



Stockbridge Audubon

Representing Northeast Indiana

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

March Meeting: Update on Limberlost Swamp Restoration

Date: March 13, 2011
Time: 2:00 PM
Location: Achatz Hall
University of St. Francis
Speaker:
Ken Brunswick, Indiana DNR

The Limberlost and Loblolly wetlands were drained a century ago to “reclaim” the land for crop farming. After 86 years of drainage, the Limberlost Swamp Remembered project began the process of restoring part of the drained wetlands back to the wetland habitat it was when Gene Stratton-Porter moved to the area in 1887. Our goal is establishing wildlife habitat that invites birds to migrate through the area or stay to raise their young. From our first 143-acre purchase in 1996 to our 2556th acre on public and private land, we worked with 45 different landowners. Now, after all these restorations, we are

seeing the birds return in large numbers.

In 2009, we restored part of our designated shorebird area, and in 2010, we were thrilled to have numerous birds and few rare species. Almost half of the program will be dedicated to the restoration and management of shorebird areas.

In 2010, a pair of Bald Eagles built their nest, and we believe the female is mature enough in 2011 to lay her eggs and hatch young.

THIS SOUNDS LIKE FUN.....

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
FOR CRANE SURVEY**
By Mark Weldon

Since 1982 the International Crane foundation has done a Sandhill Crane spring census for the state of Wisconsin. After a number of years they opened

it up to other midwest states.

This year will be the first year that Indiana will participate. The Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo will oversee the organizing of this count.

Anybody can participate in this count.

April 16 will be the only count day regardless of weather.

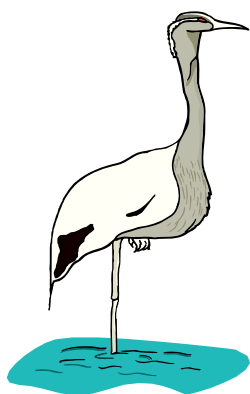
The participant(s) will be given one area to count, and **you must be present at that site from 6:30 until 8:30am**. Birds that are seen and heard will be counted. Observers will need to know at least two crane calls. This information will be supplied to the observers.

Most of the count areas are in Steuben, Noble, and Lagrange Counties, where there is good habitat or even past evidence of nesting. Participants will not

enter the actual habitat. Most viewing will be done from near your vehicle, and you'll need to fill in a simple report form.

For more information contact:

Mark Weldon
Fort Wayne Children's Zoo
3411 Sherman Blvd
Fort Wayne, IN 46808
(260) 427-6806
mark@kidszoo.org



(OK, this is a Whooping Crane, not a Sandhill. But we can dream, can't we?)

BIRDING ON THE INTERNET By Jim Haw

What are the best places to look for birds in Indiana? What birds are other people seeing in our part of the state at present? Have you seen an interesting bird that you would like to tell others about? Are you going on vacation and looking for similar information for other states? The internet has a wealth of information about these and many other bird-

related and conservation-related topics.

For Indiana, in addition to the Indiana Audubon Society website, www.indianaaudubon.org, contains much useful information. From the homepage, click on birds, then birding sites, for descriptions of many of the best birding areas in the state, complete with directions for getting there and where to go once you arrive, plus some of the more interesting species to look for. Two individuals' websites, dongorney.com and stevepancol.com, also contain much useful Indiana birding information.

What birds are currently being seen here? Many Indiana observers post their sightings to IN-BIRD-L, the state birders' listserv. You can read their emails, and post your own sightings if you desire. Sending and receiving IN-BIRD-L emails requires subscription to the listserv (no charge). To subscribe, send the message:

SUBSCRIBE IN-BIRD-L
Yourfirstname Yourlastname
To:

LISTSERVE@LISTSERVE.INDIANA.EDU

You will receive a confirmation email; follow its directions.

Or, if you do not want to post to IN-BIRD-L and would prefer not to receive all these emails in your inbox, you can read other people's IN-BIRD-L posts by going to Jack Siler's homepage, www.birdingonthe.net. Click on regional/specialty, then Indiana to read the posts. You will note that the regional/specialty page includes links to all of the other state and Canadian provincial birding listserves. If you plan to travel, or want to know what is being seen nearby across the Ohio or Michigan state line, this is your best quick source. Note that there are two Michigan listserves. Only rarities are supposed to be posted on Mich-Listers (an injunction that new subscribers sometimes violate), while the regular

Michigan listserv includes ordinary reports but may not pick up all rarities. The Rare Bird Alert page on birdingonthe.net allows you to check digests of reports (usually weekly) of unusual birds for many parts of the country. There is one frustration in using these listserves for other parts of the country: birders often report what they have found at, say, Jones Park without saying where Jones Park is. But an internet search can often supply that information.

