



# Stockbridge Audubon

<http://members.aol.com/StockbridgeAS>

*Representing Northeast Indiana*  
46864

P.O. Box 13131, Fort Wayne, Indiana

## “Sea Hawks, Eagles, and Duck Hawks” Restoring endangered raptors to Indiana By John Castrale, DNR Non-game Biologist

**Date:** Sunday, April 23,  
2006

**Time:** 2:00 PM

**Location:** Nature Center  
Fox Island County Park

Do you remember the excitement in 1992 when baby peregrines were “hacked” from the Anthony Wayne Bank building in downtown Fort Wayne? Similar efforts were made in Evansville, Indianapolis, and South Bend, and now peregrines are easy to see, if you know where to look.

Bald eagles, reintroduced at Lake Monroe in southern Indiana, have been seen in Fort Wayne, most recently at the new Eagle Marsh property in southwest Fort Wayne. (Stockbridge members helped save this

property for restoration.)

Ospreys now nest successfully at Pigeon River and Potato Creek, and river otters cavort on the riverbanks at Salamonie State Forest and Pigeon River.

John Castrale, non-game biologist for the Indiana DNR was in charge of these programs. Probably he will also give us a pep talk about the upcoming Breeding Bird Survey, which needs volunteers.

Refreshments will be served. Bring your family and go for a hike afterwards.

**Park Admission \$2 each, or  
buy an annual pass.**



### President’s Remarks By Julie Henricks

What an odd winter this has been: early December’s heavy snowfall seemed a portent of worse weather to come, but a bitter January never materialized. Now, past the mid-point of March, it feels like winter all over again. There’s no doubt, though, that the cold days are inexorably winding down: during a warm interlude a week ago, butterflies were seen in the area. Only this morning, I was awakened by a territorial robin banging into my kitchen window, jousting in vain with his own reflection. At Fox

Island, several species of salamanders have begun their migration to wet areas of the park, continuing an ancient dance of renewal.

Another sign of spring: the Stockbridge field trip schedule is underway! Please consider attending any or all of them, as well as the spring meeting on April 23. Something else you might like to do, especially if you live in the southern part of the membership area, is to join Robert Cooper Audubon Society for upcoming wetland restoration work. They plan to plant native sedges and rushes in several areas, including Loblolly Marsh. If you're interested, contact Mike Lannoo, president of Robert Cooper A.S. ([mlannoo@bsu.edu](mailto:mlannoo@bsu.edu)). Of course, we have our own major wetland restoration, Eagle Marsh, here in Allen County. Future newsletters will outline ways that we plan to partner with Little River Wetlands Project in their work to restore what will be the third-largest wetland in the state.

Whatever you do, take time to enjoy the signs of spring; and have a wonderful summer, too!

## **BIRD SIGHTINGS**

## **WANTED BY ACRES**

**Tim Kimmel, webmaster for ACRES Land Trust, would like news of bird sightings at ACRES preserves. Send them to him at [acresweb@comcast.net](mailto:acresweb@comcast.net).**



## **BIRD NOTES** **By Jim Haw**

February 2-March 15

Late winter produced few birds of note. The beginnings of spring migration were retarded in comparison to recent years, but more normal long-term. A strong warm front March 10-12 brought in a few early migrants. Lake James, Steuben Co. hosted a Bonaparte's Gull Feb. 18 (Jim Haw), the first February record for northeast Indiana, and several Greater Scaup among other ducks Mar. 14 (Sandy Schacht, Marisa Windell, Haw). A Northern Shrike was found at Cedar Swamp, Steuben Co. Mar. 11 (Brad Bumgardner). An early Eastern Phoebe was at Fox

Island Mar. 11 (Rodger Rang). A Chipping Sparrow wintering at a feeder near Ashley was reported in Feb. (Holly Meyers). The only Pine Siskin of the winter was found at Salamonie Res. Feb. 14 (Doug Rood et al).

## **Speaking of Falcons.....**

At this writing, Fort Wayne's falcon pair, Freedom and Roosevelt, has laid 3 eggs in their nest box high up on One Summit Square. Check out the website [www.soarinhawk.org](http://www.soarinhawk.org). There is a drop-down box to select Falconcam. The picture is updated every 30 seconds in daylight hours. Soon we should have fluffy babies!

