

Indiana Audubon Society

CARDINAL

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FALL MIGRATION BEGINS

IN THIS ISSUE: RAPTOR ID, OCTOBER BIG
DAY, REHABILITATION, AND MORE!

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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:

Cooper's Hawk by Vic Berardi

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

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



UPCOMING TRIPS & 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!

AUGUST 6: Hummingbird Migration Celebration [Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, Connersville]

AUGUST 9: Building Birder Skills Virtual Workshop- Shorebird ID with Geoffrey Williamson [Zoom]

AUGUST 13: Lakefront Shorebirds Field Trip [Michigan City]

SEPTEMBER 3: Fall Open House Event at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary [Connersville]

SEPTEMBER 24: IAS Fall Gathering [South Bend]

Visit the Indiana Audubon Events Page at **INDIANA AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS** to see all the field trips and events now posted for registration. These trips will fill fast!



NOMINATE AN IAS MEMBER TODAY!

Indiana Audubon Society members are encouraged to make nominations for one of two annual awards the society bestows each year. The Earl Brooks Award is given to an individual "for advancement of conservation of natural resources in Indiana." The award recipient does not have to be an Indiana Audubon Society member. The James H. Mason Service Award is presented to a member of the Indiana Audubon Society who has dedicated themselves through service to the society. It serves as an inspiration and focus for others to work with such individuals.

Learn more about the IAS Awards and nominations at
INDIANA AUDUBON.ORG/ABOUT-US



GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED THIS YEAR



The Indiana Audubon Society is pleased to announce several awards in the Mumford and Keller Grants/Scholarship Program in 2022. This program is for individuals and organizations that are seeking funding for activities related to Indiana's natural resources, particularly those related to Indiana's avifauna. This year's funding has been set aside for applicants in many categories, including, but not limited to: research, bird preservation, workshop attendance, and youth birding activities. More than \$6,000 in funds will be awarded this fall.

For more information about the Mumford and Keller Grants/Scholarship Program, visit bit.ly/IASgrant

IAS MONITORING WATERBIRDS WITH DRONES



Earlier this spring, Indiana Audubon assisted in research using UAVs (drones) to assess difficult-to-survey nesting areas where adult birds often flush and pose risk to young birds. The usually inaccessible steel mills in NW Indiana host large numbers of nesting cormorants, night-herons and egrets, in addition to gulls and terns.

High resolution "stitching" allows for many images to be combined into a single large image. **How many nesting cormorants can you find in this picture?**

BROCK'S SHOREBIRDS OF INDIANA

Shorebirds represent a diverse set of often long-distance migrant birds whose ID can be as challenging as finding them. Indiana isn't always thought of as a destination to watch shorebirds, however the many mudflats, shallow waters, sandy beaches, flooded fields and rocky shorelines provides for a host of habitats for both breeding and migrating shorebird species.

Charles Keller revolutionized what we know about shorebird migration in Indiana in his marvelous 1957-58 shorebird articles. Charlie integrated a thorough literature search with sparse local records. Today, 60+ years later, Dr. Kenneth Brock has compiled the most extensive update on the nearly 50 shorebird species that have been seen in Indiana. Each species account includes exhaustive data on migration timing, abundance, and distribution around the state.



The Brock's Shorebirds of Indiana supplement is a great addition to his previous published Birds of Indiana and Birds of Indiana Dunes. Each shorebird species file is made available online by Dr. Brock for all Indiana Audubon members.

Check it out today at
INDIANA AUDUBON.ORG/SHOREBIRDSOFIN

INDIANA AUDUBON TRAVEL PROGRAM GIVES BACK

Indiana Audubon's travel program is an opportunity to learn more about the birds around the world, while giving back to the locations we visit. Through your help, we learned more about the conservation of birds this winter and spring in locations outside of Indiana, and were able to give back to the following projects this year:



COSTA RICA NEST BOX PROJECT

Participants to this winter's Costa Rica tour learned about the efforts Emmanuel has made to provide nest boxes for woodpeckers, parrots, and other cavity nesters in reclaimed habitat just outside of San Jose. IAS made a \$500 donation towards this project, and the trip participants MATCHED the donation to help support this effort.

