

## Great News to Share!

by Bob Kissell

In just the first month of our endowment campaign, we have received over \$3000 in pledges and contributions. SAS enthusiastically thanks its initial contributors: David and Sally Crouch, Sarah Frey, Don and Helen Wiesler, Andrew Durkin, Pam and Ken Roberts, Henry Wahl, Vicky Meretsky, Robert MacKenzie, Bob and Joann Dodd, Phillip and Karen Doering, James Ferguson, Eleanore Dodge, the Lorenz Family Trust, and Kris Grube.

As we have stated, one cornerstone of SAS's work is stewardship at the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area. In January of 2008, SAS member Lee Sterrenburg, James Cole from Indiana Audubon, and Brad Feaster, DNR property manager at Goose Pond, will present a panel discussion on changes at Goose Pond, future needs at this important property, and SAS's role in the stewardship of Goose Pond. We hope you will join us to learn about the myriad of great developments at Goose Pond. Look for details about this SAS program in a future *Leaflet* issue.

SAS's Board of Directors wishes to extend its deepest appreciation to each and every initial contributor for their faith in our organization and their commitment to environmental conservation and stewardship. We pledge to use your contributions wisely and effectively in the coming years.

While our first month is a most satisfying start, we still need as many members as possible to keep us moving towards our endowment campaign goal of \$50,000 over the next two years. We hope to hear from you in the future. 🐦

## Family Flock Celebration by Tom Platt

Join us for a celebration of our natural world at our 3rd Annual Family Flock Celebration at the Griffy Lake Nature Preserve on Saturday, September 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.! We will kick off the event with a one-hour paddle around the lake (thanks to Bloomington Parks and Recreation for donating the use of canoes). After the paddle, naturalist Cathy Meyer will teach participants how to get the most out of binoculars. Then get up close and personal with Griffy Lake's aquatic insects and zooplankton with Dr. Spencer Hall from IU's Department of Biology. Finally explore Griffy Lake Nature Preserve's trails with naturalist and local bird expert Dawn Hewitt.

Bring the family and enjoy this celebration of nature! This event is open to both members and non-members, so feel free to bring along any friends. Snacks will be provided but please bring a lunch.

Schedule of events (Saturday, September 15):

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	Group Paddle on Griffy Lake
11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.	Binocular Walk (with Cathy Meyer)
12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.	Critters of Griffy Lake (with Spencer Hall)
1:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.	Guided Bird Hike (with Dawn Hewitt) 🐦

## SAS Annual 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 you put out for them.

The Fall Feeder Cleaning will take place on Saturday, September 22, at Bloomington Hardware, located on S. College Mall Rd. Drop off your feeders between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. and pick them up between 2 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.

Volunteers are needed to help with the cleaning. If you would like to help clean feeders, contact David Daniels at 812-333-2121. 🐦

## CAN YOU NAME THIS BIRD

This fellow is very sociable. He is not a fan of low-fat diets as you are likely to see him at your suet feeder. The answer is on page 4.



Photo by Jeff Hammond

# Editor's Note: *Yes, in My Back Yard*

by Bob Dodd

You do not have to travel to some distant land to see interesting birds and avian activity. You do not even need to go to one of our nearby birding hot spots. Many people whose birding activities are confined to their own home see unusual birds and intriguing bird activity right in their own back yard. For example, have you ever seen unusual visitors to your hummingbird feeder? If you are a regular reader of Dawn Hewitt's birding column in the Sunday paper you may remember several reports of Downy Woodpeckers taking advantage of the nectar. Their acrobatics in positioning themselves for feeding can be entertaining. Occasionally warblers will visit hummingbird feeders - a real treat for the bird watcher. Another source of avian entertainment is watching a Pileated Woodpecker feed from a small suet feeder - or even from the sunflower seed feeder. Actually the pileateds seem more interested in scraping the seeds onto the ground than making any real effort at eating them.

