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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: Frosty Morning at Mary Gray by Libby Keyes





MEMBERSHIP PERKS								
Access to bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters	✓	\checkmark	✓	\checkmark	\checkmark	✓	✓	\checkmark
Mailed printed copies of bi-monthly & quarterly newsletters			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Complete access to Birds of the World online	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark			
Discounted Field Trips & Programs	✓	✓	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		✓	\checkmark
Special Access to Mary Gray Birding Sanctuary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		\checkmark	✓
15% discount at the IAS online store				\checkmark	\checkmark			
Register a friend for a trip at the IAS member rate				✓				

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

UPCOMINGTRIPS & 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!

FEBRUARY 4: 125th Anniversary Hike at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary [Connersville]

FEBRUARY 7: Talamanca Highlands of Costa Rica Live Virtual Birding [Zoom]

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

MARCH 4: 125th Anniversary Hike at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary [Connersville]

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

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

APRIL 1: 125th Anniversary Hike at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary [Connersville]

APRIL 7-8: Greater-Prairie Chicken Field Trips [Newton, IL]

APRIL 15: Lye Creek Burn Longspur Field Trip [Crawfordsville]

APRIL 15-22: Rio Grande Valley Women's Birding Tour- 2 spots left! [Harlingen, TX]

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

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!



NEWS INDIANA AUDUBON SOCIETY

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

The 26th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is coming up February 17-20. Everyone is invited to join the count so their birds become part of a massive database used by scientists to track changes in bird populations over time. Participants count birds for any length of time (> 15 minutes) and report what they see on eBird. It's easy for people of all skill levels!

"The GBBC is a great starting point for anyone who wants to try a new activity for 2023," said Pat Leonard, Cornell Lab of Ornithology's GBBC spokesperson. "Many new people have turned to birdwatching in recent years and studies have shown how beneficial it is for people to have this exposure to nature. Participation in bird counts also benefits the birds themselves, providing the data needed to help assess the status of populations. We hope everyone around the world will consider spending a little time with the birds this February!"



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

CHESTERTON FEED & GARDEN DONATES TO JAEGER STUDY

Celebrating our 125th anniversary, Indiana Audubon is embarking on the first full-scale survey of migrating jaegers on the southern shore of Lake Michigan. The fall migration will be documented in the first full-season research survey to learn more about the importance of Indiana as an inland migratory hotspot for this most unusual group of birds.

Special fall events will offer members a chance to witness this normally difficult-to-see

Recently, this research project received a donation from Chuck at Chesterton Feed & Garden Center! Every year, Chuck supports the Dunes area Christmas Bird Count by donating \$1 per species seen and another \$100 for every new species recorded during the count. This year, he chose to donate this money to Indiana Audubon for our jaeger study!

We are extremely grateful for the continued support from Chesterton Feed & Garden for this research project and other programs, like the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival. We could not continue protecting the birds without their help!

Support the Indiana Dunes fall waterbird and jaeger survey by giving at WWW.INDIANAAUDUBON.ORG/DOANTE



THE SURPRISING HEALTH BENEFITS OF BIRDING

Any birder knows that birds play a role in our well-being. The New York Times recently published a great piece on the many ways birds and birding benefit our physical, emotional, and mental health. It also includes cameos from Indiana Audubon and Dunes-Calumet Audubon members!

Read the full article at t.ly/kJFq



RESEARCH GRANTS AVAILABLE



Indiana Audubon is committed to promoting independent and academic research at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, and we have created the IAS 125th Anniversary grant program specifically for that purpose! More than \$2500 will be available for research proposals in 2023.

For more information or to complete an application, visit bit.ly/mgbs125grants

CANVASBACK CHRISTMAS RESCUE

On Christmas Eve, Beverly Shores resident, Geof Benson, found a Canvasback duck completely encased in ice on the beach after the brutal cold snow and wind. Only its neck was visible and moving. Its head and eyes were covered with ice. With a National Park ranger's help, they were able to chip it free with a hatchet and bring the frozen block of duck to a bathtub to melt the rest away.

The Canvasback was then transported to the Westchester Animal Clinic where, after a clean "bill" of health, it was released on an open pond, where it departed later that afternoon.

What a great ending to a scary situation for this poor Canvasback. Thanks, Geof!









