

## President's Note: SAS Hosts Spring Dinner You're Invited!

by John Lawrence

Save Sunday, March 25, 2007, from 5:30-8:00pm for Sassafras Audubon Society's Spring Meeting and Dinner at the Fourwinds, featuring Al Gore's "Earth's New Reality--Truth and Consequences" presented by Jeff Riegel.

Barbara Restle (a founding member, past president, and great benefactor of SAS) recently commented to me that she hasn't had the opportunity to meet many of the folks currently involved with our society. Indeed, all of us (members and chapter leaders, past and present) haven't gotten together in recent years to meet and talk, to renew old friendships and make new ones. So please join us at the Fourwinds on Lake Monroe on March 25 for an evening of friends, dinner, and an exceptional program on the biggest environmental issue of our time, climate change.

For those interested in a little pre-dinner birding, we will meet at the beach parking lot at 4:00pm to see what's on the lake and in the trees. The evening will officially start at 5:30pm at the Fourwinds, with time to chat followed by a few words of welcome and a buffet dinner at 6:00pm. As dinner wraps up we will present brief acknowledgements, then at 7:00pm SAS Board member Jeff Riegel will present "Earth's New Reality --Truth and Consequences."

This presentation is former Vice-President Al Gore's famous program on global climate change that formed the basis of his book and documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Jeff trained with Mr. Gore for three days to be able to present this powerful program, which shows that the evidence on climate change is overwhelming and the time to act is now.

*continued on page 5*

## Eagle Watch Weekend Soars Even Higher

by Jeff Riegel

A record 91 eaglets fledged from Indiana bald eagle nests in 2006. The nesting range continues to expand north and northeastward across Indiana. And as their numbers soar and territories expand, so too does Eagle Watch Weekend, the largest event of its kind in the state. The 7th annual event will be held Thursday through Sunday, February 1-4, 2007, and will feature several new programs covering an ever-expanding offering for birding enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. The 2007 event is sponsored by the Sassafras Audubon Society, BirdCountry.US, the Fourwinds Resort and Marina, and the Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Indiana's most famous bald eagle, C-52  
(photo by Jeff Hammond).

"Each year more and more people come in on Thursday night to take part in the annual Eagle Watch Bird Count on Friday morning," says event coordinator Jeff Riegel, Director of BirdCountry.US, "so we are adding programming that evening to welcome them to the event." The kick-off program this year will be "Earth's New Reality," Riegel's version of the presentation that formed the basis of the best-selling book and hit documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, by Al Gore. Riegel recently returned from an intensive training session in Tennessee with the former two-term Vice President of the United States. "We are so pleased that Mr. Riegel has made a serious commitment to this challenge by coming to Nashville to become part of this unprecedented grassroots effort," says Gore.

But that is just the beginning of the weekend. Friday will start with the 3rd Annual Eagle Watch Weekend Bird Count focusing on areas around Lake Monroe. That will be followed by an in-depth look at the miracle of flight with Indiana University professors Jim and Susan Hengeveld, both former Sassafras Audubon Society Board members. Other SAS members will lead a leisurely walk around the Fourwinds after the Hengevelds' presentation. Friday evening, Ross Brittain, another former SAS Board member and leader of the Northern Saw-whet Owl banding station at Yellowwood State Forest, will lead an owl prowl. The day will end with a performance of folk music by Jim Eagleman, naturalist at Brown County State Park, and his friends, including Don Glass, host of WFIU's "Moment of Science."

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## CAN YOU NAME THIS BIRD

You might have spotted this pair of common winter residents recently swimming at Stillwater Marsh or on Lake Lemon. Check out those bills; they are a giveaway to the identification. The answer is on page 6.



