

Stockbridge Audubon



<http://stockbridgeaudubon.org>

Representing Northeast Indiana

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

Spring Meeting at U. of St. Francis: “Watching Spring Warblers”

Date: April 19, 2009
Time: 2:00 PM (Sunday)
Location: Achatz Hall
University of St. Francis
Speaker: Don Gorney

Everyone loves warblers!

Our presenter, Don Gorney, a former board member and newsletter editor of Stockbridge Audubon, will share photos and life histories of the more common warbler species found in northern Indiana. For instance, did you know that Golden-winged Warbler is now believed to be extirpated as a breeding species in the state? Their close relatives, the Blue-winged Warblers, have pushed Golden-winged Warblers into less suitable nesting habitat and frequently hybridize with them. For these two reasons, conserving the Golden-winged is a high priority for Audubon and other conservation groups.

Our family of Wood Warblers (like that of hummingbirds!) is found only in the western hemisphere. (Aren't we lucky to live here?)

Interestingly, our common Blue-grey Gnatcatcher belongs in the family of Old World Warblers. (Who knew?) And Australia has an entirely different family of birds called “warblers” that are unrelated to either the New World or Old World Warblers.

Now that spring is upon us, warblers are migrating back to northeast Indiana. Louisiana Waterthrush and Yellow-throated Warbler are two of the earliest in early April, followed by more than 30 more species over the next several weeks.

There are 128 species of New World Warblers, with about 60 that reach the United States. Of

the 39 warbler species known from the eastern United States, 36 species can be found each year in Indiana. However, some species such as Prairie, Worm-eating, and Pine, more common in southern Indiana, are hard to find in northeast Indiana. Other species, including Golden-winged, Mourning, and Connecticut, have small populations or are “skulkers” making them very difficult to find here.

Don hopes you will want to look for warblers this spring. Maybe you can find all 36!



Presidential Words

By Gary Tieben
March 2009

I would like to invite you to participate in the following Stockbridge Audubon Society Spring activities:

First please take time to visit the new Stockbridge Audubon website. The new website has a location that will make it easier to find. You can go to **Stockbridgeaudubon.org** to find the website, which is currently under construction. Many of the usual features from past websites, such as Bird of the Month, Bird Notes, Field trip schedules, etc. are present. You will also find some new items related to local natural areas of interest to birders and non-birders, links to sites for adults and children, and a number of surprises. All of these may not be present on your first visit, but they will appear over the next few months.

The Spring Field Trip schedule was in the previous newsletter and I would like to encourage you to participate in one or more of the trips. Some of the trips last only a few hours while others are all day events. All trips provide the opportunity to see interesting birds and to learn more about bird identification. Remember all levels of birders are welcome.

The Stockbridge Audubon spring public meeting will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday April the 19th at the University of Saint Francis, Achatz Hall of Science in the Gunderson Auditorium. Our speaker will be Don Gorney, a very active Hoosier birder. Don participated and led many Stockbridge Audubon fieldtrips when he was in Fort Wayne. Currently Don lives in Indianapolis and is active with the Amos Butler Audubon Chapter. Don will be presenting a program on warblers. This program will help get your warbler season off to a good start.

Again I urge you to make plans to attend the spring meeting and to attend some or all of the field trips. Be certain to visit our new website at **Stockbridgeaudubon.org** and let us know how you like the new site.

Editor's note:

The last issue had an article by Terri Gorney about the McClue Nature Preserve. She will have copies of her book at the meeting, for sale at \$25 as a fundraiser for the preserve.



BIRD NOTES

By Jim Haw

January 21-March 16, 2009

Twelve Northern Bobwhites at Salamonie Reservoir Feb. 26 (Jim Haw, Sandy Schacht, Ryan Smith) were a rare sighting of a species now infrequently encountered in northeastern Indiana. Another seldom-seen species was a Merlin in Mongo, Lagrange Co. Jan. 31 (Haw, Schacht, Smith).

Northern Shrikes were found at Pigeon River Jan. 31 (Haw, Schacht, Smith) and Chain O' Lakes State Park Feb. 3 (Haw).

