

Indiana Audubon Society

CARDINAL

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**BIRDING
COMMUNITY**

IN THIS ISSUE: PLOVERS, BIRDER STORIES,
CONSERVATION NEWS, 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:
Baltimore Oriole by
Shari McCollough

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Special Access to Mary Gray Birding Sanctuary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
15% discount at the IAS online store				✓	✓			
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➤ 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.

- JUNE 5:** Birds & Bison Kankakee Sands Field Trip [Morocco, IN]
- JUNE 7-12:** Black Hills and Badlands Birding Tour [South Dakota]
- JUNE 10-20:** IAS Ecuador Tour- FULL [Quito, Ecuador]
- JUNE 14:** Building Birder Skills Virtual Workshop- Indiana Birding Trail [Zoom]
- JUNE 18:** Breeding Birds of Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary Field Trip [Connersville]
- JULY 9:** Birds & Butterflies Photography Field Trip [Connersville]
- JULY 12:** Building Birder Skills Virtual Workshop- Hummingbirds [Zoom]
- AUGUST 6:** Hummingbird Migration Celebration 2022 [Connersville]
- AUGUST 9:** Building Birder Skills Virtual Workshop- Shorebird ID [Zoom]
- AUGUST 13:** Lakefront Shorebirds Field Trip [Michigan City]

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

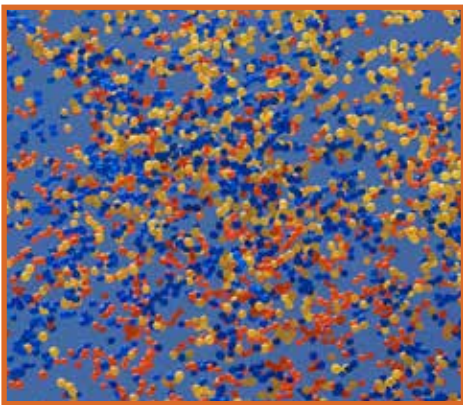
HUMMINGBIRD MIGRATION CELEBRATION RETURNS!

The Indiana Audubon Hummingbird Migration Celebration at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary is back again for 2022! Join us on Saturday, August 6 for a return of the many great activities and events that has made this event so popular. Expect live birds of prey, great presentations, bird hikes, and of course hummingbird banding up close again this year.

Registration goes live in June. Learn more at
INDIANAAUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS



INDIANA AUDUBON APPLAUDS INDY 500'S ENDING OF BALLOON RELEASES



Indiana Audubon is thrilled to hear of the recent news regarding the end of the annual mass balloon release at the Indy 500. IMS's decision to halt the release "indefinitely" is an encouraging sign of IMS's commitment to environmental sustainability.

"We've partnered with 30 other organizations in advocating for this for years and so the fact they're ending this indefinitely and citing environmental concerns is great news," Brad Bumgardner, Executive Director of the Indiana Audubon Society, said.

"It's a great outlook looking at IMS and the Penske Entertainment Group in their total environmental stewardship," Bumgardner said. "Just last year, they did get the distinction with the Responsible Sports Certification. That highlights effort they are making economically and environmentally to make sure their event is sound and safe not just for

Hoosiers but the wildlife, too."

Every year, thousands of multicolored balloons were released over the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to kick off the Indy 500. While this fan favorite might be considered the "Greatest Spectacle in Racing," it was a deadly tradition that needed to end. Indiana Audubon looks forward to continuing to make the Hoosier state a safe place for native birds to live in, migrate through, and to raise their young.

DUNES BIRDING FESTIVAL SURVEY!

The Indiana Dunes Birding Festival was held May 12-15, 2022 with a record breaking attendance! If you attended the festival, we'd love to hear from you about your experiences at this year's event. The main event survey takes approximately 10 minutes and this year, you can rate your individual field trips and events, too!

Check your email for the survey link sent at the end of May!
Can't find it? Email Sam at swarren@indianaaudubon.org

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND AN INJURED BIRD?



It is not too uncommon to find an injured bird that may need medical attention. This information is to help you identify the problem, not necessarily resolve it. It is always our goal to avoid separating a bird from its family and/or native habitat. In many cases, the mother may be feeding away from a nest and the bird is better left where it is found. But in some cases, this cannot be avoided. If the bird is sick or injured (bleeding, broken wing, etc.) it will always be necessary to bring the bird to a wild bird rehabber for treatment. Indiana maintains a list of wildlife rehabbers by county, through the DNR. If you are interested in becoming a wildlife rehabber, the DNR has an application process.

