



# TIPPE-TOPICS

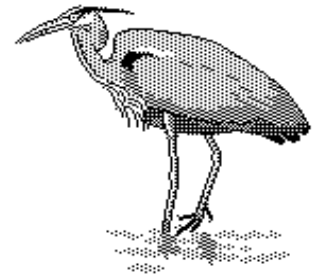
NEWSLETTER OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Cass, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Miami, Noble, Wabash, Whitley Counties,  
Indiana

Volume XXVIII, Number 1, January 2002

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**OUR MISSION: THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY SUPPORTS CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TO PROMOTE APPRECIATION, UNDERSTANDING, AND PRESERVATION OF BIRDS, OTHER WILDLIFE, AND DIVERSE ECOSYSTEMS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

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## COMING EVENTS



JANUARY 2002

### NO FIELD TRIP OR PROGRAM IN JANUARY

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## COULD YOU IDENTIFY A RARE BIRD IN YOUR YARD?

By Wilson Lutz, Chapter President

What do you think your chances are of identifying a rare bird in your back yard or perhaps on one of our Audubon bird counts? Such things do happen. One example is a Townsend's Solitaire discovered in northwestern Indiana some months ago. Townsend's Solitaire is a bird of western Canada and the western United States. Another example is a Common Crane seen at Jasper-Pulaski refuge in November 1999. This bird is a native of Europe and Asia and sometimes visits the Aleutian Islands of western Alaska. But what was it doing in Indiana?

One would not think of Manhattan Island in New York City as a likely spot to find birds of any kind let alone a rare one. Actually, New York City has some parks which appear to be very attractive to birds. When Mary and I were living in New York City back in 1955-1957 I remember reading in the paper that Olive-sided Flycatchers could be found in Central Park after most other birds had migrated through. Furthermore, they would most often be seen perched in dead trees. I decided to try this out. So on the morning of May 27, 1956, I went to Central Park and looked for dead trees and more particularly for an Olive-sided Flycatcher. As luck would have it, the first dead tree I saw had an Olive-sided Flycatcher perched on one of the branches. In all of the years since then I have never seen another Olive-sided Flycatcher.

Fort Tryon park is at the northernmost tip of Manhattan Island. It is another bird magnet. A few days ago, bird watchers there came across a strange looking Hummingbird--doubly strange, in fact. The only Hummingbird native to the eastern United States is the Ruby-throat and they had long since departed for Cuba and points south. This strange Hummingbird was unusually small and had vertical black streaks on the throat.

The correct identification was soon supplied by Michael Bochnik, President of the Hudson River Audubon Society. The strange visitor was none other than a Calliope Hummingbird. This bird is a native of British Columbia and several of our western states. Only rarely does it venture farther east than Colorado. So here was a tiny bird in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Calliope weighs in at only a small fraction of an ounce. The amount of salt you put on your food when you sit down to dinner might weigh more.

A few weeks ago, Whitley County birder Jeff McCoy was lying on the sofa watching CNN. Out of the corner of his eye he saw through the window a soaring bird that did not look quite like the usual Red-tailed Hawk. Grabbing his binoculars he quickly discovered that the bird was a Bald Eagle, the first ever seen in Whitley County. So study your bird books, keep a sharp eye on your feeders, and hope for a little bit of luck. *Tippe-Topics* will be glad to publish the rare birds that YOU find here in northeastern Indiana.

But if you see something very unusual, keep in mind the advice of the late astronomer Carl Sagan: "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence". Have a friend back up your identification and get a photograph or a video tape if at all possible. The same is true if you think you have spotted a flying saucer or a contingent of little green men from Neptune. With this in mind, don't claim that you saw a Passenger Pigeon or an Ivory-billed Woodpecker unless you are prepared to be severely badgered by skeptics.

For more information on the Calliope Hummingbird in New York City see Barbara Stewart, "A Tempest Over a Teaspoon of a Bird," *The New York Times*, December 16, 2001.

# TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT NORTHEASTERN KOSCIUSKO COUNTY, DECEMBER 29, 2001

December 29 was not a pleasant day to be outside counting birds. Temperatures were in the twenties, and a brisk wind stung the face of anyone who stepped out of the car. Most participants counted birds from inside their cars venturing out into the cold for only short walks. The count was carried out by eighteen people in nine field parties and three people counting in their own yards.

Despite the unpleasant weather the total number of birds listed was excellent. A total of 61 species was recorded, and 9722 individual birds. Most abundant by far

were American Coots with 2125 recorded. Next most abundant were Canada Geese with 1620 recorded. Third in order of abundance were House Sparrows with 1117, followed by European Starlings with 889, Horned Larks with 629, Mallards with 455, and the Rock Doves with 329.

Three of these, House Sparrows, European Starlings, and Rock Doves, are non-native species that were introduced from Europe a century or more ago. All three have spread from coast to coast. All three live around human habitations such

as residential areas and farm buildings. And all three are pests.

The following people took part in the count: Parks Adams, Vernon Campbell, John Chapman, Connie Doud, Steve Doud, Morris, Duffey, Dave Eiler, Steve Hammer, Karen Heinzman, Dave Hicks, Deb Hustin, Wayne Lawson, Darla McCammon, Dee Anna Muraski, Lila O'Connell, Frances Townsend, Jim Townsend, Cydney Townsend, Lauren Townsend. Barbara Boerger, Betty Knapp, and Dave Eckholm did feeder and yard counts at their homes.

COMMON LOON	1
PIED-BILLED GREBE	34
HORNED GREBE	2
GREAT BLUE HERON	1
MUTE SWAN	42
CANADA GOOSE	1620
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK	2
MALLARD	455
GADWALL	8
CANVASBACK	3
REDHEAD	6
COMMON GOLDENEYE	15
BUFFLEHEAD	21
HOODED MERGANSER	11
COMMON MERGANSER	4
RUDDY DUCK	1
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	1
COOPER'S HAWK	4
RED-TAILED HAWK	24
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	2
AMERICAN KESTREL	10
WILD TURKEY	12
AMERICAN COOT	2125
SANDHILL CRANE	90
RING-BILLED GULL	121
HERRING GULL	9
ROCK DOVE	329
MOURNING DOVE	19
BELTED KINGFISHER	2
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER	1
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER	31
DOWNY WOODPECKER	54
HAIRY WOODPECKER	7
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER	1

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER	31
DOWNY WOODPECKER	54
HAIRY WOODPECKER	7
NORTHERN FLICKER	13
HORNED LARK	629
BLUE JAY	180
AMERICAN CROW	250
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	70
TUFTED TITMOUSE	70
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	10
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	40
BROWN CREEPER	7
CAROLINA WREN	1
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	2
EASTERN BLUEBIRD	67
CEDAR WAXWING	19
EUROPEAN STARLING	889
ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK	2
NORTHERN CARDINAL	192
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW	224
FIELD SPARROW	65
SONG SPARROW	4
DARK-EYED JUNCO	241
LAPLAND LONGSPUR	29
SNOW BUNTING	12
COMMON GRACKLE	80
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	2
HOUSE FINCH	302
PINE SISKIN	8
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	112
HOUSE SPARROW	1117

<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>9722</b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>61</b>

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### BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

**SIGHTING REPORTS WANTED** - *Tippe-Topics* readers are invited to report bird sightings so they can be shared with other readers. Call newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 219-982-2726 (260-982-2726 after January 15), mail him a note at 606 E 7th St, North Manchester, IN 46962, or send him an e-mail message at [dleiler@earthlink.net](mailto:dleiler@earthlink.net).

**HUNTINGTON COUNTY** - On December 12 in the Salamonie area in Huntington County Dave Eiler and Parks Adams of North Manchester saw two **RED-TAILED HAWKS**, a **BLUE JAY**, and a **TUFTED TITMOUSE**. At someone's feeder they saw a flock of **PINE SISKINS**. Near the Salamonie Lake visitor center they saw four **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** males. At feeders behind the brand new Salamonie Lake nature center they saw a **DOWNY WOODPECKER** female, a **RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH**, several **CAROLINA CHICKADEES**, about a dozen **PINE SISKINS**, and two **DARK-EYED JUNCOS**.

**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - Jon Whiteman reported in an e-mail dated December 12 that he had seen **COMMON MERGANSERS** on a pond in Warsaw. On December 14 Dave and Ruth Eiler of North Manchester parked near the northeast corner of Winona Lake long enough to see four male and one female **CANVASBACKS**, one male and five female **BUFFLEHEADS**, a few **MALLARDS**, and hordes of **AMERICAN COOTS**. On Center Lake they saw several **PIED-BILLED GREBES**, a pair of **GADWALLS**, a pair of **MALLARDS**, and another horde of **AMERICAN COOTS**. Along Packerton Road on their way home they saw an **AMERICAN KESTREL**, and a little flock of **DARK-EYED JUNCOS**.

**MIAMI COUNTY** - Linda Beidleman who lives north of Peru on North Raccoon Hill Road reported by e-mail that on November 30 she saw at her feeders one **PILEATED WOODPECKER**, one **HAIRY WOODPECKER**, three **DOWNY WOODPECKERS**, one **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER**, one **NORTHERN FLICKER**, one **BROWN CREEPER**, two **WHITE BREASTED NUTHATCHES**, five **CAROLINA CHICKADEES**, five **TUFTED TITMICE**, fifteen **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**, ten **PURPLE FINCHES**, five **HOUSE FINCHES**, and two **NORTHERN CARDINALS**. During the first week of January she had at her feeders an unusual female **DOWNY WOODPECKER** with a black chin and throat instead of white. Connie Doud recently saw nine **WILD TURKEYS** along SR-16 west of Denver.

**WABASH COUNTY** - On a December 12 birding drive to the Salamonie area Parks Adams and Dave Eiler saw a **GREAT GLUE HERON**, two **RED-TAILED HAWKS**, two **AMERICAN KESTRELS**, a lone **RING-BILLED GULL**, two flocks of **ROCK DOVES**, a lone **MOURNING DOVE**, a **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER**, a **DOWNY WOODPECKER**, a pair of **NORTHERN FLICKERS**, two **BLUE JAYS**, an **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** male, an **AMERICAN ROBIN**, a **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH**, a **TUFTED TITMOUSE**, an **AMERICAN GOLDFINCH**, and a flock of **NORTHERN CARDINALS**. Joyce Joy of North Manchester reported on December 19 that she has been seeing a **NORTHERN FLICKER** and a **CAROLINA WREN** eating seed at a feeder. At their house south of Roann Steve and Connie Doud have recently seen a **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK**, a **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**, and **CAROLINA WRENS**. On January 2 Dave and Ruth Eiler saw a **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** by CR-200E north of North Manchester.

### RECENT TIPPECANOE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

<p><b>CHRISTMAS DINNER &amp; PICTURE FEST</b> On Tuesday evening, December 11, chef Dave Taylor and his helpers at the Blue Lion Coffee House in Pierceton served up a tasty feast to a gathering of Tippecanoe Audubon members and guests. The buffet meal consisted of several kinds of quiche and two kinds of soup followed by several kinds of cheese cake for dessert. After the meal several members shared wildlife and scenery slides. Rosel Egolf</p>	<p>had a series of interesting views of Mono Lake in California and some Indiana wildflowers. Steve Doud showed pictures of spiders, lightning, and scenery in Michigan. Deb Hustin and Dave Hicks showed pictures taken on several trips to Costa Rica. Wilson Lutz showed some slides of a beaver dam and pond in a stream near Mississinewa Lake. Dave Eiler shared slides taken last March in southeastern Arizona on two birding</p>	<p>Elderhostels, followed by spring wildflowers at the Herbert Taylor Wildlife Sanctuary, and birds in his back yard. Ruth Eiler displayed color prints from a trip to South Africa last spring and of mushrooms in her back yard.</p>
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Editor Phone: 219-982-2726 E-mail: dleiler@earthlink.net

**DATED MATERIAL DO  
NOT DELAY**

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: BIRD OF THE MONTH**

By David L. Eiler

Red-breasted Nuthatches often migrate south into Indiana in the winter where they visit seed feeders along with Cardinals and Finches. The Cardinals and Finches have strong heavy beaks that they use to crush sunflower seeds and extract the kernels. But a Red-breasted Nuthatch has a slender beak that cannot crush sunflower seeds. Instead it carries each seed to a tree and jams it into a crack in the bark. Then it hacks the seed open with its beak. After eating the kernel it flies back to the feeder for another seed.

When not eating sunflower seeds, it climbs about on tree trunks and limbs searching the bark for hibernating insects. Its toes and claws are designed in such a way that it can cling to tree bark and run up, down, or sideways on it. Unlike Woodpeckers it does not use its tail as a prop. In the conifer forests where it nests it forages for spiders and small insects, mainly on the outer tips of small branches.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch is a very small bird, smaller even than the American Goldfinch. It has a black cap and eye line contrasting with a long and prominent white eyebrow line. The back and wings are blue-gray contrasting with rusty-red underparts. The stubby blue-gray tail has small white spots on the corners. The female is said to be a bit paler than the male, but is otherwise identical in appearance. Plumage and behavior together make the Red-breasted Nuthatch easy to identify. It has no song. Instead it has a repetitious high-pitched squawk that it gives as it climbs about foraging in the trees.

The nesting range of the Red-breasted Nuthatch extends from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia to southeastern Alaska and south along the mountain ranges of the West and the Appalachians in the East. Depending on winter food supply in the North it may migrate as far south as the Gulf Coast. Thus it shows up in Indiana during some winters but not others.

Nesting takes place in late April or early May. The nest is built in a cavity excavated in a dead tree limb or rotted stub or in an old Woodpecker cavity. Pitch is always smeared around the entrance to the cavity. The cavity is lined with grass, moss, and bark shreds. The female lays and incubates five or six eggs that are white with brown splotches or dots. The eggs hatch in about twelve days.

Worldwide there are twenty-four Nuthatch species, all belonging to the family Sittidae and the genus *Sitta*. Only four occur in North America, and none at all in Central or South America. Apart from the Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) most Nuthatch species are nonmigratory. The slightly larger White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) ranges from the Atlantic to the Pacific in the United States and southern Canada. The very small Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) occurs in the southeastern states and Grand Bahama Island. The even tinier Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*) is found in the mountains of the western states and western Mexico. The Eastern Hemisphere has twenty Nuthatch species. The one with the greatest range is the Eurasian Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*). It ranges from Scandinavia, Great Britain, and Spain in western Europe eastward across Eurasia to eastern Siberia, China, Korea, and Japan. Two species have quite small ranges. The Algerian Nuthatch (*Sitta ledanti*) lives only in the mountainous forests of Algeria in northern Africa, and the Corsican Nuthatch (*Sitta whiteheadi*) only on the island of Corsica in the Mediterranean. The greatest number of Nuthatch species occurs in southern Asia and the East Indies. There are no Nuthatch species in Central America, South America, or Australia. However Australia has a species unrelated to the Nuthatches, the Varied Sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*), that looks and acts just like a Nuthatch.



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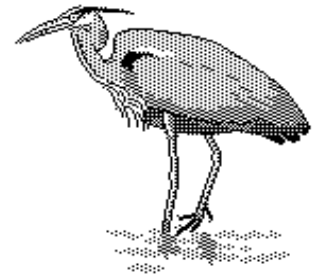
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## COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2002

### FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 17, 1:30PM - TO SALAMONIE STATE FOREST AND PICNIC AREA

The field trip group will assemble in the parking area at the entrance to the Salamonie State Forest picnic area. From North Manchester go east on SR-114 to CR-300E. Turn south (right) onto CR-300E and follow it through Servia and on south across SR-16 where CR-300 jogs slightly to the east. Continue south across new four-lane SR-24 and on south across new divided four-lane US-24 and on south across Old-24 where CR-300E turns into SR-524. Continue south through Lagro and follow SR-524 as it curves east and then south. After several more curves you will come to the Salamonie State Forest entrance road on your left marked by a large sign. Turn onto the entrance road and follow it all the way to the parking lot at the end where the field trip leader will meet you. If you have questions call field trip leader Dave Hicks at 260-982-2471 (office 260-982-5309), or newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726.

### PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 26, 7:30PM - Video: "Owls Up Close"

**AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON.** This outstanding video shows intimate views of more species of owls than most of us will ever get to see in the wild. It covers eighteen species of North American owls with stunning shots and informative narration. The video will be projected on a big screen so that everyone will be able to see it well. (This is the video originally announced for the November 27 meeting when a video on Hawks was substituted because the Owl video was not available on that date.)

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**AN APOLOGY:** The editor wishes to apologize to Tom Leggett of Argos. In the January issue of *Tippe-Topics* his name was accidentally left out of the list of people who took part in the Tippecanoe Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count on December 29 in northeastern Kosciusko County.

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## HOW COMMON IS MONOGAMY AMONG BIRDS AND MAMMALS?

By Wilson Lutz, Chapter President

Have you ever read "Peyton Place"? I haven't. I am told, however, that the novel is at the pinnacle of free-wheeling morality where marital vows have no meaning. How, then, do traditional human moral values fit into the world of nature? Is nature more like the Bible or more like Peyton Place?

Most of us have read about cases where the death of a Goose leaves its mate in a state of virtual paralysis. Pairs of Swans are pictured swimming peacefully on quiet waters in a state of seeming domestic tranquillity and devotion. With most species the male and female mate and raise young as a bonded

pair. For a long time this led most biologists to believe that about ninety-four per cent of bird species were monogamous.

But, do these pictures of seeming monogamous devotion apply to actual mating practices? Most of us have occasionally seen birds mating. It is obviously a fleeting occurrence. So, is it possible that we have failed to see surreptitious matings along the way that were outside the supposed monogamous relationship? We humans are not particularly adept at distinguishing one male from another male or one female from

another female except in rare instances where an individual bird has some unusual distinguishing mark.

Nowadays, however, there are ways to surmount this difficulty. One technique that is particularly reliable is DNA analysis. Every individual, whether human, avian, reptilian, or whatever, has a DNA pattern that is individually his or her own. It is far more distinctive than such things as fingerprints, scars, hair color, fur color, and the like. Therefore DNA analysis is now used routinely to associate or disassociate persons from crime scenes. In cases where the paternity of a child is in doubt, DNA analysis can be used to pinpoint the true father among the various possibilities. The test can be performed on microscopic quantities of tissue or body fluids.

When it comes to birds, it is possible to take a tiny sample of blood from each member of a group of nestlings. If each bird has the same father, this will show up in the DNA pattern of his offspring. If "interlopers" have contributed to the fertilization of the eggs, the DNA pattern among the offspring will be different. This technique is now in widespread use to determine mating patterns in birds, mammals, insects, and other creatures.

What are the results? The tests show that cases where all the nestlings have the same father are rare, even within the same brood. Biologists are finding that they have to scrounge to find any organisms that are truly monogamous and therefore adhere to the "human standard of morality".

Why should this promiscuous mating be so prevalent? Biologists think they know. The probable reason is that by keeping the genes (the bodies in cell nuclei that contain the DNA) mixed up there is less tendency toward in-breeding. In-breeding is bad because it predisposes to freaks and physical malformations, susceptibility to genetic diseases, and other unhealthy consequences.

Incestuous mating among humans has the same result. This is probably why we humans have a taboo against close relatives propagating children. In other words, promiscuous mating tends to promote genetic diversity and genetic diversity is good for the

reasons explained above. If an important gene is missing from one parent's genetic contribution to the offspring, it can be supplied by the other. And the "other" could be an outsider.

An extreme example of multiple couplings occurs among Honeybees. The queen bee has been observed to mate with more than two dozen males before retiring to the hive with enough sperm to fertilize all the eggs she will ever lay.

Dr. Paul W. Sherman, a Cornell University biologist, has noted that it is not just males that initiate philandering. "Both males and females seek extra-pair copulations. And what we've found lately is probably just the tip of the iceberg." It was originally thought that something like ninety-two to ninety-four per cent of avian couples were entirely monogamous. But Dr. Susan Smith, a biologist at Mount Holyoke College, says, "Nobody can take monogamy for granted anymore in any species they look at, so we're all trying to rewrite the rules we once thought applied." Recent DNA tests show that, in any given nest of young birds, anywhere from ten to seventy per cent of the nestlings will have a father different from the one that is caring for them.

Are there any animals that possess the sterling qualities of fidelity associated with traditional human morality? One that so far meets this qualification is the California Mouse. Among the "beasts of the field" it alone seems most like humans in terms of traditional morality. DNA tests performed up until now on this species indicate that one hundred per cent of the pups are fathered by the female's lifelong mate.

We can now answer the question, "Is the world of nature more like the Bible or more like Peyton Place?" With few exceptions Peyton Place morality prevails among birds and other animals because they are genetically programmed to behave that way.

Information for this article was taken from an article by Natalie Angier, *The New York Times*, August 21, 1990, section B, page 1.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS IN PLYMOUTH AND ROCHESTER AREAS

Tom Leggett of Argos organized two Christmas Bird Counts. The Plymouth Count circle in Marshall County was counted on December 22 by Tom Leggett, Matt Enos, and Edith Enos, with Jean

Green, and Walter Jurkewicz, and Margaret Jurkewicz counting at feeders. The Tri-County Count circle in the Rochester area covering parts of Fulton, Kosciusko, and Miami Counties was counted on January 1

by Tom Leggett, Billie Rakestraw, and Sandy Sawyer, with Bob Curtiss, Becky Curtiss, Violet Seriwert, Gary Griver, Tammy Griver, Ed Kelly, and Sue Kelly counting at feeders.

