

Chimney Swifts Need Your Help

by Dawn Hewitt

In recent editions of the *Leaflet*, Bob Dodd and I have told you about Monroe County Community School Corp.'s plans next year to replace Fairview School on Bloomington's near west side. Plans include demolishing the school's massive old brick chimney that hosts countless roosting chimney swifts spring through fall.

Chimney swifts may be abundant in Indiana right now, but their global population is on a sharp decline, according to Bird Life International and other ornithological sources. One reason for the decline might well be that brick chimneys are being lined, capped, or torn down.

Birders and near west side residents are eager to accommodate the swifts, and Bloomington City Councilman Chris Sturbaum has come up with a plan. He has designed a 38-foot-tall chimney to be built in a garden not far from

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Be Sure to See Photo Exhibit

The SAS-Bloomington Photography Club photo exhibit, "Natural History Photos: Focus on Southern Indiana," is currently on display at the Monroe County History Center at the corner of Sixth and Washington streets in Bloomington. The display will be up through January, but don't wait. Be sure to see these magnificent images of birds, butterflies, and other scenic treats from our region. 🐦

Lucky Seven for Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Station!

by Ross Brittain

The seventh year of SAS's Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) banding station begins this October. Each year since 2002, a team of sleep-deprived bird banders heads out to Yellowwood State Forest in Brown County to study the fall migration patterns of these secretive nocturnal predators as they arrive in southern Indiana from breeding grounds in the boreal forests of Canada and the upper Great Lakes region. A second station in Greene County is run by Jess Gwinn in his backyard. The YSF station is run by Ross Brittain, Jeff Hammond, Vicky Meretsky, and Jeff Riegel.

Last year we captured a record 447 saw-whets in Brown and Greene counties, compared to 434 in the previous five years combined. Obviously, last year was a major irruption! This year we expect significantly fewer saw-whets to migrate to southern Indiana, but also significantly more sleep for the banding crews. Over the years we have consistently captured about 80 percent female and only about six male saw-whets, indicating that females are much more migratory. We have also caught about 55 percent hatch-year (young of year) saw-whets on average.

It is our hope and intention to keep this station going as a long-term monitoring station of migratory saw-whet populations for this region of the continent. We had some of our team of banders leave the project this past year, for various personal reasons, but have added Gary Miller and Jim and Susan Hengeveld to the banding team.

As always, we do like to have the help of volunteers at the station. If you would like to volunteer to help band Northern Saw-whet Owls, please contact the coordinator, Ross Brittain, via e-mail at rabitra@indiana.edu. Banding runs each night from about Oct. 20 until around Thanksgiving, 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.

(Editor's note: If you cannot help with the banding at the site, you can always help by adopting an owl. See the form on the back page of this *Leaflet*.) 🐦

CAN YOU NAME THAT BIRD

If you are lucky you may see this big fellow with a red topknot on your suet feeder. Some novice birders misidentified this bird a few years ago, thinking they were seeing a species long thought to be extinct. The answer is on page 6.

Photo by Jeff Hammond



Editor's Note: *Don Whitehead* — *Longtime SAS and Lake Monroe CBC Leader*

by Bob Dodd

The Sassafras Audubon Society has a few charter members who are still on the rolls, but none have been active in leadership as long as Don Whitehead. Although he was never an officer in the organization, Whitehead was on the board for many years and has been compiler/organizer of the Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count for the majority of its 33-year history. One of Indiana's best known and most accomplished birders, Whitehead is also one of our most dependable and effective leaders of outings. Even when Whitehead is not officially in charge of an outing, he often comes along and is an able assistant to the leader.

Although the emphasis of Whitehead's contributions to SAS has mostly been related to birding, he has also been one of the leaders in the struggle to preserve and enhance the Hoosier National Forest. He and his students in the IU Biology Department, where Whitehead taught for many years before his retirement, have studied bird populations in the Hoosier National Forest and the effect of environmental disturbances on those populations. Thus he has been able to speak with scientific authority about management of the forest. Whitehead and other SAS pioneers led the fight to have a wilderness 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 SAS@sassafrasaudubon.org.

