds, we managed to focus long enough to maintain our streak throughout the month. Deep in the gullies of Morgan-Monroe State Forest, we labored for some time with our comrade, DNR Regional Ecologist Andy Reuter, and nearly departed the woods empty-handed; yet, at the eleventh hour, we stumbled upon a sizable patch of green adder's mouth, one of which was the largest my dad had ever seen (did I mention he was Indiana's state botanist for almost 40 years?).

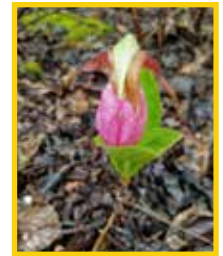
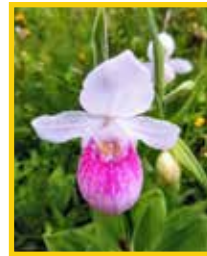
"If you can't be in awe of nature, there's something wrong with you." These (paraphrased) words of the late, great Alex Trebek traipsed through my mind many a time this past year as I read his autobiography and traversed so many truly awesome landscapes with my folks. One of the most intense epiphanies for me was discovering the wide diversity of habitats our state's orchids occupy. Forests and fens, glades and gorges- the ~40 species still gracing our land truly run the gamut in this respect. Later on in June, we'd visit two that are particularly unique, the first coming on what would be our only "4 species day" of the year. Bogs. What a great word, and what an otherworldly environment. Indeed, the term alone evokes a flood of emotions and images to anyone that's ever set foot (or lost a boot) in one. But I digress (big surprise)- our trudging that day transported us into a galaxy of sundews and pitcher plants, and a panoply of pink prizes in the form of rose pogonias and tuberous grasspinks. As June concluded, we found ourselves in a slightly more accessible setting, on a tour of fellow orchid enthusiast Brian Lowry's farmland. The Scott County property is an inspiring testament to the Wendell Berry-esque land ethic of the Lowry clan, and our morning there left an indelible mark on each of us, due in no small part to our being escorted directly to the desired spring ladies' tresses, smack dab in the middle of the donkey pasture.

Bidding adieu to June and its final vernal gasps, we prepared to slog our way through July's thick summer air and mosquito-laden woodlands. Fearing other nephew/grandson Enzo might some day envy his elder sibling, we tossed him into a hiking pack and slung him on my back (ok, maybe more gently than that). Ol' reliable Brian adeptly "sherpa-ed" the expedition through his neck of the woods once more, and together we witnessed two unassuming yet startlingly evocative *Platanthera* orchids, deep in the Muscatatuck swamps. Seeking cooler climes (and a paycheck for me), we left the next day for a quick breather in the mountains and meadows of the



Photos by Wes Homoya (left to right): *Calopogon tuberosus*, *Hexaletris spicata*, and a group observing *Platanthera aquilonis* on an Elkhart County farm

Photos by Wes Homoya (left to right): *Cypripedium reginae*, *Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*, and *Cypripedium acaule*



southern Rockies prior to my monthly eastern Colorado work trip. There'd be no dilly-dallying, however, so the day after I returned we headed northeast and bagged a fine floral triptych, indeed, locating spotted coralroot, small purple fringed orchid, and our first downy rattlesnake plantains (a strong contender for the Best Leaves award). On what would be our final outing "with child" (little Enzo again braved the skeeters with us), we made the pilgrimage to Fisher Oak Savanna in order to sear our eyes with the flaming inflorescences of orange fringed orchids. Such scorching color popping out from the mostly green tints of the understory almost defies belief. Think Blackburnian levels of orange, folks. Polishing off another successful chapter, our remaining July hunt contained an entomological mimic, the appropriately named crane fly orchid, and then like giant candy canes bursting skyward from the soil, crested coralroots, surely the sexiest of their group.

Are you longing to hear about birds again at this point? Well good news! The birds are back- three of them, to be precise. *Triphora trianthophora*, our first target in August, goes by the common name of three birds orchid! Apologies for the trickery... ;) Why such a moniker, you ask? It was given this title due to its proclivity for having three flowers per plant, though they are often found with anywhere from one to several. Intensifying the peculiarity of this orchid is the mysterious nature of its blooming patterns. Populations of plants, even at a regional scale, frequently exhibit synchronous flowering. One day the ground will be white, the next, it returns to jade, as each individual bloom lasts for but a day. In keeping with the motif, populations average roughly 3 flushes of blooms per season, and regularly with 3 days between each "bouquet". Shrouded in myth, theories remind one of morel folklore, with some pointing to the first big rain in August and others to sudden drops in evening temperature as the basis for predicting the earthen explosions. It was with this context and depth of anticipation that we searched for the little birds, and after mistiming it once at a known site, we discovered a massive population at a Central Indiana Land Trust conservation easement in the gorges of Parke County. Breathtaking doesn't begin to do the experience justice. Go see for yourself next summer, if you're up to the challenge!

I must admit now that some trepidation plagues me as we approach the conclusion of this novel, as I deem it to be somewhat of an anticlimactic denouement, at least until the very last species. Those familiar with the genus *Spiranthes* (the aforementioned ladies' tresses orchids) know of what I speak. 8 of the final 9 orchids (the only exception being the meekly cleistogamous autumn coralroot that we found in our tiny adopted forest plot in Brownsburg) that one might seek in an Indiana trip around the sun belong to it, and they can

The Homoyas getting an up-close look at a very slender ladies' tresses.
The white flowers are visible just beneath the center flag.



be downright maddening. Essentially, they are the gulls of the orchid world, brimming with taxonomic confusion and hybrid swarms. Frustrating to put it mildly! Nevertheless, one by one, our challengers fell by the wayside as we marched on, our inertia unstoppable. Romanzoffiana, lacera, tuberosa, cernua, ovalis, arcisepala, magnicamporum... and then there was one.

