



TIPPE-TOPICS

NEWSLETTER OF THE TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Cass, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Miami, Noble, Wabash, Whitley Counties, Indiana

Volume XXXII, Number 1 & 2

February 2006

COMING EVENTS

February 2006

FIELD TRIP, SUNDAY AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 12, AT 1:30 PM AT THE TAYLOR NATURE PRESERVE.

David Hicks, Professor of Biology at Manchester College, with special interests in botany and ecology, will lead a nature walk of the winter landscape.

Directions: From SR 13 north of North Manchester, take the marked turnoff into Liberty Mills. Continue over the river and through town. At the east edge of town, turn north on 4th St. Bear right at the old schoolhouse and follow the road around a major bend to the Audubon signs at the entrance. Follow the grassy lane in front of the pine trees to the parking area.

PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 28, AT 7:30 PM IN THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE, PIERCETON.

This month's program is a showing of the movie Winged Migration. This movie took 5 film crews comprised of more than 450 people total to complete. It covers migration routes through 40 countries and each of the seven continents. The flight scenes, scenery, and candid shots of exotic birds are amazing. Join us for an evening of flight with the birds.

Algae - like a breath mint for smokestacks

By Mark Clayton

Staff writer for "The Christian Science Monitor"

Boston 1/11/2006 Isaac Berzin is a big fan of algae. The tiny, single-celled plant, he says, could transform the world's energy needs and cut global warming.

Overshadowed by a multibillion-dollar push into other "clean-coal" technologies, a handful of tiny companies are racing to create an even cleaner, greener process using the same slimy stuff that thrives in the world's oceans.

Enter Dr. Berzin, a rocket scientist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. About three years ago, while working on an experiment for growing algae on the International Space Station, he came up with the idea for using it to clean up power-plant exhaust.

If he could find the right strain of algae, he figured he could turn the nation's greenhouse-gas-belching power plants into clean-green generators with an attached algae farm next door.

"This is a big idea," Berzin says, "a really powerful idea." And one that's taken him to the top - a rooftop. Bolted onto the exhaust stacks of a brick-and-glass 20-megawatt power plant behind MIT's campus are rows of fat, clear tubes, each with green algae soup simmering inside.

Fed a generous helping of CO₂-laden emissions, courtesy of the power plant's exhaust stack, the algae grow quickly even in the wan rays of a New England sun. The cleansed exhaust bubbles skyward, but with 40 percent less CO₂ (a larger cut than the Kyoto treaty mandates) and another bonus: 86 percent less nitrous oxide.

After the CO₂ is soaked up like a sponge, the algae is harvested daily. From that harvest, a combustible vegetable oil is squeezed out: biodiesel for automobiles. Berzin hands a visitor two vials - one with algal biodiesel, a clear, slightly yellowish liquid, the other with the dried green flakes that remained. Even that dried remnant can be further reprocessed to create ethanol, also used for transportation.

(continue on pg 3)

Regular Tippecanoe Audubon Society (TAS) Events:

MONTHLY PROGRAM MEETING on 4th Tuesday at 7:30 pm except in December (Christmas Dinner).

Program meetings are held at the Blue Lion Coffee House in Pierceton, Indiana.

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING on 2nd Tuesday 7:15 pm except December. TAS members are welcome.

Board meetings are at Timbercrest Senior Living Community in North Manchester, Indiana.

MONTHLY FIELD TRIPS, the time and place to be announced. Everyone is welcome.

CHRISTMAS TAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

The total number of individual birds seen was 4,467 during the TAS Christmas Bird Count, which was the lowest ever recorded. The number of species was 49 and is tied for the lowest. The dedicated bird-watchers who participated in this year's Count were Connie & Steve Doud, David Eiler, Eric Reichenback, Parks Adams, Al Crist, Beth Deimling, Dave Hicks, Deb Hustin, Lila O'connell, Lola Wagoner, Glen & Phil Campbell, Conrad Snavely, Andy & Alice Brown, and Ed McCorkle.

This year's annual Christmas Bird Count was the 106th for Audubon! The CBC data is used for several important and on-going studies. For example, the data continues to document the spread and impact of the West Nile virus.

