

## New Terrain I-69 Threatens Endangered Species!

by Alex Smith, Julia Ferguson, Jonathan Bauer and Katherine Jameson

The proposed construction of a new highway from Indianapolis to Evansville would destroy key habitat for many threatened and endangered species that dwell in our natural areas. The [Indiana Department of Transportation](#) has already identified a number of species that could be affected by the I-69 project, including the federally endangered Indiana Bat. In addition, we found two protected song bird species along the proposed highway route that were not identified in INDOT's environmental impact assessment — Cerulean Warbler and Hooded Warbler.

There are many other less conspicuous creatures living along our portion of the I-69 route that may be in even more danger. For example, the construction of new terrain I-69 would



Cerulean Warbler by Ed Furia ©

disrupt the water flow through several cave systems in our area which are home to a host of rare species. In one cave, surveyors for INDOT found four invertebrates that are found nowhere

else on earth outside this region of Indiana. One of these, the Ashcraft Cave Springtail, has been found *only* in that particular cave. Most of us have probably never seen a cave springtail, and we probably never will. But we should ask ourselves if it is ever worth knowingly placing an entire species, no matter how humble, at risk of total destruction.

Because we are concerned about the possible impacts of I-69, we recently organized a small environmental survey of our own. We identified bird species at several points along the planned highway route in Greene and Monroe counties in June 2010, near the end of the breeding season. One of us has worked professionally on bird surveys in the Hoosier National Forest for researchers at *(continued on page 5)*

### CAN YOU NAME THAT BIRD

This fellow struts his stuff in the spring, but he should go into hiding this time of year. Is this one too easy? Well, at least the timing is appropriate. The answer is on page 3.



Photo by Jeff Hammond ©

## 35th Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count to Be on Saturday, Dec 18 — Please Join Us

by Jim Hengeveld

Put Saturday, Dec. 18, on your calendar — that is the date for this year's version of the annual Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count sponsored by the Sassafras Audubon Society. This will be the 35th consecutive year for this important event.

The CBC is both a birding event and a very important scientific enterprise. On the day of the count, teams of birders spend the day (and, if you choose, part of the very early morning) working within a specified portion of our designated count circle attempting to identify and tabulate all of the birds seen or heard. CBC count

circles are standardized and have a radius of 7.5 miles — our count circle is centered south of Lake Monroe, close to the intersection of State Road 446 and Tower Ridge Road (which runs through Deam Wilderness). Our circle includes all of Lake Monroe, important wetland areas at the east end of the lake, portions of Hoosier National Forest, and extensive field areas southwest of Lake Monroe. This provides our count circle with remarkable habitat diversity, thus giving us great potential for recording a large number of species. We normally divide the circle into 12 or so areas with a specific team of *(continued on page 4)*

## Editors' Note: A Birdwatcher's Christmas List

SAS membership (see below)

Geoff Keller CD: *Birdsongs of the Brown County Hill Country*

[BirdJam iPod](#) and/or other electronic goodies

Birding vest and/or other apparel

Books about birds and (See titles reviewed by Bob Dodd in [previous issues](#).)

[Friends of Goose Pond](#) calendars and caps

SAS's *Birding Guide to South Central Indiana* ([see last issue page 7](#))

One or more field guides

Charitable contributions to SAS, [Sycamore Land Trust](#), and/or [The Nature Conservancy](#)

A Year's subscription to [Birds of North America Online](#) at Cornell University

Adopt a Northern Saw-whet Owl (see page 8)

Optics accessories such as cleaning brushes, anti-fog wipes, and binocular harnesses

A birding field trip to an exotic area 

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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

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## Give a Holiday Gift of SAS Membership

*Why not share the advantage of Friends of SAS membership with family and friends? Membership in SAS allows them to join a group of like-minded people concerned with wildlife and the environment. They will have the satisfaction of knowing that their dues money helps to support our local conservation efforts. They may also receive our bimonthly newsletter, Leaflet, and a 10 percent discount on selected items at Bloomington Hardware.*



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Each gift membership is \$20. Mail your completed application along with your check (made payable to Sassafras Audubon Society) to: Sassafras Audubon Society, P.O. Box 85, Bloomington, IN 47402. Thank you for supporting Sassafras Audubon Society! 



