

President's Note: *Let's Go Birding*

by Jeff Riegel

I am one of the lucky few, that handful of people who get to spend virtually every day in the woods, out in nature. Granted, it's all work — research on southern Indiana forests — but still, it's in the woods. Unfortunately, even that has its inherent downsides. Much of our research must happen on a daily basis. Eastern chipmunks, white-footed mice, and masked shrews cannot be left in traps for any extended period of time — that data must be collected twice a day and the animals released unharmed, no matter what the weather.

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Nature Photography Exhibit Opens Oct. 1

The Sassafras Audubon Society and the Bloomington Photography Club are sponsoring an exhibit of nature photographs titled "Focus on the Natural History of Southern Indiana" at the Monroe County History Center starting on Oct. 1 and running through Jan. 24. The history center will host an opening reception including refreshments on Oct. 10 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Members of both sponsoring organizations and the public are invited. After 5 p.m. free parking is available in the city lot behind the center at Sixth and Washington streets in Bloomington.

About 20 members of the organizations will be submitting images for the exhibit. The emphasis is birds, but photographs on other nature topics

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Fairview Chimney Swift update

by Dawn Hewitt

Six people spoke up at the Monroe County Community School Corp. board meeting Aug. 5 to encourage the board to accommodate Chimney Swifts in plans to replace the old Fairview School with a new building. The old school has a big old brick chimney in which hundreds of swifts roost during migration.

The board was welcoming to all those who spoke up, and said that already plans for the new Fairview School were over budget, and keeping the building affordable had to be their first priority. But they said that Kirkwood Design Studio, the architect developing the plans for the new school, is studying ways to accommodate swifts, either by preserving the old chimney or building a new tower designed specifically to house nesting and roosting chimney swifts. They also said that

engineers were studying the old chimney to see if it could be freestanding. They said the chimney had been tuck-pointed about 20 years ago, but that might not be enough to give it the structural stability needed to stand on its own.

One speaker, Sue Wever, suggested that the community would be willing to help raise funds to preserve the chimney if necessary, but Superintendent Jim Harvey said that any donations to fund construction would require them to recalculate their bonding and would become an administrative headache.

During and after the "community discussion," several board members made it clear that they were eager to accommodate the swifts, but figuring out how to preserve the old chimney will be a challenge.

Fall Feeder Cleaning

by David Daniels

The cool days of fall are just around the corner, and the SAS annual Fall Feeder Cleaning is the perfect opportunity to rid your bird feeders of the dirt, grime, and gunk that accumulated over the summer. Get your feeders fresh and clean for the coming winter months, when the birds most need the seed that you put out for them.

The Fall Feeder Cleaning will take place on Saturday, Oct. 4, at Bloomington Hardware, located on South College Mall Road. Drop off your feeders between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., and pick them up between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. The cost is \$4 for small feeders and \$6 for large feeders. Proceeds will go toward SAS conservation and educational programs. Sorry, but we can't accept hummingbird feeders or suet feeders.

Volunteers are needed. If you would like to help clean feeders, contact David Daniels at (812) 333-2121.

CAN YOU NAME THAT BIRD

This bird would be easier to identify if the photo were printed in color. But in the winter he looks pretty drab anyway. He is a faithful visitor to most sunflower and thistle feeders. The answer is on page 4.

Photo by Jeff Hammond



Editor's Note: *Activism and 'Neo-Activism'*

by Bob Dodd

The Sassafras Audubon Society has a long tradition of activism for the cause of conservation. Early in its history, activism was especially a trademark of SAS (see the article about Libby Frey on page 5). SAS is still an activist organization although in general perhaps less confrontational than in the past. We might call this "neo-activism." For example, we are currently working to preserve a chimney at Fairview School as a roosting site for Chimney Swifts, and we are attempting to convince the IU Athletics Department to refrain from mowing the Cross Country Course during bird nesting season.