Many folks contact Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary each year to accept in injured and pet birds. Mary Gray provides a wild haven for birds, but does not perform rehabilitation efforts for wild birds. Please contact a local rehabber for injured birds. **A few general rules of emergency care for any type of wildlife:**

1. Leave the animal alone if the parent is nearby.
2. Leave the animal alone if it appears fat, bright-eyed and healthy.
3. Rescue the animal if you see that its parent is dead.
4. Rescue the animal if it appears weak, sick or cold.
5. Rescue the animal if it appears to be visibly injured.
6. Rescue the animal if it is in danger from traffic or other animals.

Until you can get advice from your humane society or wildlife rehabber, place the animal in a box with holes and a clean ravel-free cloth. DO NOT use grass for bedding, as it is usually damp enough to cause a chill. DO NOT attempt to feed or water the animal. Inexperience with the animal's needs can be fatal. Avoid unnecessary stress by not over-handling any bird you might find that is need of a licensed rehabber. Any bird heading to a rehabber should be placed in a dark box and away from stimulation. Indiana Audubon Society and the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary receives many calls and emails every year to assist in injured or sick wildlife. IAS does not have the licenses or experience to assist with sick or injured wildlife.

Please visit the Wildlife Rehabilitation page on the Indiana DNR website at bit.ly/INwildliferehablist to locate a wildlife rehabilitator and additional information

TRAVEL THE WORLD WITH IAS!

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, and those that use our own Indiana in other parts of the year. Indiana Audubon trips bring in conservation and research dollars for Indiana bird projects and donate a percentage back to conservation efforts in the areas we visit. Consider joining Indiana Audubon for any of these upcoming tours.

2023

- Best of Thailand Birding Tour, Feb 7-18
- Winter Sax-Zim Bog Owl Tour, Feb 10-13
- Costa Rica: Cloud Forests & Osa Tour, Mar 1-12
- Rio Grande Valley Women's Birding Tour, April 15-22
- Colombia Birding Tour, July 15-27

2024

- Birding Belize, January 17-25
- South Florida Birding Tour, April 13-21

Find more info at
INDIANAUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS



MARY GRAY BIRD SANCTUARY UPDATE

We'd like to say a huge "thank you" to all of the volunteers, scouts, and presenters who made our Spring Gathering on April 30th a success! It started off a somewhat cloudy day, but soon the sun was out and birds were singing away. Bird walks were a huge success and migrants of all kinds were spotted, from Summer Tanagers to Prairie Warblers. A few were even banded during our bird banding demonstrations, including a beautiful Ovenbird! All in all, almost 100 bird species were recorded on Mary Gray property in a single day, incredible!

If you're following along from last time, all bridges are fixed up and ready for a hike! We'll be posting more volunteer workday opportunities in the future, to focus on projects like repairing the roof of the wetland shelter. Keep an eye out on our Facebook page for updates. Come visit when you can and get your fill of summer birds and blooming flowers!



For more information on Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, including trail maps, visit INDIANAUDUBON.ORG/MGBS

GLOBAL BIG DAY PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The preliminary results are in! The Cornell Lab of Ornithology held its Global Big Day on Saturday, May 14, and it was the 8th year that this spring event was held as a celebration of the birds around us. The event encourages birders to serve as citizen scientists in an effort to help understand bird populations throughout the world and nearly 49,000 people participated. The day provides a one-day snapshot of all the birds in the world and just over 7,500 species were recorded.

Over the years, Indiana has an average ranking of 22nd in the country. Although 273 different species have been recorded in Indiana for this event, around 228 species are typically seen each year.



This year, Indiana is ranked 24th in the United States with 223 species recorded via 1,301 checklists, and there was at least one checklist submitted for 62 of the 92 counties. With the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival taking place, hundreds of birders descended on the Dunes area, and with a large percentage of birders focusing their birding efforts in Porter County, 178 species were recorded (312 checklists). Tippecanoe County is currently ranked 2nd with 149 species (81 checklists) while Marion County is 3rd with 137 species (93 checklists).

With Porter County holding the top spot, the Indiana Dunes National Park hotspot, Cowles Bog, recorded the most species with 124 while the Indiana Dunes State Park had 113 species. Third place is currently held by Pigeon River FWA in LaGrange County with 103 species.