Also be on the lookout for unusual birds around your feeders or in the back yard. The Bloomington and Indiana bird lists frequently include listing of unusual birds described from someone's feeder or yard. Rufous Hummingbirds are one of the most frequent rarities reported, especially in the fall and winter. Other birds reported

*continued on page 6*

## JOIN SAS

Support *Sassafras Audubon Society (SAS)* 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% discount on selected items at the Bloomington Wild Birds Unlimited and Bloomington Hardware stores. 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!

### 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
- New member    *While supplies last! As a new Friend of SAS, you'll receive a SAS t-shirt. One shirt per new member. Circle your size choice:    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](mailto:SAS@sassafrasaudubon.org).

## Sassafras Audubon Society

### Board of Directors

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Jeff Riegel ([jkriegel@att.net](mailto:jkriegel@att.net))

### Committee Chairs

The committees welcome help from volunteers.  
Conservation Coordinator: Jess Gwinn  
Database Manager/Membership Coordinator:  
Jeff Riegel  
Education Coordinator: Tom Platt  
Field Trip Coordinator: Jim Mitchell  
Fund-Raising Coordinator:  
Bob Kissel (812-336-2907)  
Program Coordinator: Nancy Martin  
Publicity Coordinator: John Lawrence

The Board of Directors normally meets on the first Monday of each month at 6:30pm. All SAS members are welcome to attend. Please call the president or another board member to learn more details as well as the meeting location or e-mail [SAS@sassafrasaudubon.org](mailto:SAS@sassafrasaudubon.org).

### SAS Website

<http://www.sassafrasaudubon.org/>

Webmaster:

Susan Hengeveld ([shengeve@indiana.edu](mailto:shengeve@indiana.edu))

### Leaflet Staff

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

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

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# SAS Calendar September/October 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.

## Sat., Sept. 22, at 8:30 a.m.: Flatwoods Park

Join Monroe County Naturalist Cathy Meyer at Flatwoods Park to look for fall migrants. We'll meet in the parking lot at Flatwoods Park at 8:30 a.m. To get to the park follow St. Rd. 46 just over 2 miles west of the stoplight in Ellettsville. Turn left onto Flatwoods Rd. Go about 1 mile to the park entrance on the left. We should be back in Bloomington by late morning. For more info, e-mail Cathy at [cmeyer@co.monroe.in.us](mailto:cmeyer@co.monroe.in.us) or call Jim Mitchell 812-824-8198.

## Sat., Sept. 22

**Goose Pond FWA Work Day** (see article on back page)

**Fall Feeder Cleaning** (see article on front page)

## Wed., Sept. 26, at 7 p.m.: Program to Be Announced

We do not yet have the program set, but mark this date on your calendar and watch the SAS Website. The event will be held in Room 1-B of the Monroe County Public Library and is free for all to attend. We will have a short annual membership meeting before the program. Light refreshments will be served.

## Sat., Sept. 29, at 7 a.m.: Goose Pond FWA--Marsh Birds, Shorebirds, Raptors, and Sparrows

We will journey to Goose Pond FWA in Greene County to look for lingering herons, egrets, bitterns, and possibly rails; migrating shorebirds, raptors, and sparrows; early migrating waterfowl; and maybe some Bobolinks. Rubber boots might be useful if we

encounter wet conditions. Meet in the northeast corner (by the gas station) of the Super Wal-Mart parking lot on St. Rd. 45 in Bloomington at 7 a.m. We will caravan to Goose Pond from there and return by early afternoon. Contact Lee Sterrenburg at [sterren@indiana.edu](mailto:sterren@indiana.edu) or call Jim Mitchell at 812-824-8198.

## Oct. 7, Oct. 13, and Oct. 21 at 8 a.m.: Migrants

On these days Jim Mitchell will lead us on a half-day trip to Monroe and Brown County hot spots in search of fall migrant birds. We will look for land birds, waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors. Meet in the northeast corner of the K-Mart parking lot (by Bloomingfoods) on E. 3rd St. For more info, contact Jim Mitchell at 812-824-8198 or [jmitchel01@insightbb.com](mailto:jmitchel01@insightbb.com).

