

NEWSLETTER • DEC 2022 - JAN 2023 • Vol.53 No.6



Production Team

Executive Director Brad Bumgardner

Editor & Graphic Designer Sam Warren

Editor Mark Welter

Contributors Brad Bumgardner Joni James Matt Kalwasinski Aidan Rominger

Layout Credit Annie Aguirre John Lindsey

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: **Northern Cardinal** by Shari McCollough

JOIN **RENEW TODAY**



MEMBERSHIP PERKS								
Access to bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters	✓	\checkmark	✓	✓	\checkmark	✓	✓	✓
Mailed printed copies of bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Complete access to Birds of the World online	✓	✓	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark			
Discounted Field Trips & Programs	\checkmark	\checkmark	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Special Access to Mary Gray Birding Sanctuary	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	✓	✓		\checkmark	\checkmark
15% discount at the IAS online store				✓	✓			
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 summer. Visit indianaaudubon.org/events for more information or to register for any of these upcoming late summer and early fall activities. Additional events are listed on our website and many fill early!

DECEMBER 13: Building Birder Skills Virtual Workshop- Exploring Indiana's Owls [Zoom]

DECEMBER 14-JANUARY 5: National Audubon Christmas Bird Counts [Statewide]

JANUARY 1: First Day Hike at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary [Connersville]

JANUARY 14-15: Board of Director Retreat [Fort Harrison State Park]

JANUARY 14: Winter Eagle Watch Field Trip I [Salamonie Reservoir]

JANUARY 21: Winter Eagle Watch Field Trip II [Salamonie Reservoir]

FEBRUARY 3-5, 2023: Winter Snowy Owl UP Tour [Mackinaw City, MI]

FEBRUARY 10-13, 2023: Winter Sax-Zim Bog Tour [Meadowlands, MN]

MARCH 11: Early Waterfowl at Summit Lake Field Trip [New Castle]

MARCH 25: Spring Waterfowl at Kankakee FWA Field Trip [North Judson]

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!



TEVS INDIANA AUDUBON SOCIETY

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at birdcount.org. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard or anywhere in the world.

Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them and the environment we share. Last year, more than 160,000 participants submitted their bird observations online, creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded.



The 25th annual GBBC will be held Friday, February 17- February 20, 2023. FOR MORE INFO AND OTHER RESOURCES VISIT BIRDCOUNT.ORG

MARY GRAY BIRD SANCTUARY AWARDED INTERPRETIVE TRAIL GRANT



Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, owned and operated by Indiana Audubon Society, recently received a \$4,000 grant from the Fayette Community Foundation, with matching funds from Indiana Audubon. The grant will provide for the design and installation of a new interpretive birding trail at the Society's flagship property in Connersville.

Through grants, the Fayette Community Foundation supports programs and projects that serve community betterment, health and human services, and education, made possible in part due to the Community IMPACT Fund. Six new interpretive signs will provide educational notes about wildlife and habitats local to the Sanctuary, with

a focus on birds. Visitors will be able to visit the sign locations and learn about topics such as local migratory and resident birds, other animal species, ecological features, habitat features, and more.

We are hoping to have the new trail signs installed for spring migration 2023!



MARSHBIRD PROGRAM REPORTS 2022 SUCCESS!

Indiana's secretive marshbird program has been documenting our secretive wetland rails, gallinules, and more for five

years. In that time, we've learned more about the nesting requirements of these diverse and hard-to-study marshbirds. In partnership with the Indiana DNR and National Audubon Great Lakes, Indiana Audubon assists with the volunteer coordination and data collection each field season. Today, the data being collected is starting to reveal trends on stopover rates, habitat needs, and detectability.