We are pleased that there are signs of progress on both fronts, although the struggle is far from over. The school corporation, MCCSC, appears to be receptive to our plea but understandably is concerned about cost. One key to success in

our endeavor is to show MCCSC that many people are concerned about this issue and not just a hard-core few. We hope that we have made progress in marshalling support with Dawn Hewitt's articles in the *Herald-Times*, speaking at a MCCSC board meeting, and having a table at the Fairview Fair on Aug. 12. **You as a member of SAS can help by writing to Interim Superintendent Tim Hyland and/or MCCSC to express your support for saving the chimney.** Be sure to read the two articles concerning the Fairview swifts on pages 1 and 3.

Bernie Sloan has been our "front man" on the cross country course project. He was the first person to contact the IU Athletics Department about the problem of mowing the course. He did not have any success until Dawn Hewitt publicized the issue

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Sassafras Audubon Society

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The board normally meets on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. All SAS members are welcome to attend. Contact the president or another board member to learn more details and meeting locations, or e-mail SAS@sassafrasaudubon.org.

SAS Web Site

www.sassafrasaudubon.org

Webmaster

Susan Hengeveld (shengeve@indiana.edu)

Leaflet Staff

Editor Bob Dodd

Contributing Editor..... Bob Kissel

Editorial Assistant Joann Dodd

Designer Julie Dales

Mailing Maureen Forrest

Direct address changes and requests for single issues to: Ann Maxwell, Database Coordinator; P.O. Box 85; Bloomington, IN 47402.

We invite readers to submit material for consideration for publication. Contact the editor at dodd@indiana.edu or (812) 339-2976.

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JOIN SAS

Support Sassafras Audubon Society local educational programs, outings, and conservation projects by being a Friend of SAS. Friends receive membership in SAS, the Leaflet bimonthly newsletter, and a 10 percent discount on selected items at the Bloomington Wild Birds Unlimited and Bloomington Hardware stores. Support national conservation efforts through the National Audubon Society and receive Audubon magazine along with automatic chapter membership in SAS. But, because NAS dues primarily support national projects, we encourage you to also become a Friend of SAS. As a Friend, you will have the satisfaction of supporting your local chapter and its local projects!

Sassafras Audubon Society Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

- Friend of the Sassafras Audubon Society \$20/year x ____ year(s) \$ _____
Includes chapter membership in SAS
- National Audubon Society Membership \$20 for first year \$ _____
Special introductory offer (regularly \$35/year)
(Renewals go through National Audubon Society)
- Additional Contribution to SAS \$ _____
- Total enclosed \$ _____

Mail your completed application along with your check to: Sassafras Audubon Society, Attention Membership Coordinator, P.O. Box 85, Bloomington, IN 47402.

Thank you for supporting Sassafras Audubon Society!

For more information about membership, e-mail us at SAS@sassafrasaudubon.org.



SAS Calendar

September/October 2008

All SAS-sponsored outings and programs are free and open to non-members. Watch our Web site (www.sassafrasaudubon.org) and the *Bloomington Birds* e-mail list for announcements about other upcoming events. For more information, contact Jim Mitchell at jl Mitchell33@comcast.net or (812) 824-8198.

Saturday, Sept. 20, 8 a.m.: Goose Pond Work Day

This work day will concentrate on killing some of the woody vegetation that has been creeping into the wetlands. Work begins at 8 a.m. and will last until about 11 a.m. Plan to be at the Goose Pond office on SR 59 south of Linton at 8 a.m. for a short orientation. For more information, see the article on page 4 of this *Leaflet* or contact Jess Gwinn at jagmo@bluemarble.net.

Sunday, Sept. 21, 10 a.m.: SLT Birding at Touch the Earth

SAS board member David Daniels will lead a Sycamore Land Trust outing to SLT's 98-acre nature preserve in Bartholomew County. This will be an easy walk for all ages. Bring binoculars. SLT will provide water and a snack. Please R.S.V.P. to SLT at info@sycamorelandtrust.org by Sept. 17.

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 7 p.m.: Avian Inventorizing and Monitoring — Sassafras Audubon's Findings at Our Local IBAs

James Cole, coordinator of Indiana's Important Bird Areas Program, will discuss the vital role Sassafras Audubon's members have played in bird-monitoring projects this past year at nearby IBAs. This spring, SAS volunteers helped initiate the first-ever marsh bird inventory at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area, and birders carried out an inaugural rapid assessment of Hillenbrand FWA's bird life in early summer. Join us as we learn more about this year's results, some of which are unprecedented in Indiana's ornithological lore.