A full summary will be included in the upcoming Indiana Audubon Quarterly. **SEE MORE RESULTS NOW AT EBIRD.ORG/GLOBALBIGDAY**

INDIANA BIRDING HIGHLIGHT

KANKAKEE SANDS

By: Brad Bumgardner

The 7,000+ acres are home to an amazing array of birds, wildflowers, plants, and animals that fill the prairie with song and sights to behold. The restored grasslands, wet prairies, and wetlands have proven a hotspot for both migrating and breeding prairie species that are generally hard to find throughout the state. This includes Bell's Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, Western Meadowlark, Bobolink, Lark Sparrow, and state endangered Henslow's Sparrow.

Early morning visitors can hear Northern Bobwhite throughout the property from the many roadsides, and various parking lots allow for ventures into the prairies to explore. Areas to the east of US 41 harbor the most Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows, and areas with recent burns are the best to search for Lark Sparrow.

Early morning visits near any wetland or wet ditch can often harbor American Bittern in



the appropriate season. Recent restoration work in Unit J is providing excellent waterfowl habitat, and flooded field on County Road 225 N usually harbors migrating shorebirds.

For animal lovers, the recently introduced bison are usually the show stealers, which works out well as Bell's Vireo and Blue Grosbeaks have been seen in recent years right at the viewing area. If you visit in the off-season, the bison are feeding in the north prairies and more easily viewable. Visits from fall through spring are also notable as a healthy wintering population of

Short-eared Owls hunt the property at dusk. Driving the various roads will often encounter multiple birds throughout the prairie. Visitors should be careful not to block local vehicular traffic, however. An added spring bonus has been the reliable Smith's Longspurs that migrate through this part of the state each April. Check eBird sightings for updates and specific locations.

This Indiana Birding Trail site is a Hoosier Choice Award winner!



TIMING

Typical Time to Bird Site: 1-3 hours

Best Time to Bird: October through March can be excellent for wintering owls and Rough-legged Hawks. March through June is when Kankakee Sands is at its best with migrating and breeding prairie birds.

Hours: Dawn to dusk

GETTING THERE

Address: 3294 N US 41, Morocco, IN 47963.

Directions: The preserve spans several miles of local roads, but the main office is at the address listed above. Most visitors will access via US 41, whether coming from the north or south. From I-65, the Fair Oaks exit 220 on State Road 14 is the most

common route. The bison viewing area is located one mile west on 400 W. Signs point visitors to this lot.

Parking: Multiple parking lots exist throughout the property.

SITE LOGISTICS

Admission: Free

Ownership: The Nature Conservancy

Restrictions: Parking

should only be done in designated lots. Unit restrictions take place seasonally, depending on where the bison are feeding. Roadside parking is generally prohibited

Accessibility: One established trail exists at the main office. Other hiking is done off trail.

Nearby Amenities: Portable restrooms

are available at both the bison viewing area and main office. Nearby Fair Oaks Farm approximately ten miles away has modern facilities, café dining options, and lodging.

CONTACT INFO

Website: nature.org/indiana

eBird Hotspot Link: ebird.org/hotspot/L5176809

meet a MEMBER JUDY BIRKEL



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

I am a Hoosier by birth (Boilermaker by choice) who grew up in Wabash, has lived around the country, but settled in Noblesville for the last 10 years. Peter and I are both happily retired, he from software engineering and I from a brief teaching career that included mostly German and Geometry. We have two adult children and four grandchildren who help keep us young. Other mutual interests include being active in church, following the Colts and the Boilermakers, gardening, traveling, and hiking together. No, birding is not mutual interest, but Peter tolerates my occasional stopping for a bird or two (or ten!) along the trail.

Q WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN BIRDS AND BIRDING?

My birding journey includes my father, photography, Facebook, fitness, faith, and friends. My dad always had binoculars and a Peterson's guide for backyard bird watching. Peter saw my growing interest as we traveled or watched our own backyard birds. So, at Christmas 2018, he gifted me a nicer camera, which I then felt obligated to get out and use. Watching Facebook posts on "Birding in Indiana" to find locations, I began taking photos for ID, meeting other birders, and discovering the world of birding. A 2019 fall warbler field trip led by Bill Sharkey and Richard Garrett sealed the deal. I remember being near tears watching the speed with which those two could see and ID the tiny speedsters (and I could not!). Despite the frustration, I caught the bug, realizing practice would improve skills. During 2020, birding served as my fitness trainer. I found I could be out hiking and observing our Creator God's avian handiwork without much risk. Now friends in the birding community continue to bring joy as they help me along the journey.