S BIRDING S FESTIVAL



The Indiana Dunes Birding Festival is back for 2023. Begin making plans to join us in the Indiana Dunes from May 11-14, for the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival. The festival committee is working hard to create an interactive and safe festival for birders from all over the country. Both carpool field trips and van guided

trips will be back, with the return of popular events like outdoors Birds and Brews, the annual bird calling competition, and more.

INDIANA AUDUBON MEMBERS WILL HAVE FIRST CHANCE TO REGISTER FOR THEIR FAVORITE TRIP OR WORKSHOP BEGINNING
ON MARCH 1. Your email address will gain you early access to the registration site like last year. No more secret codes!

KEYNOTE



Jennifer Ackerman

The Genius of Birds

SAT 6-9PM | SAND CREEK COUNTRY CLUB

Join us for an evening dinner event with Jennifer Ackerman! A bird-lover since childhood, Jennifer 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, an international bestseller that examines how research has completely revised our view of the creatures we used to regard as 'bird brained'. 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.

HEADLINERS

Chris Haney

How We Get Haunted And Taunted By A Lost Woodpecker

THURS 11:30 AM-12:30 PM INDIANA DUNES VISITOR CENTER



Hannah Toutonghi

Northern Hawk Owl Winter Movement Ecology

FRI 11:30 AM-12:30 PM INDIANA DUNES VISITOR CENTER



Chris Bell

Colombia: Avian Adventures in the World's Most Bird-Diverse County

SAT 11:30 AM-12:30 PM
INDIANA DUNES VISITOR CENTER



Matt Young

Finch Irruptions, The Finch Research Network (FiRN) and the Winter Finch Forecast

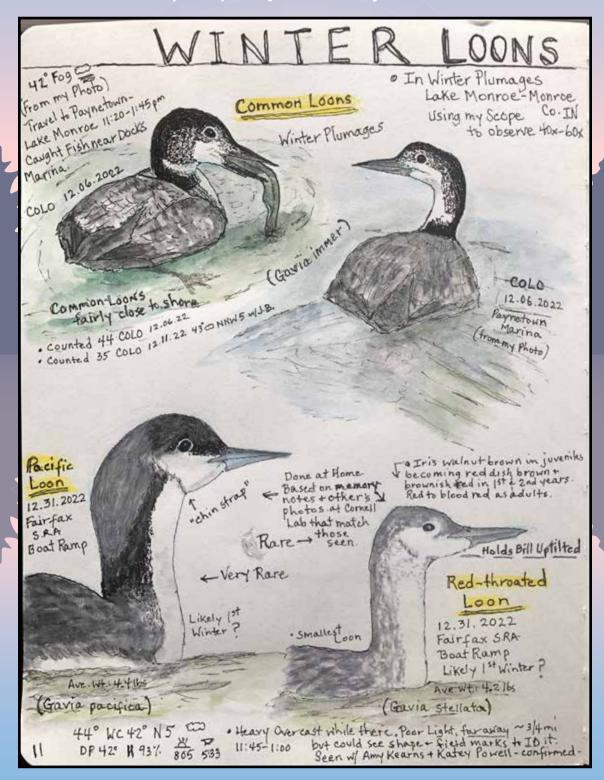
SUN 11:30 AM-12:30 PM
INDIANA DUNES VISITOR CENTER

WWW.INDUNESBIRDINGFESTIVAL.COM

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!





We would like to acknowledge our generous donors who gave \$100 or more to Indiana Audubon at the end of 2022. You helped us raise over \$25,000 for bird conservation, education, and research. We are sending a big thank you to the following supporters:

Alex Capaldi Andrea Burke Bill Cummings Charles & Sharon Sorenson Cindy McGuire Cookie Ferguson Daniel Weber George Kopcha Jim Sweeney John Blackburn Judy Borron Julie Gidwitz Karen B Robinson Karin Anderson Karla Simpson Kenneth Brock Kim McKenzie Kristen Sweinhart Lee Casebere Lynn Daugherty Mark & Kathy Mosak

Mary Andrews

Matthew Bowman Melissa Zabel Mona Clayton Pamela Herrmann Patricia Perry Patricia Reed Rebecca Lomax-Sumner Rick Read Robin Janson Ronald & Jonita Shields Rosemarie Jeffery Roxie Easter Sally Fadely Steve Dunbar Steven Doud Stevenson Joshua Hill Susan Ridgely Cohen Terry Wilkin Thomas Froman Willard & Catherine Snyder William Sharkey

Whether you shared our pleas and posts or gave financially, we greatly appreciate it. Without you, we would not be able to continue supporting the birds!