But before we close the book, I'd be remiss if I didn't first supply some parting stats. 28- days we spent "orchiding" together this year. 23- counties we explored, exactly a quarter of the 92 composing our great Hoosier state. 11- property types visited, including Nature Preserves, Fish and Wildlife Areas, National Wildlife Refuges, State and National Parks, City and County Parks, church and school properties, and those owned and

managed by Land Trusts and private citizens. 40- as mentioned before, the number of native species or varieties of orchids observed (side note- varieties are essentially the plant equivalent of what we would consider a subspecies in the bird world); and most importantly, >40- the community of incredible friends and colleagues that assisted us in some way during our journey, whether with local knowledge, hospitality, historical information, or fellowship.

Sunset on a warm September day, mighty oaks and mossy slopes, over a dozen loved ones gathered to walk the final steps of the marathon with us; such was the setting for The Last Orchid. Down in the Brown County hills at TNC's Hitz-Rhodehamel Nature Preserve, we celebrated and capped off a truly one-of-a-kind year with some humble yellow ladies' tresses (who no doubt were left wondering what all the fuss was about), along with a whole lotta smiles, and quite possibly a few tears. I may have even taught my parents the recently popularized phrase "I'm not crying; you're crying".

Speaking of the parental units, words simply fail to convey the breadth of gratitude to them that I have for all the hours spent researching, strategizing, emailing, driving, searching... but more than anything, I'm forever grateful for their willingness to spend time in the wild with their sometimes wild son. It means more than you'll ever know, Mom and Dad.

So why? Why attempt such a peculiar voyage? Why tell this story? For my part, the answer unequivocally lies in the endless wonders of nature, in the unforgettable memories made with friends and family, and in the hopes that reading this might inspire you, dear reader, to seek and find the same in your lives.



Viewing the final orchid was made all the more memorable by the presence of several friends and family members attending!

**SPRING
GATHERING**
APRIL 30, 2022
MARY GRAY BIRD SANCTUARY

BIRD HIKES
7:30AM, 1PM, & 4PM

BANDING DEMOS
8AM - 11AM

PRESENTATIONS
9AM, 10AM, 1PM, 2PM, 3PM

& MORE!

TICKETS AT WWW.INDIANAUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS

WARBLER MANIA

TIPS FOR IDENTIFICATION THIS SPRING

As the tree tops start to bud and the Red-winged Blackbirds start to sing again, birders everywhere start to feel the twitch. The warblers are coming! These small, active little birds come in a variety of colors but the most prominent is yellow. If you see a tiny, twitchy little bird high up in the treetops with some bright yellow, you're more than likely looking at a warbler. The common yellow color, active lifestyle, relatively small size, and their tendency to perch high above your head can make for identifying difficult. But, don't fret! It's one of spring migration's greatest and welcome challenges for birders! Here are a few tips to help you narrow down your identification.

COLOR AND MARKINGS

This one seems obvious, but is the first step in identifying any bird species. Notice which colors are on the bird and where. With warblers, the easiest question to ask is whether or not they have yellow on them. If so, where? If not, what colors are present? After coloring, notice how and where the different colors are located. Many species have black and yellow colors, but the Canada Warbler specifically has black markings on its chest that looks like a necklace.

HABITAT

Not all warbler species occupy the same habitat. Some prefer wetlands, like the Common Yellowthroat, while others, like the Cerulean Warbler, stay in dense forests. Familiarize yourself with these habitats in your field guide or online. Some species even have specific vegetation that they like, such as the Yellow-throated Warbler which is commonly referred to as the Sycamore Warbler for its tendency toward sycamore trees!

Not only should you look at what type of habitat you're in, but also where the bird is found within the habitat itself. Is the bird on the ground or is it way up high in the treetops? Does it have a tendency to stay in bushes down low or does it stay hidden entirely with only sound to give it away? These are all indicators of different species traits. For example, Blackpoll and Black-and-white warblers both have similar colors. However, the Blackpoll Warbler is often found higher in the trees while the Black-and-white tends to be more mid- or bottom-level dwellers.

TIME OF YEAR

Many warblers pass through Indiana in the spring on the way to their breeding grounds in the North. This means that you're most likely to see them in April and May. However, some warbler species breed in the state during the summer months, too. Check out these bar charts from eBird that depict when you can expect to see each warbler species. The bigger the green, the more abundant the birds!

Once you've narrowed it down with these steps, try **listening to their sounds next**. The Warbler Guide app is an extremely handy tool to use in the field. This app gives you multiple calls, information, and even 360 degree views of all the warbler species. You can get the Warbler Guide in hard copy, too! After sounds, look specifically at **feet and beak color**, along with the **number of wingbars** or **other markings** on the bird. If all else fails, email us or ask in a birding Facebook group. Don't be afraid to ask!

Whether you're a beginning birder with zero knowledge of warblers or you're an expert, make sure to enjoy all 30+ species that visit the Hoosier state this spring!

Top Photos: Yellow-throated Warbler (large, right), Cape May Warbler (top left), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (middle) by Ryan Sanderson; Black-and-white Warbler by Shari McCollough - Bottom Left Photo: Canada Warbler by Ryan Sanderson

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