	PLYMOUTH AREA DEC 22	ROCHESTER AREA JAN 1
COMMON LOON	2	
PIED-BILLED GREBE	5	
HORNED GREBE	4	
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT	1	
GREAT BLUE HERON	2	3
GREEN HERON	1	
SNOW GOOSE	19	
CANADA GOOSE	1382	1036
MUTE SWAN	4	3
WOOD DUCK	7	4
MALLARD	94	62
NORTHERN PINTAIL	1	
CANVASBACK	5	
REDHEAD	25	4
RING-NECKED DUCK	7	5
LESSER SCAUP	63	1
BUFFLEHEAD	4	4
COMMON GOLDENEYE	9	22
HOODED MERGANSER	2	4
COMMON MERGANSER	8	
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER	3	
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	1	
COOPER'S HAWK	2	
RED-TAILED HAWK	4	28

	PLYMOUTH AREA DEC 22	ROCHESTER AREA JAN 1
DOWNY WOODPECKER	13	26
HAIRY WOODPECKER	4	9
NORTHERN FLICKER		2
PILEATED WOODPECKER		1
BLUE JAY	52	96
AMERICAN CROW	100	189
HORNED LARK	116	47
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	18	29
TUFTED TITMOUSE	13	43
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	9	4
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	18	41
BROWN CREEPER	2	1
CAROLINA WREN	1	
WINTER WREN	1	
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET		6
EASTERN BLUEBIRD	13	35
HERMIT THRUSH	1	
AMERICAN ROBIN	19	1
EUROPEAN STARLING	1003	526
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER	1	2
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW	91	140
SONG SPARROW	12	8
SWAMP SPARROW	5	2
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	2	

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& TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
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\_\_\_\_\_ **YES!** Enroll me as a NEW MEMBER in the National Audubon Society & the Tippecanoe Chapter and send my membership card. Start sending me *AUDUBON* magazine and *TIPPE-TOPICS*. Enclosed is a \$20 check payable to the National Audubon Society for my one-year introductory membership.

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James Townsend  
6331 S 300 E HO-8  
Warsaw, IN 46580 7XCH  
E-mail: jimvmc@kconline.com

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	3	12
AMERICAN KESTREL	4	14
WILD TURKEY		6
AMERICAN COOT	2775	200
RING-BILLED GULL	48	5
HERRING GULL	8	
ROCK DOVE	47	194
MOURNING DOVE	25	56
GREAT HORNED OWL	1	
EASTERN SCREECH-OWL		1
BELTED KINGFISHER		1
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER	1	3
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER	6	16

DARK-EYED JUNCO	121	278
LAPLAND LONGSPUR	17	
SNOW BUNTING	35	17
NORTHERN CARDINAL	50	110
COMMON GRACKLE		1
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	5	1
PURPLE FINCH	10	4
HOUSE FINCH	168	360
PINE SISKIN	3	8
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	100	142
HOUSE SPARROW	967	1208
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>7543</b>	<b>5021</b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>53</b>

## GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FEBRUARY 15-18

The National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology are jointly sponsoring another backyard bird count February 15-18. Here are the instructions.

Count the birds in your local area on any of the four count days. You can just watch the bird feeders in your own yard, or you can take a short walk (less than a mile) in your neighborhood or in a nearby park. For each species of bird that you see, record the highest number of individuals that you observe at any one

time during your count. Do not add a bird every time you see one at your feeder, since you could be counting the same individual several times.

Count for at least fifteen minutes on each day that you participate. If you have time, it would be better to watch somewhat longer. That way you are more likely to see all the species in your yard or in the area you are counting. Taking more time will also enable get a more complete count of how many of each species are there.

Enter your count on-line at the Great Backyard Bird Count site at the web address, <http://www.birdsource.org>. Use the State/Province checklist to submit your highest species counts for the day.

You can view your results after you have entered your count for the day. You can also visit the so-call Map Room and see results from across the continent.

Can you guess what were the ten most common species in past Great Backyard Bird Counts? (Answer next month.)

## BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

**SIGHTING REPORTS WANTED** - *Tippe-Topics* readers are invited to report bird sightings so they can be shared with other readers. Call newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726, mail him a note at 606 E 7th St, North Manchester, IN 46962, or send him an e-mail message at [dleiler@earthlink.net](mailto:dleiler@earthlink.net).

**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - On January 8 Dave and Ruth Eiler of North Manchester looked for ducks near the northeast corner of Winona Lake in the town of Winona Lake and saw a few **RING-NECKED DUCKS** and **COMMON GOLDENEYES** along with many **CANADA GEESE**, **MALLARDS**, and **AMERICAN COOTS**. At the same place on January 16 they saw a male **GREATER SCAUP**, a pair of **BUFFLEHEADS**, several **NORTHERN SHOVELERS**, and the usual hordes of **AMERICAN COOTS**, **CANADA GEESE**, and **MALLARDS**. On January 21 at the same place they saw two **CANVASBACKS**, a few **RING-NECKED DUCKS**, along with the ever-present **AMERICAN COOTS**, **MALLARDS**, and **CANADA GEESE**. Again at the same place on January 24 they saw three **RING-BILLED GULLS**, a male **BUFFLEHEAD**, about a dozen **CANVASBACKS**, and many **RING-NECKED DUCKS**, along with twenty or so **CANADA GEESE**, and ten or a dozen **MALLARDS**. Bob and Alice Frantz of Wildwood on SR-14 east of Silver Lake reported on January 15 that their neighbors, Sue Raber and Terry Penrod who live across the road, had recently seen four **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** males in one tree.

**WABASH COUNTY** - On January 12 John and Linda Beidleman of Peru and Dave Eiler of North Manchester walked the board walk at the Laketon Bog where the only birds they saw were **BLUE JAYS**, **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS**, and **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES**. Later they saw an **AMERICAN KESTREL** hovering at SR-114 and CR-200W. On January 15 Allen Barefoot of Liberty Mills reported that a **COOPER'S HAWK** was keeping all the other birds away from his feeders.

Tippecanoe Audubon Society, Inc.  
c/o James Townsend  
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Warsaw, IN 46580  
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**TIPPE - TOPICS**

**PUBLISHED BY THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.**

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

David L. Eiler, Editor

Phone: 260-982-2726; E-mail: dleiler@earthlink.net

**DATED MATERIAL DO  
NOT DELAY**

## A BIG THANK YOU TO MANY GENEROUS DONORS

### HOW DONATIONS WILL BE USED

Many thanks are due to the individuals, families, organizations, foundations, and businesses listed below that contributed to two Tippecanoe Audubon Society funds.

Both funds will be used for special projects such as putting *Audubon Adventures* classroom newspapers in elementary school classrooms, maintaining Tippecanoe Audubon Society wildlife sanctuaries, and adding to the Tippecanoe Audubon Society endowment fund.

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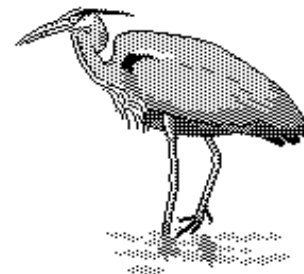
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# TIPPE-TOPICS

NEWSLETTER OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Cass, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Miami, Noble, Wabash, Whitley Counties, Indiana  
Volume XXVIII, Number 3, March 2002

**OUR MISSION: THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY SUPPORTS CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TO PROMOTE APPRECIATION, UNDERSTANDING, AND PRESERVATION OF BIRDS, OTHER WILDLIFE, AND DIVERSE ECOSYSTEMS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**



## COMING EVENTS

MARCH 2002

### **FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 10, 1:30PM - TO GREAT BLUE HERON COLONY NORTH OF WARSAW**

This will be our twenty-seventh annual heron colony field trip. This year we will be observing the herons about two weeks earlier than in the past. That means the birds will still be engaged in nest repair and building. We will see them carrying sticks and branches for the project. There will probably already be some egg laying but incubation will not have started yet. There will be some mud and water to wade through, so wear boots and warm clothes. We will meet on the entrance drive of the Petro car dealership on SR-15 a half mile north of US-30. From there it is a quarter-mile drive to the lane leading through the field and woods to the place where we will observe the herons.

### **BOARD RETREAT, SATURDAY ALL DAY, MARCH 16, 9:00AM - AT THE HOME OF JIM & SUZY TOWNSEND**

Tippecanoe Audubon members are welcome to attend and to take part in the discussions. Major topics of discussion will be fund-raising and the 2002-2003 budget. The Townsends live southwest of Pierceton at 6331 S 300 E.

### **PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 26, 7:30PM - BIRDING WITH THE HELP OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY**

**AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON.** The program will be presented by Phil Kelly of Kokomo who manages the Indiana Audubon Society website and the IN-BIRD e-mail service that enables birders throughout the state to share sighting notes with all who subscribe free of charge to the service. Phil will explain and demonstrate various kinds of technology that can be applied to birding. Topics will include the Internet, Family Radio Service (FRS Radios), the Global Positioning System (GPS), Digital Cameras, and Digiscoping (taking pictures with a digital camera through a spotting scope and inserting the images into an e-mail or website). Bring your questions and share in the discussion!

**BACK ISSUES OF NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE:** The editor has on hand back issues of *Tippe-Topics* going back as far as 1992 that he will soon need to discard. If you would like to receive a set of these back issues, or any one particular issue, please contact him soon. You can send him an e-mail at [dleiler@earthlink.net](mailto:dleiler@earthlink.net), telephone him at 260-982-2726, or drop him a note addressed to Dave Eiler, 606 East Seventh Street, North Manchester, IN 46962.

**NOTE ON WEBSITES:** *Tippecanoe Audubon* has an Internet website at [www.tippeaudubon.org](http://www.tippeaudubon.org), where back issues of *Tippe-Topics* are posted. This website also provides links to other websites of interest to Indiana birders. Other websites *Tippe-Topics* readers might want to check out are the **National Audubon Society** at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), the **Indiana Audubon Society** at [www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org), the **American Birding Association** at [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org), and the **Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology** at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

## TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

By Wilson Lutz, Chapter President

Some things are too good to be true. Take the American Chestnut. When I was still in knee pants back in the 1930s, my father took me in the car along a country road in northeastern Ohio. We stopped at a tree that he knew of from his own boyhood. It was an American Chestnut. Beneath the tree we found some prickly burrs within each of which were three or four brown tear-drop shaped nuts each with a little tassel. Breaking off this outer shell revealed a light brown nut which we didn't hesitate to munch on. I remember the taste very well. It was crunchy with a sweet nutty flavor. No Spanish or Chinese Chestnuts that I have tasted come even close.

Chestnuts were a prized food item for Wild Turkeys, Passenger Pigeons, Rodents of all types, Bears, and probably other creatures. Farmers even grazed Pigs on fallen chestnuts. Chestnut wood was hard, durable, and beautifully grained. The bark was rich in tannins and was therefore prized for tanning leather. Not only

that, but the trees were prolific and produced abundant crops of nuts. According to experts at the American Chestnut Foundation, oaks and hickories typically produce hundreds of pounds of nuts per acre. But the American Chestnut could be relied upon to produce thousands of pounds of nuts per acre. Even more remarkable, in the years before 1900, fully a quarter of all the trees in the forests of the eastern United States were Chestnuts. The Chestnut tree really was almost too good to be true.

Alas, a black cloud appeared on the horizon in 1904. In that year, a forester in a zoological park in New York City noticed that some of his Chestnut trees had developed a strange malady. By 1905, most of the Chestnut trees in the park were dead or dying. From there, the disease spread like wildfire. By 1950, nearly every mature Chestnut tree in the eastern forests was dead—truly an ecological disaster. No longer would Chestnut trees be our greatest source of wood products. No longer would its tasty nuts

grace our palates. Wildlife could no longer depend on the Chestnut as a major food source.

The Chestnut was gone for all practical purposes—gone but not extinct. At the edge of its range, a few Chestnut trees have remained viable. It is these trees that foresters are trying to hybridize with disease resistant Chestnut trees from Europe or Asia. It is a long, arduous process however, with the issue very much in doubt. Perhaps some new DNA technology will enable scientists to bring back the Chestnut by some entirely different means. Let us hope so.

Unfortunately, what happened to the American Chestnut is also happening to other species in our American forests. Exotic fungi, viruses, insects, and other voracious pests carried in from abroad have invaded our forests and are doing or have already done their dastardly deeds. The Dutch Elm Disease wreaked havoc among the American elms. Oak Wilt and Oak Sudden Death Disease have combined to reduce stands of Oak trees. Butternut

trees, already in short supply, have been decimated in the Southeast by a fungus called Butternut Canker. Dogwood trees in the deep forests of the East and southeast are dying by the millions as a result of Anthracnose. Fortunately, Dogwoods that are well exposed to the sun are not affected by the disease and should be able to survive.

One result of all this is that foresters are being run ragged trying to cope with these extra-ordinarily difficult problems—problems that are largely the result of the great speed with which human commerce moves organisms hither and yon over the surface of the earth in our modern society. It is easy for such “biological terrorists” to hide in packing crates, on the surfaces of imported plants, animals, and produce—even in the mud caked on traveler’s shoes. Clearly, those laboratories and institutions that are grappling with these problems need to be strongly encouraged and well financed.

---

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**Bird Count Compiler** - David Eiler, 606 East Seventh, North Manchester, IN 46962, Phone 260-982-2726; E-mail: dleiler@earthlink.net

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## BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

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**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - On February 18 Dave Eiler of North Manchester saw a flock of **AMERICAN CROWS**, a **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH**, a **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER**, an **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** male, and six **AMERICAN ROBINS** along the Taylor Sanctuary entrance lane northeast of Liberty Mills. On February 24 Jim Caley of Fort Wayne made a birding trip to Tri-County State Fish and Wildlife Area near North Webster, and among the birds he saw were **HOODED MERGANSERS**, **BUFFLEHEADS**, **TURKEY VULTURES**, an adult **BALD EAGLE**, **RED-TAILED HAWKS**, **AMERICAN KESTRELS**, a **BELTED KINGFISHER**, **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS**, a **HAIRY WOODPECKER**, **DOWNY WOODPECKERS**, **BLUE JAYS**, **AMERICAN CROWS**, a **BROWN CREEPER**, **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES**, **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES**, **TUFTED TITMICE**, **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS**, **NORTHERN CARDINALS**, **SONG SPARROWS**, and a **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD**. On March 5 Wilson Lutz and Dave Eiler saw five **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** males along the Taylor Wildlife Sanctuary entrance lane.

**MARSHALL COUNTY** - On February 16 Tom Leggett of Argos saw his first **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** of the season, and on February 17 he had five **BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS** at his feeder. On February 23 he saw several **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS** and **COMMON GRACKLES** at his parents' home in Argos. On February 26 and 28 he saw a flock of **SNOW BUNTINGS** at 13th Road and US-31. On March 5 he saw a **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** catch a **EUROPEAN STARLING** at one of his feeders and eat it.

**MIAMI COUNTY** - Linda and John Beidleman who live between Peru and Mexico recently saw a **KILLDEER**, and have had an **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** and a **NORTHERN FLICKER** coming to their suet feeder.

**WABASH COUNTY** - Bill Mallory of North Manchester saw his first **AMERICAN ROBIN** of the new year at his bird bath on February 2. On February 9 Dave Eiler of North Manchester saw his first **AMERICAN ROBIN** of the new year in his back yard. On February 18 Dave saw a pair of **DOWNY WOODPECKERS**, two **TUFTED TITMICE**, and a flock of **AMERICAN ROBINS** at the Taylor Sanctuary. On February 18 Rosemary Bolinger and her family who live on CR-1400N a mile north of North Manchester saw four **SANDHILL CRANES** on their property. On February 28 Dave Eiler saw about six **LAPLAND LONGSPURS** with a large flock of **HORNED LARKS** in a field by CR-800N about a third of a mile east of CR-600W. On March 4 and 5 he saw a **BROWN CREEPER** in his back yard.

**WHITLEY COUNTY** - On February 20, Jeff McCoy of Columbia City saw an **AMERICAN WOODCOCK** just west of Columbia City. On February 22, Jeff McCoy and Ed Powers visited the Denniston Resource Area northeast of Pierceton on Lincolnway (Old US-30) and found a **SAW-WHET OWL**, and in a field northwest of Columbia City they found two **SHORT-EARED OWLS**. On February 26 Jeff had two male and one female **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL** juveniles at his feeders.

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**MAIL TO MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

James Townsend  
6331 S 300 E HO-8  
Warsaw, IN 46580 7XCH  
E-mail: jimvjmc@kconline.com

**RECENT TIPPECANOE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES**

**FIELD TRIP TO SALAMONIE**

Were you there on February 17? Sixteen curious (interested) Tippecanoe Audubon members spent a beautiful afternoon trekking parts of the Salamonie State Forest picnic area and woodlands. We spotted a little flock of Dark-eyed Juncos moving through the tree tops. Then field trip leader David Hicks led us down a trail and along the Salamonie River, to a location below the only water fall in the Salamonie Forest. There, we sighted a Ring-billed Gull flying along the river. We also saw through our binoculars a drowsy Woodchuck at the mouth of its burrow on the other side of the river between two big tree roots.

Making up for a scarcity of birds were some unusual plants. We saw a Wild Hydrangea, a plant that is at the northernmost limits of its range in northeastern Indiana. Even more interesting were two unusual fern species growing on the stony wall of a little side canyon. One was Christmas Fern that gets its name for the fact that it remains green throughout the winter. The other was a couple of quite vigorous colonies of Walking Fern. It has a method of reproducing that is unusual for a fern. It sends out shoots along the ground that take root and start new plants. It is a small fern with leaves only about two-and-a-half inches long, and it grows only about two or three inches high. We also found mosses and liverworts that grow less than an inch high. When examining a liverwort clump under a hand lens, we saw a miniature world of beauty that we would otherwise have walked right past and never noticed!

At a location on the dam overlooking the lake we stopped long enough to

observe a distant flock of five or six Common Mergansers diving for fish. Thanks to Steve Doud's fine spotting scope, the view was great!

At the Lost Bridge West Nature Center we watched the bird activity at several feeders from behind one-way glass. Coming to the feeders were Carolina Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, and a Downy Woodpecker. A few of us walked a nearby forest nature trail but birding there was scant.

One of the unique characteristics of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society is that there is such a wide range of interests and expertise on the field trips. There is no end of new things out there to learn about and enjoy along with birds.

Reported by Paul Steffen

**PROGRAM MEETING**

Program chair Steve Doud presented an excellent video entitled "Owls Up Close" on February 26 at the Blue Lion Coffee House in Warsaw. The video began by showing a Barred Owl hooting and then went on to explain how Owls are equipped to hunt both at night and during the day.

The video showed how the eyes of an Owl are adapted for hunting in daylight, moonlight, or starlight, and how it can locate and capture prey by sound. Humans with their two ears located a few inches apart can tell which direction a sound is coming from on the horizontal plane. But the right ear of an Owl is somewhat higher than the left ear. This enables it to locate where a sound is coming from on the vertical plane as well as the horizontal plane. Thus it can hunt in total darkness and home in on a vole or rabbit making rustling sounds in the grass. By examining skulls and teeth in the

pellets that Owls regurgitate biologists can analyze their diets.

Soft, fluffy feathers on an Owl's wings muffle sound so effectively that it can fly silently and take prey by surprise. Most species have facial disks that may help funnel sounds to the ears. Several Owl species also have so-called ear tufts, but these are not beside the ear openings and have nothing to do with hearing.

The video had segments on each of the eighteen Owl species occurring in North America. Each species has its own habitat preference and hunts in its own special way. Thus various species seldom compete with one another, even when their ranges overlap.

The Great Horned Owl ranges over much of North and South America. It feeds upon a great variety of prey species and can carry animals three times its own weight. Even more wide-ranging is the Short-eared Owl that occurs in North and South America, Eurasia, and northern Africa.

Both the tiny Flammulated Owl and Elf Owl of the desert Southwest feed on insects and must migrate south in the winter. The Spotted Owl that lives only in old growth forests of the West is threatened by logging. The Boreal Owl, the Great Gray Owl, and the Northern Hawk-Owl of Canada range as far north as the edge of the tundra. The Burrowing Owl prefers short-grass prairies, but has adapted to the mowed grass of airports and even residential lawns. Snowy Owls of the Canadian tundra move south into the northern United States in winters when prey is scarce. Eastern and Western Screech-Owls nest in tree cavities and will also use nest boxes.

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**TIPPE-TOPICS**

**PUBLISHED BY THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.**

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

David L. Eiler, Editor

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**DATED MATERIAL DO  
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## **DOWNY WOODPECKER: BIRD OF**

By David L. Eiler

During the winter Downy Woodpeckers are likely to be the first birds to show up at your suet feeder after you put it out. You can quickly recognize the black and white male by the bright red spot on the back of his head. The female is plain black and white with no red. Both have a black crown stripe, eye line, and mustache line, that contrast with white eyebrow and cheek lines. The beak has bristles above and below. The back and underside are white. The wings are black with narrow white bands. The upper side of the tail is black and the under side white with black spots. The similar Hairy Woodpecker can be identified by its larger size, much longer beak, and outer tail feathers that are entirely white with no black barring. Both have four toes with two pointing forward and two pointing backward that enable them to climb around on tree trunks and limbs. Downy Woodpeckers prop themselves with stiff tail feathers when searching the bark for insects which they may be able to hear. In addition to insects and larvae they eat some weed seeds, and even corn in unharvested corn fields.

Downy Woodpeckers prefer deciduous forests or residential areas with mature trees with cavities. Their range extends across North America from southeastern Alaska to the Canadian Maritime Provinces, and from the southern edge of the tundra south to the Gulf Coast. They do little migrating, and they do not occur in the Southwest.

In the spring Downy Woodpeckers drum on hollow limbs, perhaps as a mating call. Nesting begins in late April or early May in northern Indiana. The nest

## **THE MONTH**

cavity, excavated mostly by the female, has a corridor going down about a foot. The bottom is lined with wood chips on which the female lays five to seven creamy white eggs that are incubated by both the male and female during the day, and by the male at night. The eggs hatch in about a week and a half, and the young fledge in about three weeks.