A short annual meeting to elect officers and board members and to amend the bylaws will precede the program. The program will be held in Room 1-B of the Monroe County Public Library at 7 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.

Saturday, Sept. 27, 8 a.m.: Migrating Birds

Join Don Whitehead, one of Indiana's top birders, as he leads us to local hot spots to look for migrating birds. Meet at the northeast corner of the parking lot (next to Bloomingfoods) of the Kmart on East Third Street at 8 a.m.

Sunday, Oct. 5, 8 a.m.: Migrating Birds

David Daniels will lead us to local hot spots to look for migrating birds. Meet at the northeast corner of the parking lot (next to Bloomingfoods) of the Kmart on East Third Street at 8 a.m.

Monday, Oct. 13, through Saturday, Oct. 18: Muscatatuck NWR

Muscatatuck NWR will be celebrating "Myers Cabin Day" on Oct. 18. The normally closed portion of the refuge is open for walk-ins the week leading up to Oct. 18, and on Oct. 18 there are pioneer arts and life styles demonstrations and ham and beans at the old Myers cabin, plus horse-drawn carriage rides into the closed area. For more information, call (812) 522-4352 or e-mail Muscatatuck@fws.gov.

Saturday, Oct. 25, 8:30 a.m.: Migrating Birds

Join Monroe County Naturalist Cathy Meyer as she leads us through Flatwoods Park to look for migrating birds. Meet at the park at 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 29, 7 p.m.: The new Griffy Lake Management Plan

Bill Jones, limnologist on the faculty of the IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs, will discuss management of Lake Griffy and some of the problems and potential solutions associated with this popular recreational and birding site north of Bloomington. Jones has been involved with development of the management plan and will be able to give us the inside story. The program will be held in Room 1-B of the Monroe County Public Library. Light refreshments will be served.

Swifts Need Your Help: Census of Chimneys, Sept. 16–24

by Dawn Hewitt

The more we learn about the locations of chimneys that swifts use to roost, the better we can protect this diminishing habitat and protect this species.

Brock's Birds of Indiana says the fall peak of Chimney Swift migration is Sept. 16 in central Indiana and Sept. 24 in southern Indiana. Since we are in south-central Indiana, let's try to locate all the local chimneys that host migrating swifts between Sept. 16 and 24.

Mark your calendars now. In the meantime, keep your eyes open for uncapped, unlined brick chimneys to watch at dusk during those nine evenings. Some resident swifts or early migrants might be using them already. If you have a brick chimney, you could have housemates and not even know it!

But we need a few folks to keep an eye on chimneys at Fairview School, Harmony School, Bloomington High School South, and the First Presbyterian Church on Sixth Street, which are all known to host hundreds (thousands?) of migrating chimney swifts during September. But where are other swift chimneys? Do swifts use the massive chimney of the old Johnson Creamery? No one seems to know. Chimneys that host just a few swifts are important, too.

If you participate, try to make a ballpark estimate of the number of swifts that dive into the chimney — a dozen? a hundred? a thousand? Take photos or a video if you can!

If you see a chimney in use by Chimney Swifts at dusk between Sept. 16 and Sept. 24, report your observations via e-mail to dhewitt@heraldt.com.



Chimney Swift.
Photo by
Dan Kaiser

Friends of Goose Pond — Committed and Growing

by Grace Chapman

When you think of the environment, do you include yourself? What would a beautiful landscape look like, if you didn't view it? Could your soul take flight without the image of a bird to lead you?

The Friends of Goose Pond, a not-for-profit organization, is committed to including humans in the environment at Goose Pond



Leaders scout Goose Pond area for prairie restoration assessment. From left are Pauline Baker (IUPUI Center for Earth and Environment Science), Laura Allen and Dinah Fuller (teachers from Eastern Greene County Schools), Brooke Furge (CEES), and Melissa Shepherd (EGCS teacher). *Photo by Lee Sterrenburg*


Restoration Work at Goose Pond Nears Completion

by Brad Feaster

Work along highway 59 is progressing well and is on pace to finish before the completion deadline of Dec. 31, 2008. Relocation of the AT&T fiber-optic cable is not moving along as quickly, but there is still some hope that it will be rerouted before winter. Neither Main Pool West nor Main Pool East can be flooded until both the highway 59 and the cable projects are completed.