Photo by Jeff Hammond

# Editor's Note: New Year's Resolutions for a Birder

It is the time of year to be making New Years Resolutions. Perhaps each of us should make a list of birding resolutions, and perhaps have a chance of keeping at least some of them. Here is my list:

- Go on as many SAS outings as possible, at least one a month.
- Go on at least one butterflying outing.
- Attend all of the evening SAS programs (last Wednesday of the month).
- Become a Friend of SAS as well as a member of National Audubon.
- Identify at least 175 different bird species in Indiana during the year.
- Identify at least 75 additional bird species that I do not find in Indiana.
- Participate in the Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count plus one other CBC.
- Participate in Eagle Watch Weekend.

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## JOIN SAS

*Support Sassafras Audubon Society (SAS) local educational programs, outings, and conservation projects by being a Friend of the Sassafras Audubon Society. Friends receive membership in SAS, the Leaflet bimonthly newsletter, and a 10% discount on selected items at the Bloomington WildBirds Unlimited and Bloomington Hardware stores. You can support national conservation efforts through the National Audubon Society (NAS) 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 as well!*

### Sassafras Audubon Society Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Friend of the Sassafras Audubon Society     \$20/year x \_\_\_ year(s)     \$\_\_\_\_\_

Includes chapter membership in SAS

New member  
*While supplies last! As a new Friend of SAS, you'll receive a free SAS t-shirt. Please circle your choice of size in either long or short sleeve. One shirt per new member.*

Short-sleeved t-shirt     Size: M   L   XL  
 Long-sleeved t-shirt     Size: M   L   XL

Renewal

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.

## Sassafras Audubon Society

### Board of Directors

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### Committee Chairs

The committees welcome help from volunteers.  
 Conservation Coordinator: Jess Gwinn  
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 Education Coordinator: Tom Platt  
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     Bob Kissel (812-336-2907)  
 Membership Coordinator: vacant  
 Program Coordinator: Nancy Martin  
 Publicity Coordinator: vacant

The Board of Directors meets on the first Monday of each month at 6:30pm at the Monroe County Public Library in Bloomington. All SAS members are welcome to attend. Please call the president or another board member to learn more details or e-mail SAS@sassafrasaudubon.org.

### SAS Website

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 Webmaster:  
 Susan Hengeveld (shengeve@indiana.edu)

### Leaflet Staff

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The *Leaflet* staff invites readers to submit material for consideration for publication. Contact the editor at dodd@indiana.edu or 812-339-2976.

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# SAS Calendar January/February 2007

All SAS-sponsored outings and programs are free and open to non-members. Watch our Website (<http://www.sassafrasaudubon.org/>) and the Bloomington Birds e-mail list for announcements about other upcoming outings and activities.

## Saturday, January 13, 9:00am Brown County State Park Winter Hike

For information check [www.browncountywinterhike.com](http://www.browncountywinterhike.com) or call the Nature Center at 812-988-5240.

## Saturday, January 27, 7:30am Eagle Watch Preview

Mike Clarke will lead participants to Lake Monroe to search for Bald Eagles in anticipation of the upcoming Eagle Watch Weekend. The Lake Monroe area in January can contain high concentrations of wintering Bald Eagles that have migrated south after their home waters have frozen. Mike will take us to prime spots on the lake for finding eagles. We will also see what other wintering birds and wildlife might be present. Meet in the northeast corner of the K-mart parking lot on E. 3rd St. in Bloomington at 7:30am. We will carpool to the lake and return before midday. For more info, contact Jim Mitchell at [jmitchel01@insightbb.com](mailto:jmitchel01@insightbb.com) or 812-824-8198.

## Wednesday, January 31, 7:00pm Report on the 2006 Owl-Banding Season

Ross Brittain and Jess Gwinn will summarize the results of the SAS-sponsored Saw-whet Owl banding program at Yellowwood State Forest and Newark. They will expand on the summary report found in this issue of the *Leaflet*. If you helped with the banding, either as a worker or an owl adopter, you will especially want to hear about the results of your efforts. The event will be held in Room 1-B of the Monroe County Public Library and is free for all to attend. Light refreshments will be served.

## Thursday-Sunday, February 1-4 Eagle Watch Weekend

See article on Page 1 and check Eagle Watch Weekend Website at [www.eaglesatlakemonroe.com](http://www.eaglesatlakemonroe.com) for details.