With support from the Efroymson Family Fund, Indiana Audubon moved forward with monitoring for Black Rail, a species that had not been detected in the four years previous. Remote audio-recording units were used to listen



for nocturnal marshbirds on select dates this spring and early summer. Using sophisticated software, like that birders use when using the Merlin app, various secretive marshbirds were recorded singing throughout the nesting season. Species recorded included American Bittern, Blue-winged Teal, King Rail, and Marsh Wren, among others.

The major highlight was the successful detection, recording, and documentation of Black Rail at one of the survey sites. There have been fewer than 50 total sightings in Indiana of this tiny marshbird that takes being secretive to the extreme. Black Rails were listed as federally threatened two years ago under the Endangered Species Act. "The conservation and research work we're doing today with the secretive marshbird program better helps us learn the specific habitat requirements that each of these species has, and how to better inform both wildlife areas and private landowners on steps they can take to promote these amazing birds for years to come," said IAS Executive Director Brad Bumgardner.

INDIANA DUNES BIRDING FESTIVAL 2023

Begin making plans for the next Indiana Dunes Birding Festival, May 11-14, 2023! We'll have many field trips back by popular demand and exciting new offerings, too. The planning team is hard at work putting together a robust schedule, but you can start getting amped up about our keynote speaker.



2023 Festival Keynote
Jennifer Ackerman, science communicator and author
Presentation: The Genius of Birds
Saturday May 13 5:30pm – 9:30pp | Sand Creek Country Club, Chesterton, IN

Join us for an evening dinner event with Jennifer Ackerman! A bird-lover since childhood, Jennifer Ackerman has been writing about birds and nature for more than three decades. She is the author of eight award-winning books, including The Genius of Birds (Penguin Press, 2016), an international bestseller that examines how research has completely revised our view of the creatures we used to regard as 'bird brained'. Her most recent book, The Bird Way (Penguin Press, 2020) explores new scientific research that is dramatically shifting our understanding of birds—how they live and how they think.

Jennifer's talks focus on our new understanding of birds, their highly efficient brains and intelligent behavior, and how this is redefining our definitions and perceptions of intelligence itself. What does it mean to be intelligent? What can we learn from birds about our own nature and our place in the natural world? What are the implications of this radical new understanding for conservation of species and the environment?

For the most current information and schedule of the festival, visit WWW.INDUNESBIRDINGFESTIVAL.COM

NEW YOUTH OUTREACH COORDINATOR, AIDAN!

Indiana Audubon is excited to welcome a new youth outreach coordinator, Aidan Rominger! Thanks in part to a grant from the Amos-Butler Audubon Society, Aidan will be helping to kickstart the new Indiana Young Birders Network while also connecting with youth in the Indianapolis area. Please help us welcome Aidan and read a note from him below.

"My love for animals began at the early age of 3, with a particular fascination for rare and endangered species. By age 4, my fascination with animals soon became specified to birds after discovering my first bird guide: Sibley's Guide to Birds of NA. By age 8 I received my first pair of binoculars and a camera, and have been birding ever since. In 2014, I became the youngest birder to see over 300 species of birds in Indiana in one year. From then on, I have been able to participate in multiple breeding bird surveys, bird banding projects, and bird tour guiding experiences throughout Indiana and Kiawah Island, South Carolina. My involvement with birding led me to get into Purdue University, where I graduated with a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology in 2022."



MUMFORD & KELLER GRANTS AWARDED

Indiana Audubon recently awarded \$6,000 in environmental grants as part of its Mumford & Keller Grant and Scholarship Program. The grants were awarded to support programs, workshops and training related to Indiana Audubon's mission of research, education, and conservation for natural resources, particularly birds. Those organizations and individuals receiving funding in 2022 include:

- Humane Indiana Wildlife
- Eagle Creek Ornithology Center,
- The Institute for Bird Populations
- Richmond Parks and Recreation
- Dunes-Calumet Audubon Society
- Bethany Land Institute USA.

"Every year we are thrilled to see our partners and fellow environmental organizations stepping up to improve Indiana for both the birds and the people who enjoy them," said Brad Bumgardner, Executive Director for Indiana Audubon.