Q DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS?

Simply enjoy observing birds, their habits, their movements, their habitats. Relax and don't worry about how little you know or how slow you might be to see the birds at first. Just as in sports, the game will "slow down" for you. No, the birds won't slow down, but as you learn how to follow them and anticipate their movements, it just gets easier somehow. Try not to compare yourself to other birders. We each learn at our own pace. Go out with birding groups and pick other birders' brains. Indiana birders are most often kind, patient and willing to help. We've all needed that help along the way. A camera is not a must. I used to get too bogged down in trying to get a photo and not really observe the bird.

Q WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE BIRDING EXPERIENCES SO FAR?

I have many! In Indiana, I would say being able to spend time at Lye Creek Burn with owner Clint Murray, twice! Once he found us the only Smith's Longspur and his love and knowledge for the birds and his property is the spirit of birding I find prevalent in the Hoosier state. I also once visited Alaska for 3 weeks and finally found my target Willow Ptarmigan on the last day after convincing Peter to return to Denali! Recently, my favorite experience was the IAS Costa Rica Trip in March. Juan Diego has magical powers as a guide! The most special moments for me were watching two Resplendent Quetzals walk in front of us and witnessing the gorgeous Ocellated Antbird eat its lunchtime ants!



SO YOUR **INDIANA BIG YEAR** IS OVER. *NOW WHAT?*

BY: TINA ROSIER



If you are thinking about doing an Indiana Big Year, the following input from several 2021 Big Year birders will give you some things to think about. For the newer birder, a Big Year means that a birdwatcher intentionally sets out to search for, chase, identify, possibly photograph, and list as many bird species as they can for an entire calendar year. It is a "big" commitment of time, money, and energy! After 2021 ended, the question was asked by IAS Director, Brad Bumgardner "once your Big Year is over, what's next? How do you feel? How did you react?" What better way to find out then to ask several Big Year birders to share their experiences. The following paragraphs convey a different perspective from each birder, but they also share several similar sentiments.

2021 did not start out as an intentional Big Year for the Rosiers. However, after completing one in 2020, it was hard to give up the desire to see as many birds as possible. Additionally, a little bit of friendly peer pressure from friends doing a Big Year didn't hurt. Let's face it, 2021 turned out to be a really great year to count birds. But come January 1 of this year, the ebird alerts were turned off and we were looking forward to slowing down and driving less. Our goals for 2022 changed to more selective chases involving state lifers, local birding, and our 2nd international birding trip, this time to Ecuador.



Top Photo: Marbled Godwits by Tina Rosier





For Bill Sharkey, 2021 was his third Big Year in a row! That is remarkable on its own merit. Adding to that, he finished first in the state with a total of 322 species listed, a new record! At the end of January 2022 he reported that he hadn't chased a bird yet and that his car was sitting quietly in the garage with the oil recently changed, but needing new tires. He

also stated that he felt like HE needed new tires! Always the jokester. For 2022 his goals are to get back into the swing of things during Spring migration and to focus on being a better birder by ear.

If you see Bill out in the field, he is often with his good buddy, Richard Garrett. When asked about his Big Year, Richard reported having a really great year in 2021, but like everyone, he was ready for a break [maybe even more so than his wife!] In January, he only chased a few birds locally, and even when he saw birds that he needed for his list, he didn't list them. Say what? As far as 2022 goals, he plans to spend more time volunteering at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary and his local Rotary Club. He plans on doing a "not so big year" in 2022... but that could always change!



According to Laurie Voss, first and foremost on 1/1/22 she was exhausted! Then, as she reflected on her year, she felt blessed, and had a sense of pride and accomplishment. After all, how many women in their 7th decade of life have even attempted such a feat? And she did it! Currently she is enjoying her backyard birds who seem to be very happy with her keeping the feeders full on a more regular basis. She has been to Eagle Creek a few times, has only 53 birds on her list, and is content. In 2022 she is planning to spend more time with family, hobbies, travel... and sleeping more!

When discussing his Big Year, Jeremiah Oden stated that the biggest relief would be driving less! Rumor has it that he put 60,000 miles on his car last year! His favorite moment was getting to see the Indiana Gyrfalcon as it was seen by only two birders. I guess you could say that sometimes it pays off to chase now and ask later! In January he reported a more casual birding plan locally and that his focus would be shifted to building his ABA life list. His plans to



travel to Southeast Arizona will be a good way to help towards that goal.