SUPPORTING SCALED QUAIL ALONG THE RIO GRANDE

Indiana Audubon's pandemic delayed trip to the lower Rio Grande this spring helped give back to the Valley Fund and participants donated on their own to the Ranchito de los Coyotillos, providing habitat and viewing opportunities for Scaled Quail and other scrubland species.

BLACK HILLS AND BADLAND GRASSLANDS RULE!

Birders this summer explored the taste of the West with our Black Hills and Badlands trip in June. That exploration showcased some amazing conservation taking place in this unique landscape. IAS provided another donation to support The Nature Conservancy's grassland restorations and management in South Dakota.

ANTPITTA WORLD IN ECUADOR

More than 400 species were seen this summer in Ecuador with Lifer Nature Tours and Indiana Audubon. A trip highlight was visiting the Angel Paz Antpitta Reserve. IAS participants were so moved by the conservation and education story taking place on the western slopes of the Andes that in combination with a \$500 donation made to the protection and continuation of this special reserve, IAS members have again matched this donation directly to the GoFundMe campaign.



Indiana Audubon

BIRDING TRAVEL

2023-2024

Come on your next epic birding adventure with us! Indiana Audubon is happy to host our next in a series of great birding adventures designed to educate our members to the birds around the world. Indiana Audubon trips bring in conservation and research dollars for Indiana bird projects and we donate a percentage back to conservation efforts in the areas we visit. Travel the world, get new lifers, and give back to local organizations. We hope to see you on our next trip!

MICHIGAN U.P.

SNOWY OWLS

FEBRUARY 3-5, 2023

SAX-ZIM BOG MN

NORTHERN OWL TOUR

FEBRUARY 10-13, 2023

COSTA RICA

CLOUD FOREST & OSA

MARCH 1-12, 2023

RIO GRANDE VALLEY

WOMEN'S TOUR

APRIL 15-22, 2023

COLOMBIA

NORTHERN BIRDING TRAIL

JULY 15-26, 2023

BELIZE

TROPICAL BIRDS

JANUARY 19-27, 2024

FLORIDA

MIGRANTS & MANGROVES

APRIL 13-24, 2024

Reserve your spot at

[WWW.INDIANA AUDUBON.](http://WWW.INDIANA AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS)

[ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.INDIANA AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS)

Photos: Blue-naped Chlorophonia by Joao Quental; Great Gray Owl by Shari McCollough; Garden Emerald by Joseph Boone; Florida Beach by Libby Keyes; Green Jay by Andy Morffew; Jabiru by David Rupp

INDIANA BIRDING HIGHLIGHT

PATOKA RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

By: Jeremy Ross

Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge is a 10,000-acre Import Bird Area IBA in the counties of Pike and Gibson. Though labeled as a bottomland forest habitat, it is the diversity of habitats that make it special to birders. Within the refuge, one can find seasonally flooded agricultural fields, grasslands (850 ac.), swamps and marshes (950 ac.), forested sloughs and oxbows, and reforestation planting at different levels of succession. Due its diversity, the refuge holds something for year-round birding.

The bottomland forests offer valuable habitat to nesting birds such as Prothonotary Warblers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers. The grasslands are home to nesting Henslow's

Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks, Dickcissels, Bobwhite and Bell's Vireos.



The flooded fields host numerous shorebird and waterfowl species, depending on season and water level. During the winter and into April waterfowl numbers can be quite significant at hotspots like Oatsville and Monty's Station if floodwaters are present. If the previously mentioned hotspots remain flooded and shallow through the first week of June then a birder can expect nearly any species of shorebird. If water is present into summer, then large congregations of waders like Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons can be seen feeding along with reliable yearly sightings of Snowy Egrets and Little Blue herons

and more uncommon sightings of Yellow Crowned Night Herons.

By fall, the seasonally flooded areas are usually dry, but a birder can still find waders on permanent wetlands such as Dillin Bottoms, Snakey Point and Bucks Marsh but often this requires walking into areas without trails and looking over the marsh as the water levels are usually too shallow to boat

If one considers all the public properties that surround the wildlife refuge, a birder has over 25,000 acres of opportunity.

TIMING

Typical Time to Bird
Site: 2-6 hours.

Best Time to Bird:
Four seasons of birding exists within the refuge. Spring migration is the best time to bird the refuge. Aside from the season, one of the most important aspects to consider when birding the refuge is the water level of the Patoka River. The river is often in some level of flooding

during the winter and early spring.
Hours: open year-round, sunrise to sunset. However, nocturnal birding can be had from the road.