Woodpeckers constitute the family Picidae. There are 22 Woodpecker species in the United States, with six in Indiana. There are 11 species of the *Picoides* genus in North and South America, with nine in the United States. Along with the little Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) is the larger Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*). Six species occur in the West or Southwest, the White-headed Woodpecker (*Picoides albolarvatus*), the Ladder-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides scalaris*), Nuttall's Woodpecker (*Picoides nuttalli*), and the Arizona Woodpecker (*Picoides stricklandi*). The endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) occurs only in old-growth pine forests of the Southeast. Two species occur in Alaska, Canada, and the mountains of the western United States, the Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*), and the similar Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*) which also occurs in Eurasia.

There are 216 species of Woodpeckers, a few of which are on the verge of extinction. There are 120 species that occur only in the Western Hemisphere, and 95 that occur only in the Eastern Hemisphere. One species occurs in both northern North America and northern Eurasia.



# TIPPE-TOPICS

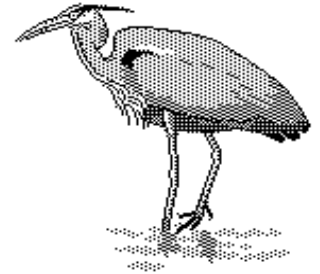
NEWSLETTER OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Cass, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Miami, Noble, Wabash, Whitley Counties,  
Indiana

Volume XXVIII, Number 4, April 2002

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**OUR MISSION: THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY SUPPORTS CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TO PROMOTE APPRECIATION, UNDERSTANDING, AND PRESERVATION OF BIRDS, OTHER WILDLIFE, AND DIVERSE ECOSYSTEMS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

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## COMING EVENTS

APRIL 2002

**FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 7, 1:30PM - TO GREAT BLUE HERON COLONY NORTH OF WARSAW**  
Repeated by popular demand--a second field trip to the Heron colony just north of Warsaw on April 7. Well over 100 nests; nearly 250 herons! Incubation of eggs will be underway. Some nest building and repair will still be in progress. Wear warm clothes and boots. There will be mud and water to wade. We will meet on the entrance drive of the Petro car dealership on SR 15 a half mile north of US 30. It is a quarter-mile drive from there to the colony. For more information contact field trip leader Paul Steffen by phone at 219-658 4504 or by e-mail at [ecoexpo@kconline.com](mailto:ecoexpo@kconline.com).

**BOARD MEETING, TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 9, 7:15PM - AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON**  
Major agenda items will be examining the mission statement, discussing fund raising techniques, and working on the annual budget. Any Tippecanoe Audubon Society member is welcome to attend board meetings.

**FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 21, 1:30PM -- BICENTENNIAL WOODS AND VANDOLAH WOODS**  
Both of these ACRES preserves are north of Fort Wayne and both feature big trees, spring flowers, and spring birds. From I-69 in northwest Fort Wayne exits to SR-3 (Lima Road) and drive north to Hometown. About half a mile beyond Hometown, or about three miles northwest of I 69, turn right (east) onto Shoaff Road and go east past Kell Road to the Bicentennial Woods parking area about 0.6 mile from the turn onto Shoaff Road. An alternate route would be to exit from I-69 onto Coldwater Road and follow it north to Shoaff Road, then turn left (west) onto Shoaff Road and go about a quarter mile to the parking area. For more information contact David Hicks by phone at 260-982 2471 (home) or 260-982-5309 (office), or by e-mail at [djhicks@manchester.edu](mailto:djhicks@manchester.edu).

**PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 23, 7:30PM - JOHN MASON, "MUSHROOMS --DELICIOUS AND DEADLY"**  
**AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON.** John Mason, mycology expert of rural Wabash, will present a timely spring program on mushrooms. With the arrival of spring in Indiana comes the annual rush to the forest to harvest the much relished morel. However, experts know dozens of species of fungi that are tasty and that can be safely enjoyed throughout the year. At the same time, certain poisonous impostors make for dangerous potential outcomes for collectors who don't know what they are doing. Showing photographs and specimens, John will clarify the five points in identifying, collecting, and enjoying many of the common species found in our area. He will provide opportunities to ask questions. For more information contact Steve Doud by phone at 260-833-7793, or by e-mail at [ced@netusa1.net](mailto:ced@netusa1.net)

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**NOTE ON WEBSITES:** Tippecanoe Audubon has an Internet website at [www.tippeaudubon.org](http://www.tippeaudubon.org), where back issues of *Tippe-Topics* are posted. This website also provides links to other websites of interest to Indiana birders, such as the **National Audubon Society** at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), the **Indiana Audubon Society** at [www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org), the **American Birding Association** at [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org), and the **Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology** at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

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## HOW WE CAN HELP DECLINING BIRD POPULATIONS

By Wilson Lutz, Chapter President

In the early summer of 1979, I took a rubber raft trip down the Colorado River from Page, Arizona, to Lake Mead. I will not regale you with stories of this trip but only point out that it was under the sponsorship of the Illinois State Museum. Anyone who takes a trip sponsored by the Museum becomes a life member of the Museum, and automatically receives its newsletter called *The Living Museum*.

A few years back, an issue of this publication featured an article by the museum's curator of zoology, David Bohlen. Mr.

Bohlen had made a study of nesting bird populations and habitats in Sangamon County, Illinois, not far from Springfield, the state capital. Wooded areas have been fragmented and intruded upon by development; remaining woodlands occur only as small patches; wetlands have been drained, and prairies and pastures have disappeared. What has happened in Sangamon County has happened to some degree in many other places, including Indiana.

As a result of these changes some twenty-five species of nesting birds have been extirpated from Sangamon County. Extirpated means that the species no longer nests in that region. Some species that have been extirpated are Greater Prairie Chicken, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Northern Harrier, King Rail, Virginia Rail, Black Rail, American Coot, Common Snipe, Sora, Upland Sandpiper, Bewick's Wren, Pine Siskin, Henslow's Sparrow, Short-eared Owl, Cooper's Hawk, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Red Crossbill, Pied-billed Grebe, and Common Moorhen.

Thirty-nine more species are in obvious decline. Examples in this category include Blue Grosbeak, Lark Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Western Meadowlark, Bell's Vireo, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Wood Thrush, Brown Creeper, Whip-poor-Will, Belted Kingfisher, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Spotted Sandpiper, American Woodcock, Yellow-breasted Chat, Ovenbird, and several other Warblers.

Twenty-three species that are losing ground more slowly. These are Green-backed Heron, Northern Bobwhite, Common Nighthawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Dickcissel.

Forty-six species are doing well. They include Canada Goose, Mallard, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Horned Owl, Chimney Swift, Northern Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Brown-

headed Cowbird, House Finch, Song Sparrow, and Chipping Sparrow.

Those species that are lost, or in the process of being lost, are suffering largely because of habitat destruction. In order to reverse this trend, the answer is, of course, to restore and protect the habitats that birds need. Here you and I can be of help. Bohlen has a list of suggestions that many of us will find useful in making our own back yards into habitats more hospitable to birds.

- (1) Mow less and plant trees in clumps. Then mow only around the entire clump.
- (2) Plant orchards rather than having large areas of grass.
- (3) Where a large tract is available, plant the area to prairie grasses and wildflowers.
- (4) Don't build a house in an established woodland setting.
- (5) Don't let pets run loose, especially during the nesting season, and have pets neutered to reduce feral populations.
- (6) Demand less tree removal and less manicuring in parks and natural areas. Leave dead limbs and snags for the use of woodpeckers and other cavity-nesting birds.
- (7) Keep off-road vehicles and jet skis out of wildlife areas.
- (8) Establish hedgerows.
- (9) Learn to identify the wildlife on your property and take an interest in seeing that it survives.

Review this list and make a point of noticing which of Bohlen's suggestions would be applicable in your own back yard and in the community where you live. Then act accordingly. The only solution to habitat destruction is habitat restoration.

Information for this article was taken from an article by H. David Bohlen in *The Living Museum*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (1994), published by the Illinois State Museum.

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## DOES THE IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER STILL SURVIVE?

By David L. Eiler

The remarkable three-inch beak of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, along with its amazing size, as big as a crow, helped to bring about its downfall. James Audubon told how people traveling by steamboat on the Mississippi bought Ivory-billed Woodpecker heads and how Indian chiefs wore belts ornamented with Ivory-billed Woodpecker bills and feather tufts. A 1731 publication by a man named Mark Catesby also described trafficking in Ivory-billed Woodpecker bills among Native Americans. A century later ornithologist Alexander Wilson gave a more detailed description of how the Indians used parts of the bird, especially the beak, for amulets or ornamentation. In 1893 Arthur T. Wayne wrote that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was rapidly being driven to extinction by local hunters shooting it for food. (See the article by John B. May in Forbush & May, *A Natural History of American Birds of Eastern and Central North America*, New York: Bramhall House, 1925, pp. 307-308.)

During the nineteenth century several ornithologists studied and wrote about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the wild. In volume four of his *Birds of America*, published in 1839, James Audubon gave a definitive account of its life history, behavior, habitat, range, and a very detailed description of its anatomy. Along with this was a painting depicting a male and a female removing bark from a dead tree.

In his account Audubon said that while traveling by boat on the Mississippi River in the 1820s he found the Ivory-billed Woodpecker as far north as the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. However, he said that it was most common in what he calls the "deep, dark, and gloomy swamps" of the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. He probably had no way of knowing that in Cuba there was a different subspecies of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Audubon characterized the bald cypress swamp habitat of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker as "deep morasses, overshadowed by millions of gigantic dark cypresses." He emphasized the

difficulty and danger of walking across the oozing, spongy, and miry forest floor covered with mosses, flags, and water-lilies, and inhabited by frogs, poisonous snakes, and alligators, in weather so hot and sultry that it was almost suffocating.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was more than a foot and a half long with a powerful two-inch-long ivory-colored bill that gave it its name. Another striking feature was a large crest that curved slightly forward. Males had a red crest and females a black crest. The face and the front and back of the neck were black with a white stripe that ran down the side of the neck. The back and tail were black. The wings were black with large white areas that, along with its three-foot wingspan, made it appear quite spectacular in flight.

Audubon said that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker ate beetles, larvae, and large grubs that it obtained from dead trees by excavating large holes or knocking off big pieces of bark. In a few hours it could remove the bark from a twenty or thirty-foot length of dead tree trunk or limb. He said it was also fond of persimmons. And he told how it would get wild grapes by clinging to the vine and reaching down for them like a Tufted Titmouse.

The remarkable size and strength of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is illustrated in an experience recounted by nineteenth-century ornithologist Alexander Wilson. He left a wounded Ivory-billed Woodpecker unconfined in his hotel room. When he returned in less than an hour it had removed a large area of plaster from the wall and was busy making a hole in the weather-boarding through which it was about to escape.

According to Audubon, the male and female Ivory-billed Woodpeckers would take turns excavating a nest cavity high up in the trunk of a live Ash or Hackberry tree, usually under a large branch. A round entrance hole just large enough to enter was bored a few inches into the tree and then a cavity about seven inches wide was dug downwards anywhere from ten inches to three feet. The female laid six white eggs in the

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY &amp; TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY</b> Chapter HO8 7XCH</p> <p>_____ <b>YES!</b> Enroll me as a <b>NEW MEMBER</b> in the National Audubon Society &amp; the Tippecanoe Chapter and send my membership card. Start sending me <i>AUDUBON</i> magazine and <i>TIPPE-TOPICS</i>. Enclosed is a \$20 check payable to the National Audubon Society for my one-year introductory membership.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TIPPE-TOPICS SUBSCRIPTION ONLY</b></p> <p>_____ I am not a member of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society but would like to receive <i>TIPPE-TOPICS</i>. Enclosed is an \$8 one-year subscription donation check payable to the Tippecanoe Audubon Society. I have a membership in the National Audubon Society carried with the following local Audubon chapter:</p>
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bottom of the cavity that was cushioned with wood chips. Both the male and the female would take turns incubating the eggs. The nestlings would climb out of the hole a couple weeks before fledging. In the southern states a pair could raise two broods each year, but further north in Kentucky and Indiana, only one brood a year could be raised.

By the end of the nineteenth century logging companies were destroying its habitat. In 1939 a study found only about two dozen breeding pairs in Louisiana, and another study in 1968 found only six breeding pairs. On three trips to Cuba in 1985 and 1986 ornithologists found a lone male and a lone female but no evidence of nesting. Thus by 1990 most ornithologists assumed that it was extinct in both the United States and Cuba.

However a recent report of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker sighting in Louisiana has raised hope that a few may still survive today. On April 1, 1999, a Louisiana State University wildlife and forestry student named David Kulivan reported

that he saw a pair at close range while hunting Wild Turkeys in Honey Island Swamp in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area near the town of Slidell in southeast Louisiana. His description of the birds held up well under questioning by knowledgeable ornithologists. Several teams of wildlife experts have found possible evidence of Ivory-billed Woodpecker activity in the area where Kulivan says he saw them. However, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries set up automated video cameras focused on trees with Woodpecker damage, but with no results. High tech recording equipment also failed to pick up either its distinctive call or its drumming. A highly qualified search team sponsored by Zeiss Sports Optics conducted an extensive search in January but did not see an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, though some members of the team thought they heard its distinctive drumming.

Information for this article came from a number of websites devoted to the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and the current efforts to determine once and for all whether it still survives.

## BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

**SIGHTING REPORTS WANTED** - *Tippe-Topics* readers are invited to report bird sightings so they can be shared with other readers. Call newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726, send him an e-mail message at dleiler@earthlink.net, or mail him a note at 606 E 7th St, North Manchester, IN 46962.

**FULTON COUNTY** - Billie Rakestraw reported on IN-BIRD that she had a bonanza at her backyard feeders the morning of March 12. There were seventeen **COMMON REDPOLLS** and a beautiful "Taiga" **FOX SPARROW**. It is the first time she has seen either in her yard for several years.

**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - On March 9 Dave Eiler saw his first **EASTERN MEADOWLARK** of the year in a field on the north side CR-500S east of CR-300E. On March 26 Vernon Campbell who lives at the southeast corner of Lake Wabee near Milford saw a **COMMON LOON**. The previous week he saw several **RING-NECKED DUCKS**. Jim Townsend who lives southwest of Pierceton reports that the big snow on March 26 brought two **FOX SPARROWS** to his feeders.

**MARSHALL COUNTY** - In a March 25 IN-BIRD note Tom Leggett of Argos reported that snow brought many birds to his feeders. A **WINTER WREN** came to his suet feeder two days in a row. At his seed feeders there were thirty to forty **HOUSE FINCHES**, ten to twenty **PINE SINSKINS**, a dozen **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**, three **DARK-EYED JUNCOS**, two **AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS**, one **SONG SPARROW**, and a **KILLDEER** that joined two **MOURNING DOVES** beneath the seed feeders. In addition there were **DOWNY WOODPECKERS**, **HAIRY WOODPECKERS**, **EUROPEAN STARLINGS**, **HOUSE SPARROWS**, **BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS**, **BLUE JAYS**, **NORTHERN CARDINALS**, and **AMERICAN ROBINS**. Marjorie Richards who lives in Donaldson reported that the snow on March 25 brought an **EASTERN TOWHEE** male to her yard.

**MIAMI COUNTY** - Linda Beidleman who lives south of Mexico saw an **EASTERN TOWHEE** at her feeders on March 22.

**WABASH COUNTY** - On March 8 Arlene Kindy saw 15 or more **SANDHILL CRANES** by a field pond about a mile southeast of Liberty Mills. Late in the afternoon Wilson and Mary Lutz along with Dave and Ruth drove out to see them and counted fifteen or more. The next morning Dave Eiler went out to see them again and counted exactly fifteen. Late in the afternoon on March 10 Wilson Lutz, Parks Adams, and Dave Eiler drove out to the same pond and the Cranes were gone, but they saw instead a **NORTHERN PINTAIL** male and a **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** male in the same pond along with many **MALLARDS**.

**WHITLEY COUNTY** - On March 11 Jeff McCoy of Columbia city reported on IN-BIRD that he again heard the same **AMERICAN WOODCOCK** that he heard a couple weeks earlier at the same spot near Columbia City along the route he bikes to work each night.

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# AN INVITATION

## TO A BENEFIT CONCERT

### COME AND HELP ACRES ACQUIRE WILDWOOD

Bird lovers and music lovers can satisfy both interests in a single program at 2:00 p.m. Sunday afternoon, April 28, 2002. At that time Acres Inc. of Fort Wayne and the Tippecanoe Audubon Society will present a program designed to help Acres acquire the Wildwood property of Robert and Alice Frantz as a nature preserve. Several members of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra have been enlisted by cellist David Rezits to give a benefit concert of classical and contemporary music in the Blocher Room at the North Manchester Public Library. The program will last approximately one hour. The admission charge will be \$10 per person. Bob will show slides of Wildwood and provide commentary. The library can be reached from either Market Street or Walnut Street just north of Fourth Street in North Manchester.

# **THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS TAKING ACTION!**

We've walked, and birded, and boated Indiana since our beginnings in 1975 with 25 members. We're now ready to GIVE BACK TO INDIANA some of the wonder we've gained. We're launching the biggest project in our history.

## **To Save the *Great Blue Heron Colony* from loss forever!**

This heron colony, one of the largest in Indiana, is located on the Tippecanoe River just north of Warsaw. It was protected for fifty years by Mr. Steve Rosbrugh, an Indiana farmer who lived out his commitment to the land. This unique habitat is now under threat by the pressures of development.

Saving the colony requires protecting a stretch of the river bottom in all directions from the colony. This is our challenge. We're planning for every log and leaf, every feather and foot print.

**Soon we'll be asking you to a breakfast** to tell you more about this project, to ask for your ideas, and to learn from you who else will care deeply about preserving this precious place in Kosciusko County.

The Tippecanoe River is a lifeline through Northern Indiana. It links us to each other, the wildlife still abundant in our region, and the Native Cultures that came before us. No other natural wonder in the Tippecanoe Audubon Society territory touches all of us so much.

When you receive an invitation to breakfast, **please join us!** We promise you'll come away with a new sense of your connection to the natural wonders of Indiana and your role in preserving them.

## **THE TAS BOARD**

# JOB OPENING

*Tippe Topics* is looking for a new "pilot". Why? Because the current pilot has qualified for retirement. David Eiler, a charter member of Tippecanoe Audubon, has been editor of *Tippe Topics* for the past ten years. He has done, and continues to do, a splendid job, and he has also earned some time in the sun.

Each month, **this job offers you** the opportunity to use your creativity, imagination, and knowledge. If you like to write, are concerned about environmental quality, enjoy sharing nature with others, are looking for a way to contribute to the Audubon cause, **this is your chance!**

## Contact one of the following people.

Wilson B. Lutz  
260-982-6754  
wlutz@ctlnet.com

Paul E. Steffen  
574-658-4504  
ecoexpo@bnin.net

David L. Eiler  
260-982-2726  
dleiler@earthlink.net



# TIPPE-TOPICS

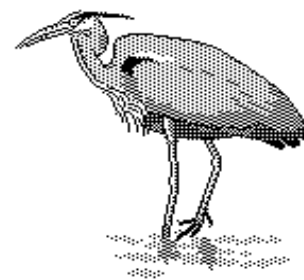
NEWSLETTER OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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## COMING EVENTS

MAY 2002

**FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 5, 1:30PM - WILDFLOWER WALK AT TAYLOR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

Each spring Taylor Sanctuary has an outstanding display of woodland wildflowers such as Hepatica, Spring Beauty, Trout Lily, Dutchman's-breeches, Fire Pink, and Appendaged Waterleaf, that carpet the forest floor. In what has become an annual event Paul Steffen will identify wildflowers for the field trip group. Other members of the group will help identify birds such as migrating warblers. Taylor Sanctuary is a wooded bluff on the south side of the Eel River northeast of Liberty Mills. It has two trails that form a loop running the entire length of the sanctuary, one loop along the bluff near the river and the other near the southeast boundary fence. Meet the field trip group at the Taylor Sanctuary entrance lane cable gate by the Eel River northeast of Liberty Mills. From North Manchester go north on SR-13 to CR-1450N and turn right (east) toward Liberty Mills. Go to Fourth Street at the east edge of town and turn left (north). Go to the old school house and turn right (northeast). Continue about a mile following the road as it turns north. When approaching CR-1500N, turn left at the Audubon sign into the grassy lane and follow it to the left (west) along the south side of the fence. Park near the cable gate where the field trip leader will meet the field trip group. For more information or answers to questions call Paul Steffen at 574-658-4504 or e-mail him [ecoexpo@mchsi.com](mailto:ecoexpo@mchsi.com).

**SPRING BIRD COUNT, SATURDAY, MAY 11, DAWN TO DARK - ALL OF KOSCIUSKO COUNTY**

To join the spring bird count call bird count coordinator JoAnne Mock at 260-982-4588, or bird count compiler Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726. They will be glad to assign you to a field party. Field parties will be limited to two or three people. The more field parties the better. Each field party will be led by an experienced birder, but people without special expertise as birders are needed to serve as drivers or recorders. If you enjoy birds, the spring bird count offers an excellent opportunity to improve your bird identification skills and to see birds you may have never noticed before.

**BOARD MEETING, TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 14, 7:15PM - AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON**

Major items on the agenda will be the Heron colony project, planning a fundraising workshop, and reviewing the annual budget. All chapter members are welcome to attend board meetings.

**SPECIAL BIRD BANDING WORKSHOP, SATURDAY OR SUNDAY, MAY 18 OR 19, 8:30AM TO 3:00PM - AT WILDWOOD**

We often hear about bird banding but we rarely if ever get to see anyone doing it. Well, the GOOD NEWS is that we have a special bird-banding workshop scheduled for May 18 at Wildwood!!! We have arranged for a "local" bird bander, Mr. Jim Meyer from West Virginia, to conduct a banding workshop for Tippecanoe Audubon and friends. The reason for the either/or date is that, if we are rained out on May 18, we will postpone the workshop to May 19. PLEASE NOTE that a light rain will not stop the workshop. Only a fairly heavy rain that would soak the birds and chill them to the point of death would force us to call it off. If in doubt because of rain, please call Bob and Alice Frantz at 260-352-2673 for verification on the morning of the workshop. This is a unique opportunity to observe first hand, the banding of birds and to learn a lot about one of the most fascinating aspects of bird study. Don't miss it. Banders are very hard to find and we are very lucky to have Mr. Meyer here from West Virginia. You are invited to drop in at any time during the day. The Wildwood entrance drive is east of Silver Lake on the south side of SR-14 about an eighth of a mile east of County Farm Road. This workshop will serve as our May program, and there will be no program on the fourth Tuesday evening, May 28. We will resume the regular program schedule in June.