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

The SAS *Leaflet* is printed by Fine Print on tree-free paper. The *Leaflet* is published six times per year by the Sassafras Audubon Society on approximately the first of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Give a Holiday Gift of a SAS Membership

Why not share the advantages of a 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 dues money helps to support our local conservation efforts. They will also receive our bimonthly newsletter, Leaflet, and a 10 percent discount on selected items at the Bloomington Wild Birds Unlimited and Bloomington Hardware stores.



Application for Gift Membership

(1) Gift to:

Name: _____

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For additional gift memberships, attach a sheet of paper with the name and address of each person.

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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 2008

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

Saturday, Nov. 8, 7:30 a.m.: Migrating Birds

Jim and Susan Hengeveld will lead us to local hot spots looking for migrating birds. Meet at the northeast corner of the parking lot (next to Bloomingfoods) of the Kmart on East Third Street at 7:30 a.m.

Saturday, Nov. 15: Northwest Indiana

Join Don Whitehead for a one-day trip to Willow Slough and Jasper-Pulaski FWA with a possible option to do the lake front on Sunday. We will leave very early on Saturday morning and carpool to Willow Slough and then Jasper-Pulaski with an intermediate stop at Kankakee Sands. For info and reservations, contact Whitehead at (812) 339-1782 or whitehea@indiana.edu.

Saturday, Nov. 22, 7:30 a.m.: Migrating Birds

SAS President Jeff Riegel will lead us to local hot spots looking for migrating birds. Meet at the northeast corner of the parking lot (next to Bloomingfoods) of the Kmart on East Third Street at 7:30 a.m.

Saturday, Dec. 13, 8 a.m.: Christmas Bird Count Warm-up Birding

Mike Clarke will lead us on this half-day of birding in anticipation of the following Saturday's annual Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count. We should find some winter waterfowl visitors on the lakes,

maybe a Bald Eagle or two, and other smaller winter birds. Join us and hone your winter bird skills for the Christmas Bird Count. We'll meet at 8 a.m. in the northeast corner of the Kmart parking lot on East Third Street in Bloomington.

Sunday, Dec. 14, 8 a.m.: Brown County State Park CBC

Meet at the Nature Center at 8 a.m. For more information, contact Jim Eagleman at (812) 988-5240.



Wednesday, Dec. 17: Goose Pond CBC

See the article in this *Leaflet*. Contact Lee Sterrenburg for details and sign-up at sterren@indiana.edu.

Saturday, Dec. 20: Lake Monroe CBC

See the article in this *Leaflet*. Contact Don Whitehead to sign up now at (812) 339-1782 or whitehea@indiana.edu.

Sunday, Dec. 21: Spring Mill CBC

Contact John Castrale at jcastrale@dnr.IN.gov for more information.

Monday, Dec. 22: Patoka Lake CBC

Contact John Castrale at jcastrale@dnr.IN.gov for more information.

Thursday, Jan. 1, 2009, 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.

Saturday, Jan. 3: McCormick's Creek CBC

See the article in this *Leaflet*. Contact Sandy or Jeff Belth for details and sign-up at belthbirds@aol.com. 

Friends of Goose Pond Calendar — In time for Christmas Giving!

by Grace Chapman

Friends of Goose Pond is ready to accept orders for its first annual photo calendar. The calendar features a variety of stunning photos submitted by local amateur photographers. In addition, the calendar includes birding, hunting, and other information useful to visitors to Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area.

To purchase calendars for direct shipment, make checks payable to the Green County Foundation and write "FoGP calendar" on your check. Then mail your check or money order to: Paul Hoernig, Friends of Goose Pond Treasurer/5004 Richland Creek Rd. / Solsberry IN 47459. The price per calendar is \$12.50 and includes shipping and handling. Along with the check, include your name and "ship to" address as well as the number of calendars being purchased. Calendars will be mailed as soon as payment is received. When purchasing calendars for shipment to multiple addresses, please print or type recipients' names and addresses and indicate the number of calendars to be shipped to each address.

Check our Web site at friendsofgoosepond@yahoo.com for notification of local sales sites where you can purchase and pick up

calendars (\$10 each). Calendars will also be available for purchase on Saturday, Nov. 22, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Wild Birds Unlimited in Bloomington. Proceeds from the sales of calendars will be used to support the activities of Friends of Goose Pond. Give a gift that gives throughout the year! 