GETTING THERE

Address: 510 ½ West Morton St, Oakland City, IN 47660
Directions: Between Wheeling and Pikeville, along the Patoka River, with Oakland City as the center.

Parking: Many large and/or popular parcels have small parking areas. Roadside viewing can be on busy roads, so caution is necessary.

Nearby Amenities: At the Boyd Trail parking lot is a new pit toilet, there are no other public restrooms. Gas stations are available at Arthur, Winslow, Francisco and Oakland City. Oakland City and Petersburg are the nearest towns with

restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores and campgrounds only one nearby hotel at Oakland City.

SITE LOGISTICS

Admission: Free
Ownership: US Fish and Wildlife Service
Restrictions: Open to hunting. Hunters and other users may be present.
Accessibility: The refuge has miles of trails

mowed and maintained by volunteers, yet conditions change with the seasons and weather. Boyd and Maxey, near Snakey Point in Oakland City, have the best accessible trails for visitors.

CONTACT INFO

Website: fws.gov/refuge/Patoka_River
eBird Hotspot Link: ebird.org/hotspot/L387713

meet a MEMBER SCOTT NAMESTNIK

Q TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF. WHERE ARE YOU FROM? FAMILY?

My wife, Lindsay, and I live in North Liberty, across the street from Potato Creek State Park (nice yard bird list as a result!) with our dog, Cooper. I work for the Indiana Natural Heritage Data Center, housed at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Nature Preserves as the heritage program botanist. That means that my spring through fall "office" is "Interstate Indiana"... I monitor rare plants and natural communities across the state.

Q WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN BIRDS AND BIRDING?

Since 1998, I've been working outside, first in Missouri, then in Indiana. My focus has always been plants, but it's impossible not to notice the other wonders of nature. One of my former coworkers was interested in birds and taught me a few as we were monitoring mitigation wetlands together in the early 2000s. He eventually moved to Florida and Lindsay met up with them for a week while I was botanizing with coworkers in the Everglades. The next week, I joined them and we went to J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. As it turned out, Lindsay learned a lot of birds in Florida, and I quickly found out that I didn't know an Anhinga from a cormorant! Not to be outdone, I became somewhat obsessed starting that day with learning birds. I quickly ran into a problem, though. I found that I was always looking down at plants, so I didn't see any birds. But I have ears, and I know how to use them. I bought the Stokes Field Guide to Birds three CD (yeah, CD) set and listened to the CDs every day on my way to and from work so that I could learn to identify birds that way. I knew all of the warbler songs before I had any clue what they looked like. This was an invaluable tool in my process of becoming a birder.

Q DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE BIRD OR GROUP OF BIRDS?

It's hard to pick favorites, but I think my favorite group of birds would be the warblers. As I mentioned, I learned them by song before I knew what they looked like, and when I put together field characters with songs, I was amazed at the visual and auditory beauty and diversity of this group of birds.



Q YOU RECENTLY CO-AUTHORED THE BOOK "WILDFLOWERS OF THE INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK." WHAT WAS THAT EXPERIENCE LIKE AND WHAT HAS BEEN THE GENERAL RESPONSE?

I actually just co-authored two books... **Wildflowers of the Indiana Dunes National Park**, and **Wildflowers of the Midwest**. Michael Homoya asked me to co-author *Wildflowers of the Midwest* with him, and I couldn't turn down an opportunity to write a book with one of my botanical heroes. A couple of weeks later, Nathanael Pilla called and said he was going to write *Wildflowers of the Indiana Dunes National Park* and asked if I'd help. I initially said no, because I'd just agreed to write another book. But Nathanael is persistent, and with the Indiana Dunes just becoming a National Park, and one that lacked a good wildflower guide, it seemed like an important endeavor to help with a book for a region an hour from my house. So I agreed, and spent the next couple of years on weekends and evenings co-authoring two books. The response has been fantastic. We didn't just put together a standard wildflower identification guide for the Dunes. Our book has that aspect, but also includes information on why the plants are named the way they are, how birds and insects interact with the plants, how the plants were used historically, and other interesting tidbits, produced in an often humorous and memorable manner. We expect that the owner of this guide will be able to take it in the field with them to help identify the wildflowers they're seeing along the trails through the National Park (it's applicable outside of this region as well!) and we hope that they can also enjoy an entertaining read about the flora on a rainy or snowy day.