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**NOTE ON WEBSITES:** Tippecanoe Audubon has an Internet website at [www.tippeaudubon.org](http://www.tippeaudubon.org), where back issues of *Tippe-Topics* are posted. This website also provides links to other websites of interest to Indiana birders. Websites worth checking include the **National Audubon Society** at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), the **Indiana Audubon Society** at [www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org), the **American Birding Association** at [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org), and the **Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology** at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

# A NEW VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TIPPECANOE AUDUBON

By Paul Steffen, Incoming Chapter President

A hand full of excited Tippecanoe Audubon Society members have just opened a new era in chapter activities! The Board of Directors made a momentous decision at the March retreat (translation: all-day board meeting). We had so many items to cover that we had to delay some for future processing. So, what's the big deal? What's going on? What's going on is that we, the Tippecanoe Audubon Society board, have made a commitment to save the Great Blue Heron Nesting Colony located on the Tippecanoe River just north of Warsaw. In order to save the Heron colony this section of the Tippecanoe River between US-30 and SR-15 must be saved from development, from pollution, and from anything else that could degrade the river bottom and the flood plain. This is a big project that will require a lot of passionate people who want to see it through to a successful completion. If you've been waiting for Audubon to do something important, something with a future focus, something with a long, long-term benefit, your wait is over! It's about to happen, and you can help it happen.

The Tippecanoe River has been identified as one of the ten most pristine rivers in the America. This means the river has never been dredged, remains relatively unpolluted, and still has a natural flood plain forest throughout much of its length. The Nature Conservancy has stationed a biologist, Chad Watts, here to work toward keeping the Tippy in that pristine state indefinitely. One of his responsibilities is to survey the river ecosystem for rare and endangered species. He has already been successful! Just a few weeks ago Chad and another biologist discovered and identified a colony of Club Shell Mussels in the Tippecanoe River. This is the largest colony of Club Shells in the world. But that ain't all! The

Club Shell Mussel is also on the Federal list of endangered species! That makes it even more important to save this section of the river.

Every spring for the past twenty-seven years Tippecanoe Audubon has sponsored a field trip into this colony and each year it has been our most popular field trip. This year we conducted two field trips into the colony. Twenty people showed up for first trip on a cold and forbidding day. Fifty or more went on the second trip. Fully two-thirds of the people on the second trip had never seen the colony before!

Here in summary is a list of the reasons why protecting the Tippecanoe River must be undertaken now by the Tippecanoe Audubon Society in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy.

1. The Tippecanoe River is the landmark for which our Audubon chapter is named.
2. The river, a Great Blue Heron, and the colony location, all appear in our logo.
3. The Great Blue Heron colony has probably occupied this general location for hundreds of years.
4. This section of the Tippecanoe River and its river bottom forest is the only truly unspoiled natural area in the immediate vicinity of Warsaw.
5. The Tippecanoe River is a pristine and unspoiled river that is 10,000 years old. It carried melt water away from the last glacier.
6. The endangered Club Shell Mussel that lives in this section of the River is many times older than the river itself.

Everything that Tippecanoe Audubon stands for comes into focus in this project and you might even be a part of it!

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## ARE BIRDS USEFUL TO HUMANS?

By Wilson Lutz, Outgoing Chapter President

Do birds have utility in ordinary human terms? In answering that question we Audubon people could list many ways in which birds benefit the human race. Certainly the way birds help to keep insect populations in check would rank high on anyone's list of benefits. Hawks and Owls are experts at keeping rodent populations within bounds. Birds also make esthetic contributions to our lives in terms of their sheer beauty and their interesting and diverse habits and life styles. And of course birds provide the basis for the fascinating pastime of bird watching.

But when it comes down to gut level utility, nothing surpasses the contributions that Vultures make to the Parsi religious community of India. The Parsis take their religion from an ancient Persian prophet named Zoroaster who lived about 600 BC. Although there are few Parsis living in Iran (ancient Persia) today, they are one of the major religious communities in Bombay, India.

The Parsis in Bombay and elsewhere have a distinctive practice based on their belief that the water and soil should not be contaminated by dead human flesh. To prevent this from happening they build what are called Towers of Silence with a platform on top. Dead bodies are placed on the platforms where vultures swoop in and consume the flesh. In the past, hundreds of Vultures would always be waiting nearby to consume the two

or three bodies per day that would normally be placed on a tower. Within an hour or two the flesh would be stripped and only a bare skeleton would remain. According to Parsi belief the defiled flesh of the corpse has thereby been properly disposed of. In Bombay the Parsi Tower of Silence is called Malabar Hill.

In recent years, however, things have not gone well for the Parsis of Bombay. The Vulture population has plummeted to the extent that there are now not enough Vultures to dispose of the bodies. Air quality near the Towers of Silence has suffered as the flesh of corpses that remain undevoured slowly putrefies. No one knows for sure why the Vulture population has declined. The best guess is that the decline is the result of an as yet unidentified disease. Ill-advised shooting is another possibility.

To overcome either of these possibilities, the Parsis plan to build an aviary on Malabar Hill within which they will breed disease-free Vultures in a protected environment. It will be at least four years, however, before the plan can kick into gear. In the meantime, the Parsis are faced with the dilemma of what to do with their dead. To them, only the Vultures fulfill the requirements for properly disposing of the corpses of their loved ones, and preventing the flesh of the dead from contaminating the water and the soil.

(Based on an article by Celia W. Dugger, *The New York Times*, Thursday, March 1, 2001.)

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## BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

**SIGHTING REPORTS WANTED** - *Tippe-Topics* readers are invited to report bird sightings so they can be shared with other readers. Call newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726, send him an e-mail message at [dleiler@earthlink.net](mailto:dleiler@earthlink.net), or mail him a note at 301 Hickory Lane, North Manchester, IN 46962.

**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - On March 27 Glen Campbell and Dave Eiler made a birding drive along CR-400E southwest of Pierceton and saw many **KILLDEERS**, many **HORNED LARKS**, many **SONG SPARROWS**, many **AMERICAN ROBINS**, many **EUROPEAN STARLINGS**, quite a few **DARK-EYED JUNCOS**, quite a few **MOURNING DOVES**, quite a few **COMMON GRACKLES**, quite a few **AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS**, quite a few **HOUSE SPARROWS**, about ten **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS** males, about ten **MALLARDS**, and four **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS** males. On April 7 Glen Campbell, JoAnne Mock, and Dave Eiler of North Manchester went on the Tippecanoe Audubon Society field trip to the heron colony north of Warsaw where they and others saw **GREAT BLUE HERONS** flying over and at a nest. On their way back to North Manchester they saw **COMMON LOONS** and Ring-billed Gulls on Pike Lake and Center Lake in Warsaw and near the northeast corner of Winona Lake in the town of Winona Lake. On Winona Lake they also saw many **AMERICAN COOTS**, many **BUFFLEHEADS**, along with

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY &amp; TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY</b> Chapter HO8 7XCH</p> <p>_____ <b>YES!</b> Enroll me as a NEW MEMBER in the National Audubon Society &amp; the Tippecanoe Chapter and send my membership card. Start sending me <i>AUDUBON</i> magazine and <i>TIPPE-TOPICS</i>. Enclosed is a \$20 check payable to the National Audubon Society for my one-year introductory membership.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TIPPE-TOPICS SUBSCRIPTION ONLY</b></p> <p>_____ I am not a member of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society but would like to receive <i>TIPPE-TOPICS</i>. Enclosed is an \$8 one-year subscription donation check payable to the Tippecanoe Audubon Society. I have a membership in the National Audubon Society carried with the following local Audubon chapter:</p>
<p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>_____ City _____</p> <p>_____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Telephone _____ E-mail _____</p>	<p><b>MAIL TO MEMBERSHIP CHAIR</b> James Townsend 6331 S 300 E HO-8 Warsaw, IN 46580 7XCH E-mail: jimvjmc@kconline.com</p>

**NORTHERN SHOVELERS, RING-NECKED DUCKS, and GREATER SCAUP, and near the lake a flock of CEDAR WAXWINGS.** Along Wooster Road east of Winona Lake they saw a huge flock of **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS**, and on a large pond by Wooster Road they saw another **BUFFLEHEAD**, more **RING-NECKED DUCKS**, and **TREE SWALLOWS** flying low over the water. On a large pond by CR-400E between CR-400S and CR-450S they saw **RING-NECKED DUCKS, BLUE-WINGED TEAL, AMERICAN WIGEON, NORTHERN SHOVELERS, GADWALLS,** and **TREE SWALLOWS** flying over the water. Driving along CR-400E they saw **AMERICAN ROBINS, MOURNING DOVES, RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS, DARK-EYED JUNCOS, EASTERN MEADOWLARKS, and EASTERN BLUEBIRDS.**

**MIAMI COUNTY** - On March 27 Linda Beidleman who lives south of Peru saw a **RED-TAILED HAWK, a PILEATED WOODPECKER, a RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, two HAIRY WOODPECKERS, five DOWNY WOODPECKERS, one NORTHERN FLICKER, four CAROLINA CHICKADEES, six WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES, seven TUFTED TITMICE, five NORTHERN CARDINALS, one EASTERN TOWHEE, ten DARK-EYED JUNCOS, six AMERICAN ROBINS, three COMMON GRACKLES, and fourteen HOUSE FINCHES.** On April 8 she had her first **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** in a tree by her deck.

**WABASH COUNTY** - Dave Eiler of North Manchester reported that the big snow brought a **HAIRY WOODPECKER** male and a **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** male and female to his suet feeders March 25-27, a **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** female March 26, a **NORTHERN FLICKER** male, and a **SONG SPARROW** March 27. On April 2 he had a **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** in his back yard. On April 7 Glen Campbell, JoAnne Mock, and Dave Eiler saw a **NORTHERN SHOVELER** male on a pond by CR-1400N east of CR-100E, and on a pond by CR-100E just north of SR-13 they saw some **WOOD DUCK** males.

**RECENT TIPPECANOE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES**

<p><b>HERON COLONY FIELD TRIPS</b></p> <p>On a chilly afternoon, Sunday, March 10, about a dozen people walked through the fields and woods to the Tippecanoe River flood plain north of Warsaw where they saw Great Blue Herons repairing nests and getting ready to lay eggs.</p> <p>A second field trip was scheduled for Sunday, April 7. On that warm afternoon, about fifty people, including some families with children, walked in to the Heron colony. They saw Great Blue Herons flying overhead, and field trip leader Paul Steffen was able to focus his spotting scope on Herons at a nest so that all who wished could get a close-up view.</p> <p>Those who looked down as well as up also saw a few spring wildflowers starting to bloom including Hepatica, Spring Beauty, Toothwort, and Skunk Cabbage.</p> <p><b>PROGRAM ON BIRDING TECHNOLOGY</b></p> <p>The program by Phil Kelly of Kokomo scheduled for March 26 was canceled because the blizzard that day made driving hazardous or impossible.</p> <p><b>FIELD TRIP TO CENTENNIAL WOODS</b></p> <p>Despite cold and blustery weather, the field trip group enjoyed a walk at the ACRES Bicentennial Woods Preserve Sunday afternoon, April 21. The large oaks were</p>	<p>impressive, although a recent wind storm had knocked the upper branches out of some. A number of spring wildflowers were in bloom, including several Violet species, Spring Cress, Blue Phlox, and Windflower. Migratory birds were not in evidence yet, but we saw or heard Tufted Titmice, Black-capped Chickadees, a couple White-breasted Nuthatches, a couple Downy Woodpeckers, a Red-bellied Woodpecker, and an Eastern Bluebird, among others.</p> <p><b>PROGRAM ON MUSHROOMS</b></p> <p>On Tuesday evening, April 23, John Mason, who lives near the Asherwood Environmental Center east of Peru, presented a program on mushrooms to a meeting of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society at the Blue Lion Coffee House in Pierceton. During the first part of his presentation he simply talked about mushrooms, and then he showed a series of slides illustrating the points he had been making. He began by pointing out that most people only collect and eat Morels because they assume all other kinds of mushrooms are poisonous. But actually about a third of all mushroom species are edible and some are quite tasty. Another third are too tough or too hot to eat even though they are not poisonous. The other third are dangerously poisonous. Once you</p>	<p>are familiar with the poisonous species, especially the deadly Amanitas, you can be more confident in eating other species.</p> <p>Since Morels appear in the spring that is when most people go into the woods looking for mushrooms. But the main mushroom season actually comes in the fall after a rain. Mushrooms are most edible when they first appear, before they begin shedding spores. The best way to prepare them is by frying them in butter. If you have more than you can use while they are still fresh, you can freeze them and keep them in an edible condition indefinitely.</p> <p>Mushrooms reproduce by shedding spores that are as fine as dust. The spores can be carried long distances by the wind. If a spore lands on a suitable substrate it can produce a new mushroom. A mushroom is actually the fruiting body that has the function of shedding spores. The rest of the mushroom, called the mycelium, consists of threadlike rootlets that penetrate the substrate and assimilate nutrients. Some mushrooms such as Red Cup Fungi and Earthstars grow in rich soil. Some grow in fallen leaves that are rotting. Some such as Shelf Fungus grow on dead stumps, logs, or sticks. Some grow on live plants and trees that they weaken and eventually kill.</p>
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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

David L. Eiler, Editor

Phone: 260-982-2726; E-mail: dleiler@earthlink.net

DATED MATERIAL DO  
NOT DELAY

## BLUE-WINGED TEAL: BIRD OF THE MONTH

By David L. Eiler

The Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, and Wood Duck, are the only duck species that nest in northern Indiana. All other Indiana duck species can be seen here only on spring and fall migration. April and early May is the time of year you are most likely to see Blue-winged Teal on shallow lakes, ponds, and wetlands with a little open water.

Blue-winged Teal are small ducks, only about two-thirds the size of Mallards. The male can be recognized at a glance by the white crescent on the side of his bluish-gray face. He also has a small white patch on the side just in front of the tail. Both male and female have the blue wing patches that give the species its name. The blue wing patches can easily be seen through binoculars or when the birds fly. Apart from these distinctive features both male and female have mottled brown plumage and dark bluish-black bills.

The nesting range of the Blue-winged Teal extends across Canada from eastern Alaska and the Yukon in the West to the Maritime Provinces in the East, and as far south as the Ohio River, Missouri, northern Texas, northern Utah and Nevada, and northeastern California. Its winter range extends from the Gulf States and southern California as far south as central Argentina.

Blue-winged Teal begin nesting in March in northern Indiana, though nesting this far south is uncommon. They nest in much greater numbers in the prairie potholes of the northern Great Plains from the Dakotas northward into Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The most typical nesting site

is a dry spot in a grassy marsh near shallow open water. The nest made of grass stems and lined with down is carefully concealed. The female lays nine to twelve whitish eggs. Instead of flying directly to the nest she lands some distance away and tries to remain concealed as she sneaks through the grass toward the nest. While she is incubating the eggs the male often stands guard. The incubation period is about twenty-four days after the last egg is laid.

The Duck Family, Anatidae, includes Swans and Geese as well as Ducks. The Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) belongs to a large genus that has members living on every continent except Antarctica. Among the 45 members of the *Anas* genus are such common North American species as the Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), the American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*), the Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*), the Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*), the Gadwall (*Anas strepera*), the American Wigeon (*Anas americana*), the Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), the Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*) of the Gulf Coast states, and the Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) of western North America.

Worldwide there are 30 members of the genus *Anas* that are called Teal. Among the most widespread are the Speckled Teal (*Anas flavirostris*) of the Andes Mountains of South America, and the Gray Teal (*Anas gracilis*) of Australia and New Guinea.



# TIPPE-TOPICS

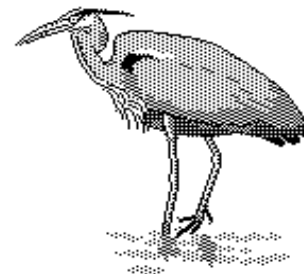
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Indiana

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**OUR MISSION: THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY SUPPORTS CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TO PROMOTE APPRECIATION, UNDERSTANDING, AND PRESERVATION OF BIRDS, OTHER WILDLIFE, AND DIVERSE ECOSYSTEMS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

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## COMING EVENTS

JULY 2002

### **SUMMER PICNIC & FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY, JULY 14, 1:00PM - BART & CINDA CULVER PLACE EAST OF NORTH WEBSTER**

To reach the Culver place from US-30 at Pierceton, go north on SR-13 about eight miles and turn east onto Backwater Road (also called CR-550N). Follow Backwater Road a little over two miles as it curves north and then east again to become CR-600N. Just after you pass CR-975E on your left, watch among the trees on your right for a paved driveway entrance between two brick pillars, and follow it back to the parking area in front of their home. The grill will be fired up at 1:00 to begin the cookout. Bring meat to grill for yourself and your guests, and a potluck dish to share. Cool drinks will be provided. Starting at 3:00 Bart will lead a field trip to a nearby area. Those who choose not to go on the field trip may swim in the pond behind the house, watch and photograph pond critters, or simply relax and enjoy the view.

### **FIELD TRIP, SATURDAY, JULY 20, 9:30AM - TO JASPER-PULASKI STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA**

Meet field trip leader Dave Hicks in front of the headquarters building at 9:30AM. Jasper-Pulaski is home to a mosaic of forest, prairie, savannah, and wetlands, and therefore has a diverse set of plant and animal species. We should see a number of prairie plants in flower, and will also visit the wetland wildlife viewing area. If time permits, we will also visit the Nature Conservancy Tefft Savannah property that adjoins the state property. Jasper-Pulaski is located in western Indiana and covers parts of Jasper, Pulaski, and Starke Counties. The simplest way to get to the headquarters area is from US 421, between Medaryville and San Pierre (south of the US-421/SR-10 junction and north of the US-421/SR-14 junction). From US-421 turn west onto SR-143, where there is a Jasper-Pulaski sign, and go about 1.2 miles west to the headquarters road. Join the field trip group in the parking area in front of the headquarters building. Bring a lunch, insect repellent, and field guides. If you want to explore the wetlands more closely, bring appropriate footwear. If you have questions you can call Dave Hicks at 260-982-2471 (home) or 260-982-5309 (office), or send him an e-mail at djhicks@manchester.edu.

**NOTE ON WEB SITES:** Tippecanoe Audubon has a web site at [www.tippeaudubon.org](http://www.tippeaudubon.org), where back issues of *Tippe-Topics* are posted. This web site also provides links to other web sites of interest to Indiana birders. Web sites worth checking include the **National Audubon Society** at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), the **Indiana Audubon Society** at [www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org), the **American Birding Association** at [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org), and the **Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology** at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

## TIPPECANOE AUDUBON STAFF OPENING

*Tippe-Topics* is looking for a new "pilot". Why? Because the current pilot has qualified for retirement, and is long past retirement age. Dave Eiler, a charter member of Tippecanoe Audubon, has been editor of *Tippe-Topics* for the past 10 years. He has done, and continues to do, a splendid job, but he has also earned some time in the sun. Each month, this job offers you the opportunity to use your creativity, imagination, and knowledge. If you like to write, if you are concerned about environmental quality, if you enjoy sharing your appreciation of nature with others, and if you are looking for a way to contribute to the Audubon cause, **this is the opportunity you have been waiting for.** To offer your services or to request more information, contact Paul E. Steffen, President, at 574-658-4504, or at [ecoexpo@mchsi.com](mailto:ecoexpo@mchsi.com).

# A COLD AND WET--BUT BEAUTIFUL SPRING

By Bob Frantz, May 2002

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: Bob and Alice Frantz have lived for more than thirty years in their home overlooking a pond on their private nature preserve east of Silver Lake in southern Kosciusko County which they call Wildwood. They take almost daily walks to observe and enjoy birds and other kinds of wildlife. Bob writes beautiful articles from time to time describing their observations. He has graciously given permission for his most recent article to be published in *Tippe-Topics*. He has published two collections of articles. You may obtain one or both by calling him at 260-352-2673, by mailing him at note at 409 E SR 14, Silver Lake, IN 46982, or by sending him an e-mail at rfrantz@ctlnet.com.

We had a very mild and almost snowless 2001-02 winter, and thus far a cold and wet spring, with the exception of a very few warm days in April. In early spring, March 25-26, we had fourteen inches of snow, more than we had all winter. It is now May 13 and according to my measurements we have had 14.19 inches of rain since January 1. I'm not sure how this compares with other years, but I do know that normally, farmers have planted most of their corn and soy beans by this time and this year hardly any have been planted.

While the ground is saturated and we are just getting over another two-inch rain, the grass, wild flowers and trees are probably the most lush that we have ever seen. As I look from the window just beyond the computer screen, the woods that was bare a few weeks ago, now appears more like a dense jungle. Weather has been unusually cool which keeps grass green and helps wild flowers last longer. One very noticeable difference in trees, due to very cool weather, is the late leafing schedule. Many trees are fully leafed, but oak and walnut are very late. Some of the black walnut trees appear to be dead, but by close observation we can see that leaves are just beginning to show.

Spring Beauty, Bloodroot, and Dutchman's Breeches bloomed in mid-April, just a bit later than usual, and are now gone. The Large White Trillium seemed to be more abundant than in most years, and has lasted longer than we can remember. Also, Blue Phlox has been plentiful and colorful, and Wild Geranium is at its best right now. Our Maiden-hair Fern and Christmas Ferns are lush, and the Jack-in-the-Pulpit seems extraordinarily healthy—these are just in front of our house.