# SAS Calendar

## November/December 2010

All SAS-sponsored outings and programs are free and open to nonmembers. For announcements about other upcoming events watch our Web site (<http://www.sassafrasaudubon.org>) and the Bloomington Birds e-mail list..

### Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 6-7: Northwest Indiana

Join Don Whitehead for a one-day trip to [Willough Slough](#) and [Jasper-Pulaski](#) Fish and Wildlife Areas with a possible option to bird the lakefront on Sunday. We will leave very early on Saturday morning and carpool to WS and then JP with an intermediate stop at [Kankakee Sands](#). For information and reservations, contact Don Whitehead at (812) 339-1782 or [whitehea@indiana.edu](mailto:whitehea@indiana.edu).

### Saturday, Nov. 13, 7:30 a.m.: Hawthorn Mine

Meet at the northeast corner of the Super Walmart parking lot on Bloomfield Road (near the gas station). We will leave at 7:30 a.m. and carpool to the Hawthorn Mine area (west of Linton). The actual area to visit will be determined by access since this is now an active mine. We will return in early afternoon. For more information, contact Don Allen at [donandchar2@gmail.com](mailto:donandchar2@gmail.com).

### Saturday, Dec. 11, 8 a.m.: Christmas Bird Count Warm-up

Jim and Susan Hengeveld will lead us on this half-day of birding in anticipation of the upcoming annual Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count. Join us and hone your winter bird skills for the Christmas Bird Count. We will meet at 8 a.m. in the northeast corner of the Kmart parking lot on East Third Street in Bloomington. For more information, contact Jim or Susan at [jhengeve@indiana.edu](mailto:jhengeve@indiana.edu) or [shengeve@indiana.edu](mailto:shengeve@indiana.edu).

### Sunday, Dec. 12, 8 a.m.: CBC Warm-up at Brown County State Park

Meet at the Nature Center at 8 a.m. For more information, contact Jim Eagleman at (812) 988-5240 or [jeagleman@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:jeagleman@dnr.IN.gov).

### Wednesday, Dec. 15: Goose Pond CBC


See the article in this *Leaflet*. Contact Lee Sterrenburg for details and to sign up at [sterren@indiana.edu](mailto:sterren@indiana.edu).

### Saturday, Dec. 18: Lake Monroe CBC


See the article in this *Leaflet*. To sign up, contact Jim or Susan Hengeveld at [jhengeve@indiana.edu](mailto:jhengeve@indiana.edu) or [shengeve@indiana.edu](mailto:shengeve@indiana.edu).

## Fourth Annual McCormick's Creek Christmas Bird Count

by Sandy and Jeff Belth

All eyes are needed! Come join us on Sunday, Jan. 2, for the 24th Annual McCormick's Creek Christmas Bird Count. The count circle includes McCormick's Creek State Park, the Restle unit of the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, Green's Bluff Nature Preserve, a section of the White River, and Flatwoods Park. Last year we had 22 people in the field and recorded 69 species. Our record of 75 species was tallied first on Jan. 3, 2003 and tied again in 2007. Let's try to break the record this year! If you can help out for all or part of the day, please call us at 825-8353 or e-mail Jeff at [jeffreobelth@aol.com](mailto:jeffreobelth@aol.com) to be placed on a team. As always, the day will be topped off by the traditional potluck dinner and tally at our house. We really look forward to another great Christmas bird count! 

## Volunteers Still Needed for NSWO Banding

If you would like to volunteer to help band Northern Saw-whet Owls, please contact the coordinator, Ross Brittain, via e-mail at [rabritta@indiana.edu](mailto:rabritta@indiana.edu). Banding runs as many nights as possible from mid October until around the first of December, as long as the weather is not raining or too windy. We open the station shortly after sunset and keep it open for at least three hours, longer if the bander wants to stay. 