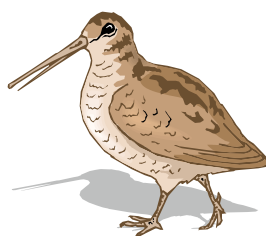
Some semi-hardy species that normally winter in small numbers were absent (Golden-crowned Kinglet) or virtually absent (Yellow-rumped Warbler) in Jan. and Feb., but others were found in normal to above average numbers: Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers at Jeff McCoy's feeder in Columbia City Jan. 25 and at Pigeon River Jan. 24 (Haw, Schacht), a remarkable three Hermit Thrushes at Pigeon River Jan. 24 (Haw, Schacht) and one at Salamonie River State Forest Jan. 27 (Haw,

Schacht), and a flock of eleven E. Meadowlarks in Allen Co. Jan. 25 (Haw). Three Meadowlarks were found in Huntington Co. and one in Wabash Co. Feb. 2 (Lynnanne Fager). A Wilson's Snipe at Fawn River Fish Hatchery, Orland, Feb. 20 (Terri Gorney, Dave Reichlinger) and a Field Sparrow at Huntington Res. Feb. 17 (Haw) may have been wintering birds or early migrants.

The record White-winged Crossbill irruption began to subside in late January as the birds moved on. Some went south, with a small flock at Salamonie Jan. 23-Feb. 14 (reservoir employees, Haw, Schacht) and one stray crossbill at Huntington Res. Feb. 10 (Haw). But as the crossbills left, increasing numbers of Common Redpolls arrived, highlighted by 62 at the Pokagon State Park nature center Feb. 27 (Holly Meyers). Purple Finch numbers peaked with a flock of 29 at Pigeon River Jan. 31 (Haw, Schacht, Smith). Pine Siskins remained numerous, peak counts being 34 at Columbia City Feb. 18 (McCoy) and 14 at Jeff Moore's Roanoke feeders Mar. 1.

Among early spring migrants were four Tundra Swans in Allen Co. Mar. 13 (Rodger Rang) and 19 more near Poneto

Mar. 16 (Larry Parker). Sandhill Cranes were first noted with 19 over Fox Island (Gorney et al) and flocks totaling 206 at Huntington, Salamonie, and Mississinewa Reservoirs (McCoy), both on Feb. 13. Some 20-25 Rusty Blackbirds flew over Fox Island Mar. 15 (Rang).



Editor's rantings By Cynthia Powers

Have you ever heard a woodcock? Right now, go out at dusk to any brushy field and listen closely. You might hear a loud nasal "peent" and see a small chunky bird fly straight up, circle around, and land back where it started. Then you hear the "peent" again. This is all to impress the females, who are pretending not to care. You might think the sound is some kind of frog! If you need help finding woodcocks, call **Fox Island County Park at 449-3180** and arrange to join them on Saturday evening, April 11 at 8 p.m. For a fee of \$2 each, they'll take you to see the amazing show. This would be great for kids, but dress warmly!

Are you pining for your hummingbirds to come back? Mine usually show up the first

week in May. You can track their arrival on our NEW WEBSITE, (thanks, Roger McNett!) **stockbridgeaudubon.org**. Scroll way down and click on the hummer arrival map. You can even put in your own sightings. Track them as they leave the Gulf States and head north. Remember to feed them ¼ cup of sugar dissolved in 1 cup of warm water, or 1:4 ratio.

Get the kids together and check out the **FalconCam**, also from our website. Yes, Freedom and Roosevelt are at it again, up in their box at One Summit Square. Freedom, the female, has grandchicks all over the midwest. At age 15, will she lay eggs this year? Keep watching!

Lastly, keep an eye on those new wetlands at Eagle Marsh. You can overlook the area from the parking lot at the Boy Scout office at I-69 and West Jefferson. Turn south at the traffic light by Lutheran Hospital and follow the frontage road.

IF YOU'RE TOO BUSY TO GO BIRDING, YOU'RE TOO BUSY!



The Swale

The Watery Road to Heron Town

No barren road
Leads travelers on
Its dusty way
To Heron Town:
But
Tangled willows,
Sweet swamp roses,
Sword grass meadows,
Bogs of rushes,
Wild flag blossoms,
Wiry sedges,
Stately cat-tails,
Ferns and mosses
Line all the road
That stretches on
Its swaly path
To Heron Town

By Jane Brooks Hine (1831-1916)

You'll remember Terri Gorney's article about Jane, the "Bird Woman" of DeKalb County. It appeared in the November 2008 newsletter.

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 9.**

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
Noble County John Winebrenner 260- 373-2904 goshawk7@verizon.net



Are you wondering.....why you're getting this newsletter? It's simple: if you join the National Audubon Society, you're automatically a member of your local chapter. (What a deal!) We're sending this issue to 744 members!