



NATURE NEWS & NOTES

DECEMBER 2012/JANUARY 2013

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR !

“Photo Night” 7:00 P.M.
December 19th at the
Vigo County Public
Library

Please join us as members share their nature photographs, video's and stories. If you have media you would like to share, please copy to a thumb drive and bring with you the night of the event. Due to number and time restraints, presenters are only allowed 10 minutes to complete their presentation. Computer, projector and screen will be available. This is always a relaxing fun event which everyone enjoys. Members and non-members are invited. You do not have to be a presenter to attend. Snacks and refreshments will be available.

“Turtle Rescue”,
Presentation, January 16,
2013

Amber Slaughterbeck, Ellen Lunsford and Heather Martin will be the guest speakers at the Wabash Valley Audubon Society's monthly meeting at 7 P.M. Wednesday January 16 at the Vigo County Public Library. Slaughterbeck leads the turtle rescue crew who,

during the past 3 years, have rescued over 2,000 turtles from traffic as they try to cross U.S. 40 and the railroad tracks at U.S. 150 by the Wabashiki Fish & Wildlife Area. Come join us to hear their fascinating story about how they rescue these turtles during their instinctive efforts to find water, mate and nest; and also find out how to join the effort to change the hand we have dealt them. All members and non-members are invited to this free program.

Joy Sacopulos Honored Hospice of the Wabash Valley recently honored Wabash Valley Audubon Society member Joy Sacopulos, as recipient of the Chapman S. Root award for outstanding contributions to the quality of life in our community. The presentation was made at the Hulman Center on Nov. 29th. Congratulations Joy!

Plans for the Terre
Haute Christmas Bird
Count

Saturday Dec 15, 2012 is the date of our **53rd** annual Terre Haute CBC. Please let one of the co-compilers know if you plan to participate and remind

us of the area you would like to bird. We will distribute tally sheets and a map. This is a big year already for winter finches and Red-breasted Nuthatch; Pine Siskin and both crossbills have been seen in the county, and Evening Grosbeak as close as Turkey Run. Keep your feeders stocked and check the conifers in your area.

The lunchtime meeting will begin at **12:30 pm** at **Subway on Third Street** and College. Please join us or call in your totals at lunch time; that helps us target species for the afternoon.

The evening countdown and dinner is at Susie Dewey's, 405 S. 34th St, a few blocks east of Baesler's Market and one block north of Poplar. Meet there at dark (6 to 6:30 pm) if you can. Barbecue sandwiches, baked beans, relish tray, cheese, and drinks are provided. If you want to bring something like a dessert, make it “finger food”, i.e., nothing requiring plates. Thanks!

Peter Scott cell: 243-3073
office: 237-2403
home: 877-2097
Dan Weber cell: 298-4842
home: 877-1810



Member Spotlight

Ellen Lunsford

This month member spotlight is on Ellen Lunsford of Rosedale, Indiana. Ellen is a speech pathologist with the Vigo County School Corporation. She joined the Wabash Valley Audubon Society in 2010 and shortly thereafter became a Director at Large and currently is serving as Secretary of the Board. Ellen also volunteers to important community causes, serving as the recording secretary of the Eta Phi chapter of Psi Lota Xi, which is an organization that supports art, music, literature, speech and hearing causes. A major goal of this organization is to raise funds that provide grants to local schools and those in need.

Ellen has always been very interested in nature, especially turtles, birds, and environmental causes, and joined the Audubon Society to be with those who share her interests and concerns for wildlife. Since becoming a member Ellen says she has learned more in-depth information about birds that has enabled her to identify many of our birds species by sight and call. Ellen also enjoys the monthly meeting topics and speakers and learns something new with every meeting and activity. Ultimately, this knowledge is passed on from Ellen to many of her students as she encourages them to learn more about the animals that interest them.

Ellen encourages others to participate in Audubon sponsored events as a way to meet those that share an interest in natural and environmental causes, stating “ It is a great way to make new friends and share time with those you may already know”. “We have so many different presenters and area of interest among our members that there is truly something for everyone”. The Audubon Society has also allowed Ellen to participate in opportunities she may not had otherwise, like participating in bat research and the bird counts.