The Wiist brothers were both the youngest, 19 years old, and the only birders from Southwest Indiana attempting a Big Year in 2021. According to them, the first six months were great!

After that, they had to start the long and arduous 11 hour drives up to the Lakeshore and Northern counties in order to find many species needed to get to that magical 300 number. Though they were glad to accomplish their goal of seeing over 310 birds, reaching 312 ABA species, they were relieved when it was over! One of their favorite experiences was looking for the ruffed grouse with friends. This remains a goal for them in the upcoming year[s]. In January, they overcame some sickness and went to the Sax Zim Bog to pick up some more Northern lifers.

Another name that came to the forefront in 2021 was Katey Powell. She was often found birding with Lori and Jeremiah. She felt elated, relieved, and a little sad after her Big Year ended. She spent January "relaxing" by ending the month with 102 listed birds... and still very addicted to birding! Her 2022 goals include finding the birds she missed in 2021, birding in new places, and traveling as her focus shifts to getting the Lifer High when you see a new species for the first time.



And finally, I had a chance to converse with Lisa [and Randy] Vanderbilt on their way home from Maine in January. She admitted to feeling some relief about taking a break from the constant chasing, driving, early hours, and financial toll a Big Year can take, but she was missing the go-go-go pace. According to Lisa, "birding can be addictive. You happen upon it, start taking it in a little here and there, and then boom... you are doing a Big Year before you even know it! So when our 2021 Big Year ended we started looking for new goals. We want to explore more rarities both near and far... and what better way than to go to Maine and see the Stellar's Sea Eagle in January!" Then in February, they traveled to Texas to see the Bat Falcon. Two really great US birds! She finished up by saying that they also look forward to picking up and chasing any new state lifers that might show up in 2022.



No matter who I talked to, there seemed to be a common theme that involved the overall Big Year experience... and an experience it is. Almost every single birder has said in one way or another, that the most rewarding part is the people you meet along the way and the friends you make. Yes, the birds are great, especially picking up lifers, but the camaraderie of the birding community is phenomenal. In the end, loving birds and loving the people of the birding community is what it's all about.

So no matter how you decide to spend your time after your Big Year, enjoy, and keep on birding in whatever way brings you happiness!





FLOCKING TO VALPARAISO

CITY INTRODUCES BIRDS OF PARADISE SCULPTURE SCAVENGER HUNT

The City of Valparaiso is showcasing local birds and local artists in a new sculpture scavenger hunt titled "Birds of Paradise." The scavenger hunt features 10 original sculptures of native birds, perched in key locations throughout the city's popular downtown. Each sculpture is an original by local sculptor Chad Copeland and clever clues for the hunt are included in a coloring book of bird illustrations by local artist Melissa Washburn. The coloring book of clues, a package of colored pencils and a prize for completion are all available for free at the Valparaiso branch of the Porter County Public Library System at 103 Jefferson St.

"The Birds of Paradise sculpture scavenger hunt is a fun way to showcase our downtown and local artists as we celebrate native birds. We've designed the hunt to appeal to all ages and abilities," said Valparaiso Mayor Matt Murphy. Because the birds are made of sturdy steel, the hunt is a year-round, permanent event. Clues and guide will also be available online at tinyurl.com/ValpoBirds.

"Serious birders will appreciate the QR code links in the coloring book, which link to the Indiana Audubon website pages, detailing each bird, including an audio clip of the bird's unique song or call. Everyone will enjoy the coloring pages and spotting the birds, some flying, some perched, some ready to appear in a selfie," said Valparaiso's Community Engagement Director Maggie Clifton, who introduced the idea and managed the project.

Clifton and Copeland thoughtfully chose locations for each sculpture, showcasing them in spaces high and low, from

a preening Great Blue Heron and pair of paddling Wood Ducks to a wizened Barred Owl and even a pair of bright Chickadees perched above a traffic signal that chirps to signal the pedestrian crossing. Other featured birds include the Sandhill Crane, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Red-tailed Hawk, American Goldfinch and Northern Cardinal, all created by Copeland using recycled metals, in a nod to the region's steelmaking prominence.

The Birds of Paradise project has received financial support from the Valparaiso Redevelopment Commission, Indiana Dunes Tourism, and generous community sponsors. The City of Valparaiso has partnered with Porter County Public Library System, Valparaiso Creative Council and Indiana Audubon Society to enhance the project.