RAPTORS IN FLIGHT ID

HOW TO APPROACH LEARNING

BY: VIC BERARDI



This fall, thousands of raptors will be migrating across our skies. While out birding on a beautiful October day, you may see a fellow birder move his or her binoculars upward and into that deep blue sky. They are fixed on something but aren't saying anything. You can barely see what they are looking at - you guess maybe a hawk, and maybe a Red-tailed Hawk. But after a moment or so, they call it out as a juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk! Whoa, really? Something about that intrigues you and you ask, "How did you do that?" Your fellow birder replies, "Do what?"

That's where the love of hawk watching begins for many birders. It did for me on a trip to Hawk Ridge in Duluth, MN many years ago in the fall of 1996. I was a pretty avid birder and kept several lists - state, county, etc. I went to Hawk Ridge on a whim to see migrating raptors. At the end of the first day, after being there for about two hours, I was ecstatic that I saw a total of 30 raptors that I could identify. However the raptor counter there just updated the site's white board and in the same time I counted 30, he counted 150! No way, I said to myself. So the next morning I decided to watch him instead of looking for raptors in the sky. After all these years, I still have it in my mind what he did next. He looked into what appeared to me to be a blank sky and then turned around and wrote something down. He did this a few more times. Then I got closer to him and looked in the direction he was looking and I saw a speck. Yeah, a speck. But as a friend of mine once said, "It's a speck with wings!" From that moment on, I was hooked into the art - yes, the art - of hawk watching.

So where do we start the process of learning how to identify raptors in flight, and more importantly at great distances? Why great distances? Because at most hawk watch sites - places where migrating raptors concentrate in greater numbers - most of the raptors that are counted are seen at a distance. The problem of identification at distance differs considerably from identification at close range. The main problem is that seeing a raptor relatively close-up uses characteristics that you can easily identify by referencing a bird guidebook. Raptors seen at long range present a different challenge.

Raptor Photos (clockwise): Rough-legged Hawk by Ryan Sanderson; Red-tailed Hawk, Osprey, and Northern Harrier by Shari McCollough;

What Can **BIRDS** Tell Us About The **STATE OF OUR LAND?**

By: Andrea Huntington

Although certain bird species are widely considered heralds of spring, many also serve as important indicators of ecosystem health. The presence or absence of certain species can be demonstrative of how well an ecosystem is functioning.

Many bird species are extremely sensitive to habitat changes. Therefore, it's no wonder that birds have long been considered important environmental monitors, and more specifically, sentinel species - recall the famous "canary in a coal mine." Just as miners used canaries for early detection of carbon monoxide and noxious gases, bird populations throughout the state are providing early detection of environmental pollution and deteriorating habitats. In that same vein, the thriving and/or returning of certain bird populations often indicates successful habitat restoration and land management efforts.

A modern example of the significance of bird species as indicators can be seen along the Grand Calumet River. The Grand Calumet River is one of 43 Areas of Concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1987 due to legacy pollutants. After years of restoration work, one can now observe Bald Eagles, Trumpeter Swans, cormorants, and Hooded Mergansers - birds that rely on clean water and healthy ecosystems. The Grand Calumet River, like many of Indiana's waterways, is being restored and cared for through partnerships with nonprofit land trusts.

Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA) is a nonpartisan network of land trusts, conservation partners, and community members championing land and water protection for all of Indiana - people, plants, and animals. Collectively, Indiana's land trusts serve all 92 counties and protect more than 158,000 acres. They preserve Hoosier landscapes and restore the important habitats and ecosystems that Indiana's flora and fauna, especially our feathered friends, need to survive.

Indiana's land trusts recognize the important impact of their work on bird populations. Many rely on informal bird assessments when visiting a site for the first time. This data may help inform the level of disturbance or habitat

degradation. Similarly, bird counts may help land trusts determine whether a restoration project has been successful. For example, one land trust recently questioned whether a planted grassland is serving its ultimate function if grassland birds such as Dickcissels fail to return.

Land trusts are increasingly making data-informed decisions about restoration and land management. Thus, assessments from bird counts and bio-surveys are extremely important. The ILPA relies on partnerships with community experts like Indiana Audubon and local Audubon Society chapters for help.