White-faced Ibis (a rare bird in Indiana) seen at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in early October. *Photo by Jim Sullivan.*

Lake Monroe CBC #33 on Dec. 20 — Please Join Us

by Don Whitehead

Put Saturday, Dec. 20, on your calendar — that is the date for this year's version of the annual Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count sponsored by Sassafras Audubon. This will be the 33rd consecutive year for this pivotal event.

As almost all of you realize, 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 night) 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 SR446 and Tower Ridge Road (which runs through the 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 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 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. Since some of the counts date back to the early

1900s, there is great potential for monitoring trends in the wintering populations of birds on local, national, and hemispheric levels.

The Lake Monroe CBC has become one of the most interesting in the state. Virtually every year, we record the highest number of species of any count in Indiana. Until last year, we were the only Indiana CBC that has recorded 100 species, and we have accomplished this six times. Over the 32 previous counts, we have tallied more than 140 species, including many rarities. Our supremacy in the state ended last year because of the wonderful results from the new Goose Pond CBC.

The count is great fun involving camaraderie and friendly competition between 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 me 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 from the leader. 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 portion of the day.

To sign up for the count, call (812) 339-1782 or e-mail me at whitehea@indiana.edu. I will provide information on the different

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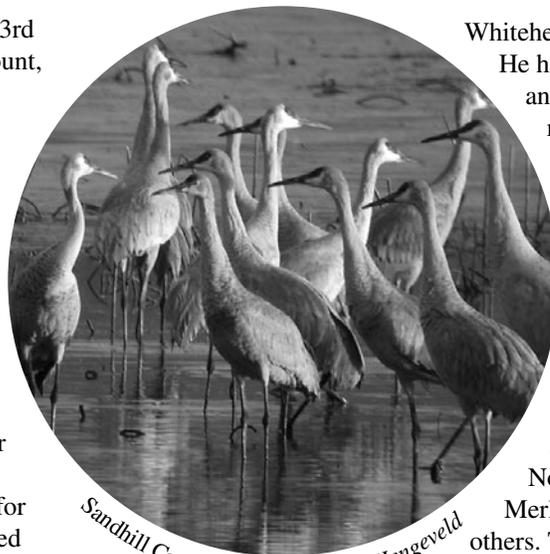
Editor's Note *continued from page 2*

recognized in the Hoosier National Forest. Although they would have preferred to have the wilderness a bit further to the east in the Nebo Ridge area of Brown County, they were successful in having Congress establish the Deam Wilderness area south of Lake Monroe.

This year Whitehead is organizing the 33rd annual Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count, one of the most successful birding activities ever sponsored by SAS. The Lake Monroe count was not the first in the Bloomington area. For many years, before SAS was organized, Val Nolan served as compiler of the Bloomington CBC. The Bloomington count was centered in the Bloomington area and included Lakes Griffey and Lemon and the Bean Blossom Bottoms area. That count was discontinued a few years after the Lake Monroe Count was initiated.

Bill Zimmerman was the first compiler for the Lake Monroe Count. He was followed first by Mary Kay Rothert and then Rick Wiesler as compilers. Whitehead became the next compiler and has served continuously since. In addition to Whitehead and the other compilers, several SAS members have been important leaders in making the count a success. Among them were Dave and Libby Frey, Henry Wahl, Rey Carlson, and Jeff Belth. Like Whitehead,

Belth has participated in practically every Lake Monroe Count (on his first count he was 14 years old). This will be the first year that Henry Wahl, who died last spring, has not participated in some capacity. In the early years, he was a vital team member in the field, and from the beginning Wahl and his wife, Cecilia, provided the setting for the evening potluck dinner and compilation.



Sandhill Cranes. Photo by Susan Hengeveld

Whitehead has maintained records of all those counts.