For Ohio, the information on birdingonthe.net needs to be supplemented with another website, www.RareBird.org, which provides links to local and regional listserves around the state. Some are seldom used, but Toledo birders often report sightings to the Toledo Rare Bird Alert but not to the Ohio statewide listserv.

For online information on good birding spots in other states, one method is to use "birding" and "name of state" as a search term in your favorite search engine. You will typically uncover multiple websites containing information of varying degrees of usefulness.

The internet contains many other resources on a wide variety of bird-related topics, including identification, song, conservation, and historical records. The above tips, though, will help tell you where to go and what is being seen.

TOUR MAGEE MARSH WITH MERRY LEA

Our own Paul McAfee and Lisa Zinn from Goshen College's Merry Lea Environmental Center will lead a weekend tour to Magee Marsh and Maumee Bay on the shores of Lake Erie, right in time for the spectacular

spring migration! It will take place May 20-22 and costs less than \$300 per person! You will travel by van and stay at Maumee Bay Lodge. (There's also a camping option). What a deal!

For the complete scoop, e-mail to jenniferhs@goshen.edu or pmcafee@toast.net.

PRESIDENTIAL WORDS

By Gary Tieben

When I was young, I always looked forward to reading Robert Ruark's "The Old Man and the Boy" column in Field and Stream magazine. You may recall that Field and Stream is the current face of the early Forest and Stream magazine that played such an important role in the early conservation movement spearheaded by Theodore Roosevelt and others. One column that comes to mind at this time of year dealt with Ruark's musings on February. The "Boy" considered February, with its meager 28 days, to be the longest month of the year. He drew this conclusion because February was too late, too early, too cold, or too wet for all of the outdoor activities the boy was interested in. It was a long, boring month. But this wouldn't have been the case if either the old man or the boy had been a birdwatcher!

Birdwatching is more difficult in February, a month which many consider the heart of winter, but birdwatching is certainly not impossible. I consider February to be just the extremely early spring. If you are not an experienced winter birder, take a look at Jim Haw's article on internet birding located in this newsletter. A periodic look at the Indiana

birding site and other sites will inform you of what species have been seen recently and where they have been seen. Wow! All the heavy lifting has been done for you, thanks to the online posters who did all of the scouting. Now, in addition to the warm, comfortable, productive indoor feeder watching sites such as those at the Nature Centers in Pokagon State Park, Salamonie State Park, Fox Island County Park, and others you might give some outdoor sites a try, such as the ones at the Fawn River Hatchery, the wildfowl overlook at Pigeon River Fish and Game Area, or others that you know or have discovered online. Remember that Fish and Game Areas have been purchased with funds from hunting and fishing licenses. These areas are excellent birding sites because they are managed for wildlife and provide for the needs of wildlife. You can help support them by purchasing a fishing or hunting license each year, regardless of how you feel about fishing or hunting. You might want to do this as regularly as you purchase your yearly Indiana State Park Pass.

If you get super serious about midwinter or extremely early spring birding, you may want to graduate to visiting the open water areas of Lake Michigan in places such as the Michigan City Harbor, the Hammond Marina, the Whiting Refinery area, the Port of Indiana, or others. A trip to Cleveland, Ohio, to look at gulls in the open water areas of Lake Erie may interest you. You may also consider a longer trip to Sault Saint Marie and the upper peninsula of Michigan to try for wintering Hawk Owls, Great Gray Owls, Boreal Owls and other boreal species. Whether you choose to do your birding inside a cozy Nature Center or to make a trip to an area by the Great Lakes, remember this time of

year can be very cold. Always dress appropriately; be certain that your vehicle is in good shape; have some emergency food and water with you and make your decisions with safety in mind.



HIGH POINTS OF LOCAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The Fort Wayne Count celebrated its 50th consecutive year Dec. 18, although Terri Gorney found an account of one held in Dec. 1920 by Charles Stockbridge and others along the St. Joe River. (They only found 19 species!) In 2010 we found 53 species, about average. Notable sightings included 105 Eastern Bluebirds, 7 Yellow-rumped Warblers, and 25 Pine Siskins, and 7 Turkey Vultures. 19 observers celebrated with the traditional chili supper coordinated by Carole Smith. Thanks to FW Parks and Rec. for the use of the Franke Park Nature Lodge. The coordinator was Jim Haw.