## Sat., Oct. 27: Northwest Indiana

Join Don Whitehead for a one-day trip to Willow Slough (WS) and Jasper-Pulaski FWA (JP) with a possible option to do 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 at 812-339-1782 or [whitehea@indiana.edu](mailto:whitehea@indiana.edu).

## Wed., Oct. 31, at 7 p.m.: Program to Be Announced

We do not yet have the program set, but mark this date on your calendar and watch the SAS Website. 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.

## Sat., Nov. 3, at 8 a.m.: Muscatatuck NWR

Jeff Riegel will lead us on a day trip to Muscatatuck NWR. We will also stop at Ewing Bottoms looking for Sandhill Cranes and Starve Hollow SRA looking for Bald Eagles. Meet in the northeast corner of the K-Mart parking lot (by Bloomingfoods) on E. 3rd St. at 8 a.m. Bring a snack or lunch since we won't be back before 2 p.m. Contact Jim Mitchell at [jmitchel01@insightbb.com](mailto:jmitchel01@insightbb.com) or 812-824-8198. 🐦

## Owl Banding Volunteers Needed

We're seeking a few hearty volunteers to help capture and band Northern Saw-whet Owls as part of ongoing research led by Ross Brittain and Jess Gwinn. Ross and his fellow banders (Jeff Hammond, Jeff Riegel, and Vicky Meretsky) invite a limited number of volunteers to help them band the owls in Yellowwood State Forest. They can accommodate as many as 5 volunteers per night, although 2 or 3 are better to keep the noise down. The sessions start at sunset or sometimes later and usually last for 3 or more hours. Be sure to wear warm clothing and bring water, snacks, blankets, and a chair. If you are interested, contact Ross at [rabbritta@indiana.edu](mailto:rabbritta@indiana.edu).



### Sassafras Audubon Society's Saw-Whet Owl Adoption Program

Supporting research on the migration patterns of the Northern Saw-whet Owl in southern Indiana.

\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to support Saw-whet Owl research!

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

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

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Send a check with \$30 for each adopted owl payable to:

Sassafras Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 85  
Bloomington, Indiana 47402

You will receive a detailed letter and certificate about your adopted owl. Contact Ross Brittain (812-340-9994, [rabbritta@indiana.edu](mailto:rabbritta@indiana.edu)) for details.



# Butterfly Count Results

by Jeff Belth

The tenth annual Monroe/Brown County "4th of July" butterfly count was held Saturday, June 30. The 16 participants found 46 species and 2,287 individuals (the 2005 tally was 49 species and 1,015 individuals--we did not conduct the count last year). Some highlights included Harvester, Juniper Hairstreak, American Snout, Tawny Emperor, Gemmed Satyr, Hoary Edge, Common Sootywing, and Sagem. The relatively dry summer may have



Little Wood-Satyr. Photo by Jeff Belth

contributed to low numbers of some species, but others had impressive or even record numbers: Pipevine Swallowtail, 166; Question Mark, 141 (our record high; Red Admiral, 216; and Little Wood Satyr, 488 (our record high).

Many thanks to all who participated! And a special thank you to Don and Betsy Whitehead for hosting our tally after the count.

Here is the complete tally: Pipevine Swallowtail-166, Zebra Swallowtail-9, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail-68, Spicebush Swallowtail-124, Cabbage White-26, Clouded Sulphur-26, Orange Sulphur-41, Harvester-6, Coral Hairstreak-4, Edward's Hairstreak-1, Banded Hairstreak-2, Juniper Hairstreak-4, Gray Hairstreak-2, Eastern Tailed-Blue-122, Summer Azure-5, American Snout-1, Great Spangled Fritillary-80, Meadow Fritillary-13, Pearl Crescent-250, Question Mark-141, Eastern Comma-9, American Lady-8, Red Admiral-216, Red-spotted Purple-42, Viceroy-12, Hackberry Emperor-3, Tawny Emperor-1, Northern Pearly-Eye-3, Gemmed Satyr-4, Little Wood-Satyr-488, Common Wood-Nymph-47, Monarch-27, Silver-spotted Skipper-44, Hoary Edge-3, Southern Cloudywing-4, Northern Cloudywing-4, Horace's Duskywing-23, Wild Indigo Duskywing-26, Common Sootywing-1, Least Skipper-17, Tawny-edged Skipper-22, Crossline Skipper-6, Northern Broken-Dash-69, Little Glassywing-50, Sagem-2, Dun Skipper-65.