He has also "preserved" memories of special birds and happenings in the counts. One of the most memorable events occurred last year when a snowstorm and impassable roads caused the count to be cancelled (for the first time in its history) and rescheduled for a later date (the only time the count did not take place on schedule). Many unusual and special birds have been found on the count. A few years ago, thousands of Sandhill Cranes spent the night in the North Fork area and were observed on the lake and then continuing their journey south. Other unusual birds for the count include Northern Shrike, Harris Sparrow, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Black-headed Gull, Kittiwake, and several others. The count has traditionally included more species than any other in the state. This is due to the habitat diversity, the skill of the leaders, and the number of participants (often 60–70) on the count. In five years, the count exceeded 100 species, the highest being 109. The three-year-old Goose Pond CBC has those same characteristics and may well surpass Lake Monroe as the most productive CBC in Indiana. 🐦

Third Annual Goose Pond CBC Scheduled for Dec. 17

by Lee Sterrenburg

Please come help with the third annual Goose Pond Christmas Bird Count in Greene and Sullivan Counties on Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2008. The Goose Pond CBC is sponsored by SAS and is one of the highlight events of the birding year.

This exciting and important CBC features highly varied habitat. The count circle includes all 8,000 acres of the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Greene County, most of the forested parts of Greene-Sullivan State Forest, and almost all of Hawthorn Mine. It also includes extensive agricultural fields east of GPFWA. This is a fast-changing area. When the WRP wetland restorations are completed at GPFWA, there will be some 4,970 acres of shallow-water wetlands, in addition to the deep-water strip mine pits at Hawthorn Mine and GSSF. GPFWA is the site of one of the largest in-progress WRP wetland restoration projects in the entire U.S. The wetlands and the 1,300 acres of restored prairie grasslands at GPFWA are changing the avian map of southwestern Indiana. We're helping to make history by tracking the success of the Goose Pond restorations. We have the greatest frontier into the avian unknown of any Indiana CBC. There is always a chance to discover something new on this CBC.

Last year (December 2007) our Goose Pond CBC tallied an impressive 103 species. We had the highest species total among all the CBCs in Indiana. We have lots more new wetlands to cover this year at Goose Pond FWA, and we need your help this year more than ever.

Last year some of the highlights included two American Bitterns, one Prairie Falcon, two Merlins, the first Northern Saw-whet Owl for our CBC, a staggering 64 Short-eared Owls, two Northern Shrikes, two Marsh Wrens, one Le Conte's Sparrow, 35 Brewer's Blackbirds, 16 Red Crossbills in GSSF, and 69 Pine Siskins at Ivy Kardokus's feeders in Linton. Goose diversity was helped out by 38 Greater White-fronted Geese, two Snow Geese, and seven Cackling Geese. We once again had one non-countable wintering Whooping Crane. Our 64 Short-eared Owls were apparently the second-highest total of any CBC in the Americas.

We want people out beating the bushes. The rewards can include oodles of sparrows. Last year we tallied 3,138 American Tree Sparrows plus 318 Savannah Sparrows, 662 Song Sparrows, and 453 Swamp Sparrows. This CBC can be sparrow heaven. If you like raptors, we have them. There are likely some nifty surprises lurking in the wetlands.

Participants will again be allocated ahead of time into a number of different teams. We'll have our noon lunchtime meeting in Linton to see how we are doing so far. The lunchtime meeting is always an exciting event. If you would like to participate, please contact compiler Lee Sterrenburg by e-mail at sterren@indiana.edu. I can provide information on the different team areas, assign you to a team, and provide starting times and places. Come join the fun.

Barred Owl seen on 2007 Goose Pond CBC. Photo by Scott Evans. 🐦

Jan. 3 marks 22nd Annual McCormick's Creek CBC

by Sandy Belth

All eyes are needed! Come join us on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2009 for the 22nd 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 Bluffs Nature Preserve, a section of the White River, and Flatwoods Park. Last year we had 19 people in the field and recorded 75 species, tying our record high tallied in 2004. Let's break the record this year! If you can help out for all or part of the day, please contact me by phone at (812) 825-8353 or via e-mail at belthbirds@aol.com. As always, the day will be topped off by the traditional potluck dinner and tally at our house. We really look forward to a great count this year! 🐦

Chimney Swifts *continued from page 1*

the much taller existing one, perhaps even using bricks from the old chimney. It could serve as a nesting and roosting site for swifts and a historical monument to the old Fairview School. The new chimney could be built to accommodate a "swift cam," for MCCSC students and others to use to study natural history and more; the garden around it could be a community wildlife habitat project; or maybe a garden club could make it into a hummingbird or butterfly paradise. There's lots of potential for neighborhood, school, community, and nature-lovers to work together on something special and worthy.