On January 16th, there will be a presentation by Ellen and others as they discuss their turtle rescue and preservation in the Wabashiki FWA. Between 2010 and 2012 Ellen and other volunteers saved over 2,000 turtles from certain death to automobiles and other manmade hazards. This presentation will begin at 7:00 a.m. in the Vigo County Public Library. All of us from the Wabash Valley Audubon Society thank Ellen Lunsford for her spirit in volunteerism. Volunteers are the heart of non-profit organizations and it does not go unnoticed.

Fall 2012 WVAS Presenters

Jerry Lehman

“Amazon River Adventure”

Photographed with Vice President
Carissa Lovett



Dr. Elaina Tuttle

“Birds of the Boreal Forest”

Photographed with Carissa Lovett

Creek Signs Posted



The Wabash Valley Audubon Society and Ouabache Land Conservancy recently completed posting creek signs at more than 11 different roadway crossings in northern and northeastern Vigo County. Creeks that are now posted include Otter Creek, Lost Creek, Snake Creek and Sulphur Creek. In the photo to the left is Phil Cox and Marty Jones at the Creal Road crossing over Sulphur Creek. Sulphur and Snake Creeks are tributaries of Otter Creek. The project was solely funded by WVAS and OLC made possible by members like you.

By knowing the names of the streams we drive across every day in our communities, citizens of, and visitors to, this area of Vigo County will gain a sense of ownership and protectiveness. Signage will also help educate the public about their role in water quality and protection of critical fisheries habitat.

WVAS and OLC would like to continue identifying more stream crossings, however additional funding will be required. The total cost of each sign, including post and hardware is \$50.00.

Please consider sending a donation today so we can continue expanding this program and helping the community become more aware of our important natural resources. With your donation you can indicate which crossing you want posted. We will then work with the County Highway Department to make this possible.

New Study: Seabird Ingestion of Plastic in North Pacific on the Rise

A new study by U.S. and Canadian scientist has found that seabirds may be eating much more plastic trash than they have in the past, and that seabirds off the coast of Washington State and British Columbia are ingesting plastic at rates that are “among the highest” in the world. The study, by Stephanie Avery-Gomm of the University of British Columbia and five other researchers, was carried out in 2009-2010 and involved the analysis of 67 Northern Fulmars that washed up dead on the shores between Long Beach, Washington, and Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Northern Fulmars, gull-like petrels related to albatrosses and shearwaters, are particularly suitable to studies investigating trends in plastic pollution because they forage almost exclusively at sea, have vast ranges, and will snatch almost anything from the surface of the water.

The study seems to show that plastic pollution has increased in the North Pacific over the past forty years, approaching the levels previously documented only in the North Sea.

“The science of this issue is still being refined; there is much we don’t know about the impacts of plastic ingestion on birds in general and Northern Fulmars in particular,” said Avery-Gomm. “We do know that plastic in the stomach displaces space for food, and can lacerate the stomach lining. Some of the birds we looked at had gizzards completely full of plastic. We also know that plastic in the sea absorbs an astounding level of contaminants in a very short time and that these contaminants may leach out into a bird that swallows it.”

The researchers found that the dead birds had ingested an average of 0.385 grams of plastic in the 2009-2010 study, compared to 0.12 grams in a 1987 study and 0.04 grams in a 1969-1977 study. The incidence of plastic ingestion also seems to be increasing, according to other studies. In 1968-1977, 57.9% of the fulmars in these studies had ingested plastic, compared to 84.2%, in 1988-1989 and 92.5% in 2009-2010.

“We have known about this problem for 40 years and we have failed to do anything about it,” said Dr. George Wallace, Vice President for Oceans and Islands at ABC. “This problem will continue to worsen if we do not attend to it by developing ways to slow or stop the flow of plastics into the oceans.”

Over 95% of the ingested plastic consisted of twine, rope, fishing line, Styrofoam, hard pieces of discarded plastic (e.g., bottle caps), fiber sponge, and sheet plastic.