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## Hot Temps, Cool Birds

by Keegan Ramey

I recently completed a thirteen-week internship through the Student Conservation Association. My position was with the U.S. Geological Survey at the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge. As a part of the Salton Sea Restoration Plan, the project concentrated on studying the reproductive success of Black-necked Stilts in a recreated wetland environment, consisting of large, shallow ponds with islands and levees suitable for nesting birds.

The project began with the nesting of the Black-necked Stilts, which was delayed by a couple strong windstorms and a very rare

rainstorm. We were responsible for finding and marking with GPS all of the nests in our study sites. Over 200 nests were found. We collected one egg randomly from the clutch a few days before hatching. This egg was marked and shipped to the lab for contaminant analysis, leaving three eggs in the nest. In total, we were permitted to collect nearly 60 eggs at various locations in the main study site and the reference sites. Next we collected a newly hatched chick from each clutch. We would then take various measurements like weight, wing chord, tarsus, culmen, and nare lengths. Also, we collected a small amount of feathers for lab analysis. Finally, we would carefully attach a very small radio transmitter to the back of the chick with three small sutures. In total, we tagged almost 70 chicks over a six-week period. Once tagged, we followed the chicks' travels throughout the area to determine which habitats were preferred, the causes of mortalities, and the ranges of their movements. The transmitters' batteries typically lasted 20 days. So, we never had more than 25 chicks to follow at a time. With average temperatures above 115 degrees and the occasional days above 120 degrees, we tried to disrupt the birds as little as possible during the hottest times of the day, so we typically worked from 5:00 to 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Apart from this primary assignment, I was also able to assist with other projects that were being conducted at the refuge. I helped with a project involving the effects of predators, primarily



Black-necked Stilt chick fitted with transmitter. Photo by Keegan Ramey

raccoons, on nesting birds. I also helped with a study on the nesting habits of Burrowing Owls. I was a part of the comprehensive Snowy Plover count for the entire Salton Sea as well. We took several airboats along the shores of the sea and counted Snowy Plovers along with all other species.

In the end I felt very fortunate to have worked with so many great people. I learned more than I even expected, and I know that it will be very useful in the future. I was also able to see some incredible birds and take plenty of great pictures, while adding 127 birds to my life list over the entire trip. For my next adventure, it looks like I will be headed to the Buenos Aires NWR in southeast Arizona to work with Masked Bobwhites. 🐦



Answer to Name That Bird:  
**Downy Woodpecker**

## To See Every Bird in the World by Bob Dodd

Have you ever thought it would be interesting or challenging to keep track of every species of bird you see in your yard or at your feeders? What about keeping a list of birds you have seen in Indiana? Many birders, even those who are rather casual about their hobby, keep a life list without any thought that it will be anywhere near complete, even for our local birds. A few birders are serious enough about their hobby that they attempt to see as many birds as possible in their home state or in North America. A very few have become obsessed with the idea of seeing every bird in the world. No one has ever reached that goal, but a few have come reasonably close. The person who has seen more species than anybody was Phoebe Snetsinger. She saw about 8,450 species out of some 10,000 species worldwide. Of course that total is a moving target as single species from time to time are split and others are combined. The general trend has been for the total to increase.