### Sunday, Dec. 19: Spring Mill CBC

Contact John Castrale at [jcastrale@dnr.in.gov](mailto:jcastrale@dnr.in.gov) for more information.

### Tuesday, Dec. 21: Patoka Lake CBC

Contact John Castrale at [jcastrale@dnr.in.gov](mailto:jcastrale@dnr.in.gov) for more information.

### Saturday, Jan. 1, 7:30 a.m.: Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge CBC

Meet at the Visitor Center at 7:30 a.m. Contact Donna Stanley at the refuge office at (812) 522-4352 or [donna\\_stanley@fws.gov](mailto:donna_stanley@fws.gov).

### Sunday, Jan. 2: McCormick's Creek CBC

See the article in this *Leaflet*. Contact Sandy or Jeff Belth for details and to sign up at (812) 825-8353 or [jeffreobelth@aol.com](mailto:jeffreobelth@aol.com). 



**NOTE: No Wednesday evening programs are scheduled for November and December.**



Answer to Name That Bird:  
**Wild Turkey**

# Gear Up and Get Out for the Goose Pond CBC Dec. 15

by Lee Sterrenburg

The fifth annual [Goose Pond](#) Christmas Bird Count will take place this year on Wednesday, Dec. 15. The Goose Pond CBC circle features highly varied habitat. It offers possibilities for birding from roads, off-road exploring, and walking in woods, grasslands, and wetlands that might appeal to almost any participant. The circle includes all of the 8,000-acre Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area with its bluestem prairie grasslands, extensive shallow-water wetlands, and riparian corridors; all the forested parts of Greene-Sullivan State Forest; almost all of Hawthorn Mine on both the Sullivan and Greene County sides (or what is left of it); the Linton Conservation Club; 1,000 Island Woods; the urban and suburban habitats of the city of Linton; and extensive agricultural fields in the southern and eastern parts of the circle. The varied landscape plus exceptional efforts by participants have helped to produce the high counts attained so far. Last year on the Goose Pond CBC we recorded 108 species, once again the top species total among all Indiana CBCs.

With the continuing drought we need more help this year than ever for covering the dynamic, changing habitat. New participants are most definitely welcome. We continue to find some very exciting birds on the count. The count circle is sparrow and raptor paradise. Regular CBC rarities have included American Bittern among lurking wetland birds. What discoveries will show up in this year's CBC?

Sassafras Audubon Society sponsors the count. We will once again divide into several teams. Teams have different starting times and locales. We meet at lunchtime at McDonald's in Linton on State Road 54 at 12:30 p.m. to see how we are doing so far. We do not hold a compilation dinner in the evening after the count due to commuting distances for some participants. We hope to see you at this year's Goose Pond CBC. To be placed on a team or to ask questions please contact count compiler Lee Sterrenburg via e-mail at [sterren@indiana.edu](mailto:sterren@indiana.edu). 🐦

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## Lake Monroe CBC (continued from page 1)

birders designated to cover each area. Each team has a leader familiar with the area and the birds to be expected and as many willing birders as possible.

The data that we gather on each count are entered into our own database and submitted to National Audubon's master database that includes all of the thousands of counts run in this country, Canada, and elsewhere in the world.

The count is always great fun involving camaraderie and friendly competition among teams. The success of the count is very clearly dependent on the number of eyes and ears in the field on that day. The more people and teams, the better the coverage of our area and the greater the number of species and individuals tallied. Thus — WE NEED YOU! This is a plea to get you to participate in this year's CBC. Call or e-mail us for information and to get a team assignment. This is a wonderful event for novice birders as well, as you can help spot birds and learn identification skills from other members of your team. Many people start working in the pre-dawn hours to record owls, others start at first light and bird all day — other people participate for a only a portion of the day.