Celebrate our 125th anniversary by giving \$125 this year. That's only \$12.50 per month, starting in March!

Give now at INDIANAAUDUBON.ORG/DONATE



A MESSAGE FROM THE SANCTUARY MANAGER

2022 was a year of growth, change, and learning, for both the Sanctuary and myself! December saw my first full year at the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, and was filled with plenty of wonderful moments, and something new around each bend of the trail. Discovering the Sanctuary one season at a time has been filled with little gifts: looking up to see a fawn with its mother on a high ridge, the deafening calls of spring frogs, checking owl banding nets without headlamps during a full moon, a box turtle soaking up the last of the fall sun. I can't wait to see what this new year brings!

Looking back, we held some fantastic events this year! A first for Mary Gray, we held a spring session of the Indiana Master Naturalists. Twenty-five attendees spent their Friday evenings with us from April to June, learning about fossils, trees, wildflowers, bird banding, and much more. Our annual Hummingbird Migration Celebration was held at the beginning of August. Over 300 people attended, braving some extreme heat and humidity to hike, learn, and of course, see a hummingbird up close!

Despite snow and icy weather canceling our owl night event, 14 Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded. One individual was heavy enough to be outfitted with a special radio transmitter. Because Mary Gray is home to a motus tower, which is used to track these transmitters, we know that that individual owl stayed at the Sanctuary for two days before continuing her migration. Hopefully, she'll pass within range of another tower on her journey, and we'll be able to see how far and how long she's traveled! We're already planning this year's owl night, and we can't wait to share these incredible, tiny owls with you.

Looking ahead, we have a big year: its the 125th anniversary of Indiana Audubon and 80th anniversary of the Sanctuary! We're contributing to the celebrations with monthly hikes, activities, and a new interpretive birding trail. We recently received a grant from the Fayette Community Foundation to design and install a series of 5 interpretive signs, which will each feature a focal bird species found in the surrounding habitat. Installation will happen in early spring in time for our yearly Spring Gathering, and we hope you'll check them out!

Resource management has been a big topic coming into the new year. Historically, all 700+ acres have been managed entirely by staff and volunteers, and it's a big job! Tackling invasive plant species like garlic mustard, stilt grass, and oriental bittersweet here at the Sanctuary is a monumental task, and we're looking into ways to outsource some of that work to a professional management company. This will help us step into our next 125 years with a healthy, diverse, and resilient ecosystem for all of the birds we know and love. The first step has been to create a Site Conservation Plan with input from staff, committee members, and many others, and the project is well underway!

I'm so excited to bring these new projects and events to you in the coming year. As things warm up, grab a pair of binoculars and hit the trails, and I'll see you out there. As always, if you need anything, please contact me, Libby Keyes, at lkeyes@indianaudubon.org.

FROM 1943: RECEIVING MARY GRAY BIRD SANCTUARY

By Mrs. Gray's will, she also made a gift to the Indiana Audubon Society of two hundred and fifty-four acres of land in Fayette County, to be developed, used and maintained as a bird sanctuary. It was provided that the Canal House in Connersville is to be used in connection with the land and as a State Headquarters for the Society.

Mr. Gray holds the title to the remaining part of the six hundred acre tract but has made no disposition of his part up to this time. This is in keeping with the policy observed by Mr. and Mrs. Gray for certain proper reasons.

Mr. Gray is in full sympathy with, and is an enthusiastic co-worker in the development of this land as a bird sanctuary. He has laid out horseback roads and footpaths connecting and extending to the whole of this six hundred acres, all to be used and developed together as one body of land.

Mr. Gray has also invited the Board of Directors to become acquainted with his suggestions and plans for this land, developing the sanctuary. He has also asked the Board of Directors to assume the obligation of maintaining an ancestral cemetery located on the remaining part of this tract of land remaining in his name. In consideration of such gift by him, the Board of Directors has assumed the obligation and assured him by certified copy of a Resolution approved for this purpose. The Board of Directors is equally assured of the gift of Mr. Gray's part and the whole six hundred acre tract is to be developed as a bird sanctuary by this Society.

