

# Stockbridge Audubon



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

*Representing Northeast Indiana*

P.O. Box 13131, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46864

## Spring Meeting at University of St. Francis: “Why I Shoot Birds: Spending Time with a Bird Photographer” By Jeff Moore

**Date:** April 20, 2008  
**Time:** 2:00 PM  
**Location:** Achatz Hall,  
U. of St. Francis

**Speaker:** Jeff Moore

Jeff Moore will be doing an “electronic slide show” of some of his digital photographs, explaining how and why he takes various types of bird pictures. He’s been a birder for over 40 years, ever since Mark Weldon invited him to help with a Stockbridge Christmas Bird Count. When not birding, Jeff is an engineer at GM.

He’s lived in Indiana except for 5+ years in Florida. Now he lives near Roanoke on two acres of pond and restored prairie. He says he has traveled to all but 7 states, trying to expand his photo collection which now includes several thousand!

As usual at Stockbridge meetings, we will have refreshments and time to ask questions and chat afterwards. And for an extra treat, Warren Mead has

arranged with the Perky Pet Company for several hummingbird feeders to be given as door prizes. You’ll just have time to fill them and put them up before the hummers return!



## President's Message: By Gary Tieben

Migration is upon us. The Stockbridge Field Trip schedule is available on our website and many of you have already been on one or more trips. Since most of us have limited time that we can spend in the field we wonder what we can do to maximize our field opportunities? How can we identify more birds? Two items to consider are optics and field guides.

Some of us only know the Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds*. Peterson's is a terrific book and it can take you far, but as you become a better field observer you will need additional help. Peterson wrote his first edition of *Guide to the Birds* in 1934. Expectations for binoculars and even spotting scopes were much lower than those of today. A pair of binoculars made in the 1960s that cost me 100 hours of labor at about minimum wage isn't half as good, in my opinion, as a new pair of binoculars that also cost 100 hours of labor at today's minimum wage. Properly selected, a spotting scope costing \$1200 is clearly better than an earlier 1960's scope costing much more. Modern gas filled optics are fog resistant and typically gather much more light than old binoculars and spotting scopes.

Since we can now see so much more, modern field guides show details that would have been left out of early field guides like the Peterson guide. I recommend a field guide such as David Allen Sibley's *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*. Sibley goes a step beyond Peterson. He shows the details that can help you make those difficult identifications.

An additional book that will improve your birding is Ken Brock's recent book *Birds of Indiana*. This book is featured on the Stockbridge website. The book is on a single CD and must be read on your computer. The data in Ken's book will tell you a great deal about the likelihood of a given species being in your area. Of course, a rare bird is by definition rare. I, however, always give a long pause if a bird is rarely seen in our state. I always want a really good look before I proclaim a bird to be something that is quite unlikely.

I hope you consider updating your optics and field guides. I believe new optics and a new field guide can help make you a more confident birder. Happy migration!



## Bird Notes By Jim Haw

February 1-March 23, 2008

Unrelenting cold and snow delayed the onset of spring migration through February. There was considerable catching up by late March.

A Cackling Goose was at Lake Clare, Huntington, Feb. 10 (Sandy Schacht), and likely the same individual was on the Wabash River west of Huntington Feb. 14 (Jim Haw). Eight Cackling Geese were at Huntington Reservoir Mar. 6

(Haw, Schacht). Two Trumpeter Swans at Pigeon River Mar. 2 (Haw) were of uncertain origin; all Indiana records of this species whose origin can be ascertained have come from the introduced population in Wisconsin. Five Greater Scaup were at the Ft. Wayne Terminal Ponds Feb. 24 (Haw) and two at Huntington Res. Mar. 6 (Haw, Schacht). Five Horned Grebes at the Ft. Wayne Terminal Ponds Feb. 24 (Haw) were early.

Feb. 23 was a big day for Golden Eagles, with two at Pigeon River (Haw, Frannie Headings, Schacht) and one in Wabash Co. (Lynnanne Fager et al). One of the Pigeon River birds was relocated there Mar. 4 (Sam Plew). An early Killdeer was at Huntington Res. Mar. 1 (Ryan Smith, Haw). The first Eastern Phoebe was rather early at Fox Island Mar. 14 (Rodger Rang). Unexpectedly early were a Pine Warbler at the Fox Island feeders Mar. 6 (Dave Reichlinger) and sporadically thereafter, and another Pine Warbler at the Pokagon feeders Mar. 20 (Holly Meyer). Small numbers of Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins continued to be reported.