The TAS results follow:

RUDDY DUCK	15
MUTE SWAN	115
CANADA GOOSE	749
CAACKLING GOOSE	1
MALLARD	1140
NORTHERN SHOVELER	4
CANVASBACK	1
GREATER SCAUP	1
COMMON GOLDENEYE	12
BUFFLEHEAD	4
GREAT BLUE HERON	4
BALD EAGLE	1
COOPER'S HAWK	2
RED-TAILED HAWK	8
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	1
AMERICAN KESTREL	1
AMERICAN COOT	374
KILLDEER	1
HERRING GULL	12
ROCK PIGEON	14
MOURNING DOVE	79
GREAT HORNED OWL	2
BELTED KINGFISHER	1
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER	2
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER	19
DOWNY WOODPECKER	24

HAIRY WOODPECKER	1
NORTHERN FLICKER	7
PILEATED WOODPECKER	2
BLUE JAY	69
AMERICAN CROW	87
CEDAR WAXWING	3
EASTERN BLUEBIRD	24
NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD	1
EUROPEAN STARLING	1059
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	1
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	32
BROWN CREEPER	5
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	21
TUFTED TITMOUSE	20
HORNED LARK	25
HOUSE SPARROW	205
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	60
HOUSE FINCH	75
SONG SPARROW	4
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	1
DARK-EYED JUNCO	98
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW	2
NORTHERN CARDINAL	78

Individuals	4467
Species	49

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Tippecanoe Audubon Web Site
www.tippeaudubon.org

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

Plan to Drill in Alaska Bird Habitat Denounced by Audubon

Washington, DC, January 20, 2006 - Ignoring vocal opposition from Alaska Natives, scientists and sportsmen, the Bush Administration opened for leasing 100% of the internationally significant Teshekpuk Lake Special Area in the Northeast Planning Area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA). The decision eliminates long-established wildlife and environmental protections first put in place by Reagan Administration Interior Secretary James Watt.

The Teshekpuk Lake area was targeted for drilling by the industry-dominated Energy Task Force headed by Vice President Dick Cheney in 2001. The 4.6 million-acre area of the NPRA is immediately west of the massive Prudhoe Bay oil field in far northern Alaska bordering the Beaufort Sea and provides vital habitat for migratory waterfowl, caribou and other wildlife, and is an important subsistence hunting and fishing area.

Congress last month decisively rejected a proposal to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 110 miles further to the east.

The Teshekpuk Lake Special Area encompasses one of the most important wetland complexes in the circumpolar Arctic. The 45,000-head Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd bears its calves and seeks relief from insects near Teshekpuk Lake, and it is a key summer molting or nesting location for many of North America's migratory ducks, geese, swans, loons and other birds. It is heavily used by Alaska Natives for subsistence fishing and hunting, especially caribou hunts. Brant and other waterfowl that migrate here are harvested for both subsistence and sport in Alaska and in many of the Lower 48 states.

"This plan is utterly unbalanced: even the Reagan Administration protected the waterfowl habitat around Teshekpuk Lake because of its world-class ecological and cultural value," said Stan Senner, executive director, Audubon Alaska. "No one should be fooled by the window dressing in this document: this plan makes every last acre available for oil development. The administration has decided that there isn't one acre of this magnificent region that should be protected."

Algae (continued from pg 1)

Being a good Samaritan on air quality usually costs a bundle. But Berzin's pitch is one hard-nosed utility executives and climate-change skeptics might like: it can make a tidy profit.

"You want to do good for the environment, of course, but we're not forcing people to do it for that reason - and that's the key," says the founder of GreenFuel Technologies, in Cambridge, Mass. "We're showing them how they can help the environment and make money at the same time."

GreenFuel has already garnered \$11 million in venture capital funding and is conducting a field trial at a 1,000 megawatt power plant owned by a major southwestern power company. Next year, GreenFuel expects two to seven more such demo projects scaling up to a full production system by 2009...

One key is selecting an algae with a high oil density - about 50 percent of its weight. Because this kind of algae also grows so fast, it can produce 15,000 gallons of biodiesel per acre. Just 60 gallons are produced from soybeans, which along with corn are the major biodiesel crops today...

A prototype is capable of handling 140 cubic meters of flue gas per minute, an amount equal to the exhaust from 50 cars or a 3-megawatt power plant,

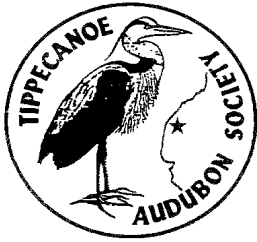
Greenshift said in a statement.