In spite of cold wet weather, birding has been good. We have a list of the different species identified here at Wildwood since January 1, and our number is now up to 68. Last Saturday, May 11, Alice and I made a bird count here at Wildwood for the local Audubon chapter. In spite of a rain-shortened day, we identified 41 species and we know that many more were here, but didn't show up on that day. We have two nesting boxes, each with five baby Eastern Bluebirds, and we know of three Canada Goose families. House Wrens are nesting in several boxes and occupying two more. Today we had a very colorful day of birding—part from our window and part on a hike. A partial list

includes Scarlet Tanager, Red-headed Woodpeckers, American Goldfinches, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, three pairs of Baltimore Orioles (in bright sunlight), and a pair of Eastern Bluebirds. An unbelievable day!

I must relate our observation of one Canada Goose pair. Their courtship, which consisted of lots of head dipping by both birds, and mating, which took place on the pond as we observed from our big window. The nest of this pair was in what we call the north wetland, which is not far from our house, on a tiny island. On my walks to the mail box, I could see the female on the nest. As I approached, she would freeze in one position—not moving a muscle or feather, head down instead of the normal up position. The male was always nearby, sometimes creating a disturbance, probably intended to divert my attention from the nest. Incubating lasts 28-30 days, so this is quite a long process that requires patience by the prospective parents. I wasn't sure just when nesting began, but tried to keep a close watch so as not to miss the hatch.

Last Sunday, May 12, on my walk to the mail box for the Sunday paper, I checked the nest as usual and stopped short to observe a most interesting sight. The female was still on the nest, in the frozen position, two or three newly hatched goslings were swimming near her, and the male was also in a frozen position on guard just a few feet away. I assumed the female was still sitting on unhatched eggs or on newly hatched goslings. On my return with the paper, parents and goslings were gone. Later we watched the family of eight, six goslings and the two parents, as they grazed on grass and swam on the pond. While feeding, one parent was always on guard, and on the water one parent led followed by the goslings, and the other parent brought up the rear. We have never seen any parents quite as protective as the Canada Geese. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that we seem to have so many of these beautiful birds.

While we are loving the beautiful spring growth that our wet, cool weather is providing, we now hope for some dry, sunny days. Whether it is too wet or too dry, too cold or too hot—we'll take what comes. Nature is nature, it doesn't always please us, but that is the way it is.

## TALL BUILDINGS KILL MIGRATING BIRDS

By the Editor

A recent IN-BIRD note posted by Randy Pals of Chesterton, Indiana, called attention to an article that will appear in the August issue of *Discover* magazine. According to this article written by Doug Stoltz, a conservation ecologist at the Field Museum in Chicago, Stoltz and his colleagues counted the number of birds that have hit McCormick Place, a large convention center on the Lake Michigan water front in Chicago, during the past two years. The Lake Michigan shoreline is a major migratory flyway for many species.

According to Stoltz, the ten species most frequently killed by crashing into this tall building were Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow, Ovenbird, American Tree Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Tennessee Warbler.

On the basis of their study Stoltz suggests that lights in tall buildings, especially along the Chicago waterfront be turned off from 11:00pm until dawn during spring and fall migration seasons when the most birds are killed.

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### BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

**SIGHTING REPORTS WANTED** - *Tippe-Topics* readers are invited to report bird sightings so they can be shared with other readers. Call newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726, send him an e-mail message at [dleiler@earthlink.net](mailto:dleiler@earthlink.net), or mail him a note at 301 Hickory Lane, North Manchester, IN 46962.

**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - Juliea Long of Saint Charles, Illinois often spends time at Lake Wawasee. On June 8 she went birding in Tri-County State Fish and Wildlife Area where she saw two **BARRED OWLS**, a **PILEATED WOODPECKER**, an **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER**, **WHITE-EYED VIREOS**, **CERULEAN WARBLERS**, and a **PROTHONOTARY WARBLER**. On July 1 Dave Eiler drove the mowed lanes in a grass field at Wildwood and saw two **BOBOLINK** males and a **DICKCISSEL** that Bob Frantz had told him were there.

**MIAMI COUNTY** - Linda and John Beidleman who live south of Mexico have been watching a pair of **PILEATED WOODPECKERS** taking suet from feeders and feeding two juveniles. On June 23 they saw a pair of **CAROLINA WRENS** on their deck. On June 24 Linda discovered that **EASTERN SCREECH-OWLS** appeared to be making use of a large gourd she had hung near the deck. On the same day she saw **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAKS** eating an orange and a blueberry suet cake she had hung out. She also saw a **WILD TURKEY** in a nearby meadow.

**WABASH COUNTY** - Dave Eiler who recently moved to a duplex at the Timbercrest Retirement Center north of North Manchester has taken several birding walks on trails that have been mowed in the woods and along a small creek on the north side of the property. Some the birds he has seen are a **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO**, **RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS**, **CEDAR WAXWINGS**, **GRAY CATBIRDS**, **SONG SPARROWS**, a **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK** male, and a pair of **INDIGO BUNTINGS**. He has heard, but not seen, an **EASTERN TOWHEE** and a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**.

### RECENT TIPPECANOE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

**FIELD TRIP TO PIGEON RIVER**

On Saturday, June 22, a small group of field trippers braved hot and humid weather to visit fens at Pigeon River State Fish and Wildlife Area in La Grange County. (Fens are wetlands that receive a flow of alkaline seep-water, and therefore differ from bogs, which have acid soils.) They saw a nice display of Grass Pink Orchids, Indian Paintbrush with unusual yellow flowers, and three species of carnivorous plants. Among the bird species seen were a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, an American Woodcock, and Willow Flycatchers.

**IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER PROGRAM**

On Tuesday evening, June 25, Steve Doud presented a very informative program on Ivory-billed Woodpeckers at the Blue Lion Coffee House in Pierceton. He began by showing a short video from a CBS News Sunday Morning report aired on January 27, 2002, which summarized recent evidence that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker may still survive deep in the Bald Cypress swamps of the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area in

southeastern Louisiana. The video included the only known movie shots of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers made in 1935, the last known photographs taken in 1941, and a recording of its distinctive drumming and call. It also showed the kind of remote Bald Cypress swamp habitat where it is known to have lived. Steve then gave information from other sources, especially an article by James J. Williams in the March 2001 issue of *Birding* magazine published by the American Birding Association entitled "Ivory-billed Dreams, Ivory-billed Reality" that he used as the title of his program.

In 1935 a Cornell University research team obtained the only movie footage ever made of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and also recorded its call and drumming. James J. Tanner, who was an ornithology professor at the University of Tennessee, studied the Ivory-billed Woodpecker from 1937 to 1939 in the Singer Tract that was logged during World War II. His wife Nancy still recalls seeing them. Since then there have been many sighting reports from various places in

the South from eastern Texas to southern Florida, but none has been confirmed.

The most recent report of a sighting was by a forestry student named David Kulivan at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. While Turkey hunting in April 1999 in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area in southeastern Louisiana, he watched for several minutes at close range what he is quite certain was a pair of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers. He told James Van Remsen, a biology professor at Louisiana State University, who questioned him at great length and found his story convincing. Kulivan also told his story to Vernon Wright, a forestry professor at Louisiana State University, who likewise found his account believable.

News reports attracted the attention of a Zeiss Optics official who arranged corporate sponsorship for six expert ornithologists to conduct a definitive search in January and February 2002. The team found evidence that was tantalizing but inconclusive. So the issue remains an unresolved mystery.

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NOT DELAY

## EASTERN SCREECH-OWL: BIRD OF THE MONTH

By David L. Eiler

The Eastern Screech-Owl is the Owl species most often seen or heard in the eastern United States. It has mottled plumage and occurs in both brown and gray color forms. It is a fairly small bird, about 10 inches long with a wing span of about 22 inches. It has large yellow eyes that make it look fiercer than it really is. It also has ear tufts that are unrelated to its real ears. The ear tufts make it look somewhat like a small version of the much larger Great Horned Owl.

When smaller birds such as Blue Jays find an Eastern Screech-Owl perched in a woodland tree during the daytime they will often gang up on it and harass it noisily till it flies away. In fact birders sometimes play a tape recording of the Eastern Screech-Owl as a way of attracting smaller birds that come looking for it in order to drive it away. A live Screech-Owl may also answer a tape-recording of its call and even come looking for the Owl it thinks it is hearing.

Eastern Screech-Owls are said to mate for life. They use tree cavities such as abandoned woodpecker holes but do not make a nest. The pair may use the cavity for shelter throughout the year, and both may stay in it together. They will also use a nest box that has a big enough entrance hole. Courtship starts in late winter, and in late March or early April the female lays and begins incubating four or five pure white eggs that hatch in about three-and-a-half weeks.

The diet of the Eastern Screech-Owl consists primarily of large insects such as grasshoppers, crickets, and beetles, though it also preys upon small mammals such as mice,

voles, and chipmunks. It sometimes eats small birds, and, surprisingly, has even been reported to catch and eat fish.

All Owls except Barn Owls belong to the family Strigidae that has 188 species. Ornithologists classify 63 of these in the genus *Otus*. Of the 23 members of the *Otus* genus found in the Western Hemisphere all but one have the English name Screech-Owl.

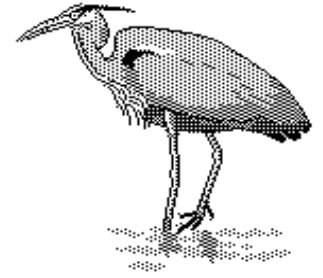
Four members of the *Otus* genus occur in the United States. The Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*) lives east of the Rocky Mountains in the United States and Canada, and varies enough from area to area that six subspecies are currently recognized by ornithologists. It does not migrate. The Western Screech-Owl (*Otus kennicottii*) can be found from the western edge of the Great Plains through the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast, as far south as northwestern Mexico and as far north as southeastern Alaska. The Whiskered Screech-Owl (*Otus trichopsis*) ranges from southeastern Arizona south through Mexico and Central America as far as Nicaragua. The Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*) nests from southern British Columbia through the western United States to southern Mexico.

The other 19 Western Hemisphere *Otus* species occur south of the United States, either in Latin America or the West Indies. The 40 members of the *Otus* genus that occur in the Eastern Hemisphere have the English name Scops-Owl.



# TIPPE-TOPICS

NEWSLETTER OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Cass, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Miami, Noble, Wabash, Whitley Counties, Indiana  
Volume XXVIII, Numbers 8-9, August-September 2002



## OUR MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY IS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND THE PROTECTION OF THE AIR, LANDS, AND WATERS UPON WHICH ALL BIRD, PLANT, ANIMAL, AND HUMAN LIFE DEPENDS.



## COMING EVENTS



AUGUST 2002

**FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 25, 1:30PM - TO THE FLORY-GEMMER WOODS**

### PRESERVE

This should be good time to see late-summer plants and birds in several habitats ranging from wetland to forest to oldfield. To get to the preserve take SR-13 north from North Manchester to the Liberty Mills sign at CR-1425N, turn east and go through Liberty Mills staying on Main Street and continue on as the road bends south and then east again to become CR-1400N at CR 400E, continue to CR-500E and turn north about half a mile to the grassy roadside parking area by the Flory-Gemmer Woods Preserve sign where the field trip group will assemble. The field trip leader will lead the group along trails through the woods where woodland species are common, and on a mowed trail through the oldfield where brushland species are common. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes suitable for walking through stubble, and long pants to protect your legs from scratchy bushes and vines on each side of recently mowed trails. For more information call field trip leader Dave Hicks at 260-982-2471 (home) or 260-982-5309 (office).

**PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 27, 7:30PM - BIRDING WITH THE HELP OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY**

**AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON.** This program was originally scheduled for last March but had to be canceled at the last minute because a blizzard made roads impassable. It will be presented by Phil Kelly of Kokomo who manages the Indiana Audubon Society website and the free IN-BIRD e-mail service that enables birders throughout the state to share sighting notes with other subscribers. Phil will explain and demonstrate various kinds of technology that can be applied to birding. Topics will include the Internet, Family Radio Service (FRS Radios), the Global Positioning System (GPS), Digital Cameras and Digiscoping, which means taking pictures with a digital camera through a spotting scope and inserting the images into an e-mail or website. Bring your questions!

SEPTEMBER 2002

**BIRD BANDING WORKSHOP, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 7:00AM TO 1:00PM - AT WILDWOOD**

This will be the second bird banding workshop conducted by Jim and Janet Meyer from West Virginia for ACRES and Tippecanoe Audubon Society members and anyone else who may be interested. A light rain will not stop the workshop, but a fairly heavy rain that would soak the birds and chill them would force us to call it off. If in doubt call Bob and Alice Frantz at 260-352-2673 for verification on the morning of the workshop. In case rain does force the cancellation of the Saturday workshop, it will be postponed to Monday, September 16. Mr. Meyer will come from West Virginia for a second time because the bird banding he did last May at Wildwood was so successful. You may drop in any time during the day. The Wildwood entrance drive is east of Silver Lake on the south side of SR-14 about an eighth of a mile east of County Farm Road. This workshop will serve as our September field trip.

**PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 24, 7:30PM - MIKE HUDAK: "OUR FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS: WILDLIFE HABITAT OR LIVESTOCK PASTURE?" AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON.** Mike Hudak of the Indiana

Department of Natural Resources will explain how livestock grazing in the western United States over the past four centuries has caused severe environmental damage to a variety of ecosystems causing a drastic decline in grassland bird populations. In a slide presentation he will review the history and politics of government subsidized livestock production in the American West giving visual comparisons between pristine grassland landscapes and grasslands damaged by livestock grazing. Mr. Hudak is a former computer industry researcher who is committed to environmental advocacy. He has advanced degrees from the State University of New York in Binghamton and from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Since 1997 he has spent a total of fourteen months traveling and hiking on public lands throughout the West to observe the impact of livestock grazing. In 1999 he established the Public Lands Without Livestock project of Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs to educate the public about the environmental and economic costs of ranching on public lands.

## TIPPECANOE AUDUBON STAFF OPENING

*Tippe-Topics* is looking for a new "pilot". Why? Because the current pilot has qualified for retirement, and is long past retirement age. Dave Eiler, a charter member of Tippecanoe Audubon, has been editor of *Tippe-Topics* for the past 10 years. He has done, and continues to do, a splendid job, but he has also earned some time in the sun. Each month, this job offers you the opportunity to use your creativity, imagination, and knowledge. If you like to write, if you are concerned about environmental quality, if you enjoy sharing your appreciation of nature with others, and if you are looking for a way to contribute to the Audubon cause, **this is the opportunity you have been waiting for.** To offer your services or to request more information, contact Paul E. Steffen, President, at [ecoexpo@mchsi.com](mailto:ecoexpo@mchsi.com), or at 574-658-4504.

**NOTE ON WEB SITES:** Tippecanoe Audubon has a web site at [www.tippeaudubon.org](http://www.tippeaudubon.org), where back issues of *Tippe-Topics* are posted. This web site also provides links to other web sites of interest to Indiana birders such as the **National Audubon Society** at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), the **Indiana Audubon Society** at [www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org), the **American Birding Association** at [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org), and the **Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology** at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

## AUDUBON'S GREAT PASSION

By Paul E. Steffen, Chapter President

It's the people who make Audubon great, and it is the passion and vision of the people in Audubon who make great things happen. What Audubon people hold in common is passionate concerns about the loss of species and of the habitats that support those species. We are also concerned about the environmental pollution that degrades habitats and threatens many species.

With well over 400 members we are in a strong position to respond to the issues. We are also in a unique position geographically and historically to accomplish a project that will stand as the Audubon legacy in this area for decades to come. That project is to protect permanently the Great Blue Heron Colony on the Tippecanoe River north of Warsaw by protecting the river bottom habitat in the vicinity of the colony. This is a very ambitious project involving many acres of river bottom land and many other species besides the Great Blue Herons. As you

probably know by now, the worlds largest population of Club Shell Mussels also lives in the Tippecanoe River. This Mussel species is on the federal list of endangered species. We have a lot to be passionate about here and a lot to do to make sure this project is a success.

The board of directors has recently revised the Audubon mission statement to read as follows: *The Mission of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society is environmental education and the protection of the air, lands, and waters upon which all bird, plant, animal, and human life depends.* Clearly the Heron Colony and Tippecanoe River project meet the parameters of our new mission statement.

I want to invite you to contact me with your ideas, thoughts and insights on this most important Audubon mission. You can reach me by telephone at 574-658-4504, or by e-mail at [ecoexpo@mchsi.com](mailto:ecoexpo@mchsi.com).

## DNA STUDIES LEAD TO RECLASSIFICATION OF VIREOS

By Barny Dunning, Purdue University

**EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:** The following article is a revised version of an IN-BIRD e-mail post dated August 2. It is used with the permission of the author who suggested a few minor changes to improve its clarity and accuracy.

Vireos were recently moved in the checklist order followed in most bird field guides. Actually the Vireos, the Jays and Crows, and the Shrikes were all moved within the songbird order, Passeriformes. The reason is genetic research done in the 1990s on the relationships among the families and orders of birds that found a previously unrecognized grouping. New DNA research seemed to show beyond much doubt that a large assemblage of songbird families were one another's closest relatives. This seemed to reflect a major, but previously unrecognized, evolutionary radiation of birds out of Australia. A "radiation" is the evolutionary expansion of a group of species, families, or other classification group to into an available niche in an isolated area. The most well known examples of such radiations are the Honeycreepers of the Hawaiian Islands and the Galapagos Finches that were one of the clues that led Charles Darwin to his theory of evolution.

The Australia avifauna includes many songbirds found only there, but named by Europeans for similar songbirds back in Europe. Some examples are the Australian Chats, Robins, and Fairywrens. On the other hand there were highly unusual Australian forms such as the Lyrebirds, Birds-of-Paradise, and Bowerbirds, that were unknown to Europeans who had to make up names for them.

In recent years several forms of genetic analysis, most notably DNA-DNA hybridization by Charles Sibley and Jon Ahlquist have shown that all these birds were part of an ancient evolutionary radiation of forms. More surprisingly, the same analyses showed that the Shrikes, Corvids (Jays and Crows) and Vireos were also part of this radiation. Many checklists, including the authoritative American Ornithological Union checklist were revised, moving the Shrikes, Corvids and Vireos together and placing them early in the overall list of songbirds.

The biggest surprise among these changes was the reclassification of the Vireos. Even though they were never thought to be closely related to the Wood-Warblers, that is where they were customarily placed in field guides. But the Vireos are entirely a Western Hemisphere group, so it hardly seemed plausible that they would have originated in Australia in the Eastern Hemisphere. Yet two other groups, Shrikes and Corvids, have both Eastern and Western Hemisphere members. So it is possible that the Vireo ancestor could have been from the Eastern Hemisphere as well but died out there long ago.

If you want a quick introduction to such things as DNA-DNA hybridization or the Australian radiation, they are covered in David Allen Sibley, editor, *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001.

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## IS GOLF YOUR GAME?

By Wilson B. Lutz

Golf is a major sport in America and is popular in many other countries. Thus people who cherish an environment friendly to wildlife often despair at the number of golf courses that are being planned or already exist. The reason is that golf courses can be profligate users of water and of polluting pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Furthermore they provide little in the way of wildlife habitat. There are nearly eighteen thousand golf courses already, and a new one is added on an average of once a day. That can mean a lot of pollution.

Fortunately some golf course managers want to make their course more interesting as wildlife habitats. They have found that golf courses do not need huge amounts of water, pesticides, and herbicides, and that raising grass height only an eighth of an inch greatly

improves its resistance to pests and reduces the need for pesticides.

One golf course in New Jersey has let a fifth of its 155 acres go wild. Golfers may see as many as half a dozen foxes in a day of golfing. A course in New York has planted grasses and attractive plants such as Black-eyed Susan, Goldenrod, Christmas Fern, and Wood Asters that are drought and pest resistant. Another New York course is spending five million dollars on a new and more efficient watering system. Conservation organizations such as Audubon are often consulted on how to manage courses to benefit wildlife.

Note: Information for this article came from an article by Llisa W. Foderaro, in the May 1, 2002, issue of the *New York Times*.

## BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

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**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - On July 15 in a field pond along SR-13 just south of Sidney Dave Eiler saw a **SPOTTED SANDPIPER** still in breeding plumage and a **LESSER YELLOWLEGS**.

**MIAMI COUNTY** - Linda and John Beidleman who live south of Mexico reported recently that two **INDIGO BUNTING** males have been coming to their feeders. They have also been seeing a **RED-TAILED HAWK** near their residence. And there is a **MUTE SWAN** family with six young in their pond.

**WABASH COUNTY** - Since the middle of July Dave Eiler has taken several birding walks in and near the woods north of the Timbercrest Retirement Center north of North Manchester where he has seen or heard a **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO**, a couple **CHIMNEY SWIFTS**, some **RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS**, some **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS**, a **NORTHERN FLICKER**, an **EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE**, an **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** male, several **GRAY CATBIRDS**, a **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER**, a **CAROLINA CHICKADEE**, some **TUFTED TITMICE**, a **YELLOW WARBLER** female, a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**, some **SONG SPARROWS**, an **EASTERN TOWHEE**, and a **SCARLET TANAGER** female. On August 3 Dave saw a couple dozen **PECTORAL SANDPIPERS** in a pasture with a small area of shallow water just north of North Manchester along CR-100E, and on August 5 nearly three dozen. At the same place there were two **SEMPALMATED SANDPIPERS** on August 5, and a **LEAST SANDPIPER** on August 8. Steve Hammer reported on August 12 that he has been seeing **GREEN HERONS** along the Eel River near his home in North Manchester.