To sign up for the count, call (812) 988-1671 or e-mail us at [jhengeve@Indiana.edu](mailto:jhengeve@Indiana.edu) or [shengeve@indiana.edu](mailto:shengeve@indiana.edu). We will provide information on the different team areas and provide you with the starting times and places for each team/area.

The day ends with our traditional potluck dinner. This year the potluck will be held in the headquarters for the Sycamore Land Trust at 4898 E. Heritage Woods Road. The food is always wonderful and the meal is followed by the tally, at which time individual and team bragging rights are established. 🐦

## IU Campus Bird Report

by Stephen Friesen

We're almost through our first year of the Indiana University Campus Bird Survey, and I should begin by thanking the volunteers who helped collect the data (we have more than 500 entries!). It has been a really terrific exercise. Over the course of the migration survey and the breeding bird survey, we have detected 71 species — and I still have several data sheets to input. As you might expect we counted our fair share of European Starlings and American Robins. What I didn't expect was the abundance of Red-headed Woodpeckers on campus, nor the Solitary Sandpiper that appeared to be enjoying its stop over in the new Jordan Wetlands restoration unit. In the upcoming months, after the winter survey is completed, I will provide a more complete report of this first year's census.



Red-headed Woodpecker

The only problem we encountered was that we were unable to cover each study unit twice, since we didn't have quite enough help. If you're interested in taking part for our last survey cycle (Jan. 1-31, 2011), e-mail me at [stephenmarkfriesen@gmail.com](mailto:stephenmarkfriesen@gmail.com). 🐦

## Consider This:

# Fairview School Swift Tower Has Hundreds of Guests

by Bob Dodd

During the dedication ceremony last May, a few Chimney Swifts were flying high above the new tower, a good omen for the future. Of course, none of them entered the tower that day, especially not in the middle of the afternoon. But on Sept. 12, Marti Crouch reported on the Bloomington birds list that she, Kay Thorbecke, and Dave Harmon saw a dozen or so swifts dive into the tower between 8:15 and 8:30 p.m.

On Sept. 21, my wife Joann and I decided to inspect the tower at about 7:45 p.m. When we arrived there were a few swifts in the area, but not much action around the tower. Within a few minutes the numbers began to grow and they started circling the tower. At the peak there may have been as many as 200-300. It is difficult to count when they are circling around so rapidly. Soon we began to see a few drop into the chimney, but we were a bit far away to be certain whether they were entering or just swooping low. So we walked to a closer vantage point at the corner of Fairview and 8th streets to get a better view. It was exciting to see them drop singly or in small groups into the tower and see the number of flying birds gradually decrease. The last three birds descended into the tower at about 8:10 p.m..

Crouch, who lives near the tower, made nightly visits after that, and she reports that they have been seen every night until today (Sept. 30 as I write this). Several other people have come to see the “swift show” including students and teachers from Fairview. Crouch has also visited the tower at dawn and reports seeing the swifts leaving the tower. The exit is in a steady stream without the circling action observed when they enter the tower.

Here is my message to the swifts: Thank you Chimney Swifts for cooperating so well and using the tower made just for you! Throughout the planning, fund raising, and construction of the tower we kept asking ourselves “What if you do not come”? There was always the fear that our efforts might be in vain and that we would end up with a beautiful tower that did not interest you. How exhilarating it was to see hundreds of you dropping into your way station as you traveled to your winter home in South America. We look forward to seeing you next spring. Your hotel will be waiting for you! 🐦



## New Terrain I-69 (continued from page 1)

Purdue University. We followed the methodology used for those surveys, which is the exact same process as that used for the Hardwoods Ecosystem Experiment, also run by Purdue University. In the course of one weekend, we identified a Cerulean Warbler (state endangered, federal species of concern) and Hooded Warbler (state species of concern) along the highway route.