For his part, Berzin calculates that just one 1,000 megawatt power plant using his system could produce more than 40 million gallons of biodiesel and 50 million gallons of ethanol a year. That would require a 2,000-acre "farm" of algae-filled tubes near the power plant. There are nearly 1,000 power plants nationwide with enough space nearby for a few hundred to a few thousand acres to grow algae and make a good profit, he says.

Energy security advocates like the idea because algae can reduce US dependence on foreign oil. "There's a lot of interest in algae right now," says John Sheehan, who helped lead the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) research project into using algae on smokestack emissions until budget cuts ended the program in 1996.

In 1990, Sheehan's NREL program calculated that just 15,000 square miles of desert (the Sonoran desert in California and Arizona is more than eight times that size) could grow enough algae to replace nearly all of the nation's current diesel requirements.

"I've had quite a few phone calls recently about it," says Mr. Sheehan. "This is not an outlandish idea at all."



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TIPPE-TOPICS February 2006

Parks M. Adams, Editor

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER — DAVID HICKS

I will use this column to review a recent book that may be of interest to TAS members. ***The Grail Bird*** was written by Tim Gallagher (2005, Houghton Mifflin). Gallagher was integrally involved in the recent rediscovery of the **Ivory-billed Woodpecker** in Arkansas, and he tells the story of the search effort in this book.

Sightings of Ivory-bills had been reported sporadically from the 1950's through the 70's, in an area stretching from eastern Texas to Louisiana. Gallagher is a nature photographer and writer. He is on the staff of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, where he edits "The Living Bird" magazine. His involvement in the Ivory-bill search began in early 2004, when he visited various sites in Louisiana. The most thorough study of the species had been done in the Singer Tract in northern Louisiana was in the 1930s, and a credible report came from the southern part of the state in 1999. However, searches by Gallagher and others yielded no clear-cut observations of the bird in these sites.

The Arkansas rediscovery began with a brief sighting of the bird by kayaker Gene Sparling in Feb-

ruary, 2004. Gallagher and fellow photographer Bobby Harrison confirmed Sparling's observation later that month. Gallagher got searchers from the Cornell laboratory involved, and birds were spotted several times during the winter and spring of 2004. These observations were the basis for the public announcements made by National Audubon, Cornell, and the Nature Conservancy, and other organizations later that year.

Gallagher's book is a good read. He provides background on Ivory-bills, gives plenty of detail about the search from the 1930's on, and does a good job of describing the frustrations of field work and the elation of his first spotting. He has some interesting analysis of the motivations (and, in some cases, mental stability) of earlier Ivory-bill observers.

The search for Ivory-bills continues. Observations are easiest in the winter, when the bald cypress trees that dominate southern swamps are leafless. For further information, including video of a talk by Gallagher, Ivory-bill video from 2004, sound recordings, and updates on this winter's search (including directions to the most likely areas for sightings), see: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/ivory/>.

Note: The **Bird Of The Month** by David Eiler will return next month with the **Snow Bunting**. -- Ed.



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Volume XXXII, Number 3, March, 2006

COMING EVENTS

FIELD TRIP, SATURDAY MARCH 25, AT 1:30 PM AT GLENN WOOD NEAR LEESBURG.

Glenn Wood is one of the Acres Land Trust properties. The terrain includes a large cattail marsh and numerous trails, some in high-ground woodland and some in low-ground woodland with muck soil and a very high water table (no standing water until spring rains). A heavy bank of small to large trees with ample under brush grows along the east side of the long drive way. This should offer good birding for early spring migrants such as White-crowned, White-throated, Song, and Tree Sparrows. The Yellow-rumped Warbler is probable and a chance to hear rails too! I'm sure this is not the extent of the list, however so come and help add to the days catch!

Directions: Glenn Woods is located just 7 mi. west of Leesburg. From SR 15 turn west on 600 N (.5 mi. south of Leesburg). Go west to the road's end, then turn right and go 1 mi. to the Tee. The entrance to the property is straight ahead. Bring your friends, neighbors and relatives!

PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 24, AT 7:30 PM IN THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE, PIERCETON.

The program is the Mountaintop Removal Road Show includes a stunning slide show about the impacts the mountaintop removal on coalfield communities featuring traditional Appalachian mountain music and shocking aerial photos of decapitated Appalachian mountains. Over 300,000 acres of the most beautiful and productive hardwood forests in America have already been turned into barren grasslands.