## Friday-Monday, February 16-19 Great Backyard Birdcount

See article on Page 8 and check the Great Backyard Birdcount Website at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc) for details.

## Saturday, February 24, 7:30am Eagles and Waterfowl on Lake Monroe

Expert birder Don Whitehead will lead us on an outing to see the Bald Eagles, other raptors, and waterfowl who call Lake Monroe home. Meet in the northeast corner of the K-mart parking lot on E. 3rd St. in Bloomington at 7:30am. We will carpool to the lake and return before midday. For more info, contact Don at 812-339-1782 or Jim Mitchell at [jmitchel01@insightbb.com](mailto:jmitchel01@insightbb.com) or 812-824-8198.

## Wednesday, February 28, 7:00pm Cave Critters

Kriste Lindberg will discuss life in the dark, in caves that is. Kriste is with the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department and is active with the Indiana Karst Conservancy, Project Underground, and the National Speleological Society. The event will be held in Room 1-B of the Monroe County Public Library and is free for all to attend. Light refreshments will be served.

## Friday and Saturday, March 23 and 24 Trip to Prairie Chicken Natural Area

Jim & Susan Hengeveld are in the planning stage of leading a trip to the Prairie Ridge Natural Area south of Effingham, Illinois, on the weekend of March 23. Birds seen on previous trips in addition to Greater Prairie Chicken include Short-eared Owls, Eastern Meadowlarks, Horned Larks, American Golden-Plovers, Pectoral Sandpipers, Northern Harriers, and Loggerhead Shrikes. Because we have to be in the blind very early on Saturday morning, we will need to stay in the Effingham area Friday night. More information will be in the March/April *Leaflet*.

## Sunday, March 25, 5:30pm SAS Meeting and Dinner

The Sassafras Audubon Society will hold a spring meeting and dinner at the Fourwinds Resort and Marina. All members and guests are invited. See the President's Note on Page 1 for details.



## Whooping Cranes Soar Out of Muscatatuck on Their Way South

by Sandy Belth

Jeff, Alan, and I left early on a November morning for Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge to watch the Whooping Cranes continue their maiden migration journey south. We had visited the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin, this summer. The drive to Muscatatuck was very foggy. We arrived just as the gates opened at 6:45am and drove to the area where Fish and Wildlife personnel were directing parking. There were maybe 45 people who showed up, coffee and cameras at hand.

The "Operation Migration" ground crew truck pulled up and the crew told about the cranes. One woman dressed in a crane suit demonstrated how the Crane Puppet head drops corn to teach the chicks to feed. Another one of the crew is in charge of weather and makes the decision whether to stay or take off at each stopover place. A little while later the pilot crew with Chris Gullikson drove up. They had decided to postpone the 7:15am takeoff time until the fog lifted. Eventually they drove off and a little while later (the fog now lifting) first one, then another one, and eventually four ultralights came buzzing over the treetops and circled the parking area. The ultralights had been grounded in a different area from where the cranes stayed the night. All the pilots were now dressed in Whooping Crane suits. They flew over a distant tree line across from the parking area and were lost in the fog.

## Whooping Cranes *continued from page 3*

After a few minutes the ground crew reported that two of the ultralights had radioed that they had picked up the cranes. We strained our ears and heard them circling back towards the parking area. And then there they were, flying low over the tree line! What a magnificent sight to see 17 Whooping Cranes following the ultralight. My heart soared with them. Then the second ultralight came into view and there was a single crane riding the lift. It didn't have to flap its wings at all. Finding a sweet spot above the right wing tip of the ultralight, it was getting a free ride. They circled over the parking area and headed southeast. We watched as they fell away into the distance and most people packed up and left. All the while I had been following the single bird getting a free ride in my binos and suddenly realized that the ultralight had turned and was headed back in our direction. As a handful of hangers-on watched, the ultralight returned and then another ultralight came into view. The cranes had split up over one of the ponds and now they were in separate groups following several of the ultralights. An aerial roundup was underway! As they passed over our heads one last time all but the single crane following its private ultralight, fell into formation behind the lead ultralight and the next leg of their journey south began. The ground crew was told it was time to take down the overnight enclosure and move on. We bid them farewell for the rest of their trip. I give a lot of credit to the Operation Migration crew who devotes its time, care, and great love to the cranes and steadfastly keeps up with its work to reintroduce this magnificent bird for the benefit of us all. Thank you, Operation Migration and the International Crane Foundation! 🐦