**If you're too busy to go birding,  
you're just too busy!**

## 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 10.**

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 260-638-4291 [zzedpowers@aol.com](mailto:zzedpowers@aol.com)  
Noble County John Winebrenner 260- 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.

**There are still a few blocks available to be surveyed in Allen County**, each about 9.5 miles square. 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).



**Audubon's picture:  
Whooping Crane**

On March 23, seven Stockbridge members traveled through the sleet to Kankakee FWA in western Indiana. In a muddy field of corn stubble, we saw a whooping crane in a big flock of sandhills. It was migrating north on its own, without any help from ultralight aircraft.

Apparently, one trip is all it takes to learn the route. How amazing!

We can't officially count a whooping crane on our Indiana life lists, though, as the population has not been deemed to be "self-sustaining without human assistance" long enough. Nevertheless it was a huge thrill for all of us.

My fantasy is: if the world is safer for these endangered birds, and if enough people care, maybe the world will be safer for humans too.

### **Have you read this?**

Recently Richard Louv, author of "**Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder**" was awarded the Audubon Medal by John Flicker, president of National Audubon.

Louv thinks that all children should have free

time to play outdoors, making tree houses and forts, damming up creeks, climbing trees and so on. He even thinks this free, unregimented play would help autistic children and those with ADHD.

In response to Louv's book, some nature educators have proposed a policy of "**No Child Left Indoors.**" What a concept!

Those of us with children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or neighbor kids should read this book, and then MAKE time to take those kids for an unhurried walk in the woods. Of course it wouldn't hurt to point out a few birds along the way.....

### **This from American Bird Conservancy: Cats Indoors!**

#### **What do Indoor Cats Miss?**

Getting lost  
Getting stolen  
Getting hit by a car  
Fatal feline diseases  
Dog attacks  
Abscesses  
Worms, fleas, and ticks  
**And above all, killing birds!**



**Bird of the Month:  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
By Warren Mead**



Our featured bird this month is affectionately called “butter-butt” by many birders but is officially known as *Dendroica coronata*, the Yellow-rumped Warbler. Another name associated with this bird is “Myrtle Warbler” which reflects its fondness for myrtle berries. Through the ages, the Yellow-rumped Warbler has also been called: golden-crowned flycatcher, golden-crowned warbler and yellow-crowned warbler.

The various names given to this bird refer to some of the distinguishing marks, which of course, include a yellow rump and a yellow crown-patch—both of which appear on males and females of the species. The male in breeding plumage is primarily blue-gray above with a black breast patch in an inverted “U” configuration. They also sport a yellow patch in front of the wings, a black face and white chin/throat. Springtime females are similar, but browner in coloration.

At 5 to 6 inches in length, the Yellow-rumped’s size is typical of the warbler family. This, coupled with their more demure coloration in fall/winter, lands them squarely in Roger Tory Peterson’s collection of “confusing fall warblers”.

These warblers generally winter just to our south, with the northern edge of their winter range between Ft. Wayne and Indianapolis. As a matter of fact, Christmas Bird Counts have recorded them in Delaware county. Their nesting territory is in the farthest northern reaches of the U.S and all through Canada, typically in conifer and mixed forests. The best time for us to see “butter-butts” is in late April and into May, when they migrate through our area in notable numbers.

Yellow-rumped Warblers make a Junco-like trill that tends to rise in pitch at the end. They also have a rather distinctive and sharp “chek” call.

Yellow-rumped Warblers are solitary and monogamous nesters but become gregarious in winter and will readily join mixed-flocks.

One of the most notable facts related to the Yellow-rumped Warbler is that it is the only warbler that over-winters in northern states. It is also the most-prevalent migrating warbler in the eastern U.S.

Their summer diet consists of insects, spiders and tree sap and their winter diet consists of berries and seeds. They can be attracted to feeders with suet, peanut butter and doughnuts.

It was once believed that there were two separate species of Yellow-Rumped Warblers. The western birds were known as Audubon’s Warblers and the eastern variety were Myrtle Warblers. However, cross-breeding of these birds has been recorded where their ranges overlap, so ornithologists now deem them to be the same species with two geographic *races*.

Look high in the trees in late April and early May. If you see birds flitting around and flying in-and-out of the farthest branches, there is a good chance they will be Yellow-rumped Warblers.