Dave Cooper, the speaker, is currently organizing a national speaking tour to educate communities across America about Mountaintop Removal. He was a mechanical engineer for 20 years, but decided to devote his full attention to environmental issues after seeing a mountaintop removal mine on Kayford Mountain in West Virginia. He lives in Lexington, Kentucky.

Save April 25th for our 32nd annual Great Blue Heron rookery field trip on the Tippecanoe River at Warsaw. Watch for details next month!

Help! New Tippe-Topics Editor needed!

Our excellent replacement has had to decline due to shifting circumstances. ANY SUGGESTIONS ? The TAS Board fervently hopes that someone in our membership will volunteer **soon!**

This editor, who has enjoyed his turn with *Tippe-Topics*, already owns a new-old home in Forest Grove, Oregon to be near family.

Tippe-Topics takes about 8 hours per month, using our excellent desk top publishing program.

Special Book-Rate

The Grail Bird tells the fascinating story of last year's rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Thanks to the generosity of TAS members Steve & Jill Olson, copies of this book are available to TAS members at a 20% discount on the usual \$25 cost.

If you wish to buy a discounted copy, stop by the Wild Birds Unlimited store (2281 N. Oak Rd, Plymouth), and show this newsletter. The supply is limited. (see a book review in last month's *Tippe-Topics*. Ed.)

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER — DAVID HICKS**A Visit to Tall Oaks**

Human decisions about the environment, even ones that seem benign at the time that they are made, often have unexpected consequences. This was brought home to me recently when I helped a student collect tree data in a local woods.

Initially, the forest looks pretty pristine. One's first impression is of a forest with a many large trees, mostly oaks and hickories. The student's measurements showed that there are a number of trees with trunk diameters close to three feet. We don't know the ages of these trees, but a somewhat smaller tree that was cut down elsewhere on campus had over 150 rings when it died in the early 90's. Consequently, the largest trees probably date back to the days when there was an Indian village in the area. This is supported by the records of the early land surveys of the 1830's. The surveyors describe our area as one of oak-hickory forest, with large trees being present.

However, much has changed about the environment since the 1830's, and these changes have affected the nature of the forest. One important change is that the forest that was almost continuous in northeastern Indiana has now been fragmented. Fragmentation increases wind exposure of the remaining trees, and several of the large oaks have come down in recent years.

A more important, but less perceptible, change is the reduction in fire frequency. This is quite understandable, since the forest is adjacent to developed areas. However,

fire favors oak and hickory seedlings, which have large tap-roots that allow them to recover after a burn. Most other species of tree in the area do not have this advantage, and would have been severely hampered by fires that came through every few years. The student and I found many seedlings and saplings of white ash and black cherry, but no oaks or hickories. As the mature trees fall, they will be replaced by other tree species. Of course, no one had this in mind when the surrounding areas were cleared and when fire was suppressed to protect houses and fields of crops.

The forest also has a number of introduced plant species. Two that are prominent are Asian honeysuckle and garlic mustard. Both were deliberately introduced in the US (honeysuckle as an ornamental, garlic mustard as flavoring agent), but escaped from gardens and invaded native ecosystems. Honeysuckle was at one point not very prominent in this forest. However, the understory of the forest was mowed occasionally in an attempt to suppress insect populations; since mowing ceased a few years ago, the honeysuckle has really taken off. Again, the introduced plant problem is an unintended consequence of people bringing over familiar, useful plants from European gardens.

Change is likely to continue. As I mentioned, white ash is very common, and one of the largest trees in the woods is a large ash. However, ashes are susceptible to the (accidentally) introduced emerald ash borer. This pest insect is not in our area yet, but if it reaches the forest, further change in the forest is easy to predict.

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary Invites Everyone to Witness Sandhill Crane Migration

Kearney, NE, February 17, 2006 - Each spring over a 500,000 Sandhill Cranes congregate on Nebraska's Platte River in one of the world's greatest migration spectacles. Along with these majestic birds, tens of thousands of birdwatchers flock to Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary near Kearney to see and hear this astounding migration display.

This year, from March 4 through April 9, Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary will again conduct daily fieldtrips, both morning and evening, to viewing blinds along the Platte to watch the cranes leave and return to their river roosts – providing visitors with an extraordinary opportunity to experience the largest concentration of Sandhill Cranes in the world during their spring migration...

This year, Rowe Sanctuary will host the first Family Crane Carnival on March 25. There will be lots of kids and family-oriented activities at the event to help everyone involved learn about cranes.