Whooping Cranes (photo by Jeff Hammond)

## New Year's Resolutions *continued from page 2*

- Participate in all work days at Goose Pond.
- Help with Saw-whet Owl banding next fall.
- Keep my feeders and birdbath filled.
- Write at least 10 letters or e-mails during the year to government officials in support of conservation issues.

Several SAS Board members and former members sent me their ideas for resolutions.

- Susan Hengeveld resolves to put on her cold weather gear and go out birding this winter and not just confine her observations to the feeders from the warm house.

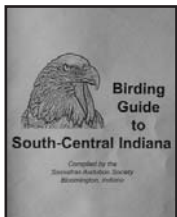
- Jess Gwinn resolves to help protect a piece of land so that birds and other animals will always be able to use it.
- Nancy Martin resolves to consolidate all of her birding trip lists into one digital list.
- Cathy Meyer resolves to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count this February.
- Jeff Riegel resolves to learn one new bird each week-- identification of all plumages, life history, habitat requirements, conservation concerns, additional knowledge needed, etc. Jeff also resolves to put up one more nest box and bird feeder, and plant one more cover shrub in his yard.
- Sandy Belth resolves to put up a wider variety of bird boxes during the next year. She also is planning to plant more native fruit-bearing trees and shrubs.
- Jim Hengeveld hopes that our members will resolve to read the book by Laura Ericson entitled *101 Ways to Help Birds* (published by Stackpole Books).

Maybe I have a chance of keeping most of my resolutions. Your list, of course, will differ depending on your level of interest and ability. An excellent birder might set a goal of identifying as many as 300 state birds, or a beginner might start at 75 or 100. But setting a goal might add some interest to your hobby. You might set an even lower goal but confine your search area to your own yard if you find it difficult to do much birding away from home. Each of us should be able to come up with a list of birding resolutions. I would be interested in learning about any special resolutions you might make for the year. E-mail me at [dodd@indiana.edu](mailto:dodd@indiana.edu) and I will publish your resolutions.

I was pleased to receive several responses to my book "contest" in the last issue. The first response came from Jay Heeter. He received the copy of *Wild America*. The other book winners were Greg Hess and Steve Dunbar. I also received responses from Dick Pfister, Jeff Danielson, Don Adams, and Melanie Dodd. Thanks to all of you and to others who have orally commented to me about the *Leaflet*. 🐦

### Birding Guide to South-Central Indiana

Mail me \_\_\_ copies of the *Birding Guide to South-Central Indiana*.



\_\_\_ \$8.00 (member price)

\_\_\_ \$10.00 (non-member price)

Add \$1.50 per guide to cover shipping costs.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your completed form along with your check (made payable to Sassafras Audubon Society) to: Sassafras Audubon Society, P.O. Box 85, Bloomington, IN 47402.

All funds from sale of the guide go to SAS projects at Goose Pond FWA, our adopted Important Bird Area.

## Eagle Watch Weekend *cont'd from page 1*

Saturday is the "big day" with a breakfast with SAS birders answering questions about an array of subjects in the birding world from birding with kids to field guides to aging Indiana's bald eagles. After breakfast Jim Eagleman and Jeff Riegel will present a program on birding basics. Eagleman will take folks outside, while Riegel imparts the same information inside the Fourwinds. This will be followed by John Castrale, Avian Biologist for Indiana DNR, discussing the overwhelming success of Bald Eagles in Indiana, as well as an update on Peregrine Falcons, Osprey, and the state's other endangered birds. At the same time, a special program just for the kids will introduce them to birds in fun and crafty ways.