Phoebe chronicled her search in her fascinating autobiography, *Birding on Borrowed Time* (published in 2003 by the American Birding Association). Her interest in birding did not develop until age 34 when she saw a Blackburnian Warbler in company with her birding neighbor. She was hooked with an obsession that grew. If you want to see every bird in the world you must be prepared to travel to many out-of-the-way places, which requires lots of money. Fortunately for Phoebe she inherited a fortune from her parents. Phoebe and most other birders striving to see all of the world's birds traveled with organized birding groups led by the best birders for the area being visited. Not only did Phoebe simply want to add the bird to her list, she insisted on seeing it well enough to identify it personally and not just rely on what her guide told her. Also she insisted on seeing the bird, hearing its call was not enough. She kept detailed notes of every species she observed, first in a card file and later digitally. Phoebe was diagnosed with cancer in 1981 and given a year to live. She decided to use that year in doing the thing she loved most, birding. Fortunately the cancer went into remission, and although it recurred, it never slowed her progress. As you can imagine, traveling in small groups to obscure parts of the world led to numerous adventures, many of the unpleasant variety. During her travels Phoebe was raped in New Guinea, being lucky to survive. She almost lost her life when the boat she was traveling in from a small island in the Indian Ocean overturned. She continued on a birding trip in the Philippines for several days with a broken ankle, refusing to leave the group for treatment when there were new birds to be found. As you can imagine, her home life suffered as well. She did not attend her daughter's wedding because it interfered with a planned birding trip. Her husband contemplated divorce, but counseling and some give and take saved the marriage. She claimed to be slowing in her search for new birds as she reached the 8,000 mark, but the trips continued. Ultimately she died tragically when the bus in which she was riding on a birding trip in Madagascar overturned. She had seen her 8,450th bird that day in 1999.

*To See Every Bird on Earth: A Father, a Son, and a Lifelong Obsession* (published in 2005 by Penguin Group) is quite a different sort of book. It was written by Dan Koepfel, a professional writer specializing in biking and nature. The story is written about his father, Richard. Richard's achievements were more modest than Phoebe's, if you can call over 7,000 birds modest. Richard's interest in birding began as a 12-year-old in the Flushing Meadows area of New York. The bird that hooked him was a Brown Thrasher. Richard's obsession with world listing developed more slowly than Phoebe's, and it was not until after an unhappy and ultimately failed marriage and a belated degree in medicine that he became serious in listing. Richard did not have an inherited fortune to finance his trips, but he was a successful physician who was able to arrange his schedule to accommodate his obsession. Much of the book concerns Richard's difficult life and his relationship to his estranged wife and son (Dan, the author). Richard was not a person to show his true feelings openly, and it took years for father and son to break down the barriers and become friends as well as father and son. The two were together on a birding trip in Brazil when Richard spotted bird number 7,000. Richard's health was already failing, and after reaching the 7,000 plateau his interest in listing diminished. At the time of publication of the book, he was still alive and birding at a reduced level. 🐦

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## More of Your Favorite and Interesting Places to Bird by Lynda Walker

In the last two issues of the *Leaflet*, SAS members have shared their favorite birding spots. Many of you enjoy birding in your own backyards. We're lucky in this area that there are so many bird species that visit our yard feeders. More favorite and interesting birding spots are provided below. Have fun checking out some familiar birding spots--and trying some new places!

- Joann Dodd--I enjoy birding with my husband at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. I also like to go birding with my grandson at the Rio Grande Nature Center in Albuquerque, NM..
- Laura Hammond--I like my backyard best. It's such a fun place to watch birds and it's very relaxing.
- Anna Larimer--I went to Monteverde, Costa Rica, and loved the birds there. It's beautiful.
- Nancy Mitchell--I like to bird wherever my husband, Jim, is birding.
- Tom Platt--If you have a chance to visit Matagorda Island, Texas, I recommend it!
- Jeff Riegel--My favorite birding spot is Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, located on the subtropical barrier island of Sanibel in the Gulf of Mexico. The refuge is part of the largest undeveloped mangrove ecosystem in the United States and is famous for migratory birds.
- Bernie Sloan--I like places where I can walk for exercise and bird at the same time. My favorite three local spots are Griffy Lake, the IU Cross Country Course, and Clear Creek Trail.

We'd love to hear from you, too. Share your favorite or interesting birding spots by sending an e-mail to [wdcreeper@aol.com](mailto:wdcreeper@aol.com). 🐦

# President's Note

by John Lawrence

It's hard to believe that the two years of my term as SAS president have gone by already. "Leave it better than you found it" is good advice, and I hope I've managed to do that with our organization. In any case, I'm glad to announce that we have an excellent candidate to take the reins as president: Jeff Riegel.