## RECENT TIPPECANOE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

**SUMMER PICNIC & FIELD TRIP**  
On Sunday afternoon, July 14, a big group of Tippecanoe Audubon members and friends took part in the annual summer picnic at the home of Bart and Cinda Culver east of North Webster. After the meal Bart led a walk along the edge of Backwater Marsh. A Scarlet Tanager male and a pair of Gray Catbirds were seen, and a Common Yellowthroat was heard. A

Red-tailed Hawk was also seen in a tree not far from the house.  
**FIELD TRIP TO JASPER-PULASKI**  
On a hot Saturday, July 20, a small group of Tippecanoe Audubon members took part in an all-day field trip to Jasper-Pulaski State Fish and Wildlife Area north of Medaryville. Among birds seen or heard were a Red-tailed Hawk, a pair of American Goldfinches, several Red-

headed Woodpeckers, a Northern Flicker, a Northern Bobwhite, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a Yellow-throated Vireo, an Eastern Kingbird, several Great Blue Herons, and a Wood Duck. Wildflower and plant species identified by field trip leader Dave Hicks included Western Sunflower, Seneca Milkwort, Slender Mountain-Mint, Prairie Blazing Star, and Big Bluestem.

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**TIPPE-TOPICS**  
PUBLISHED BY THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.  
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
David L. Eiler, Editor  
Phone: 260-982-2726; E-mail: dleiler@earthlink.net

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## FIELD SPARROW: BIRD OF THE MONTH

By David L. Eiler

The kind of field that Field Sparrows like is a brushy oldfield, not a cultivated field. They also like weedy fence rows and woodland edges, but will not be found inside a woods. This causes Field Sparrow populations to fluctuate as agricultural practices change. When farms are abandoned they turn into oldfields that make good Field Sparrow habitat and populations increase. When oldfields are returned to farming or converted to housing developments Field Sparrows are eliminated. Field Sparrows do not adapt to the presence of humans and seldom come to bird feeders.

Like Chipping Sparrows, Field Sparrows have a rust-colored crown, mottled brownish back, two white wingbars, and unmarked whitish underparts. But they have a pink beak, pink legs, and a faint rusty eyeline. Their song is a series of notes on the same pitch speeding up to a trill at the end.

Field Sparrows usually build nests on the ground for the their first brood, but then in bushes for later broods. The cup-shaped nest is made of grass, weed stems, and leaves. It is built primarily by the female with some help from the male. She lays three or four oblong eggs that may be pale greenish, bluish, or cream-colored, with reddish-brown or purplish dots and blotches concentrated at the large end. Starting with a first brood in May, a pair of Field Sparrows may raise as many as three broods in a single summer. But Brown-headed Cowbird females frequently lay eggs in Field Sparrow nests. This greatly reduces the number of Field Sparrow young that are fledged in a season.

Field Sparrows migrate to the southern states for the winter but return to their nesting range as early as March when insects start to become available. Besides insects their diet also includes a variety of weed and grass seeds. They often alight on grass or weed stems and bend them down to the ground to get at the seeds.

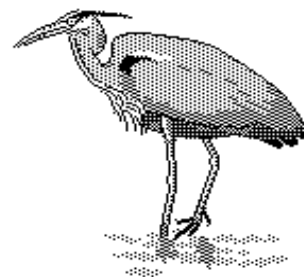
Along with the Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*), there are six other members of the *Spizella* genus. The two that we see in northern Indiana are the Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) during the summer, and the American Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*) during the winter. Both occur from coast to coast. The Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*) nests in the northern Great Plains. Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) breeds from the western edge of the Great Plains westward through the Rocky Mountains and Great Basin. The Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrogularis*) occurs in southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Worthen's Sparrow (*Spizella wortheni*) is found only in northeastern Mexico.

The *Spizella* Sparrows belong to the Emberizidae Family that includes Grassquits, Seedeaters, Buntings, Towhees, Flowerpiercers, Western Hemisphere Sparrows, and some Finches. The family is widespread in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. *Spizella* Sparrows are not related to the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) which belongs to the Eastern Hemisphere family Passeridae that includes Old World Sparrows and Snowfinches.

# TIPPE-TOPICS

NEWSLETTER OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Cass, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Miami, Noble, Wabash, Whitley Counties,  
Indiana

Volume XXVIII, Number 10, October 2002



## OUR MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY IS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND THE PROTECTION OF THE AIR, LANDS, AND WATERS UPON WHICH ALL BIRD, PLANT, ANIMAL, AND HUMAN LIFE DEPENDS.



## COMING EVENTS



OCTOBER 2002

### FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 13, 1:30PM - TO SIDERS GRAVEL PIT IN DISKO FOR GEOLOGY

Could you use some interesting rocks for your rock garden, an unusual doorstop, a boulder for your front yard, or a really hefty paper weight? If so, be sure to join the October Tippecanoe Audubon Society field trip on October 13. We have permission to visit the Siders & Son Gravel Pit in the little town of Disko on SR 114 eight miles west of North Manchester and two miles west of SR-15, or about four miles southeast of Akron and SR-19. Mr. Siders says that we can take any interesting rocks we find. In recent years the Siders Gravel Pit has expanded its operations considerably. It supplies sand, gravel, and crushed stone, for building and paving projects throughout much of northeastern Indiana. We owe the origin of this treasure trove of building materials to the Wisconsinan Glacier. At rare intervals the earth's climate pattern can undergo shifts that are the opposite of global warming. Prolonged cold weather combined with heavy precipitation in eastern Canada led to the accumulation of vast amounts of snow. The great weight of this large mass of snow compressed the snow into glacial ice. This mass of ice can become so thick, up to several miles, that it began to squeeze outward like pancake batter on a grill. As a result, about 20,000 years ago a wall of glacial ice now called the Wisconsinan Glacier began to move south across southern Canada and into what is now the United States. Acting like a gigantic bulldozer, this wall of ice gouged and scraped its way along, tearing up the bedrock and picking up rock fragments of all sizes. Some of these rock fragments were carried for hundreds of miles. Abrasion occurring at the glacial edges and in the subsequent melting of the glacier tended to round off the sharp corners of the rocks so that they assumed rounded shapes. In Indiana the Wisconsinan Glacier got as far south as Shelbyville near Indianapolis. At that point, a change in the climate caused the ice to melt faster than it was being replenished from the north. This climatic shift occurred about 10,000 years ago and the glacier began to retreat. In doing so it left behind enormous piles of rock material gouged from the bedrock of Canada and Michigan. These piles of rock and gravel are called moraines and the materials themselves are called glacial till. The Packerton Moraine, centered at the little town of Packerton south of Warsaw is an outstanding example of a moraine formation. The Siders & Son Gravel Pit is working in a deposit that is undoubtedly in an arm of the Packerton Moraine. The abundant boulders at the Siders pit, and the farm fields throughout northern Indiana, are called glacial erratics. These rocks and boulders are quite unlike the bedrock of Indiana. Instead they are characteristic of the bedrock of lands farther to the north. When glaciers melt, large amounts of water are released. This glacial outwash exerts a sorting action on the glacial till. Where the outwash streams are moving vigorously, large coarse materials will be deposited. Where the outwash streams are moving more slowly, finer materials such as sand, silt, or clay, settle out. Examples of this sorting action can be clearly seen in the layered appearance of the walls of the Siders Pit. Please join us for a journey into the 10,000 year old past of Indiana's geological history. And who knows, we may also see some birds. As you enter Disko, look for the red-painted caboose that marks the drive into the pit area. Park in front of the service building near the caboose where the field trip group will meet for the hike down into the pit. The co-leaders for this trip will be Wilson Lutz and Greg Clark. We are greatly indebted to Mr. Dick Siders for permission to visit the pit.

### PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 22, 7:30PM - DAVE HICKS, "LANDS OF ENCHANTMENT"

AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON. The program will be a photo tour of the deserts and mountains of the Southwest, with stops in New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, and Colorado. We will view a variety of desert and mountain habitats from 11,000 feet elevation to below sea level along with some of the denizens that live in each. We will also make a virtual visit to the Native American civilizations that flourished in that region a thousand years ago. Dave is a member of the Biology Department at Manchester College where his specialties are botany and environmental studies. He participated in a National Science Foundation program on desert ecology in the Southwest during a recent sabbatical leave.

# LIES ABOUT WEST NILE VIRUS

By Paul E. Steffen, Chapter President

Local government officials and the media keep referring to West Nile Virus as a deadly disease transmitted by killer mosquitoes. Yet they qualify these claims by saying that it is very hard to become infected with West Nile Virus, and that most people who are infected recover without any treatment and without experiencing any symptoms. So which is it, a deadly infectious disease, or very mild disease that you are unlikely to be infected by? It can't be both.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the largest known West Nile Virus epidemic occurred in Romania in 1996. Approximately 100,000 people allegedly became infected. About four hundred of those people became ill with symptoms of encephalitis. Only fifteen of those people died, all of whom were over 65. Considering the level of health care in that country, the poor nutritional status of its citizens, and immunity

status of its senior citizens, these statistics indicate that the virus is much less dangerous than the common cold. See [www.naba.org/wnvirus.html](http://www.naba.org/wnvirus.html).

In New York City, according to a study by the city's own Department of Health, four residents of the city died in 1999 from West Nile Virus. Three were taking immunosuppressant cancer drugs, and the fourth was HIV positive. This indicates that only people with severely compromised immune systems die from West Nile Virus, and that even in those cases death is quite rare.

For more information see "New York City Department of Health, West Nile Virus: A Briefing," *City Health Information*, Vol. 19, No. 1, or read Mr. Lederman's article, "Top 10 Lies about West Nile Virus and Anvil Insecticide," on the Internet at <http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/doh/html/chi/chi.html>.

## PRESERVATION VERSUS CONSERVATION

By Wilson B. Lutz, Sanctuary Committee Chair

Some years ago, members of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society visited a municipal park in north-central Indiana that had an interesting management policy. The way the managers paid for the park upkeep was to periodically permit a lumber company to come in and cut down selected trees for lumber. The manager explained his reasoning in the following way: "I am a conservationist not a preservationist." I am still scratching my head over that management policy. One reason is that when I visit a preserve, one of the things that I find particularly inspiring are venerable old trees that have stood the test of time, weather, insect attack, and the like. I have seen the California Redwoods and they are awesome, but we also have great trees here in the Midwest.

One example is a stand of mixed virgin hardwoods and softwoods in the Porcupine Mountains of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Gigantic White Pines and Hemlocks abound in the Porcupine Mountains. Closer to home is the Hartwick Pines State Park near Grayling, Michigan, which also features a virgin tract containing impressive Red and White Pines. The Centennial Forest north of Fort Wayne has been visited by Tippecanoe Audubon Society field trip groups. It also contains impressive hardwoods, as does Wildwood near Silver Lake. Near Medina, Ohio, the Coon Creek County Park features a towering Cottonwood tree said to be the largest single-trunk Cottonwood in the country. It is 140 feet tall and is 9.5 feet in diameter! Our

own Flory-Gemmer Woods Preserve features impressive Sugar Maples, Red Oaks, and an Ironwood tree that is of extraordinary size for an Ironwood tree. Our Herbert L. Taylor preserve features a very lovely grove of Beech trees. All of these I find to be inspiring and well worth a trip to California, or Michigan, or Liberty Mills.

I recognize that persons who own woodlands have taxes, medical bills, mortgages payments, and many other expenses. I also recognize that wood makes a highly desirable building material and art medium. When I buy a piece of furniture I am more likely to select a wood product than a metal product. I can't imagine playing an all-steel piano nor would it be possible to even make such a piano. I think all of us must therefore condone tree cutting.

The ideal would be to combine conservation and preservation. Park lands in particular should be managed for preservation. Tree farms, on the other hand, could be managed with less emphasis on preservation and more on sound cutting practices along with good conservation measures. Nevertheless my hat is off to the owner who manages to preserve great specimens of trees so that those of us who have a profound interest in the natural world may marvel at these wonders of creation. Old mature trees, dead trees, and trees of all ages are an absolute necessity for wildlife. Without them many of the birds that we know and love would cease to exist.

**NOTE ON WEB SITES:** Tippecanoe Audubon has a web site at [www.tippeaudubon.org](http://www.tippeaudubon.org), where back issues of *Tippe-Topics* are posted. This web site also provides links to other web sites of interest to Indiana birders such as the **National Audubon Society** at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), the **Indiana Audubon Society** at [www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org), the **American Birding Association** at [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org), and the **Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology** at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

## TIPPECANOE AUDUBON STAFF OPENING

*Tippe-Topics* is looking for a new "pilot". Why? Because the current pilot has qualified for retirement, and is long past retirement age. Dave Eiler, a charter member of Tippecanoe Audubon, has been editor of *Tippe-Topics* for the past 10 years. He has done, and continues to do, a splendid job, but he has also earned some time in the sun. Each month, this job offers you the opportunity to use your creativity, imagination, and knowledge. If you like to write, if you are concerned about environmental quality, if you enjoy sharing your appreciation of nature with others, and if you are looking for a way to contribute to the Audubon cause, **this is the opportunity you have been waiting for**. To offer your services or to request more information, contact Paul E. Steffen, President, at [ecoexpo@mchsi.com](mailto:ecoexpo@mchsi.com), or at 574-658-4504.

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**Be sure to place the code HO-8 in the lower right-hand corner of the renewal form.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY &amp; TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY</b> Chapter HO8 7XCH</p> <p>----- <b>YES!</b> Enroll me as a NEW MEMBER in the National Audubon Society &amp; the Tippecanoe Chapter and send my membership card. Start sending me <i>AUDUBON</i> magazine and <i>TIPPE-TOPICS</i>. Enclosed is a \$20 check payable to the National Audubon Society for my one-year introductory membership.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TIPPE-TOPICS SUBSCRIPTION ONLY</b></p> <p>----- I am not a member of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society but would like to receive <i>TIPPE-TOPICS</i>. Enclosed is an \$8 one-year subscription donation check payable to the Tippecanoe Audubon Society. I have a membership in the National Audubon Society carried with the following local Audubon chapter:</p>
<p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">City _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Telephone _____ E-mail _____</p>	<p><b>MAIL TO MEMBERSHIP CHAIR</b> James Townsend HO-8 6331 S 300 E 7XCH Warsaw, IN 46580 E-mail: jimvjmc@kconline.com</p>

### BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

- SIGHTING REPORTS WANTED** - *Tippe-Topics* readers are invited to report bird sightings so they can be shared with other readers. Call newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726, send him an e-mail message at [deiler@earthlink.net](mailto:deiler@earthlink.net), or mail him a note at 301 Hickory Lane, North Manchester, IN 46962.
- KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - On August 19 Dave Eiler made a birding drive in southeastern Kosciusko County. Among the birds he saw were four **AMERICAN KESTRELS**, two **EASTERN KINGBIRDS**, a family of **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS**, a **CEDAR WAXWING**, a **PECTORAL SANDPIPER**, a **GREAT BLUE HERON**, and an **INDIGO BUNTING** male. On September 24 Jim Townsend who lives southeast of Warsaw saw four **GREAT EGRETS** at one place and two at another place southeast of Pierceton.
- HUNTINGTON COUNTY** - On September 15 Dave & Ruth Eiler stopped by a pond along SR-3 at CR-150S south of Markle where they saw seven **GREAT EGRETS**, a **GREAT BLUE HERON**, and a **HOODED MERGANSER** male, and at the Kil-So-Quah boat launch on the north side of Huntington Lake off US-224 they saw a **BELTED KINGFISHER** male, and a **RED-TAILED HAWK** juvenile.
- MIAMI COUNTY** - On September 21 Lila O'Connell of Warsaw saw a Wild Turkey male on CR-1200 south of Amboy, and along the Mississinewa River she saw some Eastern Bluebirds. On September 24 Dave Eiler saw a **RED-TAILED HAWK** and a **KILLDEER** along SR-24 northeast of Peru.
- WABASH COUNTY** - On August 19 in a pasture with a small area of shallow water just along CR-100E north of North Manchester Dave Eiler saw a **HORNED LARK**, and two **PECTORAL SANDPIPERS**. At the same place on August 20 he saw a **RED-TAILED HAWK**, about thirty **PECTORAL SANDPIPERS**, three **SEMPALMATED SANDPIPERS**, and a **LESSER YELLOWLEGS**. On both days he saw about half a dozen **KILLDEER**. In the woods north of Timbercrest Retirement Home on September 17 Dave saw a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** male, a flock of **TENNESSEE WARBLERS** at a tree with berries, a **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER**, and a **RED-HEADED WOODPECKER** juvenile. On September 21 Glen Campbell and Dave Eiler took a birding walk in the same area and saw a **CAROLINA WREN**, a **CAROLINA CHICKADEE**, a **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** male, and a **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** female. On September 24 Wilson Lutz of North Manchester reported that **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS** were still coming regularly to nectar feeders. **BLUE JAYS**, **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**, and **MOURNING DOVES** have been coming to seed feeders. The also heard an **EASTERN SCREECH-OWL** near the property regularly until just recently. There is also a **BELTED KINGFISHER** that frequents the Eel River by their property.

### RECENT TIPPECANOE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

**FIELD TRIP TO FLORY-GEMMER WOODS**  
On Sunday afternoon, August 25, we enjoyed our trip to Flory-Gemmer Woods, although the weather was warm and humid. Insects were abundant. We saw several kinds of butterflies, including Monarchs, Cabbage Whites, Sulfurs, and Pipevine Swallowtails. Praying Mantises, the species introduced from Asia, were also common. We sampled some of the abundant fruits of Black Cherries, and enjoyed seeing the purple of Ironweed flowers. Few bird species were seen or heard, the most unusual being two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds apparently still disputing territorial boundaries.

Reported by Dave Hicks

**PROGRAM BY PHIL KELLY ON BIRDING WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY**  
On August 27 at the Blue Lion Coffee House in Pierceton, Phil Kelly of Kokomo, presented many interesting ways hard-core bird watchers have stepped into the world of

technology. Phil and his wife Joann are avid birders. They have traveled to many other states to see birds. Phil is an engineer for Delphi Electronics and Joann is an artist. Phil designed and owns the IN-BIRD-L website hosted by Indiana University on which Indiana birders post sightings.

To enjoy birds at home the Kellys have a microphone system that transmits the sounds of birds at their feeders to speakers inside their house. In the field they use Swarovski binoculars and spotting scopes. They have satellite and GPS equipment in their vehicle that they use to get the word out to other birders about birds of special interest.

Phil has a digital camera that he can attach directly to his spotting scope. With this he can photograph birds from a greater distance with less impact on the area and less disturbance of the birds. These digital pictures can then be entered into a laptop

computer and sent through satellite connections to birders who check a list-serve of rare bird postings for the state. The whole process can be carried out in less than ten minutes. Other valuable means of communication used by birders are cell phones and walkie-talkies tuned to a birding frequency.

The Kellys use wind and weather maps to predict migratory bird flights so they can make quick trips to see them. They showed astronomy charts with masses in the night sky that were in reality great "clumps" of migrating birds!

Jeff McCoy, one of Indiana's best-known birders, was present at the program and contributed to the discussion. Jeff is doing a "Big Year" count. This means he is trying to see as many species as he can find in one year. He explained the many ways technology is aiding him in this pursuit.

Reported by Connie Dou

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## **KILLDEER: BIRD OF THE MONTH**

By David L. Eiler

The Killdeer is one of our most familiar birds. It makes its presence known by its often repeated call that sounds like *kill-dee, kill-dee, kill-dee*, the call that gives it its name, or just an often repeated *dee-dee-dee-dee*. If you look quickly when you hear it, you may see it running across a field or flying nearby. Often there may be a flock of several together that you can both hear and see.

The Killdeer has a distinctive appearance that is easy to recognize. Overall it is dark brown above and white below. It has two black breast bands and an orange rump that distinguish it from closely related species that have only one band and no distinctive rump color, and on the forehead there is a white band just above the black beak with a black band above that. There is also a white eyebrow line connecting with a white eye-ring. When it flies a white band on the wing can be seen and the orange rump stands out. It is about the same length as a Robin, but slimmer and with longer legs.

It holds its body almost horizontal. It runs rapidly and stops suddenly, and flies swiftly and directly. A Killdeer flock often feeds and flies with other shore birds and is usually the first to fly when alarmed. They feed on insects and grubs.

Although Killdeers belong to a shorebird family, they are equally at home in wet or dry areas. Killdeer pairs do not build nests. Instead males stake out territories in competition with other males. Mated pairs then perform display rituals in the air and on the ground. During these displays they scratch out small scrapes or depression in gravel, sand, or

dirt that may or may not be lined with pebbles or other debris. The female lays four eggs. Both take turns incubating the eggs that hatch in about twenty-five days. The hatchlings are precocial. This means they are immediately able to run about and find food for themselves. The parents never feed them, but do lead or follow them around. If an intruder such as a human being approaches the nest or hatchlings still too young to fly, the adults will distract the intruder by pretending to be injured, limping along on the ground with a wing dragging. When the intruder has been led a safe distance away the birds suddenly fly off.

Killdeers have a wide range from northern Canada south throughout the United States, Mexico, and Central America, to the northwestern coast of South America. They are usually present throughout the year in northern Indiana, though there is some migratory movement north in late winter and early spring and south in late autumn.

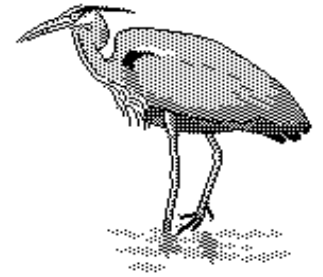
The Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) belongs to the Plover and Lapwing Family, Charadriidae, that has 66 species, 30 of which are *Charadrius*. Both the family and the *Charadrius* genus are distributed worldwide. Other members of the genus occurring in North America are Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*), Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), and Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*). The Semipalmated Plover is abundant, but the Snowy Plover is rare and endangered.