NEW AUDUBON MIGRATION EXPLORER



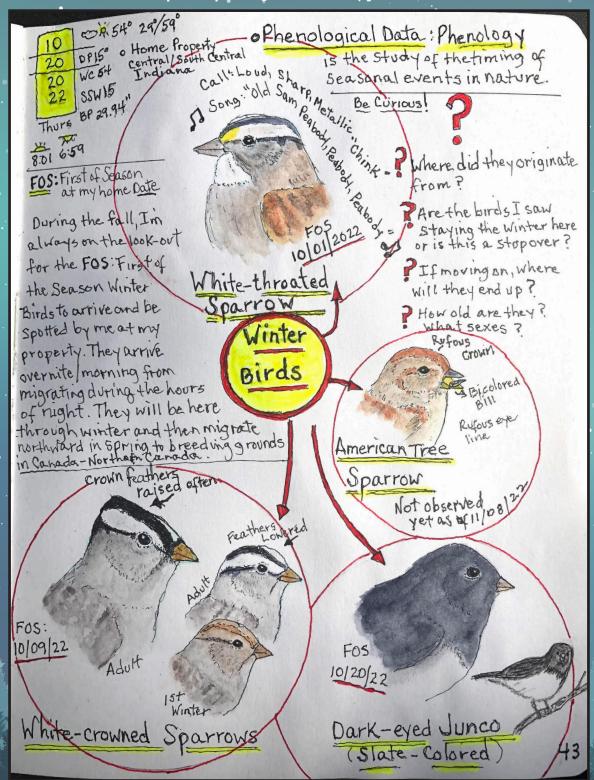
A new interactive guide from Audubon tracks the journeys of more than 450 species as they travel around the hemisphere. Complete with the conservation organization's signature illustrations, the Bird Migration Explorer features digital maps that offer detailed insight into such grand-scale avian movement and are searchable by different taxonomies. Examples of ways you can explore the feature include following a Tundra Swan's annual flight path from the arctic, seeing where tagged Merlins have been spotted, and explore the difficulties a Horned Lark faces as it encounters human activity and climate crisis-related changes on its trek.

To explore this new tool, visit HTTPS://EXPLORER.AUDUBON.ORG

FIELD NOTES FROM A NATURALIST

Nature journaling has been around for centuries, with the famous Aldo Leopold tracking natural events and phenology until his death in 1948. In a special IAS Cardinal series, we'll be showcasing journal pieces from naturalist, Joni James. Each featured page will highlight natural phenomena for that season.

We hope it sparks your creativity and interest!



meet a MEMBER MATT KALWASINSKI

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

My wife and I have a 12-year-old son. We live in Munster (Lake County), and I am currently in my 21st year at Munster High School where I teach AP Psychology. I am very fortunate to have a family that encourages me to go birding as much as a I can and accepts my addiction to this hobby.



WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN BIRDS AND BIRDING?

I did not get interesting in birds until my early 30s. My wife and I took a camping trip to Florida during winter break and we hoped to enjoy the area and see alligators in the wild. While there, we noticed all these different types of birds, and we started taking pictures of everything we could. Little did we know that many of these same species, like Double-crested Cormorants and Snowy Egrets, were in Indiana also. From there, we started going on bird hikes at Indiana Dunes State Park and met Brad Bumgardner. Next thing you know, we were participating in a Big Day, and then I was leading trips for the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE BIRDING DESTINATION, BOTH IN INDIANA AND OUTSIDE THE STATE?

I really enjoying birding locally; both in my town and county. I love searching for new locations to bird that other people do not know about or visit often. I am a strong believer in the benefit of eBird (citizen science), so in my opinion, the more data that is collected from various locations, the better. If everyone birded the same spots, there would be a huge void in the data.