American Bird Conservancy

You Know you are a Birding Fanatic if...

- * you bird landfills.
- * it takes you three hours to go get a loaf of bread for your spouse.
- * you pay more attention to your backyard birds than to your husband or wife.
- * the Hulman Airport security suspect birders with binoculars and scopes as terrorist threat.
- * you get up from a warm cozy bed at 3 am to go owling when it’s well below freezing outside.
- * you fall into Brazil Sewage Lagoons while trying to photograph ducks.
- * you get your car stuck in a roadside ditch while photographing a hawk nest.
- * you welcome the prospect of below-zero temps and piles of snow on the theory that it’ll drive northern species farther south. So when everyone else huddles indoors you head out looking for snowy owls, redpolls, and crossbills.
- * you volunteer to plant native plants on a Wabash Avenue planter and are rewarded with free drinks from Sonka’s Irish Pub
- * your wife says “I wish I had feathers so you would pay more attention to me”.

Our welcome to the new members listed below. The December meeting is the month when members share a few of their nature/bird/travel photos—i.e. digital power point pictures. It has proven to be one our most popular programs. Consider joining us for some fun and cookies.

Maurice Taylor	Linda Hodgen	Rebeca Libke
Charlotte Black	James Barton	Donald Ridge
Rudy Theisz	Phyllis Hess	Roberta Sproul
Peggy Wilson	Susan Scott	Margaret Ditteon
Yvonne Hofmann	Eileen Prose	Shirley Badner
Jeanne Connell	Karen Staub	

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS—A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Do you have a friend, neighbor, co-worker, or family member who calls you to help identify a bird or they have a bird question. I have a friend who would call and mimetic a hooting owl she heard outside her window. After many calls, several of them late night, the owl was finally named. And she was then hooked on wanting to know many more birds and calls. Thus a new member was created.

I imagine about all bird watchers have had similar experiences like this Members, you, in effect are on the membership committee. You are WVAS's best recruiter for increasing our membership. Just take the time to invite someone to a meeting or birding event. And don't forget an Audubon membership would make a great Christmas gift.

Brenda Milliren, Membership Chairperson

Miracle on 7th Street

The Wabash Valley Audubon Society participated in the December 7th, 4th Annual Miracle on 7th Street. The event drew large crowds that included activities for the whole family, including an open air marketplace, gallery openings, an appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus, poinsettia sales, and holiday music.

The WVAS received \$100.00 for entering a tree into the "Miracle Trees" decorating contest.

Pictured to the right is Carissa Lovett and Jenny Bodwell with our tree. All decorations on the audubon tree were made of products such as popcorn string, peanut butter pinecones, bird ornaments including a snowy owl tree topper. Following the 7th Street event, the tree was moved to Dobbs Nature Center where it will stand for the remainder of the holiday season.

Thanks to all the volunteers that helped make this event possible.



Events

All events are open to the public. If you have a topic you would like to present please contact WVAS. If additional information is needed contact one of the officers listed below:

WVAS OFFICERS

President:

Phil Cox,
philwcox@gmail.com

Vice-President:

Carissa Lovette,
carissalovett@terrehaute.in.gov

Secretary:

Ellen Lunsford
mabel819@aol.com

Treasurer:

Phil Milliren
philiren@msn.com

Conservation:

Phil Cox

Education:

Carissa Lovett

Board member:

Helen Vermillion,
Joe Dickson,
Shelley Arvin,
Nicholas Brown
Lucinda Berry

Social Chair:

Margaret Tamar,

Membership Chair

Brenda Milliren,
breniren@msn.com

Memorial Fund:

Open

Bird Count Compiler:

Peter Scott,
pscott@indstate.edu

Newsletter Editor:

Marty Jones,
indth33@yahoo.com

Dec

Jan

Feb

1 Greening the Statehouse, http://www.hecweb.org/news-events/calendar-of-events/?event_id=340

3 Board Meeting at the Grand Traverse Pie Co. 7:00 p.m.

1-3 Eagles in Flight Weekend, Turkey Run State Park, 765-597-2654

15 Terre Haute CBC, see cover page of this newsletter for more information.

16 "Operation Turtle Rescue" program, 7:00 p.m. at the Vigo County Public Library.