Saturday afternoon features bus caravans to view eagles in the wild. SAS members will make stops along the way and do their best to find Indiana eagles for visitors. Participants can go from station to station on buses furnished by the Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau. The afternoon will also focus on birds of prey from other lands (including a Harris's Hawk and Augur Buzzard) from Return to the Wild, a raptor rehab center in Nashville, Indiana. Another kids' program will follow on the "tail" of that event.

Another expansion for the 2007 Eagle Watch Weekend will be two feature presentations on Saturday night. First, the most famous and photographed of all Indiana eagles, C-52, will visit from Patoka Reservoir, his home since being brought here from Alaska in the late 1980s as a part of the Indiana Bald Eagle Reintroduction program. Due to a congenital defect in his wing, he will never be able to fly. C-52 will be followed by a presentation on the conservation icon of the early 21st Century, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, by John Schaust, Wild Birds Unlimited Chief Naturalist. The birding world was shocked with the rediscovery of the ivory-billed in Arkansas a couple of years ago, and evidence surfaced this year in Florida that offers even more hope for the future of the most endangered bird on this continent.

Sunday morning will feature another breakfast with the birders and a new program entitled "The Oak Bottleneck--Understanding Conservation of Indiana Forests." This presentation will explain the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment, a multi-agency study that began in 2006 in Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests that focuses on the effects of various forest management practices on birds, amphibians, insects, bats, and the vegetation itself.


The raptors of Indiana will then take center stage when the folks from Return to the Wild return for a second day. The event will wrap up with a look into the rest of 2007 and the many birding and nature opportunities we can all look forward to in this new year.

The complete Eagle Watch Weekend event agenda is available at several locations as well as online at [www.eaglesatlakemonroe.com](http://www.eaglesatlakemonroe.com), the official Website of Eagle Watch Weekend. The Website includes links to another new feature of the 2007 event, online registration. Mail-in registration forms are also available on the Website and walk-ins during the weekend of the event are always welcome. Registration for this year's event is \$10 per person with children 12 and under free.

Go to [www.eaglesatlakemonroe.com](http://www.eaglesatlakemonroe.com), [www.BirdCountry.US](http://www.BirdCountry.US), [www.fourwindsresort.com](http://www.fourwindsresort.com), [www.visitbloomington.com](http://www.visitbloomington.com), or contact Jeff Riegel (Event Coordinator) at 812-335-8137 for more information. 

## President's Note *cont'd from page 1*

You don't want to miss this presentation, even if you've already seen or read *An Inconvenient Truth*, since it has been updated with the latest facts and information from the past two years.

Please reserve your spot for our Spring Meeting now! The evening is \$29 per person, which includes a buffet with several delicious choices of entrées and sides plus dessert and beverage. A cash bar will also be available. Most importantly, you'll have a chance to catch up with fellow SAS members and hear the latest news on global climate change, an environmental issue of critical importance. Since this is the first time in recent years we've had an event like this, it would be very helpful to have reservations well in advance--so please let us know right away with the form in this issue of the *Leaflet*. I look forward to seeing you all in March! 

 <b>Sassafras Audubon Society</b>  <b>Spring Meeting and Dinner</b> Sunday, March 25, at 5:30pm at the Fourwinds
Name: _____
Phone: _____
Guest(s) Name(s): _____ _____
Number of seats _____ x \$29/seat = \$ _____ enclosed.
Please complete the reservation form and mail along with your check (made out to Sassafras Audubon Society) to: Sassafras Audubon Society, PO Box 85, Bloomington, IN 47402.
<i>Thanks for your support!</i> <i>We look forward to seeing you at the dinner.</i>



As a result of digital magic a pair of cardinals adds warmth to an otherwise cold scene under a winter moon. This is a composite of two photos, one of the cardinals on an evergreen

branch and the other the moon with bare branches. They were digitally superimposed to make this striking picture. Photo by Jeff Danielson. To see more of Jeff's photos (in color) check his Website at [www.browncountyphoto.com](http://www.browncountyphoto.com).