YOU ARE A GUIDE AT THE INDIANA DUNES BIRDING FESTIVAL AND OFTEN FOR IAS FIELD TRIPS. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT BIRD GUIDING AND/OR FAVORITE STORY?

I might not the best or most knowledgeable birder, but I like taking people to new places and showing them how to find birds. I learned from others, and I enjoy sharing what knowledge I have. For me, birding is about getting outside and enjoying nature, which has made me appreciate the environment and want to protect it. I hope my love of birding and being outside can influence someone else to want to protect what we have because birds need all the help we can give them.

ADVICE TO NEW BIRDERS GETTING INTO THE HOBBY?

For new birders you need to first get a good pair of binoculars. It is amazing how much better you can see/ identify birds with a good pair. Also, join an Audubon Society, such as the Indiana Audubon Society or a local National Audubon chapter. These organizations offer programs and field trips where you can learn from more experienced birders. Part of the learning is knowing when and where to go. There is nothing like learning in the field from someone else.



Join Indiana Audubon as we celebrate our 125TH ANNIVERSARY in 2023! Indiana Audubon is the oldest conservation organization continuously operating in Indiana, and the fourth oldest "Audubon" in the country. Founded in 1898, we truly represent a community through conservation.

Help us celebrate 125 years of rich history, and another 125 years of important research, conservation, and education for of the natural resources and birds we love. How can you help us celebrate?

SPECIAL EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Join us for our 125th Anniversary Summer Party at Eagle Creek Park In Indianapolis and special field trips throughout the year. More details coming soon!

Visit the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary Interpretive Birding Trail this summer at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary. Learn about the importance of MGBS for breeding and migratory Bird Species.

Find 125 birds for the 125th Anniversary! Log your sightings on eBird.org and complete the online form (beginning April 1) for your chance to win prizes, and your own 125th anniversary commemorative decal. Find your birds anytime in 2023, and submit your results by December 31, 2023.

In a landmark study, Indiana Audubon will embark on the first full scale survey of migrating jaegers on the southern shore of Lake Michigan into Indiana. The fall migration will be documented in the first full season research survey to learn more about the importance for Indiana as an inland migratory hotspot for this most unusual group of birds. Special events will offer members a chance to witness this difficult to see migration.

Indiana Audubon will expand upon 2022's successful Black Rail survey program. Additional sites are being identified, and automated recording units do the work in detecting this very difficult to find and Federally Threatened species nesting right here in the Hoosier state.

ANNIVERSARY LOGOS

For 125 years, our state bird, the Northern Cardinal, has represented Indiana Audubon. As we look back on our past and look towards the future, we hope you like these logos and what they represent. Special thanks to Scott Arvin for designing these anniversary logos!



BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER

This lemon-faced woodland warbler is a common migrant in both spring and fall, and nests in select areas in the summer. Its amazing migration each year is an example of the various mysteries of the bird world that draw us to learn more and appreciate the great feats contained within tiny winged packages.



NORTHERN CARDINAL

Our signature bird for 125 years. The cardinal is an immensely popular songbird that is a common sight throughout the state. Its vibrant red color is noticeable with birders and non-birders alike. It's no wonder it's our state bird! The cardinal represents our past and that connection we have maintained with wild birds and will continue to have the next 125 years.



NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL

No one can deny the Saw-whet Owl's overall adorability and popularity. Though highly secretive and hard to find, it represents one of Indiana Audubon's longest-running research initiatives that combines science and education around the state each year. The Saw-whet Owl represents our commitment to continually learning about the birds in Indiana and to use that information for the benefit of both the birds and people who love them.

Birds provide joy to so many people and Indiana Audubon is happy to



Since 1898, Indiana Audubon has been serving Hoosier birders by providing education, conservation, and research. IAS is dedicated to fostering the appreciation of migrant and resident bird species that are present in Indiana and other regions of the world. The organization also strives to support educational efforts that will promote future generations continuing this tradition in perpetuity. Appreciating the aesthetic contributions that birds provide is an important mission of the Society. As Indiana Audubon moves toward its next 125 years, it is important to look at all the ways that we as conservation-minded individuals can support the birds.