7 Board Meeting at the Grand Traverse Pie Co. 7:00 p.m.

15 Dobbs Park Bird ID, 10 a.m. to noon. If additional information is needed, contact Carissa Lovett, 812-877-1095.

19 Dobbs Park Bird ID, 10 a.m. to noon. If additional information is needed, contact Carissa Lovett, 812-877-1095.

15-18 Great Backyard Bird Count, www.birdsource.org/gbbc/

19 WVAS Photo Night, We will meet in the lower level of the Vigo County Public Library, 7th & Poplar Street in Terre Haute. See cover page.

25 Ouabache Land Conservancy Banquet, 6:00 p.m. at Kleptz Restaurant (Seelyville)

16 Dobbs Park Bird ID, 10 a.m. to noon. If additional information is needed, contact Carissa Lovett, 812-877-1095.

22 Turkey Run CBC, To participate contact Alan Bruner at abbird@att.net

26 Duke Energy Eagle Viewing Day, 9:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Cayuga Generating Station, 800-832-3143

19 Member Meeting at the Vigo County Public Library. See Feb/March issue for details.

27 Newport CBC, contact Alan Bruner, abbird@att.net

20 Diana Hews, Professor of Biology, ISU, Oaxaca, Mexico study of social behavior and physiology of a specific lizard species.

PHOTO GALLERY

Viceroy Butterfly, JI Case Wetlands, by Mike Hannum.



Purple Turkey-tail Shelf Fungi, Lincoln Trails State Park, by Joe Dickson

The Merlin had just captured an American Goldfinch and is shown here as it began its meal. Goose Pond, Greene County, by Marty Jones



LeConte's Sparrow, Universal Mine, Vermillion County, by Jim Sullivan.

OUABACHE LAND CONSERVANCY ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET

The Ouabache Land Conservancy will be hosting their 3rd annual meeting and banquet on Friday January 25th at Kleptz Restaurant, 9711 W US Hwy 40, Seelyville (8 miles east of downtown Terre Haute). The featured speaker for the evening is John Bacone, Director, Indiana Division of Nature Preserves. When John became director in 1979, there were 51 dedicated nature preserves in Indiana protecting 9,637 acres of land. Today, there are over 200 dedicated nature preserves protecting more than 40,000 acres throughout the state. John will be discussing the history of nature preserves in Indiana; and the relationship between the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves and local land trusts. There will be a social hour (with cash bar) and silent auction (donations accepted) beginning at 6:00 with dinner at 7:00. Make reservations by contacting Phil Cox at [\(765\)548-4007](tel:7655484007) or philwcox@gmail.com by January 18. Checks (made payable to Ouabache Land Conservancy for \$25 per person for members, \$50 minimum for non-members (includes a membership), and \$25 per guest with member) can be mailed to Phil Cox, P.O. Box 237, Clinton, IN 47842 or payment can be made at the door (with a reservation). Please note that members are encouraged to give more than the minimum. Come and help celebrate Ouabache Land Conservancy's 2012 accomplishments and 2013 vision. Silent auction items may be donated at the banquet. Non-members and members alike are welcome to join us for this special night! For more information about the Ouabache Land Conservancy, go to ouabachelandconservancy.weebly.com.

Day of the Eagle

Sunday, December 16

Turkey Run State Park Nature Center OPEN 10am-5pm EST

6:45-8:15am Eagle Roost Trip – Meet inside the INN for a preview of the trip, & then line your cars up behind the DNR van in the parking lot. Travel to the launching point of a bald eagle roost & see a dozen or more leave for the day's hunt.

10am Help Feed The Birds – Nature Center.

10:30am-1pm Eagle Road Trip – NATURE CENTER parking lot: line up behind the DNR van and caravan to a bald eagle nest, plus a frequent hunting site.