The Pigeon River Count was held the following day, Dec. 19. Ten observers found 53 species, a tie with Fort Wayne! They saw 2 Bald Eagles, 19 Wild Turkeys, and 6 Eurasian Collared-Doves and a Pied-

billed Grebe, plus the “usual suspects.” Coordinator was Gary Tieben.

The **Pokagon Count** was held on Dec. 28 in Steuben County. It had the most observers, 25 in all. (Could the chili lunch at the Nature Center be part of the attraction?) The big surprise was 2 Virginia Rails, along with 2 Bald Eagles, 10 Pileated Woodpeckers, and a Northern Shrike. The Pokagon Count was coordinated by Fred Wooley.

BIRD NOTES

October 11-January 15

By Jim Haw

Reports of Cackling Geese were two at Bixler Lake, Kendallville, Nov. 27 (Jim Haw) and one at the Ft. Wayne sewage treatment plant Jan. 3 (Haw). Snow Geese were two in Steuben Co. Nov. 12 (Holly Meyers), 2 at Cree Lake, Kendallville, Dec. 4 (Haw), and one at Lake Clare, Huntington Dec. 7 (Haw, Sandy Schacht). A Ross' Goose at Roush Lake Nov. 23 (Haw, Schacht) was a rarity, as were a Black Scoter and a Long-tailed Duck on Clear Lake, Steuben Co. Nov. 16 (Haw, Schacht, Marisa Windell).

A late Green Heron stayed at Eagle Marsh through Oct. 19 (Haw). Turkey Vultures again wintered in the Cedar Creek area of Allen County. A Golden Eagle was at Salamonie

Res. Dec. 7 (Haw, Schacht). Outside the normal reporting area for this newsletter but remarkable was a count of 158 Bald Eagles at the winter roost below Mississinewa Dam Jan. 8 (Lynnanne Fager et al); a Golden Eagle was in the same area. A Merlin was at Pigeon River Nov. 4 (Haw, Schacht).

One out-of-season Sandhill Crane was at Pigeon River Jan. 1 (Mark Weldon). A Black-bellied Plover was in Lagrange Co. Oct. 16 (Haw, Schacht). Fawn River Fish Hatchery again hosted wintering Killdeer (high count of 8 Jan. 7 by Terri Gorney) and one Wilson's Snipe Jan. 6-7. Notable among gulls were northeastern Indiana's third Little Gull, at Clear Lake, Steuben Co. Nov. 16 (Haw, Schacht, Windell) and fourth Black-legged Kittiwake at Roush Lake Dec. 4 (Jeff McCoy).

Unusual in winter was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Salamonie River State Forest Jan. 13 (Haw, Schacht). A very late Eastern Phoebe visited the Salamonie nature center Dec. 16 (Fager). Northern Shrikes were found in Noble Co. Nov. 1 (McCoy) and Steuben Co. Nov. 16 (Haw, Schacht, Windell). A Marsh Wren lingered at Eagle Marsh through Oct. 31 (Haw), northeast Indiana's latest fall record by 7 days. A Hermit Thrush in Franke Park Jan. 10 (Haw) and another in Salamonie R. State Forest Jan. 13 (Haw, Schacht) picked a

cold, snowy year to spend the winter so far north, and an American Pipit at Fawn River Jan. 6-7 (Haw, Schacht, Gorney) was even more out of place. The winner of the “shouldn't be here in winter” contest, though, was a Pine Warbler that showed up at Paul McAfee's feeder in Allen Co. Jan. 1-4. Single Eastern Towhees were at the Fox Island feeders (Ed and Cynthia Powers et al) and the Salamonie feeders through the season so far (Fager et al). Five or six Eastern Meadowlarks were in Allen Co. Jan. 14 (Powers). Good numbers of Pine Siskins moved through in November and early December, peaking at 56 at Salamonie Nov. 30 (Fager), and small numbers stayed for the winter. A lost female White-winged Crossbill was at a feeder in Amish western Lagrange Co. Nov. 14-18 (Leland Shaum, Sam Plew et al) with no conifers around for miles.

Editorial Rantings

By Cynthia Powers

If you enjoy “collecting” people's names that have to do with their occupations, you were no doubt disappointed when John Flicker resigned as President of National Audubon. But all is not lost! The chairman of the board is a Mr. Thrasher!