There are truly so many ways... here are 125 of them.

- 1. Speak with your town council about becoming a Bird Town Indiana.
- 2. Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count each February.
- Donate to the DNR Non-Game Fund to help endangered birds.
- 4. Make your own suet for year-round bird feeding.
- 5. Call or visit your favorite nursery and encourage them to carry bird-friendly native plants.
- 6. Build a Barn Owl box and donate it or help find a suitable barn for it.
- 7. Plant a native tree for Arbor Day in your backyard habitat.
- 8. Network with other birders at the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival.
- 9. Volunteer at a young birders' event near you or ask to host one.
- 10. Say no to balloon releases and excess garbage waste.
- 11. Plan a visit to Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary to learn about bird banding.
- Join the National Audubon Society, Indiana Audubon, and/or your local Audubon chapter.
- 13. Take someone birding for the first time
- 14. Buy a Federal Duck Stamp (even if you don't hunt!).
- Donate gently used optics and field guides to the IAS Share & Connect program.
 - 16. Donate supplies or money to a

- local bird rehabber.
- 17. Report new eagle nests to the DNR.
- 18. Nominate someone for the IAS Brooks or Mason Awards.
- 19. Participate in a local Christmas Bird Count.
- 20. Adopt a kestrel nest box through the American Kestrel Partnership.
- 21. Volunteer at a local or state nature center or park.
- 22. Suggest a new birding hotspot on eBird.
- 23. Offer to lead a birding hike or tour with Indiana Audubon to showcase a special place.
- 24. Share bird facts with friends and co-workers.
- 25. Vote for representatives that support conservation initiatives.
- 26. Find a new birding patch and see what's present.
- 27. Break the news to cat owners on the effects feral cats have on bird populations.
- 28. Wear IAS gear to show your support for birds.
- 29. Decrease/eliminate your use of outdoor chemicals and pesticides.
- 30. Leave baby birds where you find them.
- 31. Document a rare bird for the Indiana Bird Records Committee
- 32. Use mouse traps instead of rat poison.
- 33. Respect closed beaches and habitat

- for nesting birds.
- 34. Go camping at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary.
- 35. Encourage parks to limit mowing both during and after the nesting season
- 36. Put up decals to limit bird collisions on your windows.
- 37. Wear binoculars into businesses to raise awareness for birders' impact on local economies.
- 38. Set up bird feeders outside your home and record what comes to visit.
- 39. Visit Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary during the Hummingbird Migration Celebration.
- 40. Stay on park trails when birding.
- 41. Write a birding book review for an Indiana Audubon publication.
- 42. Advocate for "lights out" programs in your town or city to address light pollution.
- 43. Use eBird to report all the birds you observe.
- 44. Integrate birding into your summer vacation.
- 45. Actively remove invasive species on your property.
- 46. Communicate to your legislators your support for bird-friendly legislation.
- 47. Install LED lights in your house.
- 48. Carpool when birding.
- 49. Join the discussion in the Indiana

Audubon Facebook group.