## **Stockbridge Field Trip Report** **By Cynthia Powers**

Eight bundled-up people car-pooled to Lake Michigan on March 18. Although it was sunny, the wind was cold, as usual for the lake front. But the birding was great! We saw two Red-shouldered Hawks along Beverly Drive. A very cooperative Northern Shrike was spotted by sharp-eyed Amish birder Joseph Bontrager, who had also spotted a Glaucous Gull at Michigan City harbor. At West Beach in the National Lakeshore were the first Tree

Swallows of the spring. Other high points of the trip were a pair of Purple Finches and a Great Horned Owl on her nest. On the way home we stopped at Kingsbury State Fish and Wildlife Area, where a Northern Harrier and many kinds of ducks rounded out the day.

**Check last month's issue for our field trip schedule, and plan to join us!**



### **DNR leader explains how citizens can earn federal conservation funds.**

Dear Fellow Indiana Wildlife Conservationists:

Indiana can earn millions more federal dollars for wildlife conservation.

Here's how. Federal wildlife management funding is based on state sport license sales. So if more Hoosier wildlife conservationists, even those who do not consider themselves hunters or anglers, purchase Indiana hunting and fishing licenses, then the state earns more federal wildlife conservation funds.

For example, your \$25

Resident Combination Fishing and Hunting License contribution to wildlife earns the state another \$20 from Uncle Sam.

**If just 30 caring people from each Indiana county bought a combo license every year for the next ten years, they would earn wildlife more than an extra million dollars.**

Hoosiers who spend their time afield with binoculars, cameras and hiking boots instead of shotgun shells and fly rods should recognize how many of our wildlife habitat purchases are funded.

Annual sport license funds help buy critical wildlife habitat, like the new 8,000-acre Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Greene County.

Also, with each gun, bow or fishing pole bought, a portion of the purchase price goes to the federal government as an excise tax. Indiana then gets a share of those taxes back, based on the number of fishing and hunting licenses sold. This federal money is committed to wildland acquisition and habitat management.

Your purchase of an Indiana Resident Combination Hunting and Fishing License provides instant leverage of your original dollars, even if you choose not to hunt or fish. **A \$25 contribution becomes a \$45 contribution.**

The DNR can then take that pool of funds and leverage it even further with private dollars to buy and manage land.

That is exactly how Goose Pond became a reality.

Leveraging your dollars and spending money that comes from outside Indiana on Hoosier projects seems like a pretty good idea to me.

**Another great way for conservationists around the state to support the environment is by purchasing the Environmental License Plate for their vehicles.** The money this generates (\$1.5 million in 2005) goes directly into the Indiana Heritage Trust. Last year that fund allowed for the purchase or protection of 38 properties in 25 counties around the state.

The Heritage Trust also leverages funds with matches from private individuals, not-for-profit organizations, and other governmental entities. This leverage lets every Indiana Heritage Trust dollar buy \$5 worth of habitat.

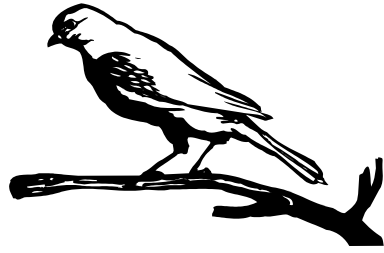
You will continue to hear and see more about our effort to get Hoosiers to **Catch a Combo** and to put blue environmental license plates on their vehicles.

Urge all of your wildlife-watching friends to **Catch a Combo** to support wildlife conservation. It's as easy as visiting <http://www.in.gov/dnr/public/>. Click on 'hunting and fishing licenses' to purchase a license and start protecting Indiana's wildlife today.

See you on the trail,

Kyle J. Hupfer,

Director, Indiana Department  
of Natural Resources



## Big May Day Bird Count

On the second Saturday in May each year, Indiana Audubon Society sponsors the Big May Day Bird Count. Birders all over the state survey their respective counties and report the numbers of each species of bird they see that day. **This year the count is held on May 13.**

This day is chosen because it is normally close to the peak of spring migration; for example, there is a reasonable expectation that 30 species of warblers will be seen in Allen County that day. This is an excellent time to be out and learn more about our birds.