Jeff has been a member of the SAS Board of Directors as Membership Coordinator for the past two years. Professionally, he is the Director of BirdCountry.US, a company dedicated to avian conservation and education. He's also the Field Research Supervisor for Purdue University on the annual Hoosier National Forest Breeding Bird Survey and the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment at Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests, and also Brown County State Park. Prior to working for Purdue, Jeff was the Interpretive Naturalist for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at Lake Monroe for nine years.

As an environmental educator, Jeff has coordinated Eagle Watch Weekend for the past 10 years and launched the inaugural "Wings on the Water" event in 2006 and the "Spring Nature Expo" in 2007. In addition, Jeff is a member of "The Cavalry," the first 50 people in the world to receive personal training and authorization from former U.S. Vice President Al Gore to present his slide show on global warming, the basis of the Academy Award winning documentary and bestseller book, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Jeff has made the presentation to hundreds of people throughout southern Indiana, including the Sassafras Audubon Society's Annual Dinner held last April.

I'm also glad that we have four board members running for reelection after completing their first two-year terms. David Daniels, owner of Bloomington Wild Birds Unlimited, coordinates our popular and successful bird feeder cleaning fundraisers every fall and spring. Bob Dodd, our hard-working *Leaflet* editor, is a retired IU professor from the Department of Geological Sciences. Nancy Martin teaches at Jackson Creek Middle School and organizes our monthly programs. Tom Platt, a graduate student in the IU Biology Department, arranges our annual Family Flock events. They're all doing great jobs for SAS, and I'm sure you'll join me in supporting them and Jeff at our annual meeting in September.

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## Editor's Note

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in back yards in recent months include Bullock's Oriole, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Harris Sparrow, and Northern Parula. Probably many backyard birders see other unusual birds and either do not recognize or do not report them. Bob and Judy Ensman recently had an unusual backyard visitor. A Green Heron perched in a tree beside their deck.



Green Heron behind Ensman Condo. Photo by Bob Ensman

Many of us have seen cardinals "fight" their own reflection in a window or other shiny surface. We were recently treated to the spectacle of a pair of Eastern Towhees attacking our bedroom window (usually at dawn). Sometimes it was the male defending his territory, but often it was the female or both attacking simultaneously. Have you had any unusual visitors to your backyard recently or witnessed any interesting bird behavior? We would like to know about it. Just e-mail your story (or write or call) to [dodd@indiana.edu](mailto:dodd@indiana.edu).

How are you doing on your 2007 Indiana bird list? After a very productive June, my list now stands at 159. With a little luck this fall I may be able to reach my 175 goal. My New Mexico son and daughter-in-law have already exceeded their modest goal of 100. Don Wiesler is still ahead of me at 173, so unless he goes to sleep on the job he will make his 175 goal easily. I recently heard from Brian Sloan indicating that he has seen 155 species as of late July. Brian, a frequent poster on the Bloomington Bird List, points out that he confines most of his birding to a few spots near Bloomington. David Daniels ranges further afield, and he told me in mid July that his Indiana list was already at 202. Let us know if you can beat that number. 🐦

**Letter to the Editor:** You would have to ask me that question [What is your Indiana bird total for the year?] on the most recent of a long string of days (10, I think) when "getting out" has been nearly the farthest thing from my mind and one day after having seen my 18th and most recent species for the month of August: Common Grackle (at neighbor Cathy's bird feeder). Exciting.

Well, we all need down time. The ol' list for 2007 has been enriched since I wrote you last, with a Cooper's Hawk, the Daviess County Loggerhead Shrike, the Beehunter King Rail, and a couple of early southbound shorebirds. So where does the arithmetic lead us? Hmm. That's 189 for the year, but 17 of them were seen in Ohio only, on our May Crane Creek trip. 172, then, huh? Do I get to count my heard-only Chuck-will's Widow, which would make it 173?