To view the Sandhill Crane migration at Rowe Sanctuary reservations are required. Call 308-468-5282 or go to www.rowsanctuary.org/index.html.

“I am I, plus my surroundings. If I do not preserve the latter, I do not preserve myself.

Jose Ortega Gasset, Spanish philosopher (1883 - 1955)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Trumpeter Swan Success Story in Michigan

By Wilson B. Lutz

The trumpeter swan nearly met the same fate as the passenger pigeon. The trumpeters were gone from the midwest by the late 1800s. Uncontrolled hunting and habitat destruction were the culprits. Unlike the passenger pigeon which was hunted to extinction, a few trumpeters survived. Most were in remote areas of Idaho, Montana, and Alaska. The few remnant populations were eventually protected by law.

In 1998, Michigan wildlife managers based at the Kalamazoo Nature Center used financial help from Consumer's Power Company to obtain ten fertile trumpeter eggs from Alaska. The hatchlings were released to the AuSable River. The Michigan habitat is evidently to the swan's liking as the ten original birds have steadily increased in number. Most of the birds are located along the AuSable River and associated lakes in Michigan's lower peninsula, and in the Seney National Wildlife Refuge in the upper peninsula. As an example of this remarkable comeback, the number of

resident trumpeters in Michigan for the year 2005 totaled 728 trumpeters! Biologists attribute much of this success to the high water quality in these areas of Michigan.

The trumpeter is the largest North American waterfowl weighing in at 25 to 35 pounds. They stand four feet tall and have a wingspan of eight feet. The pair nest in late April. The female lays four to six eggs which hatch in late May. Their main food supply consists of lake and river bottom tubers which they are able to reach with their long necks. Trumpeter swans are now also being seen in Indiana. To distinguish trumpeter swans from mute and tundra swans look for the following: (1) large, long-necked bird with the typical swan shape, (2) all plumage snow-white, (3) bill: all black right up to the eye, (4) no knob on the bill, and (5) black legs and feet.

With eagles, ospreys, and otters having been recently reported in the North Manchester area, maybe the trumpeter swan will be next.

Based on an article by Karen Rouse which appeared in the *Iosco County News-Herald*, February 1, 2006.

"This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere: the dew is never all dried at once: a shower is forever falling, vapor is ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal sunset, eternal dawn and gloaming, on sea and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls."

John Muir, naturalist, explorer, and writer (1838-1914).

Snow Bunting: Bird of the Month (continued from page 4)

Greenland, northern Canada, northern Alaska, and northern Eurasia all the way from eastern Siberia to European Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway, and may extend further south in mountainous areas. Nesting takes place in late May or early June when long daylight hours help to warm the ground. Since Snow Buntings nest north of the tree line their cup-shaped nests are always on the ground. Made by the female, the nest may be half hidden behind a boulder or between rocks. Dry blades of grass and weed stems are used in constructing the nest, which is lined with finer grass and sometimes a few feathers.

The female lays four to six eggs that are pale blue or blue-green with reddish-brown speckles and blotches, and she alone incubates them, depending on the male to bring her food. The incubation period ranges from a week and a half to two weeks. Both the male and the female feed the

nestlings. In about 10 to 14 days the nestlings fledge but continue to be fed by both parents for another three weeks or so. During the summer on their nesting grounds, Snow Buntings feed upon both insects and seeds, but when cold weather and snow force them to move south in the winter they feed almost entirely on seeds. They must also swallow small pieces of gravel to help to grind up the seeds in their gizzards.

The Snow Bunting, *Plectrophenax nivalis*, has four subspecies, only one of which occurs in North America. It belongs to the worldwide Emberizidae Family that consist of 321 species. Species within this large family go by a variety of different English names including Bunting, Sparrow, Finch, Seedeater, Grasquit, Towhee, Junco, Saltator, Grosbeak, Cardinal, and Dickcissel.

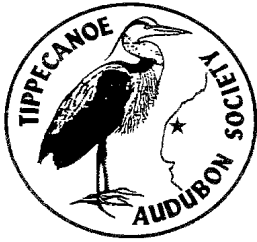
Tippecanoe Audubon Board

The installation of the Board of Directors occurred at the April program meeting for a one year term.