The count is conducted by a number of parties, each made up of two to four observers, at least one of them an experienced birder. Even if you can't tell a hawk from a heron, you can make a significant contribution, because the more eyes there are, the more birds will be seen. The more experienced birders will be on hand to help with identification.

For more information, or to volunteer for the count, contact the compiler listed below.

Allen County Ed Powers 638-4291 [zzedpowers@aol.com](mailto:zzedpowers@aol.com)  
Noble County John Winebrenner 373-2904 [goshawk7@verizon.net](mailto:goshawk7@verizon.net)



### Volunteers Needed for Indiana Breeding Bird Atlas

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources conducted its first Breeding Bird Atlas in 1985-1990, to get data to produce accurate, up-to-date distribution maps for every species breeding in Indiana. Now the DNR is repeating the survey to document changes in the distribution of Indiana's breeding birds.

In Allen County there are 12 designated blocks, each about 9.5 miles square, to be surveyed. An atlaser will be assigned to each block. The atlaser should make several visits to the block during breeding season to collect evidence of breeding birds. Criteria for evidence are spelled out in the atlas instructions.

If you would like to help with this important project, or would like more information, contact the Allen County coordinator, Ed Powers, at (260)638-4291, or e-mail [zzedpowers@aol.com](mailto:zzedpowers@aol.com).



**Bird of the Month  
By Warren Mead**

Usually, when mention is made of a non-native species that has been common, the connotation of those comments is negative. That, however, is not the case with this month's featured bird, the House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*.)

This species is native to the southwestern United States and as legend has it, was introduced into the northeastern part of the country in the 1940's in a rather dramatic manner. As the story goes, an unscrupulous pet-store owner in New York City, smuggled some House Finches into his establishment, where they were sold as "Hollywood Finches." The authorities caught on to this scheme and raided the store to confiscate the birds and deal with the store owner. As the authorities entered the front door, the owner released the birds out his back door, and thus established the eastern population of House Finches in the U. S.

A field guide that I have published in 1966 shows a range map with House Finches concentrated in New York, New Jersey and

eastern Pennsylvania. The notation in this book states: "uncommon, but increasing and spreading in the east." (Robbins, Bruun, and Zim.) The first documented sighting of a House Finch in Indiana was said to occur in La Porte County on 11/16/58. This bird was mixed in a flock of Purple Finches. Since that time, the House Finch population has become abundant to the point of possibly surpassing the population of the House Sparrow, by some estimations.

The House Finch is sparrow-sized and slender of build. Males have reddish-orange coloration on the head, breast and lower back/rump and are otherwise brown with a heavily-streaked, white breast. Females lack the reddish coloration altogether. In rare cases, the orange-red on the males is replaced by yellow. Studies have shown that the brighter the colors on the male, the more attractive he is to females. The similar Purple Finch is more raspberry or wine colored.

House finches are notorious for building their nests in hanging flower baskets or decorative wreaths and porch light fixtures. The usual clutch is 4-5 eggs, pale blue with black spots.

Both sexes sing, especially the male, starting as early as mid-January. The delightful song can sometimes last 15 seconds.

You can attract House Finches by offering sunflower seeds, safflower, millet, and thistle (nyger) seeds. They are one of our most endearing songbirds and a welcome addition to any yard or garden.

We welcome **new** members using the form below. To speed your service and save us postage, mail **renewals** directly to National Audubon, using the form that they provide. Any questions relating to membership? Ed Powers, Membership Chair, will be glad to help!

**HO-9 National Audubon Society/Stockbridge Audubon Chapter Membership Application HO-9**  
I want to join Audubon! Enclosed is my check payable to the **National Audubon Society**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES  
\_\_ Individual/\$20    \_\_ Family/\$20  
\_\_ Student/\$15    \_\_ Sr. Citizen/\$15  
\_\_ Lifelong/\$1500

**HO-9  
7XCH**

Mail to National Audubon Society, Chapter Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001.

**Inside this issue:**

**Stockbridge Directors & Officers**

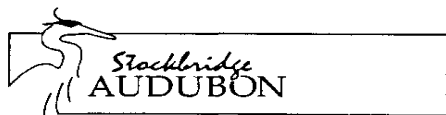
**Annual Meeting 4/23: John Castrale to speak on raptor reintroductions**

**Message from DNR Director Hupfer**

**Jim Haw's Bird Notes**

**Bird of the Month: House Finch**

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