2pm Planetarium Star Show – 40 minutes star and planet show.

3-4:30pm Birding With A Pro – Gather on the INN FRONT PORCH for a moderate hike with expert and WVAS member Alan Bruner. Look for overwintering birds, including the majestic bald eagle. Hot drinks will be available in the Inn lobby afterwards.

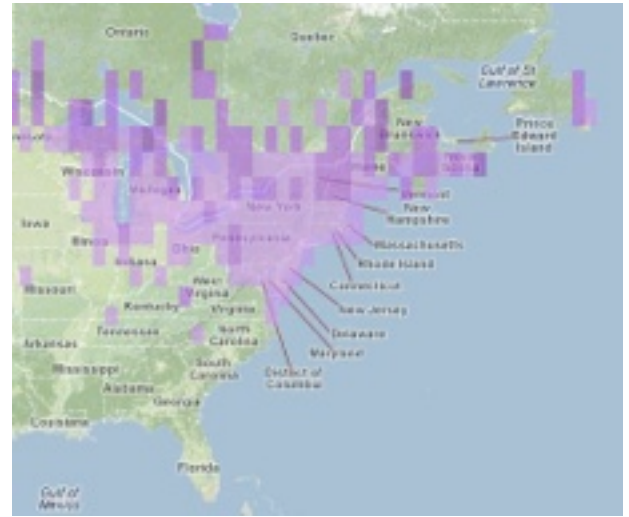
The following link provide information on additional programs at Turkey Run State Park:

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2964.htm>

Evening Grosbeaks - Watch Your Feeders!

A review of the Terre Haute area bird sightings from the 1960's and 1970's show many reports of evening grosbeak. Up until the 80's the bird was quite common in the winter here. Only a few reports of the bird in the entire state have been made since the early 90's. It has been well over 20 years since it was last seen in Vigo County, but that may change this winter due to poor seed and cone crops farther north.

The ebird range map to the right shows evening grosbeak reports August through November. Keep an eye on your feeders for a possible rare look at this beautiful bird. Hint: They love sunflower seeds!

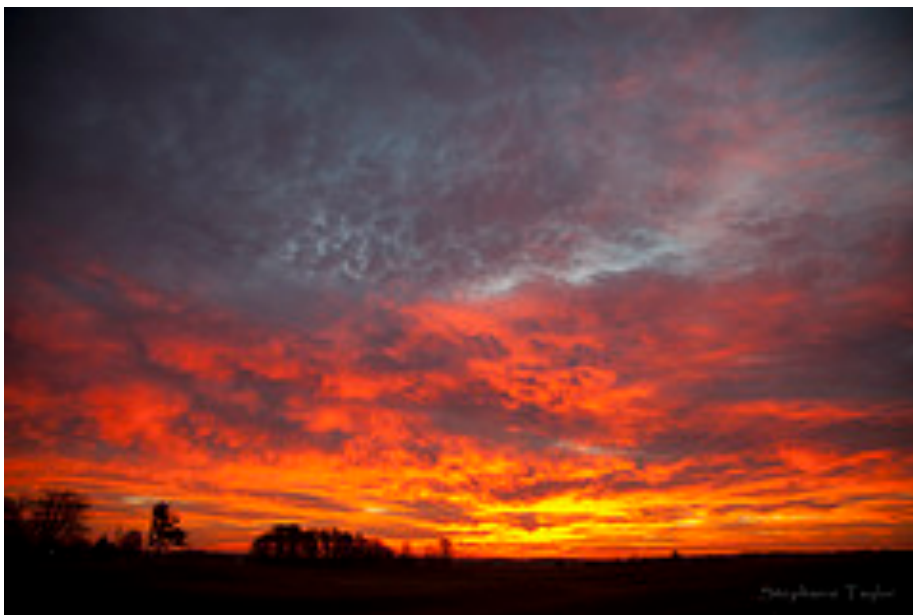


More on the Finch Irruption

Beside evening grosbeak there are now many other winter finch irruption species in the U.S. and Indiana: White-winged Crossbill (seen recently at St. Mary of the Woods), Red Crossbill (also at St. Mary of the Woods), Purple Finch...higher concentrations than usual, Pine Siskins...reported all the way into Florida!, Common Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll... one report so far in northwest Indiana, Red-breasted Nuthatch...all over the state, Bohemian Waxwing...good numbers, but only in Lake and Porter Co Indiana. The nearest evening grosbeak to Terre Haute, so far, was seen November 17th at the Turkey Run Nature Center