I can't get my mind off that proverbial hare. Two yards from the finish line he turns around and sees a plodding tortoise far behind him. He then goes to sleep and dreams of Magnolia, Blackburnian, Black-throated Green, Canada, Wilson's, and Bay-breasted Warblers, Cormorant, Dunlin, and Pectoral Sandpiper, all of which he saw in Ohio and all of which generally show up in Indiana in fall migration. His dreams encompass the Blue-headed Vireo Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow, and Purple Finch, which he missed in spring but are fairly reliable in fall. He dreams of having read online about White Pelicans and Snow Buntings and Black-bellied Plovers and Short-eared Owls, going to the place they were seen, and finding them. A few more winks and then we'll get the job finished, he says; but, awakening, he sees a determined tortoise anklin' it over the finish line, turning to him, and yelling "Happy New Year!"

Bob, I hope you get your 175 and then some. Let's let Daniels and the others have their fun, too. I'll be content to see any two of the above (or acceptable surrogates). That, of course, doesn't mean I'll quit for the year if I find a Snowy Egret and a Little Blue Heron pecking on my picture window. No, sir; not with the prospect of all that beautiful fall weather awaiting us. --Don Wiesler 🐦



## Activists' Corner

by Jess Gwinn, Conservation Coordinator

Last week an interstate bridge spanning the Mississippi River in Minnesota suddenly collapsed without notice. The final death toll will probably be at least 10. To say the bridge collapsed without notice gives the wrong impression. Inspections carried out over the course of many years have consistently pointed out the many defects in the decades old bridge. Much of our highway infrastructure is in disrepair. Indiana has 2,066 bridges that the Federal Highway Administration says are "structurally deficient." Another 1,987 are rated "functionally obsolete." These add up to 4,053 bridges, 22% of all the bridges in the state, needing work. The cost to replace this one span in Minnesota is projected to be 250 million dollars. While not all of the 4,053 bridges in Indiana in need of repair are as big as the one in Minnesota, the cost to repair and replace these bridges (and roads) runs into the billions of dollars.

In all honesty, repairing existing infrastructure is just not sexy. There is no ribbon cutting ceremony or great photo ops. The structure probably already has a bronze plaque with the name of some long-dead politician on it. What's in it for the current politician? Oh yeah, public safety. How many votes is that worth? Contrarily, how many votes is it worth when the bridge collapses?

With the state trying to steamroll a new terrain 4 billion dollar I-69 down our throats, wouldn't it be more prudent to spend that money improving and fixing the roads we have? Wouldn't we all be a little safer with that money spread around the state on all of those deficient bridges and other small road improvements instead of on one gargantuan project that will require even more scarce highway funding to maintain once built? True, there won't be a pretty new ribbon of asphalt and concrete with a big sign calling it the "Mitch Daniels Freeway." Instead, how about we all promise to show up and take pictures of every new and repaired bridge and road? And vote for the politicians who had enough sense to not squander 4 billion dollars on I-69 and fix our existing roads instead.

## SAS Historical Notes from 1971

The following are news items from old *Leaflets* as provided by Cathy Meyer.

**April 1971** Rey Carlson was organizing field trips. Jim Jontz and Mrs. Pat DeVille were visiting classrooms to talk about birds. SAS installed landscaping at Eisner food store [now O'Malia's].

**May 1971** Dr. David Frey submitted an article about Lake Monroe, pointing out the need for planning on a watershed scale. He predicted nutrient loading, siltation, and recreational uses would have a detrimental effect. A neighbor's logging activities damaged Cedar Bluffs Nature Preserve.