Both the Cerulean and Hooded Warbler are inhabitants of the deep woods — reclusive species that avoid edges where the forest meets cleared land. This means that the impacts of a highway cutting through their forest habitat would extend beyond the actual trees that are felled. They prefer large trees for nesting, which restricts them to the remaining patches of mature forest. Both species spend their winters in Central or South America, where they face additional threats from rampant deforestation. According to the Cerulean Warbler’s conservation action plan, compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it is the fastest declining warbler species in North America. If there are no further threats to the Cerulean Warbler, current models estimate that it will be reduced to 10% of its current population 100 years from now. With the possible threat posed by new terrain I-69 construction, it is difficult to know how this species will fare.

When we read the recently released environmental impact statement for section four of the new terrain I-69 route (passing through Greene and Monroe counties), we were surprised and a little bit shocked to learn that the document does not mention either the Cerulean Warbler nor the Hooded Warbler. This is a document in which INDOT is supposed to assess the potential impacts on any protected species that could possibly be affected by the project, and ensure that those impacts are minimized. We are submitting our findings to INDOT, and we hope that they will be given full consideration. At the same time, we worry about other imperiled species that may have been overlooked in the assessment.

For us, this experience has emphasized the importance of public participation and discussion when it comes to large projects like I-69. If we had not taken the time to go look for birds on these properties, it is possible that the highway could have been built without anyone considering the threat it may pose to these endangered warblers. Because of this, we urge all of you to educate yourselves about the impacts of this highway. If you know of an area that could be affected, take a walk and make note of what you see. Most importantly, talk about this with your friends and neighbors, and let your state legislators know your thoughts on the matter. With the majority of this project still unfunded and environmental impact studies for half the route unfinished, it is by no means a done deal. By speaking out about I-69, you can lend a voice to the many imperiled species that cannot speak for themselves. 🐦

# Endangered Birds of Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area: Updates on a Major Conservation Success Story

by Lee Sterrenburg

At the time of its inception in late 1999, the 7,200-acre easement at [Goose Pond](#) in Greene County, Indiana was the largest Wetland Reserve Program and Natural Resources Conservation Service restoration project in the United States. There have now been some larger WRP projects in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Even so, the Goose Pond restoration still ranks as the seventh largest WRP restoration ever done in the U.S. It remains the largest ever in the state of Indiana. The actual restoration work on the WRP easement began in 2001. The restored wetlands at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area total about 4,000 acres and the restored grasslands encompass some 1,300 acres, most of them composed of big bluestem tall grass prairies. How do we measure the success of this large habitat restoration project with respect to the birds of Indiana?

Borrowed from the movie “Field of Dreams,” this popular adage is often used in the field of restoration and conservation biology: “If you build it, they will come.”<sup>1</sup> A more appropriate adage could not be devised to describe the magnetic pull GPFWA has had for, especially aquatic, birds. Ken Brock, James Cole, and myself inaugurated a property bird list for GPFWA in 2005, at which time the Indiana Department of Natural Resources had purchased the property from Wilder Farms Inc. As of October 2010, the property bird list totaled 260 species, and an updated third edition is about to be printed.

The success of birds at GPFWA has been tracked in several ways. Bob Russell of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service asked Mike Clarke and the Sassafras Audubon Society to help monitor shorebirds in the nascent wetland restorations at GPFWA starting in the spring of 2003. That task evolved into the SAS bird monitoring project that has been led and coordinated by me for a number of years. Our efforts have included conducting an annual GPFWA Christmas Bird Count, the inaugural event of which was held in 2006; doing Continental Marsh Bird Monitoring routes; monitoring shorebirds; running informal transect surveys of Henslow’s Sparrows; conducting annual counts for Sedge Wrens and other land birds; participating in the weekly DNR waterfowl surveys throughout the fall and winter; helping with the biannual DNR Northern Bobwhite covey counts; and engaging in other bird monitoring activities. Cole, the former National Audubon Society Director of Bird Conservation for Indiana, and Ross Brittain, who currently holds that position, have both played significant roles in designing and implementing some of these monitoring efforts.