# Local Banders Capture 91 Northern Saw-Whet Owls

by Ross Brittain

The 2006 Northern Saw-whet Owl (NSWO) migration banding season began on October 20, 2006, and came to a close at Yellowwood State Forest (YSF) on December 3. This year we conducted an experiment in YSF by operating a second substation in addition to the main station we have operated the past four years. The substation was located approximately a mile south of the main station along the same access road. The final tally for the season was:

- 70 NSWOs in YSF from October 22 to December 2, with 158 hours of effort. (That's a lot of sleepless nights folks!)
- 37 at the main station (in its fifth year of operation)
- 33 at the substation (in its first year of operation)

This year was the slowest year at our main station with 38 being the previous low (2005). As Jess Gwinn's station in Newark also had its slowest year this year (21 NSWOs), the overall migration was



Ross Brittain holds one of the Northern Saw-whet Owls captured this past fall (*photo by Lee Sterrenburg*).

apparently slow this far south in Indiana. Likewise, stations near our latitude farther to the east in the Appalachians had very low numbers this year. Stations along the US/Canada border, however, had some of their highest years; thus, many owls apparently stayed farther north this fall. Most surprisingly, YSF had four foreign recoveries this year (birds banded at other stations before visiting the YSF stations), and one owl that was originally banded at YSF in 2004 revisited YSF this year. We know that three of the foreign recoveries were originally banded either in central Wisconsin or northeastern Minnesota, but one we have not yet heard about. These foreign recoveries add to our growing database showing that most of the NSWOs migrating into and through southern Indiana come from locations to the northwest.

The addition of the substation a mile away from the main station may have siphoned some owls from the main station, but the low results in Newark contradict that theory. We will wait to see what happens in future years to be certain, but these preliminary results indicate at least most of the 33 owls at the substation were likely ones we would have missed, a rather interesting conclusion given that the stations were only a mile apart. Doing the math on extrapolating owl migration across the state with approximately 70


miles of heavy woods for the NSWOs to migrate through yields about 2500 NSWOs!

The high count for one night was eight NSWOs, which occurred twice in November (11/9 and 11/17) at our usual peak of migration; however, the migration this year was primarily a steady trickle of owls (one to three per night) rather than a bunch of nights with no owls punctuated by a few nights with lots of owls as we have often had in the past.

Similar to previous years 76% of the NSWOs were female, 7% were male, and 17% were of unknown sex. Amazingly, 60% of the NSWOs were hatch-year birds (birds hatched this past breeding season), obviously only 40% were older, and 17% were confirmed to be older than two years.

With the two stations in YSF we had a unique opportunity to see how the owls may be moving around the forest. Thirteen NSWOs were locally recaptured in YSF (banded in YSF this year and then recaptured again this year), averaging nine days between the original and last capture date, and averaging a loss of 2.9 grams per bird. Of those 13, four were originally banded at the main station and recaptured at the main station, one of which also visited the more southerly substation in between. Similarly, three NSWOs were originally banded and recaptured at the substation, two of which visited the more northerly main station in between. Three NSWOs stayed in the area of the main station and another three stayed in the area of the substation (as far as we know). This means that the NSWOs are obviously doing quite a bit of moving around in the forest during their migration stopovers. Additionally, the total number of local recaptures was high compared to previous years, but once we factor out those who traveled between the stations without being recaptured at their original station, the numbers are much more in line with previous records.

After five years of collecting data at the main YSF station, we are ready to begin inferential statistical analysis and think about getting the data published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. Wish us luck as we begin this next, complicated phase of analysis and publication.

Thanks to all of the volunteers and SAS members who helped our banding operation this year. We hope to see many of you again next year. I would especially like to thank my fellow co-banders at the YSF stations, Jeff Hammond, Vicky Meretsky, and Jeff Riegel for many long, cold nights of hard work that takes a tremendous amount of dedication and sleep deprivation. Additionally, I should mention that Dave Dunatchik, Rose Ann Hasty, and Drew Laird joined me for several nights of training to join the rest of us by becoming sub-permitted NSWO banders. 