Earthwork on the tern island is completed, and we will begin hauling and placing stone on the sides and top of the island this fall.

Our small NAWCA grant project is set to start construction this fall. This project consists of installing a water control structure in the old "stock pond" in GP5 (just east of CR1200). By doing this, we can stockpile water in the pond and have controlled water releases into units GP5N and GP5S. Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, and Duke Energy are all partners on this project.


These are exciting times at GPFWA. We are so close to finishing the restoration that the anticipation is almost unbearable, but we also still have some significant work to do. 

 Answer to Name That Bird:
American Goldfinch

Fish and Wildlife Area by supporting environmental education, scientific research, recreational activities, and programs.


This past year's activities have included trash pickup during County Pride Day, sponsorship of both a dove hunt and frog giggering for youth, bird-watching, and hunting-safety events. Members also volunteer as chaperones for local school field trips, supporting school "hands-on" science programs in wetlands ecology. Field trips are planned for the last weeks of August 2008 and April 2009.

Displaying soaring spirit for America's natural history and wildlife, this summer the Friends of Goose Pond float won third place overall in the Linton Fourth of July parade. The week of Aug. 4, Friends of Goose Pond volunteers were in the field helping with a prairie restoration assessment. Over the coming weeks, judges will be selecting winners in a calendar photo contest; the 2009 calendars will showcase landscape and wildlife at the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area and will include helpful information for visitors. Calendars will be available for purchase in December.


Friends of Goose Pond works in partnership with Sassafras Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and folks like you who are committed to interacting constructively with our natural environment. If you would like to be on our e-mailing list, participate in activities with us, reserve a 2009 Goose Pond calendar, or support our goals with a tax-deductible donation, please contact us at friendsofgoosepond@yahoo.com. 

Volunteers Needed for GP Work Day

by Jess Gwinn

SAS will be sponsoring a work day on Sept. 20, when we will concentrate on killing some of the woody vegetation that has been creeping into the wetlands at Goose Pond. We will begin at 8 a.m. and work until about 11 a.m. Plan to be at the Goose Pond office on SR 59 south of Linton at 8 a.m. for a short orientation. If you have a sprayer, you may want to bring it as we have limited numbers of sprayers. For the woody eradication, some volunteers will be needed to cut the stem while others will spray the stump to retard re-sprouting. Keeping ahead of these invasive plants early on in the restoration will go a long way toward maintaining a high-quality wetland in the long run. If you have questions, contact Jess Gwinn at jagmo@bluemarble.net. 

SAS Annual Meeting on Sept. 24

On Wednesday, Sept. 24, the Sassafras Audubon Society will have its annual membership meeting at 7 p.m. in room 1-B of the Monroe County Public Library. The purpose of the meeting is to elect officers and members of the board of directors. This year we will also be voting on changes to the chapter bylaws. See the SAS Web site (www.sassafrasaudubon.org) for a summary of the proposed changes. Although this meeting is important for governance of the organization, we anticipate that it will only take a few minutes. The regular program, a presentation by Indiana IBA coordinator James Cole, will follow the membership meeting. We encourage you to attend, both the meeting and the program. 

Libby Frey, Early SAS Activist

by Bob Dodd

Libby Frey was one of the first environmental activists in SAS. She fought many battles in the early days of the organization, and she is still fighting today. On the day we interviewed her for this article, she had just returned from a meeting to discuss the PCB contamination problem in Monroe County. Libby was defending the environment in the early days when that contamination was discovered. The contamination is still there — and Libby is still fighting for a permanent solution and complete cleanup.

“David was the birder. I was the activist.” That was Libby’s comment about the roles played by her and her husband, David, in the early days of SAS. Indeed David, who died several years ago, was the first vice president of SAS. He was an ardent birder and for a few years taught ornithology at IU. “He was a birder on a par with Don Whitehead and Lee Sterrenburg, and that is saying a lot,” she affirmed.