The response by endangered and threatened birds has been of historical magnitude. The DNR maintains a Web page on “Indiana Species of Greatest Conservation Need” at: [www.endangeredwildlife.in.gov](http://www.endangeredwildlife.in.gov) That page lists 27 bird species as officially State Endangered (SE) and another 20 species as Special Concern (SC). Amazingly, GPFWA has recorded an impressive 25 of the 27 species on the State Endangered list. GPFWA has also recorded 18 of the 20 species on the state Special Concern

list. That is, of the 47 species now listed as being of “Conservation Need” in Indiana, 43 of them have now been found on the GPFWA property. The only species of Conservation Need that have not been recorded at GPFWA are forest birds: Kirtland’s and Cerulean Warbler, which are on the State Endangered list, and Worm-eating and Hooded Warbler, which are on the Special Concern list. Among wetland and grassland bird species of Conservation Need, GPFWA has proven to be very valuable. These are significant developments on the state and regional bird conservation fronts.

For several of the state-listed species that have been recorded at GPFWA, the numbers of individuals involved are eye-popping. Here is a list of State Endangered Species that have been found at GPFWA, along with their one-day, single-party high counts to date: one Trumpeter Swan, 14 American Bitterns, 14 Least Bitterns, 76 Black-crowned Night-Herons, 10 Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, two Ospreys, 35 Northern Harriers, four Peregrine Falcons, one Black Rail, 13 King Rails, five Virginia Rails, 19 Common Moorhens, nine Whooping Cranes, one Piping Plover, one Upland Sandpiper, three Least Terns, 43 Black Terns, four Barn Owls, 21 Short-eared Owls, one Loggerhead Shrike, 94 Sedge Wrens, 12 Marsh Wrens, one Golden-winged Warbler, 76 Henslow’s Sparrows (part of a multi-team survey total of 192 Henslow’s Sparrows recorded that day), and one Yellow-headed Blackbird. Whooping Crane, Piping Plover, and Least Tern are also listed as Federally Endangered (FE). The FE definition reads: “Any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.”

The tallies of Special Concern species at GPFWA have been equally impressive. The one-day high counts for these species at GPFWA include: 1324 Great Egrets, one Mississippi Kite, 17 Bald Eagles, two Sharp-shinned Hawks, four Red-shouldered Hawks, two Broad-winged Hawks, 11,200 Sandhill Cranes, 559 American Golden-Plovers, 20 Solitary Sandpipers, 497 Greater Yellowlegs, one Ruddy Turnstone, six Buff-breasted Sandpipers, 66 Short-billed Dowitchers, nine Wilson’s Phalaropes, 64 Common Nighthawks, one Whip-poor-will, one Black-and-White Warbler, and one Western Meadowlark. Whip-poor-will has been heard from the property but the singing bird was actually off the edge of the property boundary. We should therefore probably adjust the statistics to read: within the property boundaries, 17 of the 20 species listed as of Special Concern in Indiana have been recorded at GPFWA.

Some of these cited totals also represent all time Indiana state-record high counts. In its short ten-year history, the Goose Pond restoration has now produced all time Indiana state-record high counts for a remarkable 14 species of birds. The property has also recorded the second highest state count for an additional four species. These are stunning achievements, and they further attest to the success of the wetland and grassland restorations.

*(continued on page 7)*

# Goose Pond FWA Gets Telemetry Tracking Equipment

by Don Allen

In late 2009 Brad Feaster, Property Manager of [Goose Pond](#) Fish and Wildlife Area, mentioned to Lee Sterrenburg that the property would be able to track visiting Whooping Cranes more efficiently if it had its own telemetry equipment. The reintroduced Whooping Cranes, which had been visiting the property since at least 2004, carry radio transmitters. These transmitters can be monitored from as far away as 1 mile when the birds are on the ground and up to 10-12 miles when they are flying.