A membership drive was underway. Some 300 people attended a rally to save the Lost River from being dammed. 🐾

## Watch for Spectacular Chimney Swifts Migration Show This Fall

by Bob Dodd

Would you like to see a spectacular local bird display? Each fall migrating Chimney Swifts put on a show that bird lovers look forward to in anticipation. Swifts spend their summers in North America when flying insects are abundant, but in autumn, when insect numbers are falling, the swifts head south for their winter home in South America. On their way they form large flocks and spend the night in communal roosts. Their favorite roosts are frequently large masonry chimneys, especially the type that formerly were built in large structures such as factories, schools, and churches. A favorite roost in Bloomington is the chimney at the First Presbyterian Church at Sixth and Lincoln Streets. Cathy Meyer informs us that swifts also roost in an airshaft at Bloomington High School South. There are probably other local sites as well. If you go to one of these sites just before sunset on an early- to mid-October evening you are in for a treat. Hundreds of swifts circle the roost as if in a formation that spirals in toward the chimney. Gradually a few will plunge into the chimney followed by a few more, etc. until they are all settled in for the night. Humans are not the only creatures watching the show. You may see the large shadowy form of a Coopers Hawk dash in to take a before-bedtime snack. At Chapman Elementary School in Portland Oregon, watching the swift migration has become an annual event (the Oregon swifts are actually Vaux's Swifts, a close relative of our Chimney Swifts). In Portland, the swifts roost in the chimney of the school. The local Audubon Society sponsors a "Swift Watch" at which the participants sit on the slopes overlooking the school watching the show and booing when hawks swoop in for a kill.

Before European civilization came to North America, Chimney Swifts nested and roosted in hollow trees and other cavities. Like several other species of birds, the swifts benefited from the presence of humans. They soon learned to utilize chimneys, resulting in an expansion of population size. Humans also benefited because one of the swifts main food sources is mosquitoes and other small flying insects. In more recent years, due to technological advances, people are building fewer large masonry chimneys. Large hollow trees are not as common as they were in pre-European times; so natural sites are limited. Many otherwise suitable chimneys are being capped, preventing entry of swifts. Although swifts are still relatively abundant, their numbers are declining. This decline is a source of concern to ornithologists. There is even an organization dedicated to preservation and increase in population size of Chimney Swifts. Visit its Website at <http://www.chimneyswifts.org/>.

What can you do to help the swifts? Do not cap your masonry chimney (or remove the cap if it is already there). Do not have your chimney cleaned during nesting season (approximately April-August). Do not build a fire in your fireplace during nesting season if you hear a "chattering" in your chimney. Be informed of the usefulness and plight of these valuable and fascinating birds and support efforts to save large, old masonry chimneys. You might even consider constructing a Chimney Swift tower (but it is a large and expensive project). You can find directions on the Web. 🐾

# Friends of Goose Pond

A group consisting largely of Greene County residents is forming an organization called Friends of Goose Pond. The group will promote utilization and appreciation of the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area. Becky Yung will serve as president and Lee Sterrenburg, vice-president. Brad Feaster, Property Manager of Goose Pond FWA, has been active in advising and working with the group. Although final details of the organization, such as non-profit tax status, remain to be worked out, the group has already started activities. They sponsored a float in the Linton Fourth of July parade. The group plans to sponsor a youth dove hunt this September. They are also planning a photo contest and a Goose Pond calendar. The friends are working with a group of local high school teachers to utilize the area for science projects. We plan to have a more complete report on the group and its activities in the next *Leaflet*. 🐦



Friends of Goose Pond float for Fourth of July parade. *Photo by Lee Sterrenburg*

## SAS Work Day at Goose Pond on September 22

SAS will conduct a work day at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 22. All SAS members and friends are invited to join us in working on non-native invasive species control at our adopted Important Bird Area. We will meet at the Goose Pond FWA barn/office on the south side of Indiana Highway 59 south of Linton just after the right hand bend in the road. Bring sprayers if you have them and wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, as we will be getting dirty. Waterproof boots would be useful but not necessary. Our target plants are phragmites and reed canary grass. For more information contact Jess Gwinn at 812-876-8623 or [jagmo@bluemarble.net](mailto:jagmo@bluemarble.net). 🐦

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Show this coupon with your address label to receive a 10% discount on purchases (excluding books and optical equipment) from the **Wild Birds Unlimited Store in Bloomington, Indiana**, or for a 10% discount on items in the bird department at **Bloomington Hardware**. Please keep the coupon for future purchases. Coupon expires October 31, 2007.



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