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Volume XXVIII, Number 11, November 2002



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## COMING EVENTS



NOVEMBER 2002

### FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1:30PM - MOUNT PISGAH NON-GAME AREA SOUTHEAST OF NORTH WEBSTER

Mount Pisgah is a type of moraine called an esker that was left behind by the most recent glacier that moved south across northern Indiana. On the west side of the esker is a large marsh in a low area scooped out by the same glacier. The area includes a variety of scenery and habitats, including cattail marsh, shrub-swamp, beaver dam and pond, mature oak forest, and fens with Tamarack trees, an unusual deciduous conifer. With luck we will see some migratory waterfowl in the wetlands, and will search in the fen for carnivorous Pitcher Plants and late-blooming Fringed Gentians. If time permits, we will also check out the Durham Lake area, which is nearby. From SR 13 south of North Webster, just south of the "flowing well" historical marker, turn east onto Kosciusko County Road 350-N. There is a sporting goods store on the east side of State Road 13 at the corner where you turn. Travel east on the County Road 350-N about 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> miles crossing the causeway over the marsh to the small parking lot on the north (left) side of the road. If you pass the county line, you've gone too far. Wear boots if you wish to hike into the fen.

### PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 26, 7:30PM - ROB REBER: "THE SOUTH DAKOTA BLACK HILLS AND BADLANDS"

AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON. Rob Reber teaches Environmental Science at Taylor University. Each summer he leads a class of students to this unique geologic area. He will share his experiences and his knowledge of the Black Hills and Badlands. The region is an outdoor recreational paradise with over 10,000 square miles of prairies, grasslands, badlands, and rugged mountains. It has a National Park, National Monument, National Memorial, National Forest, National Grassland, and State Parks and Recreation Areas. Elevations in the region vary from 2500 to 7242 feet. Rob will have slides showing scenes from these areas as well as data slides demonstrating some of the interesting facts about this geological wonder. He will also talk about changes to the area caused by recent floods and fires. Come early to enjoy soup, sandwiches, and great coffee, or grab a cookie or slice of cheesecake as you go to the meeting room at the Blue Lion Coffee House. This promises to be an enjoyable program!

## HAVE YOU BEEN THINKING ABOUT LANDSCAPING FOR WILDLIFE? OR YOUR OWN LIFE?

By Paul Steffen, Chapter President

Good! Fall is an excellent time to do some landscape planting. Most plants can be moved quite successfully in the fall, but please note that plants growing in containers can be planted any time you can dig a hole. You can plant in the dead of winter if the ground thaws out as it did last winter. The only limitation is digging plants that are growing in the nursery field. There are a few that should not be dug in the fall, but **only** a few. White Birch and Tulip Tree are two examples that should not be dug in the fall.

If you plant in the fall, should you water the plants throughout the winter? **ABSOLUTELY!!!** First of all, plants continue to transpire a small amount of water even in winter, when we think there is no activity in the plant at all. Secondly, the plant has not had enough time to grow roots out into the surrounding soil. Therefore, the plant is dependent on the water reserve in the small amount of earth that was in the container, and that just *ain't* enough. So, every three or four weeks, dump a bucket of water in the basin you built around each plant when you planted. Don't worry if the ground is frozen. The water will find it's way down into the ground.

There is only a small interest in the use of native plants for landscaping. Because the interest is so small, very few nurseries have taken a serious interest in native plants. Consequently, it's usually difficult to locate nurseries that stock native plants. However, there are a few mail order nurseries that offer some native plants, but there are certain cautions you should take into account. I would buy mail order plants only in the spring. Also, because mail order plants are usually quite small, I recommend that you plant them in a garden situation and grow them for two or three years before planting them where you actually want them to end up. This avoids the problem of mowing them off because you didn't see them in the tall grass. It also minimizes losses in the final planting. Losses that occur in the garden are of no great consequence.

When they are two or three years old, you can transplant shrubs very easily in spring or fall by forcing a shovel into the ground around each plant to the full depth of the shovel blade. Usually three shovel cuts in a circle around the plant will provide a large enough ball of earth to move the young plants successfully. The objective here is to cut a ball that you can

“dip” out of the ground and move to a new location with the ball intact.

Move plants as early in the spring as soil conditions will allow, even February if you can. It is important to move them before they leaf out. If you must move them after they leaf out, be sure to strip all the leaves off the plants. They will leaf out again in about three weeks. You may be thinking, “another transplant isn’t good for these plants again so soon”. Not to worry. Every time you move a plant, it grows a thicker root system and it’s survival probability actually improves. So moving it is good for it.

Be sure to water spring plantings **every week**. WATER EVEN IF IT RAINS!!! Remember, a quarter-inch rain will soak in

about three-quarters of an inch, and the roots are a lot deeper than that. So drown ‘em once a week. DON’T WATER EVERY DAY or even every other day, or you’ll kill ‘em. A word of caution regarding heavy clay soils, yellow clay as well as the black “gumbo” or “wax” soils found in many areas. These soils don’t drain, as you well know. Therefore, be a bit conservative each time you water. Water will sit in clay soil and rot the roots. The leaves then start drying up and you think the plant needs *more* water.

Oops! The editor just dropped the flag, indicating that I’ve crossed the finish line. Send me an e-mail or note if you would like more on this subject in future issues. Do the same if you need more details on the above.

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## FISH HATCHERY OWNER ACCUSED OF KILLING FISH-EATING BIRDS

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The owner of a fish hatchery in Florida was arrested recently and charged with killing over a period of eleven months thousands of legally protected Egrets, Herons, Eastern Meadowlarks, Black-necked Stilts, as well as an Alligator, that

she thought were eating the fish in her fish hatchery. She is said to have bought twenty-five thousand shotgun shells for her employees telling them to kill anything that looked as though it might be a threat to the fish.

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**NOTE ON WEB SITES:** **Tippecanoe Audubon** has a web site at [www.tippeaudubon.org](http://www.tippeaudubon.org), where back issues of *Tippe-Topics* are posted. This web site also provides links to other web sites of interest to Indiana birders such as the **National Audubon Society** at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), the **Indiana Audubon Society** at [www.indianaaudubon.org](http://www.indianaaudubon.org), the **American Birding Association** at [www.americanbirding.org](http://www.americanbirding.org), and the **Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology** at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org).

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## BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

**SIGHTING REPORTS WANTED** - *Tippe-Topics* readers are invited to report bird sightings so they can be shared with other readers. Call newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726, send him an e-mail message at [dleiler@earthlink.net](mailto:dleiler@earthlink.net), or mail him a note at 301 Hickory Lane, North Manchester, IN 46962.

**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - While driving through southern Kosciusko County on the afternoons of October 23 and 24 Dave Eiler of North Manchester saw numerous **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS**, several **STILT SANDPIPERS**, several **WILSON’S SNIPES**, several **AMERICAN KESTRELS**, a **BROAD-WINGED HAWK**, a **GREAT BLUE HERON**, and a late **TURKEY VULTURE**.

**MARSHALL COUNTY** - On Saturday, October 5, Tom Leggett of Argos and a group of Tippecanoe Audubon members planted five donated Blue Spruce trees by the parking area at Potawatowmie Wildlife Park. While there the group took a birding walk and saw a **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT**, **GREAT BLUE HERONS**, **CANADA GEESE**, a **BLUE WINGED TEAL**, **HOODED MERGANSERS**, **KILLDEERS**, an **AMERICAN KESTREL**, **MOURNING DOVES**, a **BELTED KINGFISHER**, a **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER**, a **NORTHERN FLICKER**, **DOWNY WOODPECKERS**, **HAIRY WOODPECKERS**, **BLUE JAYS**, **AMERICAN CROWS**, **TUFTED TITMICE**, **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES**, **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES**, **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS**, **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS**, **AMERICAN ROBINS**, a **GRAY CATBIRD**, **EUROPEAN STARLINGS**, **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS**, a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**, **NORTHERN CARDINALS**, **SONG SPARROWS**, **AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS**, **CHIPPING SPARROWS**, a **SWAMP SPARROW**, **HOUSE SPARROWS**, **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**, and **HOUSE FINCHES**. Tom also reported in an IN-BIRD post dated October 5 that an **EVENING GROSBEAK** male had visited his feeders.

**MIAMI COUNTY** - Linda Beidleman who lives south of Mexico saw the last **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** at her feeder on September 29, and on October 7 she saw two late **AMERICAN ROBINS**. On October 22 she reported that she had seen a **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET**, and that she has been seeing a **BROWN CREEPER** every day. On October 25 she had her first **WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS** of the season, and on the same day a **DARK-EYED JUNCO**, a **HAIRY WOODPECKER**, and a **HOUSE WREN** that had not yet left for the winter. She also saw a **GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** recently. On October 25 she was still seeing a **HOUSE WREN** in her yard.

**WABASH COUNTY** - On October 6 Glen Campbell saw two **AMERICAN CROWS** chasing a **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** on the north side of North Manchester. On October 9 he saw an **AMERICAN ROBIN** and heard a **NORTHERN PARULA**, a **CAROLINA WREN**, and a **NORTHERN FLICKER** in his yard, and saw an **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** and a family of **KILLDEERS** at the Sycamore Golf Course east of North Manchester. On October 20 Glen Campbell and Dave Eiler of North Manchester took a birding walk in the woods north of the Timbercrest Retirement Community. Among the birds they saw were many **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**, a **BLUE JAY**, a pair of **NORTHERN CARDINALS**, a **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** male, two **AMERICAN ROBINS**, two **MOURNING DOVES**, and two **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS**. On November 5 Dave and Ruth Eiler saw a large flock of **CEDAR WAXWINGS** eating berries on trees at the Manchester Public Library, and along the edge of the woods north of the Timbercrest Retirement Community he saw a hundred or more **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**, four **AMERICAN ROBINS**, and a **DOWNY WOODPECKER**.

**MAIL THIS APPLICATION FORM  
FOR AN INTRODUCTORY \$20 NEW AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP  
OR FOR AN \$8 TIPPE-TOPICS SUBSCRIPTION**

NOTE: Send *membership renewal* checks directly to National using the renewal form that comes with your renewal notice.  
**Be sure to place the code HO-8 in the lower right-hand corner of the renewal form.**

**NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
& TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
Chapter HO8 7XCH

\_\_\_\_\_ **YES!** Enroll me as a NEW MEMBER in the National Audubon Society & the Tippecanoe Chapter and sends my membership card. Start sending me *AUDUBON* magazine and *TIPPE-TOPICS*. Enclosed is a \$20 check payable to the National Audubon Society for my one-year introductory membership.

**TIPPE-TOPICS SUBSCRIPTION ONLY**

\_\_\_\_\_ I am not a member of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society but would like to receive *TIPPE-TOPICS*. Enclosed is an \$8 one-year subscription donation check payable to the Tippecanoe Audubon Society. I have a membership in the National Audubon Society carried with the following local Audubon chapter:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL TO MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**  
 James Townsend HO-8  
 6331S 300E 7XCH  
 Warsaw, IN 46580  
 E-mail: jimvjmc@kconline.com

**TIPPECANOE AUDUBON STAFF OPENING**

**Tippe-Topics is looking for a new "pilot". Why? Because the current pilot has qualified for retirement, and is long past retirement age. Dave Eiler, a charter member of Tippecanoe Audubon, has been editor of Tippe-Topics for the past 10 years. He has done, and continues to do, a splendid job, but he has also earned some time in the sun. Each month, this job offers you the opportunity to use your creativity, imagination, and knowledge. If you like to write, if you are concerned about environmental quality, if you enjoy sharing your appreciation of nature with others, and if you are looking for a way to contribute to the Audubon cause, this is the opportunity you have been waiting for. To offer your services or to request more information, contact Paul E. Steffen, President, at [ecoexpo@mchsi.com](mailto:ecoexpo@mchsi.com), or at 574-658-4504.**

**RECENT TIPPECANOE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES**

**BIRD BANDING WORKSHOP**

On Saturday, September 14, the second bird banding workshop of the year was conducted by Jim and Janet Meyer from West Virginia at Wildwood, the home of Bob and Alice Frantz west of Silver Lake. Despite pleasant late-summer weather, captures were relatively few. Only six birds were banded during seven hours of open nets out of only about a dozen captured.

However, the species caught included two unusual ones, a Northern Waterthrush and a juvenile Red-Headed Woodpecker that the Meyers were especially delighted to band. Other captures included several Goldfinches, Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds, and a House Finch. We discussed differences between Northern Waterthrushes and Louisiana Waterthrushes, and between House Finches and Purple Finches, that are often difficult to detect through binoculars. Having a bird in the hand makes identification much easier.

**PROGRAM ON WESTERN PUBLIC LANDS**

Mike Hudak, who works for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, gave an informative program on September 24 about the harmful impact of livestock grazing on 260 million acres of land owned by the federal government in eleven western states. He has spent his vacations for the last few years traveling and hiking in the West gathering first-hand information on this topic, and now devotes much time to lecturing on it.

He explained with many examples how the federal program allowing ranchers to graze cattle on public lands degrades natural grasslands, and enriches ranchers at the expense of taxpayers. The program permits overgrazing that badly degrades grasslands as wildlife habitat. This threatens grassland bird and mammal species whose numbers have been declining at an alarming rate. Also large numbers of cattle going down into streams to drink severely damage stream banks and pollute the water.

The fee charged by the federal government for grazing permits is \$1.35 per month per head of cattle. Permits are for ten-year periods and are renewed over and over again and passed down from generation to generation. In contrast, the going rate paid by ranchers to private landowners is about \$11 and sometimes as high as \$15. One study found that most of the cattle grazed on public lands belong to corporations and millionaire absentee owners.

Furthermore the grazing permit fee paid to the government goes mostly to provide fences, water tanks, reseeding, and other benefits for the cattle owners. It does not go to enhance wildlife habitat. Efforts in Congress to increase the grazing fee have been blocked by congressional delegations from states where ranchers are politically powerful. In fact some members of congress from western states own large herds of cattle that they graze on public lands. Thus they benefit from keeping fees low.

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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
David L. Eiler, Editor  
Phone: 260-982-2726; E-mail: dleiler@earthlink.net

DATED MATERIAL DO  
NOT DELAY

## NORTHERN CARDINAL: BIRD OF THE MONTH

By David L. Eiler

The Northern Cardinal is one of our most common and familiar birds. Cardinals give their musical calls and build their nests in any suburban or small town yard that has some trees and shrubs. In rural areas they prefer shrubby oldfields, bushes along roadside and fencerows, and forest edges. They readily come to feeders and birdbaths, and are especially fond of sunflower seeds which they crush easily with their large beaks and then adroitly extract the kernel, while dropping the husk. Away from feeders Cardinals forage mostly on the ground, eating a variety of seeds, berries, and some insects.

Cardinals are so familiar they need only a brief description. The male is red overall with a black face that contrasts with the heavy red beak. A closer look reveals that the breast and crest are bright red whereas the wings, back, and tail are somewhat darker. The female has a yellowish breast and dull reddish-brown wings, back, and tail. Like the male she has a black face contrasting with a red beak. Juveniles resemble the female but have a brown beak and lack a black face. When excited or agitated Cardinals raise their crests and flick their tails.

During much of the year Cardinals are seen in pairs, but in the fall family groups move about together in flocks. In winter flocks of Cardinals may often be seen foraging and moving about together. Several little groups will fly one after another as they move about. Cardinals also join flocks made up of several species foraging together. Such flocks may include Nuthatches, Chickadees, Titmice, and Woodpeckers.

During courtship the male feeds the female. The female begins nest building in late March or early April and lays three or four eggs that are pale green with dark speckles. The cup shaped nest is made of twigs, stems, vines, leaves, bark, rootlets, and grass, and lined with grass, and is hidden in a dense bush or tree, usually no more than five or six feet above the ground. Three or four broods are raised in a season. Both sing throughout the year. The male often sings from a conspicuous perch high in a tree.

Once upon a time the Cardinal was considered a bird of the Southeast where it was often caught and sold as a cage bird until that became illegal about a hundred years ago. It has been gradually expanding its range northward and can now be found in southeastern Canada. From the Atlantic Coast its range extends westward to the Great Plains, and southwest across southern New Mexico and Arizona, and southward through Mexico to Belize and northern Guatemala. Ornithologists have distinguished eighteen subspecies, many of them in Mexico and nearby islands.

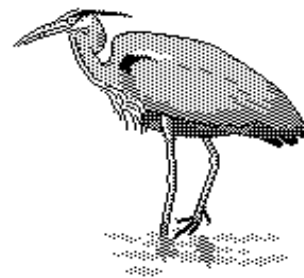
Along with the Northern Cardinal, *Cardinalis cardinalis*, the genus has two other members. One, the Pyrruloxia, *Cardinalis sinuatus*, is found in the desert Southwest. The other, the Vermilion Cardinal, *Cardinalis phoeniceus*, occurs in northwestern Colombia, northeastern Venezuela, and nearby islands. All are members of the Western Hemisphere Cardinalidae Family that has a total of forty-three species assigned to fourteen different genera, with English names such as Cardinal, Grosbeak, Bunting, and Saltator.



# TIPPE-TOPICS

NEWSLETTER OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Cass, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Miami, Noble, Wabash, Whitley Counties,  
Indiana

Volume XXVIII, Number 12, December 2002



## OUR MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY IS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND THE PROTECTION OF THE AIR, LANDS, AND WATERS UPON WHICH ALL BIRD, PLANT, ANIMAL, AND HUMAN LIFE DEPENDS.



## COMING EVENTS



DECEMBER 2002

### CHRISTMAS DINNER, TUESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 17, 6:00PM - Meal Followed by Slide and Picture Fest

AT THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE IN PIERCETON. The Blue Lion is on the south side of Market Street directly behind the James Townsend & Son building, one block west of SR-13. Proprietor Dave Taylor and his employees will set up a buffet with two quiches per person along with soups, relishes, desserts, and a choice of coffee, tea, or lemonade.

**Reservations are required, and must be made by Friday evening, December 13.** To make reservations contact Jim Townsend by e-mail at jimvjmc@kconline.com, or by telephone at 260-839-5203. Give the name of the person making the reservations and the number of reservations needed. The cost for the meal is \$12, including tax and gratuities, the same as last year. Meals must be paid for unless reservations are canceled by Monday evening, December 9. Payment may be made that evening by check or cash. Members and guests are invited to bring their best nature slides, prints, sketches, or paintings of 2002 to display. Or just come to see what others have brought. A projector and screen for showing slides will be provided, and there will be table space for displaying photographs and paintings.

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, DAWN TILL DUSK - Northeastern Kosciusko County

Teams of two or three people will be assigned to designated areas of the 15-mile count circle. Each team will have a car and driver and at least one experienced birder to serve as leader and to ensure that identifications are accurate. Each team will also have a recorder, who need not be an experienced birder, to record the numbers of every species seen when each flock of birds is counted. Both experienced and inexperienced birders are invited to help with the count. Names of participants are needed by Friday, December 20. To join the count contact Dave Eiler on or before Friday, December 20, at 260-982-2726, by e-mail at dleiler@earthlink.net, or send him a note a 301 Hickory Lane, North Manchester, IN 46962. Participants are asked to meet at 6:30AM for breakfast at Richards Restaurant located on the east side of Warsaw on US-30 just west of McDonalds. At that time each team will receive a packet of material with instructions, map, and forms for recording data. Teams will spend the day counting birds in their assigned areas, taking breaks as needed. Team leaders are asked to collect a \$5 fee from each team member that must be sent to National Audubon to help pay the costs of publishing the results of all 2002 Christmas bird counts. The count will conclude with a chili supper and count compilation, starting at 5:00, at the home of Jim & Suzy Townsend, 6331 S 300 E, southeast of Pierceton (on CR-300E the first house south of CR-600S). Each team leader should bring all count forms and fill them out ready to turn in. Other count participants are welcome.

### OTHER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS IN TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY TERRITORY

A count will be held in a circle centered at Plymouth on Saturday, December 21, and in circle centered at Rochester on Wednesday, January 1. For further information on these counts contact Tom Leggett at 1-574-892-5035 or by e-mail at tomleggett@HOTMAIL.COM.

## WANTED: MORE DEER HUNTERS

The Audubon Society has traditionally been four-square against hunting—but times are changing! What follows is the science and reasoning behind the decision of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society to open two of its sanctuaries to deer hunting on a few specified days by a small group of trustworthy hunters this year, on an experimental basis. The following article consists of excerpts from an article by Ted Williams published in *Audubon* magazine along with a few comments by Paul E. Steffen, President of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society.

No species in North America has been more grotesquely mismanaged than deer. The ongoing mismanagement began with a crusade by the early settlers against cougars and wolves, the main predators of deer. This behavior flabbergasted the Indians. After much arguing and the theorizing, they decided it was a symptom of insanity.

By the early twentieth century the Feds were leading the charge against predators, and they weren't content with just control—they wanted *extinction*. Whipping the public to a froth of anti-wolf, anti-cougar fervor was a young Forest Service bureaucrat who, in 1919, praised New Mexico for "leading the West in the campaign for eradication of predatory animals" and who urged states to "finish the eradication work." But later,

when the bureaucrat, Aldo Leopold, extended his reading to what deer were writing on the land, he filed a report in which he said, "I have watched the face of many a newly wolfless mountain, and seen the south-facing slopes wrinkle with a maze of new deer trails. I have seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anemic desuetude, and then to death. I have seen every edible tree defoliated to the height of a saddle horn. Such a mountain looks as if someone had given God new pruning shears, and forbidden Him all other exercise. In the end the starved bones of the hoped for deer herd, dead of its own too-much, bleach with the bones of the dead sage, or molder under the high-lined junipers."

It was on the Crane Estate, 30 miles north of Boston, in the early 1980s that I saw where roughly 400 White-tailed Deer—340 more than carrying capacity the number of deer for which a given area can provide adequate food and cover had denuded 2,000 acres. There wasn't a scrap of green to the height of a saddle horn. One of the last undeveloped barrier-beach complexes in the East had been shorn of native plants. Dunes were blowing away. The property, owned by the Trustees of Reservations, had forbidden hunting there since they started acquiring land in 1945 but, apart from cultural bias, there had been no reason for the ban. By the late 1970s the trustees realized that hunting was the only way to preserve wildlife, and they scheduled a public hunt for 1983, thereby energizing a national animal-rights outfit called Friends of Animals. The animal-rights movement doesn't like people who "manipulate" nature, but it doesn't like nature either. Asked what he'd do if granted absolute power over the world, a father of the movement, Cleveland Amory, declared, "All animals will not only *not* be shot, they will be protected—not only from people but as much as possible from each other. Prey will be separated from predator, and there will be no overpopulation, because all will be controlled by sterilization or implant."