Libby did not hold a formal office but was very active in environmental and conservation causes. She especially remembers working with Ruth Reichman and Barbara Restle in fighting some of the conservation battles in those days. She recalls her shock when she and Harry Hollis observed clear-cutting in the Hoosier National Forest in the area that has since become the Deam Wilderness. She was in the thick of the battle to stop damming Lost River, a natural treasure as well as being a terrible place for a dam in any event. Studies by the Indiana Geological Survey showed the folly of that proposal, but it died hard. “I write,” Libby said of her approach of sending letters and finding studies bearing on the issue at hand. She

has done much to educate (or attempt to educate) decision makers about environmental issues. “You have to be scientific,” she says.

Libby reported that she is in her 90th year. She has lived for many of those years in a beautiful home on the edge of the forest on the southeast side of Bloomington. From her dining room window, you have the feeling of living in the middle of the forest, yet on the other side of the house is a busy road. Sweeping down the ridge are rows and rows of daffodils along with hostas and other beautiful plants and flowers.



Libby learned to love nature when living on a farm in Ohio. Her father was both a farmer and a lawyer, and her grandfather was a superintendent of schools. She recounted pleasant memories of the truck farm where she lived and having an abundance of fresh produce. They also grew flowers. That is when she learned to love daffodils. “I love their fragrance. Each variety smells different.”

Libby received a bachelor’s degree from Smith College in Massachusetts before going to the University of Wisconsin, where she received a Ph.D. under the direction of famous ecologist and environmentalist Aldo Leopold. It was also at Wisconsin that she met the love of her life, David Frey. She taught for three years at Duke University before she and David were married and he convinced her to join him in Bloomington, where he had just received an offer to teach in the Zoology Department. She was reluctant to leave North Carolina, which she loved, but soon found that Bloomington was even better. She now feels that she is a Hoosier through and through.

What a treasure we have in people like Libby. How fortunate we have been to have founders and leaders of our organization with her passion and dedication to the environment. Thank you, Libby, for all you have done for SAS and especially for helping to protect our wonderful surroundings. Keep up the good fight. Perhaps someday PCBs will be only a footnote to history instead of front-page news. 🐦

Activist’s Corner

by Jess Gwinn, Conservation Chair

“If we were green, would more stay?” This was the title of an op-ed piece in *The Indianapolis Star* on May 18, 2008, by Dennis R. Ryerson, editor and vice president of *The Indianapolis Star*.

The gist of the article was about how abysmal Indiana and, in particular, Indianapolis, fare in most environmental rankings and how little most of our state and local leaders (and even ordinary Hoosiers) seem to care. For years, these same state and local leaders have bemoaned the so-called “brain drain” whereby the best and brightest of our youth graduating from college in Indiana flee the state the moment the sheepskin is in hand and the mortar board hits the air. These so-called leaders either can’t see the connection between the brain drain and a terminally ill natural environment or are so dogmatic as to be unwilling to admit a cause and effect.

Either that or they simply won’t quit until we truly are “Number 1” when it comes to being the dirtiest and unhealthiest state in the union. It is up to us, we the voters, to chew on our elected officials’ ears and let them know that we care about environmental issues and are willing to hold them accountable for their legislative records. Indiana truly does have many great assets, natural and otherwise. They simply need better advocates. 🐦

John Castrale Earns Award from Indiana Wildlife Federation

The Indiana Wildlife Federation recently named Indiana Department of Natural Resources nongame bird biologist John Castrale recipient of the DNR Employee of the Year award. Many SAS members will remember Castrale from presentations at local wildlife events and for his work with restoration of Bald Eagle, Osprey, and Peregrine Falcon populations in Indiana. He has also been active in monitoring other endangered bird species and species of special concern.

Castrale is the organizer of the Indiana Breeding Bird Atlas project. Several SAS members have been involved with this six-year project to assess the location of bird species that breed in Indiana. The current study will be compared to a similar study that Castrale organized in 1985–1990.

Castrale’s work with Bald Eagles, Ospreys, and Peregrine Falcons has been an outstanding avian success story. He is a good friend of SAS and of Hoosier birds. We congratulate him on receiving this honor. 🐦

Unmowed IU Cross Country Course Aids Birds

by Bernie Sloan (bgsloan2@yahoo.com)

As of this writing, the unused areas of the IU cross country course have been mowed only once so far this season, in mid-May (the running paths are mowed regularly). I don't know if IU Athletics has changed its mowing policy due to public pressure, or if this is just a positive side effect of higher fuel prices — IU hasn't responded to my queries.