"We welcome visitors far and wide to check out our community as we appreciate local species and talented local artisans. We're very proud of our community and it doesn't take binoculars to appreciate our downtown," said Clifton.

To learn more about Valparaiso's Birds of Paradise sculpture scavenger hunt, visit tinyurl.com/ValpoBirds.

The Birds of Paradise sculpture scavenger hunt took flight with a free kick-off event at Valparaiso's Rotary Library Garden, complete with music, crafts and special guests. Valparaiso's Birds of Paradise sculpture scavenger hunt features 10 native birds, crafted by local artist Chad Copeland and guided by a coloring book of clues created by local illustrator Melissa Washburn. The hunt is designed to appeal to serious birders and families alike and is available year-round. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/ValpoBirds or visit the Valparaiso branch of the Porter County Public Library during business hours.

PIPING PLOVER AT KEMIL BEACH:

A CHARACTER IN A SHOREBIRD SOAP OPERA

BY: BOB DOLGAN

It was only natural to reflect on some of Indiana's most recent Piping Plover sightings during the recent Indiana Dunes Birding Festival. After all, the Piping Plover was featured on the festival's beautiful art print, a beer was brewed in honor of the species, and official festival gear was festooned with plovers. And indeed the birds should be celebrated: just 70 pairs or so remain around the Great Lakes and they have long been federally endangered.

Piping Plovers haven't bred in the state since 1955, when a pair nested on the Indiana side of Wolf Lake. In the early 20th century, they nested along Lake Michigan at Miller Beach and West Beach. With an abundance of sandy shores and long stretches of marram grass for cover, the dunes would appear to be potential nesting habitat for Piping Plovers in the future.

Indiana's recent dalliances with Piping Plovers might begin with Matt Beatty's sighting of a juvenile plover in Michigan City on July 24, 2017. The vast majority of Great Lakes plovers are banded soon after hatching. Unbeknownst to Beatty at the time, the plover's green-and-orange bands turned out to be those of "Monty," a plover that's gone on to national fame for nesting in Chicago with "Rose." Beatty learned it was Monty he photographed a couple of years later.

Then there was "Dodger," a bird most known because he or she landed in Chicago in the fall of 2018 and simply didn't migrate. Dodger stayed and stayed at the beach into winter despite plenty of snow and cold. Dodger disappeared one day in December, and most everyone thought the saga was over. However, he was spotted at Miller Beach a day or two later. Then he surprised us by returning north to Chicago, spending a few more weeks there until January 10, 2019.

Most recently, there was "Enforcer," a bird who has an interesting tie to Monty and Rose. Enforcer showed up at Kemil Beach on July 8 last year and was photographed by Doug Faulkner. One might wonder why a cute bird like Enforcer earned such an aggressive name. Enforcer, hatched in 2011, landed in Muskegon, Mich., in 2018, and discovered the presence of another plover,

Little Guy. According to plover monitor Carol Cooper, Enforcer chased off Little Guy and took up with his mate, Bahama Mama, which is the type of drama not unusual early in Piping Plover breeding season. Cooper, a hockey fan, naturally dubbed the feisty bird "Enforcer."

Now back to the tie with Chicago's birds. Rose's parents were Muskegon's Bahama Mama and Little Guy; Enforcer's presence was perhaps a little bittersweet to those of us who have followed Rose so closely and had an affection for Little Guy. Enforcer then went on to nest successfully in 2018 but unsuccessfully in 2019, according to the Great Lakes Piping Plover Recovery Team. He spent 2020 and 2021 alone in Muskegon without attracting a female. Piping Plover life histories often make for an entertaining read. Nature is messy, though, and narratives don't always unfold tidily.



Piping Plover at Marquette Park on July 31, 2021 by Michael Topp



Enforcer the Piping Plover at Kemil Beach on July 8, 2021 by Doug Faulkner

The remainder of the 2021 summer brought three more Piping Plovers to Indiana, all of which were banded previously. It led to a frenzied summer of birding up on Lake Michigan's shore! While many birders enjoyed the sightings, it also brings hope that the Hoosier state may soon host a breeding pair again. One can expect the unexpected, and the next Piping Plover chapter in Indiana almost certainly will be an interesting one.

ADVERTISE WITH INDIANA AUDUBON

Target a specific demographic across the state of Indiana while contributing to a conservation based non-profit!

For more information about The Cardinal and advertising rates, please visit indianaudubon.org/the-cardinal

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