A brick mason gave Sturbaum an estimate of just over \$10,000 to build the new structure, and Sturbaum came up with a plan for funding it. He's gotten a commitment from the City of Bloomington to cover one-third of the cost; an anonymous school board member said the school could likely come up with one-third (though not from Fairview construction funds) — leaving about \$3,500 for private donors.

Sassafras Audubon Society's board of directors has promised to chip in \$500, so ... how about you? Will you contribute \$20 for chimney swift habitat? How about \$50? \$100? Of course, even \$5 will help, but we really do need every single bird-lover in the area to help.

If you're willing to contribute to this worthy project, please make a tax-deductible check out to Sassafras Audubon Society, but be sure to note on the check that it's for the "Fairview chimney" project. Mail it to SAS, P.O. Box 85, Bloomington, IN 47402. 🐦

Lake Monroe CBC *continued from page 4*

team areas and provide you with information of starting times and places for each team. The day ends with our traditional potluck dinner, which had been hosted by Henry Wahl every year since the count's inception. Henry Wahl's passing this past year was a sad moment for SAS. This year the potluck will be held in the new headquarters for the Sycamore Land Trust at 4898 E. Heritage Woods Rd. The food is usually wonderful. The meal is followed by the tally, at which time individual and team bragging rights are established. 🐦

President's Note: *Indiana Loses ... Nature Wins*

by Jeff Riegel

For the last several years, many of us have anxiously awaited the annual flight of young Whooping Cranes being led by ultralight aircraft through Indiana skies on their way to wintering grounds in Florida. Operation Migration has brought more than 100 Whooping Cranes through Indiana over recent years. Many of us got up early, sometimes several days in a row, traveled to Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge near Seymour, and eagerly awaited sight of the birds. "Will they take off today?" was always the first question asked as you met with folks you first met at the same place last year or maybe the year before. This conversation may go on day after day until weather conditions improve to the point where the birds, as well as the ultralight aircraft, can safely make the next leg of their journey.

Indiana has become known to the Operation Migration crews as "Windiana." It seems they get caught here in unrelenting weather conditions year after year. You or I could jump in our cars at 8 a.m. and watch that same day's sunset as we cross the Georgia-Florida line. The Operation Migration crew takes a little longer. But last year, the trip from the training grounds in Wisconsin to their winter home in Florida took 97 days! Not only is that extremely tiring for everyone, people and birds alike, but it is also exceedingly expensive. That is problem No. 1.

On the Sunday morning of Eagle Watch Weekend in February 2007, it fell upon me to announce to all those present that the entire 2006 class of Whooping Cranes from Necedah National Wildlife Refuge had been lost when a tornado struck their impoundment in Florida the night before. Thankfully, that wasn't quite right. A few days later, a lone survivor of the group was found a few miles away. Problem No. 2 — having the entire flock in one place. So this year, things will be different ... in several ways.

First of all, Operation Migration will not be bringing young Whooping Cranes through Indiana. They're going to stay to the west, flying south through Illinois instead. In past years, they crossed the Appalachians in the Tennessee/Georgia area, but this year they'll stay to the west of that as well traveling through Alabama for the most part. Secondly, once the procession reaches Florida, the flock will be split into two groups, one of which will head for a new wintering area (another difference for 2008). The new home will be south of Tallahassee in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. The remainder of the flock will continue on to Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf Coast. Operation Migration hopes the new route will make for a faster and therefore less costly trip. Splitting the flock will prevent another natural disaster from destroying an entire year's work with some of the most endangered, therefore most valuable, birds on the continent.

We'll miss watching the cranes being led south right here near home. But at the same time, I, and hopefully many of you, will continue to support this tremendous undertaking by some of the most dedicated conservationists I have ever met.

In any case, Indiana will lose an annual bird sighting that many of us have gotten used to. But, in the end, with a less costly trip and a safer wintering situation, nature wins. And when nature wins, we all win. To find out more, log onto www.operationmigration.org. 