Whatever the reason for the mowing delay, the birds have certainly benefited, with Eastern Meadowlarks being the most obvious example. In past years, I was lucky to encounter two or three meadowlarks in a visit to the cross country course. On Aug. 4, I attempted to census the meadowlark population there. During that morning, I encountered at least 30 individual birds! On the morning of Aug. 7, I saw a flock of 23 meadowlarks in flight, the most I have ever seen at one time. The group started with about four or five birds. As the flock passed over the grasses, it started picking up additional birds until the number peaked at 23.

I've also noticed an increase in the variety of grassland bird species on and near the cross country course, including Dickcissel, Sedge Wren, Savannah Sparrow, and Grasshopper Sparrow. These represent species I had not encountered there in past years.

While this is just a small step in helping grassland birds, the increase in bird populations on the IU cross country course stands as strong evidence in support of not mowing during nesting seasons. The Sassafras Audubon Society should continue to engage with IU, and other public agencies, to encourage responsible mowing practices and do our bit to address the decline of grassland bird populations. 🐦

Editor's Note *continued from page 2*

in her *Herald-Times* column, and the department began hearing from others. This is certainly a demonstration of the importance of numbers when it comes to making an impression about a conservation issue. Although the athletics department has never made an official statement about their mowing policy, the course has not been mowed since mid-May. See the article by Sloan at the top of this page for a report on how the birds have benefited. This is surely an example of a win-win situation. The birds have benefited and IU has saved money it would have spent for mowing. Also, IU can burnish its reputation for being environmentally friendly.

Of course, all of the news is not good on the activism front. Efforts to convince the state about the folly of a new-terrain I-69 seem to be falling on deaf ears. And the expanded logging program in the state forests continues. SAS has often been on the losing side of conservation issues, but we can thank past activists that we have also won many battles. 🐦

First Goose Pond Butterfly Count Nets 40 Species

by Jess Gwinn

On July 19, five teams participated in the first-ever Goose Pond Butterfly Count. Territories included Goose Pond, Beehunter Marsh, Hillenbrand FWA, Minnehaha FWA, and Greene Sullivan SF as well as a private prairie and other farm fields. The consensus of all groups was that the day was very slow regarding butterfly activity, compounded by temperatures that soared into the upper 90s. Ordinarily warm temperatures are beneficial for butterflies but when there is little activity, the counters suffer the most. Heavy rains in June probably diminished the butterfly population by drowning adults and larvae. Flowering nectar plants were few and far between. Grass skippers were hard to find and hairstreaks were nonexistent. Even so, we ended up with a tally of 40 species and almost 3,000 individuals. Not bad for a first attempt. As we proceed into the future, we hope our knowledge of the habitat will increase and our ability to find the best patches of habitat will yield better results. Also, with the restoration of Goose Pond nearing completion, the improved habitats should provide for a healthy butterfly population. 🐦



Harvester. © Jeffrey Belth

President's Note *continued from page 1*

Then there's all that data. What is done with it? The first step is to get it all entered into the various databases. It takes a considerable amount of time to enter records from 5,500 salamanders, 7,000 birds, and 15,000 trees. Entering REVI (Red-eyed Vireo) 800 times is not my idea of birding — another of the inherent drawbacks to field research.

Most people think that since I am in the woods on a daily basis, I get to go birding almost constantly. Sure, I make mental notes of the begging calls emitted from the Red-shouldered Hawk nest. I take notice of the late-singing Wood Thrush. And I always take a minute to gaze at the brilliant male Scarlet Tanager, a red so vivid it makes a Northern Cardinal look bland. But that's about the extent of my summer birding — another drawback.

Soon, many of our spring and summer songsters will be leaving us for more hospitable surroundings to the south. Some, like the Cerulean Warbler, are already gone and I already miss their song. Others will stay throughout the winter. That drab Northern Cardinal will be much brighter against the backdrop of a December snow. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Fall migration is under way.