On **Saturday, October 8**, ILPA is partnering with Indiana Audubon, land trust members, and local Audubon chapters to host its first-ever statewide October Big Day event. Expert bird guides will lead birding hikes at **15 different nature preserves and natural areas throughout the state**, owned and managed by 13 different nonprofit land trusts. Participating land trusts include: Red-tail Land Conservancy, Ouabache Land Conservancy, Indiana Karst Conservancy, ACRES Land Trust, Central Indiana Land Trust, Little River Wetlands Project, LC Nature Park, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, Mud Creek Conservancy, Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy, Sycamore Land Trust, Oxbow, Inc., and Oak Heritage Conservancy.

Register now for one of the free guided hikes at
WWW.INDIANAUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS



Top Photo: Sargent Road Nature Park (owned by Mud Creek Conservancy) by Ben Miller

OXYGEN CHAMBER IMPROVES WILDLIFE CARE

HUMANE INDIANA WILDLIFE RECEIVES IAS GRANT FUNDS FOR SUPPORT

By: Nicole Harmon

Humane Indiana Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center (HIW), in Valparaiso, Indiana, is one of the largest and most experienced wildlife rehabilitation centers in the state. Humane Indiana Wildlife provides medical care to injured or orphaned birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians covering 26 counties.

Since its inception in 2014, HIW has admitted over 11,000 animals for care or medical treatment and provided preventative treatment to 30,000 wildlife. HIW also provides education reaching 15,000 people a year through camps, school presentations, events, and seminars.

Animals can come into treatment at Humane Indiana Wildlife for many reasons – becoming orphaned due to weather events and climate change, nest destruction caused by human expansion or predators, animals hit by vehicles, attacks from domestic pets, striking windows or buildings, and poisoning.

Despite the severity of the injuries, Humane Indiana Wildlife returns to the wild 57% of animals in their care! This is an incredible success rate compared to the national average of 35%.

To continue improving the quality of care for wildlife patients, Humane Indiana Wildlife needed an oxygen chamber. Animals rescued from stressful situations can have severe respiratory distress. Even the process of rescuing a wild animal can cause respiratory problems.

Studies have shown that increasing the oxygen concentration in an animal's blood, specifically for animals that sustain neurological trauma, more than doubles their chance of survival. Oral medications like anti-inflammatories are often not enough. The use of an oxygenator and corresponding chamber reduces cerebral edema, decreases intracranial pressure, repairs damaged brain tissues, assists in regaining cognitive or motor functions, minimizes oxidative stress, and reduces the blood-brain barrier breakdown.

Wildlife patients who receive oxygen chamber therapy improve at a rate four times faster than those without it. Just in the last 3 years, more than 1,800 of the bird patients at Humane Indiana Wildlife would have benefitted from this therapy. And with Humane Indiana's impact growing by 10% every season, the need for more advanced medical care equipment is essential to help native birds heal and be released back into the wild.

As a recipient of Indiana Audubon Society's Mumford and Keller grant in 2021, Humane Indiana Wildlife purchased an oxygen concentrator and facemasks to help birds in respiratory distress heal so they can be returned to the wild. This has helped birds like the Tennessee Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, Swanson's Thrush, and Hermit Thrush admitted during migration season after striking the sides of buildings or windows. We also treated American Robins who were victims of cat attacks.

More than 75% of the birds Humane Indiana Wildlife treated with the oxygenator have survived and been able to return to the wild! Our most memorable release being a Gold Crowned Kinglet that had struck the side of one of the art buildings at Valparaiso University and was moderately concussed. The bird was found and rescued by several nursing students who quickly rushed the bird into our care. After spending the night in the oxygenator, it was ready to be released the following day. We are grateful for the generous contribution by the Indiana Audubon Society's Mumford and Keller grant to assist in our continued care of injured and orphaned wildlife native to Indiana.



HIW Oxygen Chamber

To learn more about Humane Indiana Wildlife and our upcoming events, visit [HUMANEINDIANA.ORG](https://humaneindiana.org)

Visit our New Nest!

9873 N. Michigan Rd Ste 130.
Carmel, IN 46032

*Across the street from our old location in the
center with Red Wing Shoes



Wild Birds Unlimited in Carmel
is moving to a new location.



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