Photo: Male Evening Grosbeak, Dunes State Park, by Marty Jones



Sunrise on November 19, 2012 by Stephanie Taylor

Diana Hews Feb 20th Presentation:

Join us February 20, 2013 as Diana Hews presents her recent lizard study experience and findings in Mexico. In June of 2012, six biologists were in Oaxaca, Mexico to study social behavior and physiology of a specific lizard species. Working along the Pacific coast in tropical deciduous forest, team members encountered reptiles and amphibians, regularly heard Citreoline Trogon "courts" and weathered the effects of heat, humidity and Hurricane Carlotta. Forays from their hotel on the Huatulco town square included sampling Oaxacan cuisine, roasted crickets and cerveza.

Diana Hews is a Professor of Biology at Indiana State University. She studies hormones, behavior and sexual selection in lizards, and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in physiology. She has a US ABA bird life list of 565 species, and attributes the last 250 of those to getting to bird with her husband, Peter Scott.

Look for more details in the next issue of the NNN.

Question and Answer

Q: I have filled one of my feeders with cracked corn, but every time it rains the corn at the bottom gets wet, then dries into a brick, clogging the feeder. What am I doing wrong?

A: Cracked corn is best scattered on the ground. Birds that favor this food most often are ground feeders. Better yet, don't use cracked corn. It primarily attracts nuisance species - House Sparrows, European Starlings and Brown-headed Cowbirds.

Q: I want to attract large birds like Northern Cardinals and Blue Jays. I have a large feeder. I also get crows and blackbirds at this feeder. How do I get rid of the crows and blackbirds?

A: It is difficult to discourage blackbirds. Feeder placement and choice of food is critical. It will help to keep your feeders distant from coniferous trees. This will discourage grackles and crows, which favor coniferous trees. Use only black oil sunflower and safflower seed. And it is better to have several smaller feeders than one large one.

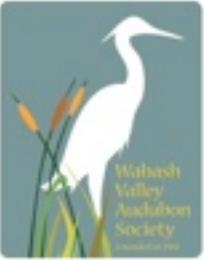
Q: Are we interfering with nature when we feed wild birds?

A: It is estimated that birds coming to feeders take no more than 20 percent of their daily food requirement from such offerings. Besides, we interfere with the natural course of birds' lives far more by destroying habitat, building houses with glass windows, erecting high signal transmission towers, allowing cats to run free - you get the idea.

Bird Remains Found at Peregrine Falcon Site

The Peregrine Falcon is renowned for its speed, reaching over 200 mph during its characteristic hunting stoop (high speed dive), making it the fastest member of the animal kingdom. Its diet consist almost exclusively of medium-sized birds. Late this past summer audubon members identified several different bird species skulls lying at the base of the Indiana State University falcon site. We found remnants of the following birds: Blue Jay, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, American Crow, European Starling, Northern Flicker, Pigeon, and Pileated Woodpecker. The photo to the right is the skull of the Pileated Woodpecker.





Wabash Valley Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2338
Terre Haute IN 47802-2338

Audubon Help Needed

NOTICE

Wabash Valley Audubon currently has openings for the following positions: board member, newsletter editor, memorial fund. Some of the most valuable gifts that an organization can receive have no price tag on them. Only an hour or two of volunteer work each month can really make a difference. To learn more contact Marty Jones, 317-696-6246, **Chapter Members** if you are a chapter only member, your membership renewal is due!

Newsletter photo sources: Google Images & Flickr

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Society Code No. C3ZH050Z

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& Notes, National & Chapter Membership.

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