In September 1984, I queried *Friends of Animals* about the humaneness of starvation as a management strategy. I was told that it's painless because Mahatma Gandhi, while fasting, claimed to have been comfortable enough.

If Cleveland Amory sprang from the grave and took over the world, he could not control wild ungulates. Even if it were possible to trap and transfer deer without killing them, no one would take them. Nor is there workable birth control. While it's possible to sterilize lots of deer, it's not possible to sterilize enough to control even a small, isolated population. There is much flap in animal-rights publications about immunocontraception, an innovative method by which does are vaccinated against their own eggs. It works well on captives. But after studying nonlethal control of deer for 10 years, Larry Katz, head of the Department of Animal Science at Rutgers University's Cook College, called immunocontraception "impractical, counterproductive, and absolutely unworkable."

Has the public learned anything from the Crane fiasco and thousands of replays in urban and suburban parks and reservations across America? Maybe, but not much. Facing severe damage by an exploding deer herd, Town & Country, Missouri (its real name), surveyed 4,000 households in October 1998. "The city hired a consultant, Dr. Anthony DeNicola, who . . . recommended control. . . . Among the questions: Would you endorse lethal methods?" *Fifty-five percent said no.*

Williams keenly understands the dangers of mismanagement. Two years earlier, while he was driving back from monitoring

grossly overpopulated deer at Mumford Cove, Connecticut, one leaped in front of his vehicle, doing \$4,500 worth of damage. In the southern part of the Lake Gaillard watershed there were now about 100 deer per square mile; in this kind of habitat you start seeing damage at about 15 deer per square mile. In a 10-year experiment, the United States Forest Service found that at more than 20 deer per square mile you lose your Eastern Woodpeewees, Indigo Buntings, Least Flycatchers, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and Cerulean Warblers (on Audubon's Watch List). At 38 deer per square mile you lose Eastern Phoebes and even American Robins. Ground nesters such as Ovenbirds, Grouse, Woodcocks, Whippoorwills, and Wild Turkeys can nest in ferns, which deer scorn, but these birds, too, are vastly reduced, because they need thick cover.

We saw browse lines around Cedars and Yews. A grove of White Pines had been denuded for the first five feet, a sign of true desperation. At every turn deer froze, then bounced away. In much of the watershed there was no under story, save moldering ferns and such invading exotics as Barberry, Wineberry, and Winged Euonymus, which deer don't like because they didn't evolve with them. Now ecological restoration, if ever it happens, will require not only controlling deer but also killing alien plants. Woods such as this look "lovely" and "park like" to most people. The public tends to accept large landscapes as they exist in the here and now, not noticing missing parts.

America's deer crisis isn't confined to human population centers. In all 50 states it extends to wild lands that are managed more by superstition than science. First we killed too many Whitetails, then too few. They've increased from an estimated 500,000 in 1900 to an estimated 33 million today, and they now occur in all forty-eight contiguous states. There is even concern that the explosion will cause the extinction of Mule Deer because Whitetail bucks breed Mule Deer does, producing sterile males.

Most state fish and game agencies are funded largely by fishing and hunting licenses and taxes on sporting equipment, so they tend to cater to the appetites of sportsmen instead of their long-term best interests. No state had managed its deer more abominably than Pennsylvania, but now it's leading the way. Backed by the Pennsylvania Habitat Alliance, a coalition of conservation, sportsmen's, and land trust groups was put together by Pennsylvania Audubon and its partners. The state game commission is allowing and urging hunters to shoot more deer, especially does. If the herd is reduced to carrying capacity (the number of deer for which a given area can provide adequate food and cover), deer will be bigger and healthier. Ruined habitat that can't support deer now will be able to do so, and there will be far more habitat for other wildlife, including other game species. "The commission has finally seen the light," comments Pennsylvania Audubon's director, Cindy Dunn. "This is precedent-setting. We think Pennsylvania can become a national model, where the hunter's role changes from resource taker to provider of an environmental and ecological service."

When the charismatic Gary Alt took charge of Pennsylvania's deer program in 1999, the deer had already been tearing up the woods since 1917. In the past two years Gary Alt has given one hundred fifty lectures. When he speaks, auditoriums overflow. There is much shouting and cursing. Alt has become a master at cowing bullies. I'm not talking about little pockets of land, but thousands and thousands of square miles that have been devastated. Raising more deer than the land can support has been the biggest mistake in the history of wildlife management.

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# PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

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## INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATION

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By Paul E. Steffen, President

You will note that your newsletter is loaded this month with some very exciting constitution and by-laws copy, and you are wondering why we would fill the newsletter with such material. Well, the reason is that the law requires us to do so. It has become necessary to make some changes in the constitution of

the Tippecanoe Audubon Society and the law requires that the proposed changes be published and made available to the entire membership for review before said changes are adopted. Thus you have been served a full plate of the proposed changes. Enjoy!

**DELETIONS ARE SHOWN IN BOLD-FACE TYPE AND ADDITIONS IN ITALICIZED TYPE**

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## THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. REVISED CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Approved and Adopted May 13, 1997

Replacing the Original Constitution and By-laws Adopted by the Society April 16, 1975, at Its Founding

### C O N S T I T U T I O N

#### ARTICLE I: NAME AND AFFILIATION

Section 1: This organization shall be known as the Tippecanoe Audubon Society, Inc., and may be referred to in this document simply as the Society.

Section 2: The Tippecanoe Audubon Society is a chartered chapter of the National Audubon Society.

#### ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Section 1: The purpose and objectives of the Society shall be to engage in educational, scientific, investigative, philanthropic, and charitable pursuits related to all wildlife and the environment.

Section 2: The Society is not organized, nor shall it be operated for financial gain and no funds shall accrue to any individual. All property, assets, or net income of this Society are irrevocably dedicated to charitable purposes.

Section 3: In the event of the dissolution of the Society or abandonment, the assets and property of this Society shall be donated to a not-for-profit organization that will continue the objectives and purposes of the Society. The Board of Directors of the Society may designate such an organization with the concurrence of the appropriate field office of the National Audubon Society, and subject to the order of a court as provided by law. None of the assets or property shall be donated to any organization other than a not-for-profit organization as set forth in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### B Y - L A W S

#### ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Any person interested in the purposes of the Society is eligible for membership.

Section 2: Classes of membership and the annual dues shall be established by the **National Audubon Society**. All classes of members shall enjoy all the rights and privileges granted by the **National Audubon Society**.

Section 3: Membership dues shall be paid annually to the **National Audubon Society**.

#### ARTICLE II: MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

Section 1: The Annual Meeting of the Society, at which new officers shall be installed and take office, shall be on the fourth Tuesday of April. Regular meetings of the Society shall be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month February through June and August through November.

Section 2: The Board of Directors shall arrange the location of the Annual Meeting and regular meetings. Field trips, picnics, social gatherings, or other meetings shall be arranged by the Board of Directors or designated chairs at places and on dates of their choosing.

Section 3: The members in attendance at any Annual Meeting or regular meeting of the Society shall constitute a quorum.

#### ARTICLE III: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1: The business of the Society shall be vested in a Board of Directors who shall determine policies and actions. The Board shall be composed of (a) four elected officers, and (b) three or four elected directors.

Section 2: Regular meetings of the Board shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month except December, unless the President decides there is insufficient business to transact. A minimum number of meetings per year of the Board shall be as required by the National Audubon Society.

Section 3: A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4: Special meetings of the Board may be called by the President or at the request of a majority of the Board.

Section 5: Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of all business meetings.

#### ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Section 1: The elected officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

Section 2: The President shall be elected for a two-year term and may be reelected to one additional consecutive two-year term.

Section 3: The Treasurer shall be elected for a two-year term and may be reelected for an indefinite number of consecutive terms.

Section 4: The Vice President, the Secretary, and the Directors shall be elected annually and may serve a maximum of four consecutive one-year terms. Any person serving on the Board may serve an additional four years if elected President.

Section 5: A vacancy in any elected office shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board of Directors to hold the office until the next Annual Meeting.

Section 6: The President shall act as chair of the Board of Directors and of the Annual Meeting and regular meetings of the Society, shall be an ex-officio member of the nominating committee, and shall represent the Society whenever required.

Section 7: The Vice President shall assist the President and preside at meetings in the absence of the President.

Section 8: The Treasurer shall have custody of the Society's funds and shall disburse funds as directed by the Board; shall prepare monthly financial reports for the Board, an annual budget proposal for the consideration of the Board, and an annual

financial summary for distribution to members at the Annual Meeting; shall prepare an annual report for the National Audubon Society; and shall prepare and file tax-related forms. The treasurer and the President shall each be authorized to sign checks. Section 9: The Secretary shall keep a record of all proceedings of the Board and the Society, and shall conduct correspondence as requested by the Board.

#### ARTICLE V: NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: Annually, prior to January 1, the Board of Directors shall appoint a nominating committee of not less than three members. The President shall be an ex-officio member of the committee. Names of persons who might fill open positions may be recommended to this committee. Nominations for any office may be made at the time of the election provided prior consent has been obtained from persons being nominated.

Section 2: The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees for open positions on the board that shall be presented to the regular meeting of the Society in March for a vote. Elections may be by voice vote, or by motion from the membership instructing the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot in favor of the slate presented by the Nominating Committee. Uncontested elections may be by voice vote, but if contested, must be by written ballot. Duly elected Board members shall be installed and assume their duties at the Annual Meeting in April.

#### ARTICLE VI: APPOINTIVE POSITIONS

Section 1: The positions described below shall be filled annually by members of the Society who have been recommended by the President and approved by the Board. Persons appointed to these positions may or may not be elected members of the Board of Directors, and may hold more than one appointive position at any one time. Persons holding these positions shall report to the Board at regular intervals determined by the board, or upon request of the President or the Board, or at their own initiative. Committees may be appointed to assist these persons at the discretion of the President and the Board.

Section 2: The appointive positions and their duties shall be as follows.

1. The Society Historian shall preserve copies of all newsletters and other mailings, photographs and newspaper clippings documenting Society activities, and other items of historical interest relating to the Society.
2. The Membership Chair shall maintain membership records derived from National Audubon Society records, recruit new members, encourage those who have not paid current dues to renew their memberships, and supply address labels for the newsletter.
3. The Program Chair shall make plans and arrange programs for the Annual Meeting and regular meetings of the Society, and recommend to the Board the locations for these meetings.
4. The Field Trip Chair shall plan and organize at least nine field trips each year for the interest and education of members and friends of the Society.
5. The Conservation Chair shall keep informed on local, state and national policies and events affecting the natural environment or related matters of concern to the Society and shall be prepared to advise the Board or membership regarding appropriate action.
6. The Sanctuary Chair shall be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of preserves under the care of the Society, shall raise funds for the proper development of these preserves, and shall promote appropriate uses of these preserves.
7. The Publicity Chair shall publicize the activities of the Society through newspapers, radio, television, or other means.
8. The Education Chair shall encourage and arrange for schools and teachers in the area to use Audubon study programs, and recommend other ways to further educational activities related to conservation and ecology.
9. The Editor shall publish a newsletter at least nine months of each year for the members of the Society that shall include a calendar of upcoming Society activities, reports of past activities, and articles of interest to the members.

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#### *PROPOSED NEW ARTICLE VII: DISCONTINUANCE*

*This Society may terminate its status as a Chapter of the National Society, and the National Society may terminate the status of this Society as a Chapter of the National Society, pursuant to procedures set forth on the 2001 Audubon Chapter Policy adopted by the National Society's Board of Directors on December 8, 2001.*

#### *proposed new article VIII: Commitments*

*This Society shall not enter into any commitments binding upon the National Society without written authorization by the National Society, nor shall the National Society without written authorization by this Society, enter into any commitments binding upon this Society.*

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#### RENUMBERED ARTICLE VII, BECOMES ARTICLE XI: DISSOLUTION OF THIS SOCIETY

**Section 1: The Tippecanoe Audubon Society may terminate its chapter status on six months notice from the Board of Directors given in writing to the membership and to the National Audubon Society. The Society also recognizes the right of the National Audubon Society to terminate the chapter status of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society on six months notice. In either case the members of the Society shall continue as members only for the balance of the term for which dues have been paid.**

RENUMBERED SECTION 2, BECOMES ONLY SECTION: In the event of the discontinuation of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society for any reason, the Board of Directors shall arrange for the conveyance of all property and funds held by the Society to an appropriate entity as mandated in the Constitution **with the concurrence of the appropriate field office of the National Audubon Society.**

#### RENUMBERED ARTICLE VIII, BECOMES ARTICLE X: CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAW CHANGES

Constitution and By-law changes may be made at the recommendation of the Board by a majority vote of the members present at any Annual Meeting or regular meeting of the Society provided that prior notice of the proposed changes has been distributed to the members in writing fifteen days before the meeting.

**MAIL THIS APPLICATION FORM  
FOR AN INTRODUCTORY \$20 NEW AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP  
OR FOR AN \$8 TIPPE-TOPICS SUBSCRIPTION**

NOTE: Send *membership renewal* checks directly to National using the renewal form that comes with your renewal notice.  
**Be sure to place the code HO-8 in the lower right-hand corner of the renewal form.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY &amp; TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY</b> Chapter HO8 7XCH</p> <p>_____ <b>YES!</b> Enroll me as a NEW MEMBER in the National Audubon Society &amp; the Tippecanoe Chapter and sends my membership card. Start sending me <i>AUDUBON</i> magazine and <i>TIPPE-TOPICS</i>. Enclosed is a \$20 check payable to the National Audubon Society for my one-year introductory membership.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TIPPE-TOPICS SUBSCRIPTION ONLY</b></p> <p>_____ I am not a member of the Tippecanoe Audubon Society but would like to receive <i>TIPPE-TOPICS</i>. Enclosed is an \$8 one-year subscription donation check payable to the Tippecanoe Audubon Society. I have a membership in the National Audubon Society carried with the following local Audubon chapter:</p>
<p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____ City _____</p> <p>State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Telephone _____ E-mail _____</p>	<p><b>MAIL TO MEMBERSHIP CHAIR</b> James Townsend HO-8 6331S 300E 7XCH Warsaw, IN 46580 E-mail: jimvjmc@kconline.com</p>

## BIRDING NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

**SIGHTING REPORTS WANTED** - *Tippe-Topics* readers are invited to report bird sightings so they can be shared with other readers. Call newsletter editor Dave Eiler at 260-982-2726, send him an e-mail message at [dleiler@earthlink.net](mailto:dleiler@earthlink.net), or mail him a note at 301 Hickory Lane, North Manchester, IN 46962.

**KOSCIUSKO COUNTY** - On a November 7 birding drive through southern Kosciusko County to Winona Lake and Warsaw Dave Eiler of North Manchester saw a **RED-TAILED HAWK**, several **AMERICAN KESTRELS**, many **AMERICAN COOTS**, several groups of **MALLARDS**, a pair of **BUFFLEHEADS**, a couple dozen **CANVASBACKS**, two pairs of **LESSER SCAUP**, many **CANADA GEESE**, a **HORNED GREBE**, several **PIED-BILLED GREBES**, a flock of **RING-BILLED GULLS**, a **DOWNY WOODPECKER** male, an **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** male, quite a few **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**, a **HOUSE FINCH**, a couple **DARK-EYED JUNCOS**, and a **NORTHERN CARDINAL** male.

**MIAMI COUNTY** - Linda Beidleman who lives south of Mexico reported on October 22 that she had seen a **BROWN CREEPER**, a **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET**, and a **GRASSHOPPER SPARROW**. On October 25 she reported seeing a **HAIKY WOODPECKER**, a **HOUSE WREN**, a **DARK-EYED JUNCO**, and several **WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS**. On November 4 she reported seeing several **AMERICAN ROBINS** eating rose hips, and a couple **KILLDEERS**. On Thanksgiving Day she saw five **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS**. On December 2 a **FOX SPARROW** began coming to her feeder. It was a new species for her life list. She has **CAROLINA WRENS** coming to her suet feeder, and on December 4 a **PILEATED WOODPECKER** came to her suet feeder.

**WABASH COUNTY** - During October and November Glen Campbell of North Manchester saw at his feeders **MOURNING DOVES**, a **NORTHERN FLICKER**, **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS**, **DOWNY WOODPECKERS**, **BLUE JAYS**, **TUFTED TITMICE**, a **CAROLINA CHICKADEE**, **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES**, a **CAROLINA WREN**, **EUROPEAN STARLINGS**, **HOUSE SPARROWS**, **HOUSE FINCHES**, **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**, **DARK-EYED JUNCOS**. On November 7 Dave Eiler of North Manchester saw a couple **BLUE JAYS**, several **AMERICAN ROBINS**, and a couple **DARK-EYED JUNCOS** north of North Manchester. **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS** have been coming regularly to the bird bath behind Dave and Ruth Eiler's duplex at the Timbercrest Retirement Community in North Manchester.

## RECENT TIPPECANOE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

### GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP

On pleasant Sunday afternoon on October 13 Greg Clark of the Manchester College Physics Department, and Wilson Lutz, retired from the Manchester College Chemistry Department, led a field trip to the Sider Gravel Pit in the village of Disko east of Akron.

Greg explained various geological features visible in the pit. The layering along the walls of the pit, the rounded shape of the rocks, and the variation in size from boulders to gravel to fine sand were all the results of material being ground on the under side of the Wisconsin Glacier as it was carried southward from what is now Canada. The pit is located in what is called the Packerton Moraine.

Wilson discussed the chemical make-up of various rocks. Limestone was easy to identify by putting a drop of vinegar on it and seeing it bubble. The presence of iron in a rock gives it a rusty color. Rocks such as granite and gneiss have a crystalline

structure acquired when they cooled and solidified from a molten state. The slower the cooling, the larger the crystals.

### PROGRAM ON THE SOUTHWEST

On Tuesday evening, October 22, at the Blue Lion Coffee House in Pierceton, David Hicks of the Manchester College Biology Department gave a photographic presentation on the natural history of the southwestern United States. His slides illustrated the variety of habitats in the region, from low-elevation deserts to cool highland forests. Geological processes have produced magnificent scenery at size scales ranging from individual boulders to buttes and canyons.

The Southwest has been the site of many human civilizations, but the variable and often hostile climate has made life tenuous, as illustrated by the abandoned cliff dwellings of the ancestral Pueblo Indians (Anasazi). Slides by Hicks and his wife, Deborah Hustin, showed the East Mojave National Scenic

Area, Saguaro National Park, Anza-Borrego Desert Park, Mesa Verde National Park, and other areas.

### FIELD TRIP TO MOUNT PISGAH

On Sunday afternoon, November 10, field trip leader David Hicks led a group through the Mount Pisgah Nongame Area southeast of North Webster. Despite rain and chilly temperatures, the group walked the full length of the wooded moraine to the beaver dam where they flushed a flock of Hooded Mergansers from the pond. They then circled around the pond and went on to a small fen where Pitcher Plant leaves were abundant, but the Fringed Gentians they had hoped to see were past flowering.

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David L. Eiler, Editor  
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DATED MATERIAL DO  
NOT DELAY

## RING-BILLED GULL: BIRD OF THE MONTH

By David L. Eiler

The Ring-billed Gull is more common than any other Gull species in northern Indiana. It is most abundant during the summer but can often be seen during winter months as well. It usually occurs in flocks of two or three or as many as a dozen or more, often swimming or flying over lakes and ponds. It also likes to forage in newly plowed fields where it may sometimes be seen following the plow looking for prey stirred up or uncovered by the plow.

At first sight different Gull species often look much alike, but with practice one can learn to tell most of them apart. Identifying Gulls is made more difficult by the fact that nearly all species go through a series of plumage changes as the mature. For most species it takes three, or even four years, to attain adult breeding plumage. Compared to other Gull species Ring-billed Gulls are medium size, about the same size as American Crows. A mature Ring-billed Gull has a white head, neck, breast, and tail. The wings and back, the area called the mantel, are light gray. The ends of the wings are black with a small white spot at the tips. The beak is light yellow with a black ring near the tip that gives the species its name. The eyes are pale yellow, and the legs are yellow. As in most Gull species, males and females are alike. In winter adult Ring-billed Gulls acquire grayish-brown mottling on the head and neck, and the bill becomes whitish but retains the ring near the tip. Ring-billed Gulls are so uniform throughout their range that there are no recognized subspecies.

Juvenile Ring-billed Gulls during their first year have mottled brownish-black necks, breasts, and mantels, pale pinkish legs, and a mostly black beak that turns pinkish with

a black ring during the first winter. During the first winter they have a black tail band that becomes narrower the second winter. By the third winter the tail has become pure white.

Although present all year in northern Indiana, Ring-billed Gulls are more abundant in summer than in winter. They move north in March and south in November. A few nest in northern Indiana, but the main nesting range is southern Canada, the northern tier of states west of the Great Lakes, and the Pacific Northwest. Nests made of weeds and dried grasses are about a foot in diameter. The two or three eggs hatch in about three weeks. Ring-billed Gulls nest in large colonies that may include several Gull species and also Terns. Such colonies are usually in wetlands near lakes or seacoasts. In winter Ring-billed Gulls move to the Pacific States, the states south of the Great Lakes, and on south as far as southern Mexico and the Caribbean.

The Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) belongs to the Laridae family which has a total of 51 species. Of these, 45 belong to the *Larus* genus. Gulls of one species or another occur on every continent except Antarctica. The Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) ranges all across North America and Eurasia. Several Gull species have ranges extending far north of the Arctic Circle, but none ranges as far south as the Antarctic Circle. Some have large ranges that include parts of both hemispheres. Others are found only in the Western Hemisphere, or only in the Eastern Hemisphere. Some are inland species, some are coastal species, and some are oceanic species. Some have small ranges restricted to a few lakes, bays, or islands.