50. Drink bird-friendly coffee.

- 51. Install species-appropriate nest boxes on your property.
- 52. Start a compost pile on your property.
- 53. Visit an IAS sponsored saw-whet owl banding station and adopt an owl.
- 54. Use only reusable water bottles and coffee cups.
- 55. Build a bluebird box and put it up.
- 56. Write a bird of the month article for IAS.
- 57. Gift an Indiana Audubon membership to someone you know.
- 58. Reduce, reuse, recycle.
- 59. Serve on an Audubon board or committee.
- 60. Attend a local parks and recreation board meeting to promote birds.
- 61. Volunteer at a local bird event or festival.
- 62. Support a bird feeding station at a local school.
- 63. Donate to Indiana Audubon to help leverage grant funds for bird-related projects.
- 64. Clean your bird feeders regularly.
- 65. Talk less, listen more when in the outdoors.
- 66. Choose to walk rather than drive when possible.
- 67. Learn more about birds through Birds of North America Online, available to Indiana Audubon members.
- 68. Let gardens stand all winter for native birds to use.
- 69. Clean up discarded fishing line when you see it.
- 70. Buy a duck stamp every year.
- 71. Take a kid bird watching.
- 72. Count birds for the Global Big Day in May and post data on eBird.
- 73. Provide a clean water source for birds in your yard.
- Contact a local school to ask if any teacher would like a short presentation about birds in your area.

75. Participate in October Big Day count and events.

- 76. Only use 1:4 ratio sugar water for hummingbird feeders. No dye.
- 77. Share this list with local scouts to use.
- 78. Support your local food markets.

- 79. Join an organization that promotes native habitat and manages invasive species.
- 80. Return half of your yard to native habitat.
- 81. Write an article for the Indiana Audubon Cardinal.
- 82. Compete in a Birdathon to raise money for a local cause.
- 83. Take a new birder to see their first Snowy Owl.
- 84. Donate a field guide to a local school.
- 85. Participate in the Indiana Marsh Monitoring Program.
- 86. Like Indiana Audubon on Facebook.
- 87. Seek out bird art exhibitions.
- 88. Attend your local Audubon chapter meetings to find out what they're doing.
- 89. Use less salt when you shovel snow to avoid excess going into local waterways.
- 90. Don't buy illegally caged birds.
- 91. Keep your distance when photographing birds.
- 92. Take an IAS Birding in Indiana Crash Course to learn more about birds.
- 93. Install a Prothonotary Warbler box in a local swamp or wetland.
- 94. Tag #indianabirding on your bird-related Instagram posts.
- 95. Download a birding app to help you learn birds.
- 96. Go fishing at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary.
- Show off your best bird call at the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival's Bird Calling Contest.
- 98. Install a screech owl box in your local woods.
- 99. Spread the word about the effects of climate change on birds.

100. Help with a conservation work day at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary.

- 101. Share your love of birds during the Marsh Madness at Goose Pond FWA.
- 102. Buy an Indiana environmental license plate.
- 103. Donate a feeder and seed to a local nursing home.
- 104. Build or purchase nest boxes with side or front panels that open for clean out.
- 105. Take a night hike looking for owls.
- 106. Becoming a sponsor of the Indiana

Dunes Birding Festival.

- 107. Report banded birds when found.
- 108. Become a volunteer at your local zoo.
- 109. Contribute a new birding site guide location on the Indiana Audubon website.
- 110. Research ways to lower your carbon footprint.
- 111. Advocate for the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- 112. Buy an Indiana State Park pass.
- 113. Attend a Project WILD educators workshop.
- 114. Share your spotting scope with new birders.
- 115. Buy only sustainably sourced seafood to reduce negative impacts on seabirds.
- 116. Purchase a hunt/fish combo license to support habitat for birds on state properties.
- 117. Record photos and audio files for your eBird checklist.
- 118. Share your northern Indiana bird sightings to the Michiana Birding Hotline for Amish birders. (574-642-1300, ext. 4098)
- 119. Keep your cat indoors.
- 120. Be knowledgeable about bird watching ethics and nature photography ethics.
- 121. Volunteer for Lights Out Indy.
- 122. When fishing or hunting, use leadfree tackle or ammo to keep birds and mammals safe and healthy. Encourage others!
- 123. Become an Indiana Master Naturalist through the DNR.
- 124. Begin keeping a Nature/Birding Journal.

125. Just Go Birding!





PROJECT OWLNET BANDED OVER 75 BIRDS THIS SEASON. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



FOLLOW INDIANA AUDUBON ON SOCIAL MEDIA!