Shorebirds, warblers, waterfowl, and a host of others will pass through our area over the course of the next two or three months. I'll miss most of them, even though I am out every day. But, I vow right here and now, not to miss them all. Sassafras Audubon Society has a multitude of outings planned for the next few months, and I plan on going on as many of them as I can. (Check our calendar of happenings elsewhere in the *Leaflet* or online at www.sassafrasaudubon.org.) Fall and winter events like Wings on the Water and Eagle Watch Weekend are just around the corner as well. Whether you can get out every day of the year, just one day out of every year, or somewhere in between, there are plenty of opportunities awaiting us. So, what are we waiting for — let's go birding! 🐦

In My Backyard ...

by Marc Allaire

There is nothing out of the ordinary about my backyard: it's in suburban Bloomington, a lawn with some trees, some shrubs, surrounded by three other similar yards. Not much to get excited about, one would think. But when I arrived here in the summer of 2005, I set out the usual array of feeders (suet, sunflower seeds, hummer) and decided to keep a yard list. My yard listing rule is very simple: a bird has to be in the yard, or directly above, in what I consider the yard's airspace, to be counted as a yard bird. With some luck, I thought I could tally 50 species.

The first birds were the expected ones: robin, cardinal, Red-bellied Woodpecker. The list kept building through the fall (junco, goldfinch) and the winter (creeper, waxwing). My first Bloomington spring brought me a Scarlet Tanager and a couple of Blackpoll Warblers. In mid-April 2007, a Field Sparrow appeared under the feeder, and the half-century mark was in the books!

There were some surprises: an adult male Red-shouldered Hawk, perched in a tree, totally out of habitat; six species of warbler (five more than I expected); six of the seven southern Indiana woodpeckers; a Grey-cheeked Thrush (totally unexpected); and awesome views of migrating Nighthawks in late August (probably my favorite sighting).

Three years later, I was standing in my front yard (taking a break from packing boxes, on my way to a different yard) talking with a good friend when I looked up and above us soared a Red-tailed Hawk. Yard species number 64!

My take-away from this experience: keep a yard list, no matter how "ordinary" your yard. And keep your eyes open — you will be surprised and rewarded.

(Editor's note: Marc Allaire and wife Lynda Walker have recently moved to Florida after three years of much-appreciated membership in SAS, including serving on the board of directors. We will miss them greatly and wish them all the best in their new home.)

... and in My Backyard

by Bob Dodd

The saga of the hawk vs. songbird continues. We received a hawk photo from Nancy Deal, who works at the Owen County State Bank in



Cooper's Hawk eating pigeon on the roof of Owen County State Bank. Photo by Nancy Deal



Red-shouldered Hawk perched near Haas feeder in Illinois. Photo by Judy Haas

without any interruptions. It was quite fascinating to watch. When he left, all that remained were the feathers." See the photo that she sent of the Cooper's Hawk enjoying his meal.

We also received a photo from members Jim and Judy Haas, who live in Collinsville, Ill., showing a Red-shouldered Hawk who was a frequent visitor observing their feeder last winter (see photo). They also report a Cooper's Hawk visitor. Apparently their toll on songbirds is not too great, as they report a wide variety of birds at their feeders.

Leaflet designer Julie Dales supplied a photo that her mother, Ann, sent recently from Albuquerque, N.M. Ann was wearing a bright orange shirt while visiting a hummingbird feeder at a national campground in the Jemez Mountains. Much to her delight, an inquisitive Black-chinned Hummingbird touched on her finger before checking out the nearby nectar, and Julie's father, Bert, captured the shot.

We received a photo from another out-of-state member. My son Paul and his wife, Melanie, also from Albuquerque, N.M., frequently see Scaled Quail around their house. This is a western species and is much more common than our local Bobwhite. Recently, a quail wandered into their open garage and could not determine how to exit, even with the encouragement of Paul and Melanie. They managed



Black-chinned Hummingbird with New Mexico twitcher. Photo by Bert Dales

to take this photograph of the wayward quail as it hunkered in the rear of the garage. The story does have a happy ending, as eventually the quail found its way out. 🐦



Scaled Quail trapped in Albuquerque garage. Photo by Melanie Dodd

Photography Exhibit *continued from page 1*

such as butterflies, other animals (vertebrate and invertebrate), flowers, and scenic views will also be included. As both sponsoring organizations have many talented photographers, we look forward to some great images in the exhibit.