This tract of two hundred and fifty-four acres of land is seven miles Southwest from Connersville. There is now about one hundred and sixteen acres of this in woods, approximately eight acres of which have recently been set principally in conifers.

The tract is located in the extreme south of the Tipton till plain and thus the soil is much the same as we have throughout the most part of central Indiana. The biota is also like that of most of central Indiana. However, immediately south of the tract is the Illinois till and we see biotic stragglers from that environment extending their ranges into this area.

We enter the grounds from the East over a winding gravel road through the woods, across a small branch for 1,500 or 2,000 feet to headquarters home. The road extends another fifteen hundred or more feet to two other dwellings.

The headquarters home was for many years the summer home of Mr. and Mrs. Gray. It is a comfortable cottage, with a lull basement having a commodious fireplace, with an outside entrance and highly suitable for a Sanctuary Naturalist to use as a library, museum and Sanctuary workshop. In the front yard is a lily pond led by springs. Flowers and shrubbery are plentiful throughout the grounds.

Small streams run entirely across the farm and only rarely, in extreme drought, become dry. Large springs feed a small pond near the house and they furnish enough water to enlarge this pond.

Much of the woodland is virgin, some second growth, and has never been pastured, and most of the wild flowers known to this section are present. Thousands of grand old trees abound in the woodland.

Several pasture fields are dotted with brambles and shrubs, affording nesting sites and suitable cover for many species of birds. Sufficient water is present for bird attraction. However, it is not sufficient to attract water fowl. This will be, in the main, a sanctuary for song birds and upland game birds; which in itself will be sufficient reason for their sanctuary, even if water fowl and shore birds will not find suitable habitat for their stopping there.

The first consideration is to develop the place so that it is truly a Bird Sanctuary. And, second, make it possible for bird lovers to profit therby. Birds first, public second.

This article was taken from the 1943 Indiana Audubon Yearbook, when the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary was gifted to the Indiana Audubon Society. It was written by editor Earl Brooks, whom the current Brooks Hall at the sanctuary is named after.

CELEBRATE WITH US!

Join Indiana Audubon staff and volunteers as we celebrate 125 years of the organization and 80 years of Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary! Throughout 2023, we'll be offering special monthly hikes to explore what makes the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary important for both birds, and other wildlife. You just might find what makes this place special to humans too!

Each hike begins at 9am ET on the first Saturday of the month and requires pre-registration. Each hike is free for Indiana Audubon and \$10 for non-members. Register now at INDIANAAUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS





SPACE Moments

Celebrate Indiana Audubon's 125th anniversary by sharing your spark! What's a spark? It's an experience, moment, or collection of events that sparked you to start your birding journey! Whether it's seeing a Pileated Woodpecker at your feeder for the first time, hearing the dinosaur call of Sandhill Cranes flying overhead, joining a local bird walk, or reading a fascinating article on how smart crows are, everyone has an inspiration that sparked them to love birds. Birds connect people and we want to highlight spark experiences in 2023! Here are some spark moments from the Indiana Audubon staff and board members!

My family was very much a camping family. We traveled from state park to state park, often visiting nature centers and taking part in interpretive programs. At the age of 9, my parents took our family on a Sunday morning bird hike at Pokagon State Park. It didn't take long for my family to make repeated visits to Pokagon, and each time we attended the weekly bird walk. After a few visits, the then naturalist, Fred Wooley, gifted me one of Audubon checklists to allow me to keep track of the birds for the group. I brought that checklist back with a clipboard each week, and would add to it with each new week's sightings. Fred's actions brought me into birding and gave me a role within the weekly bird walk. Another well known birder, Bud Starling, would hand out gold star stickers to participants who might happen to find a good bird. It wasn't long before my binoculars had the hallmark gold star on them and from there I was hooked. • Brad Bumgardner, IAS Executive Director