Goose Pond FWA had been borrowing telemetry equipment from the International Crane Foundation, but this equipment was not always available when the cranes were in the area. Lee suggested that Brad contact the local

chapters of The National Audubon Society to see if they would be interested in applying for Collaborative Funding to purchase this telemetry equipment. After being contacted by Feaster, Don Allen of the Sassafras Chapter and Phil Cox of the Wabash Valley Chapter applied for and received the funding and purchased the telemetry equipment which was then presented to Feaster.



Photo by Don Allen ©

Above — Don Allen, Brad Feaster, Phil Cox

This equipment can track Sandhill Cranes as well as Whooping Cranes. By purchasing additional relatively inexpensive antennas, the radio can track other wildlife if it carries a radio transmitter. Data collected on Whooping Cranes is given to The International Crane Foundation. 🐦

## Birds of Goose Pond

*(continued from page 6)*

Goose Pond FWA currently holds the state record for the highest number of individuals recorded by a single party in one day for the following wetland and grassland species (SC and SE signify Indiana Special Concern and State Endangered species, respectively): Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (11), Northern Pintail (9,210), American White Pelican (359), Great Egret (1,324 SC), Green Heron (56), White Ibis (16), White-faced Ibis (5), Roseate Spoonbill (one – first documented state record), King Rail (13 SE), Greater Yellowlegs (497 SC), Black-necked Stilt (42 – as pertains to live, flying birds rather than to the inclusion of egg counts), Stilt Sandpiper (70), Sedge Wren (94 SE), and Bobolink (369). Bird species recorded on GPFWA for which the second highest counts in Indiana have been made there are: Greater White-fronted Goose (1,700), American Bittern (14 SE), Lesser Yellowlegs (1,300), and American Tree Sparrow (1,182). These data on Indiana record-high counts come from Ken Brock's state bird database.

Whew! That is a lot of birds and a lot of state records. And we have not yet even mentioned the numbers for Northern Bobwhite (NOBO) — the main species for which National Audubon Society has designated GPFWA as a “Globally Important Bird Area.” The numbers of bobwhites are calculated by computer projection based upon the results of fall covey point counts. The high projection for the NOBO population has been 2,592 in the fall of 2007. That number has fallen off some with the completion of the wetlands. Even so, the Northern Bobwhite population remains the largest found on any public property in Indiana.

It is difficult to sum up the magnitude of Goose Pond's contribution to the history of bird conservation in Indiana. Such

phrases as “more than anyone dreamed of or imagined ahead of time” come to mind. The rapid and vigorous avian response to the Goose Pond restoration suggests some of the pressure that birds are under in these times of ever declining and disappearing habitats, especially wetland and grassland habitats. There is much more to be said about these numbers in historical context, about successful breeding by State Endangered and Special Concern species such as Black-crowned Night-Heron and King Rails, and about other matters which will have to wait for another day.

Thanks to WRP/NRCS for doing the restoration, and to the Indiana DNR for doing such a good job of managing the property for maintaining a diversity of habitats and species. And thanks to the many “Partners” and “Supporters” of GPFWA who made possible the restoration and the eventual property purchase by the state in 2005.

A huge “thank you” also to the birders who contributed to data cited here on Endangered and Special Concern species and record counts. Contributors have included Jim Brown, Michael Brown, Alan Bruner, John Cassady, Mike Clarke, John Castrale, James Cole, Jerry Downs, Don Gorney, Jim Haw, Jim Hengeveld, Susan Hengeveld, Bill Holladay, Dan Kaiser, Amy Kearns, Noah Kearns, Jeff McCoy, Larry Peavler, Peter Scott, Lee Sterrenburg, Don Whitehead, and the DNR staff at Goose Pond FWA – Matt Bredeweg, Brad Feaster (Property Manager), and Dennis Workman, and others not named here. Effusive thanks go to Ken Brock for maintaining the GPFWA bird database and for his always prompt and helpful responses to my many inquiries on Indiana bird data.

<sup>1</sup>The actual quotation is : “If you build it, he will come,” but the phrase now in common usage is the one listed. 🐦



Northern Saw-whet Owl by Jeff Hammond ©

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