The exhibit will be a great opportunity for SAS to showcase our organization before the community and to promote an appreciation of nature. SAS and the Bloomington Photography Club will have displays describing their organizations and encouraging membership application. SAS will also highlight our endowment campaign and Goose Pond sponsorship. We hope that you will come to the exhibit and encourage your friends and neighbors to attend as well. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. 🐦

Technology Revolutionizing Birding

by Bob Kissell

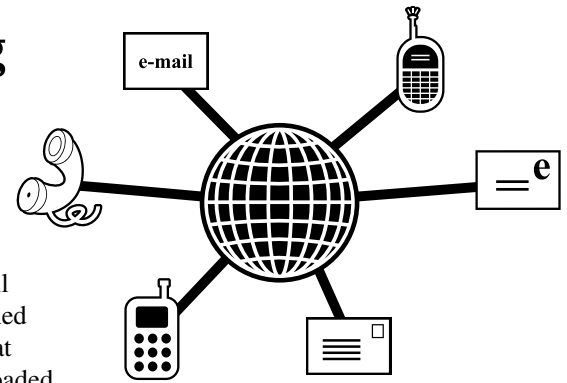
In Kenn Kaufman's account of his Big Year record attempt in 1973, *Kingbird Highway*, he talks of two information revolutions in bird-watching. In 1934 Roger Tory Peterson published his first *Field Guide to the Birds*, allowing identification of species by anyone, not just trained experts. In the early 1950s, Olin Pettingill wrote *A Guide to Bird Finding*, devoting a chapter to each state's good birding areas. A few years later, Jim Lane improved bird-finding guides by incorporating highly detailed information and directions from local birders.

In May of this year, I was a firsthand witness to what certainly represents a third revolution in bird-watching. I was with Don Whitehead and his breeding-bird atlas team that discovered the ultra-rare and first state record Fork-tailed Flycatcher (FTFC) in western Owen County. Don Allen saw the bird, Don Whitehead identified it, and all eight of us had "life looks" at this

South American wanderer. Then it got quite interesting.

Susan Hengeveld used her cell phone to call IN-Bird webmaster Phil Kelly in Kokomo. Don Allen happened to have a GPS device and relayed that information to Phil as well. Phil uploaded the verbal and GPS directions to the Indiana and Bloomington bird list servers less than five minutes after the flycatcher was first seen. Everyone in the party who had a cell phone started a phone tree to local and regional birders. Upon my return home, I updated the bird's presence that afternoon and early evening from my home computer and phone based upon reports from Susan on her cell. Digital photos were shared and placed on the Web.

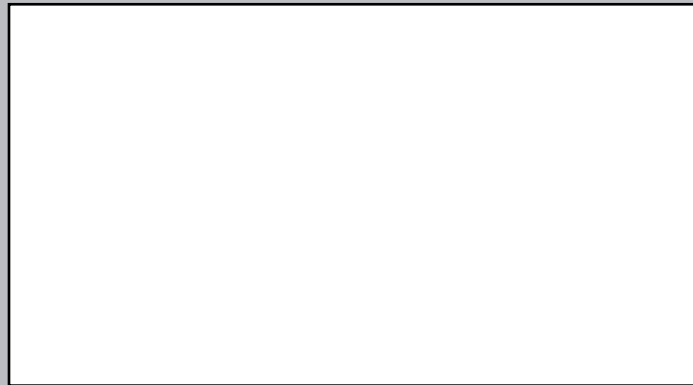
The result? More than 100 bird-watchers from all over Indiana and other Midwestern states raced to Owen County over the next several days before heavy



rains arrived. I heard that Ken Brock's Lake Michigan group literally dropped everything and drove south immediately after receiving the news about the FTFC. Electronic communication represents the latest information revolution in bird-watching. It has enabled rapid dissemination of the arrival of rare birds, careful planning for out-of-region bird trips, as well as broad-based consultation on bird identification questions. We've come a long way from a pair of binoculars, a sketch pad, written field notes, and anxious hope that someone else would see that bird rarity. 🐦

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