Answer to Name That Bird:  
**Northern Shoveler**

## Activists' Corner

by Jess Gwinn, Conservation Coordinator

There are two pieces of good news regarding forests. On the local front, the Monroe Circuit Court has decided that a lawsuit filed against the Indiana Department of Natural Resources over its logging program can proceed. This case has bounced around the legal system for a few years and can now go to trial. The plaintiffs, the Indiana Forest Alliance, et al., claim that the IDNR has not followed the Indiana Environmental Policy Act (IEPA) in regards to its logging program on the state forests. The IEPA is the state equivalent to the National Environmental Policy Act, the federal law that requires an environmental impact statement for all federal projects that might cause environmental damage. The state had asked, more than once, to have the case dismissed and the judge disagreed--so now the case goes to trial.

On the national level, on November 29, 2006, Judge Elizabeth LaPorte, U.S. District Court, found in favor of a coalition of environmental groups and state attorneys and ordered the Forest Service to stop work on 84 oil and gas projects and an Idaho road project. These projects were started after the illegal repeal of the 2001 Roadless Rule by the Bush administration. This ruling in essence reinstates the 2001 Roadless Rule in all of the lower 48 states. For those of you who don't recall, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was formulated by the Clinton administration after three years of study and comments by over four million citizens, the vast majority of whom supported roadless area protection. While this new ruling is very positive, I would not be surprised to see further attempts by a few timber interests and their cronies in the Bush administration try to once again derail this massively popular program.



We thought about using this photo for our Name That Bird feature, but decided it was too tricky. Jim and Susan Hengeveld identified it as a leucistic (partially albino) Dark-eyed Junco. Tom Coleman and Pat Williams spotted it on their feeder recently and sent the photo to Dawn Hewitt. Pat Williams took the photo.

### Which type of membership best fits you?

National Audubon Society (NAS) members are automatically chapter members of the local Sassafras Audubon Society (SAS), so they are not required to become a Friend of SAS to receive the chapter newsletter, the *Leaflet*. We ask NAS members, however, to please consider also becoming Friends of SAS to support our local conservation and education projects. You can be just a Friend of SAS, just a member of NAS, or--best of all--do both!

## SAS Gets Grant from National Audubon to Build Parking Lots

The National Audubon Society has funded a competitive grant submitted by SAS (prepared by Jess Gwinn) for funds to purchase materials to construct parking areas at the Beehunter Marsh portion of the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area (GPFWA), SAS's adopted Indiana Important Bird Area. On December 9, 2006, SAS volunteers, with the help of personnel from GPFWA, installed 6"x6" wood posts around the perimeter of four parking areas at Beehunter Marsh. All four parking areas are along County Road 200 South, the main east-west road through Beehunter. Once these posts (which were set with concrete) become firm, a cable will be strung between them. This will help delineate the parking areas for users of this increasingly popular birding and hunting area. Thank you to the volunteers: Mike Clarke, Janet Creamer, Terri Greene, Jess Gwinn, Jim Hengeveld, Susan Hengeveld, Ross Hill, Andrew Mertz, Jim Mitchell, and Lee Sterrenburg.

### Thanks, SAS

(from the IN-BIRD-L Archives Website)

*I just want to take this opportunity to thank SAS for purchasing the materials for yesterday's workday and to all of the members who volunteered at Goose Pond FWA. I can't begin to tell you how important it is to have such willing and eager volunteers to help make improvements to the property. Thanks again and I'm looking forward to future activities.*

Brad Feaster, GPFWA Manager



SAS members and friends pose beside one of the posts after a job well done. Left to right: Tilia (dog), Creamer, Mertz (back), Clarke, S. Hengeveld, J. Hengeveld, Greene, Gwinn, Hill, and Sterrenburg.