It's so hard to pick just one! The first bird I ever remember ID'ing is probably a relatively common spark bird for a lot of people, the common loon. As a kid I spent weeks to months of every summer at my grandparents cabin on a lake in northern Wisconsin, and their calls were familiar background noise. Some summers they were a bit like my own personal National Geographic channel, I watched them nest, hatch their young, watched them fishing from a kayak, watched an eagle attempt an easy meal of baby loon with no luck. I didn't quite get hooked to birding, aside from a foray into 4-H and showing chickens, until a banding demonstration in a college ornithology class. I got to help release a junco after banding, and pretty much decided right there that I wanted to work with wild birds. A big part of what got me interested in birds during that class wasn't a bird itself but learning songs, suddenly a dawn chorus wasn't just "birds", it was american robins, downy woodpeckers, yellow warblers and yellowthroats. For me what keeps me hooked on birds is less about a single spark bird, and more about the realization that there'll always be more to see or learn, new behaviors to see in familiar species. If I had to pick just one spark bird though, I always go back to the loon! - Libby Keyes, MGBS Operations Manager

The journey that sparked my interest in birding was the trip my husband and I took to Belize and Guatemala. We saw many amazing birds and went on bird hikes which really deepened our appreciation for birds. Our goal is to go back and search for the resplendent quetzal. - **Amanda Sitterding, IAS Treasurer**



I have two main spark events that led me to working with and enjoying birds. I was studying wildlife management and thought that I wanted to have a career in mammal conservation. When I signed up to help the DNR with some Sharptailed Grouse collaring, I had zero idea what the birds even were. We had to get up at 3am to drive an hour into this middle of nowhere field to sit in a pop-up blind. As the sun slowly rose, the grouse started squawking and all of a sudden, the field was alive! I just remember thinking that they sounded like little lawn mowers and were incredible. When I got to help capture and radio tag a few of them, I started thinking birds were cooler than I had previously thought! A few months later, I took a field course in Thailand where we got to help mist net and band birds. One of the technicians

handed me a bag with a bird in it and said "Be careful with this one! They like to go for the eyes!" I opened it up cautiously and out comes this brown and white bird with a long, brilliantly colored red bill like a spike. It was a White-throated Kingfisher! They taught us to hold the kingfishers flat in our hands on their backs so they would be calm. I had never seen anything like it! Those two moments completely changed my career path and I started focusing on ornithology. Grouse and kingfishers will forever be my two favorite bird families! - Sam Warren, IAS Communications & Outreach Manager



When I think of a particular "spark bird" I really don't have one. ALL birds are spark birds for me and I started what I call "birding by accident" 10 years ago. I had bought

my first decent DLSR camera and started taking pictures of birds, which led me on a quest to identify what birds I was seeing. I soon realized there was not just one sparrow, but so many different sparrows and ALL hawks were "turkey buzzards," regardless the size and shape! Birds in general sparked that drive for more birding and more ID's. It's been such an amazing journey for me. Birds mean so much to me! Not only do I love them but they have a deep spiritual meaning. I LOVE BIRDS! This has led me to the path I now walk, which is volunteering my time and efforts through Indiana Audubon an organization who's mission statement I truly believe in. I'll never forget receiving my first Cardinal in the mail. Back in those days it was black and white! I was glancing at the front page which listed the current Executive board members and board of directors when I thought to myself "maybe someday I will be one of those people helping make a difference for the birds." Here I am 7 years later as current membership chair and Vice President, after serving two terms on the board. So, birds have sparked a fire in me to do more for them! The journey continues! - Shari McCollough, IAS Vice President

1969 was the year of my introduction to birds. First, it was the dead of winter when a flock of Evening Grosbeaks descended on my backyard. So, I looked them up and told my science teacher who was a birder. Then, there was a Northern Saw-whet Owl at eye level looking at me from a tree as I walked to the school bus. He didn't fly away and was there when I came home from school at the end of the day. Very cool! Finally, the spark bird was in May 1969 on a fishing trip. I was crawling through the underbrush to get to my brook trout stream when I ran into a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak. - Josh Hill, MGBS Trustee



I have always been interested in all-things nature, but the real turning point or bird moment was when I had completed my IMN class and had volunteer time to give. Little did I know that my time at the Indiana Dunes State Park and Brad Bumgardner would turn me into a "bird nerd" for life. People ask me what my favorite bird is, and I can honestly answer, "The bird I'm looking at right now!"- Cookie Ferguson, IAS Board Member

WE WANT YOUR SPARK STORY!

Help us celebrate our 125th anniversary by sending us your stories to share. Submit them throughout the year at WWW.INDIANAAUDUBON.ORG/125YEARS







FOLLOW INDIANA AUDUBON ON SOCIAL MEDIA!