Activist's Corner: *Elections Matter — Vote*

by Jess Gwinn, Conservation Chair

Elections do matter. Your vote counts (usually). On issues from schools and road maintenance on the local level to forest management and Interstate-69 on the state level to the Iraq war and corporate regulation on the federal level, just think of how these issues would be shaping up right now if the opponent had been elected. Maybe not much different in some cases but likely radically different in others.

In countries that are finally given the right to vote, turnout is usually very high, often more than 80 percent to 90 percent. Yet here in the United States, voter turnout is usually less than 50 percent. This kind of apathy lends itself to poor governance in a vicious downward spiral. One seems to lead to the other in perpetuity. Break the cycle and vote.

Voting for someone just because they seem friendly or likeable or because they come from a certain party is lazy and can have serious consequences. Get informed. Ask your media outlets for more information on candidate platforms. Check out the Internet for sites by candidates and parties as well as those sites of their opponents. Take your responsibility to vote seriously. How can you not? 

Thanks to SAS Members Who Helped on Goose Pond Work Days

by Brad Feaster, Goose Pond FWA Property Manager

Once again, I want to thank SAS for their ongoing support of GPFWA. The workdays held on Aug. 16 and Sept. 20 are two of the most recent examples of SAS's commitment to GPFWA.

The focus of these two workdays was invasive plant eradication. On Aug. 16, we targeted mostly Phragmites and Reed Canarygrass. On Sept. 20, we "mopped up" some of the Phragmites from the August workday but also concentrated on eliminating woody encroachment (namely Willow and Cottonwood trees).

Both workdays were a success, and I'd like to personally thank all of those people who came out on those Saturday mornings. On Aug. 16 they were: James Cole, Jerry Downs, Maureen Forrest, Jess Gwinn, John Lawrence, Jim Mitchell, and Lee Sterrenburg. Those who participated on Sept. 20 were: Drew Allen, Laura Allen, Bob Dodd, David Crouch, Jerry Downs, Jess Gwinn, Jim Mitchell, and Lee Sterrenburg.

In addition to the annual work days, SAS and SAS members are busy supporting GPFWA in other ways. For instance, SAS has purchased five backpack sprayers for use at GPFWA; SAS members play a pivotal role in avian monitoring activities; and, of course, SAS has been on the forefront of promoting GPFWA. 



Answer to Name That Bird:
Pileated Woodpecker

SAS Board of Directors Welcomes Three New Members

At its annual meeting before the program on Sept. 24, SAS members elected three new members to the board of directors: Don Allen, Stephen Friesen, and Ann Maxwell. John Lawrence and Jim Mitchell were elected to a second term on the board. Bernie Sloan was elected secretary and Laura Hammond treasurer of the organization. Members also approved changes to the bylaws.

We have asked our new board members to introduce themselves to our membership. Their responses appear below:

Don Allen

I was born and raised in Indianapolis and earned a BA degree from IU Bloomington in 1971. My wife, Charlene, and I met during our IU years and chose to live and raise our sons here. They, their wives, and our three grandchildren are all Bloomington residents and a part of the IU community.

One of my first employers was the IDNR at Monroe Reservoir while a student, and I worked as assistant property manager there from 1972 to 1976. My work experience has all been in the Bloomington area with the last 16 years, having been in sales/management of residential masonry.

Outdoor activities such as hiking, boating, canoeing, hunting, and fishing are favorite pastimes. I joined the National Wildlife Federation 30 years ago and acquired my first field guide (*Peterson's Guide to Birds* of course) some 35 years ago. My first bird identification experience was as a check station attendant for duck hunters at Monroe Reservoir.

My wife and I enjoy life on our 20 acres on Clear Creek near Harrodsburg, where we built our home 12 years ago. I began my formal life list six or eight years ago.

Stephen Friesen

I am a graduate student in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at IU. My wife and I moved to Bloomington from Vancouver, British Columbia, to be shaped by the IU edge in my field of study. After having applied to several graduate schools across North America, I thought it prudent to make my final determination after visiting some of their campuses. Upon my visit to IU in April of 2005, I was filled with wonderment by the indefatigable songs of birds. Not long after our permanent arrival, I found myself perusing the woods and fields for birds. That wonderment moves me still.

Ann Maxwell

Ann (Sallade) Maxwell says that she has been an amateur birder ever since she can remember, but she credits SAS with helping her develop and indulge that particular addiction. As a nature enthusiast, she finds that birding is a major part of her time away from work, which includes photography, traditional archery, and an occasional canoeing adventure. Ann is a graduate of Indiana University, with a BS in finance, and has completed coursework toward a master's degree at the University of Louisville. She only regrets that she can't yet retire from her "day job" as a law enforcement officer in Monroe County so that she can appreciate the outdoors even more. 🐦

IU Leaves Cross Country Course Unmowed, Benefiting Birds and Plants

by Bernie Sloan (bgsloan2@yahoo.com)

The Indiana University cross country team's home season is over. There were just two home events on the cross country course over a six-day period in September. IU did some extra mowing along the running trails to make room for spectators, which was expected, but a good-sized portion of the course has not been mowed since mid-May.

An article by Dawn Hewitt in the Aug. 24 issue of the *Herald-Times* discussed IU's willingness to experiment with alternative mowing methods in some areas that are peripheral to the heart of campus. The article cites the IU cross country course as one of these areas. This is welcome news!

While the reduced mowing has provided additional habitat for local grassland birds, it is benefiting plants as well. Several prairie plants have sprouted up. The most notable are Little Bluestem and Indian Grass, two native prairie grass species. While these plants are sparse in some areas, there are several spots that are thick with Little Bluestem, interspersed with Indian Grass, looking very much like native prairie remnants. Amazing what pops up when you don't mow!

The reduced mowing will provide an additional benefit for birds. As summer ends and autumn begins, many of the plants on the unmowed sections of the cross country course will go to seed. The seeds from these plants will provide a valuable food source

for the birds that winter there, and the plants themselves will offer additional cover for wintering birds.

Sassafras Audubon Society members are urged to thank IU for taking a more environmentally friendly approach toward maintaining its grounds. Comments should be directed to Michael Crowe, IU's director of facilities, at (812) 855-5294 or mcrowe@indiana.edu. 🐦

Fall Feeder Cleaning Nets \$371

by David Daniels

The annual fall feeder cleaning held on Oct. 4 was a success. Thanks to the generous support of the people who brought in their feeders for cleaning, SAS earned \$371. The proceeds will be used for SAS conservation programs and educational activities. The fall feeder cleaning would not be possible without the time and effort put in by the volunteers who gave up part of a beautiful fall Saturday. We had help from Bob Dodd, Susan Hengeveld, Nancy Martin (who also contributed her power washer and tent), Ann Maxwell, Jim Mitchell, Jeff Riegel, and myself. Thanks also to Vickie Davison and her staff at Bloomington Hardware for hosting the event. 🐦

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 Northern Saw-whet Owl research!

Send a check with \$30 for each adopted owl, payable to: Sassafras Audubon Society, P.O. Box 85, Bloomington, IN 47402.

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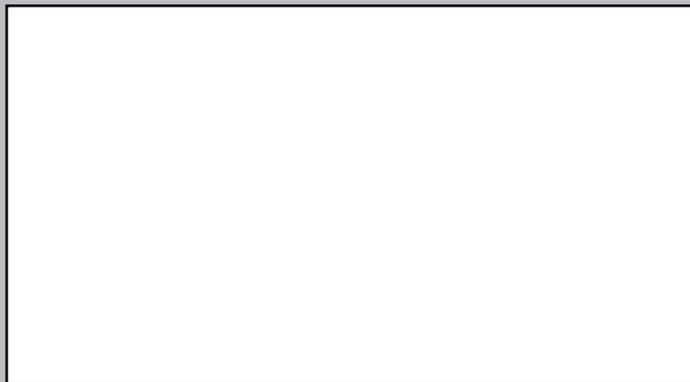
You will receive a detailed letter and certificate about your adopted owl. Contact Ross Brittain at (812) 340-9994 or rabritta@indiana.edu for details.

Northern Saw-whet Owl. *Photo by Jeff Hammond*



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