PRESIDENT - David Hicks, VICE PRESIDENT - Steve Hammer, SECRETARY - Connie Doud,

TREASURER - Deb Hustin, PROGRAM CHAIR - Steve Doud, FIELD TRIP & PUBLICITY CHAIR - Paul Steffen,

SANCTUARY & MEMBERSHIP CHAIR - Wilson Lutz, NEWSLETTER EDITOR - Parks Adams, Director-Shirley Needham



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TIPPE-TOPICS

March, 2006

Parks M. Adams, Editor

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SNOW BUNTING: BIRD OF THE MONTH

By David Eiler

Snow Buntings nest along the North American and Eurasian shores of the Arctic Ocean all the way around the North Pole — farther north than any other perching bird. In winter they migrate south only as far as necessary to find the weed and grass seeds they need.

Many spend the winter along the shores of the North Atlantic and North Pacific, but some go to the shores of the Great Lakes. This means that one good place to look for them in Indiana is along the shore of Lake Michigan from Hammond to Michigan City where they have been recorded most often during November, and much less often in October and December. This is the same time period when they appear elsewhere in northern Indiana where they may be seen in agricultural fields foraging for weed seeds and crop seeds missed during harvest. When there is snow on the ground they often forage along the edges of country roads as well as adjacent fields along with flocks of Horned Larks that have similar habits. Lapland Longspurs may also join such foraging flocks. So, when there is snow on the ground and you come upon a flock of Horned Larks foraging along the edges of a country road, pull over and scan the flock with binoculars or a spotting scope looking for Snow Buntings.

Snow Buntings are about the same size as the Horned Larks they often flock with, but have shorter tails. They are easy to spot once you learn to look for the long and promi-

nent white horizontal wing bar and the vertical rust-colored bar in front of the wing. When they fly, the white wing bars become large white wing patches that are distinctive and easy to see. When flying as a flock, Snow Buntings turn this way and that in a coordinated way similar to the way shorebird flocks move. Since Snow Buntings show up in Indiana only during the winter, they are usually wearing non-breeding plumage. The breast and belly is pure white except for a buffy tinge just below the wing in the female. The back is mottled with black and tan, and the head has tan cheek patches and tan extending from the back of the neck over the top of the head. The central tail feathers are black and on each side of the tail the feathers are black with white edges. The end of the tail has a shallow V-shaped notch. The beak is yellowish-orange.

Sometimes a flock of winter Snow Bunting will have a few individuals that appear to be in breeding plumage. In breeding plumage the male has a pure white head, breast, belly, and under tail coverts. The back is black all the way to the end of the tail except that the tail side feathers are black edged with white. The female in breeding plumage has faint rusty cheek patches, an insignificant amount of black mottling on the back of the head, and black with white mottling on the back. Both have black beaks.

Snow Buntings nest mostly north of the Arctic Circle on tundra habitat across northern (continue on pg 3)



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Volume XXXII, Number 4, April, 2006

COMING EVENTS

April 2006

OUR 31ST ANNUAL HERON ROOKERY FIELD TRIP, SATURDAY APRIL 22, AT 1:30 PM.

The sad news is that development is encroaching from both north & south. There have been dramatic advances since last year: construction work within 200 yards in both directions! And the worst part is that development is all residential rather than commercial. Lots of kids and litter come with residential areas!

Well over 100 nests, approximately 260 adult herons; and they will raise more than 200 young this year. But will they be there 5 or 10 or 20 years from now. I think I can see 5 years, but not 10. Wear warm clothes and boots. There will be water and mud, more mud than we have ever seen before, because of earth moving in the area and no grass cover.

We will meet on the north end of the Kohl's Department Store parking lot. Located 1/2 mi. north of the US 30 & SR 15 intersection on the north side of Warsaw. For additional information contact field trip leader, Paul Steffen, at 574-658 4504 or at <ecoexpo@kconline.com>. — Paul Steffen

PROGRAM, TUESDAY EVENING APRIL 25, AT 7:30 PM IN THE BLUE LION COFFEE HOUSE, PIERCETON.

Mike Carey, a South Bend police officer, will be speaking on modern falconry practices as well as how he assists wildlife rehabilitators. He will be bringing with him a Harris Hawk and possibly a Goshawk.

SPRING BIRD COUNT, SATURDAY, MAY 13, DAWN TO DARK - ALL OF KOSCIUSKO COUNTY.

To join the spring bird count, contact bird count coordinator, Greg Clark, by May 8th. You can send him an e-mail at gwclark@manchester.edu, telephone him at 260-982-5071 or 260-982-7588 in evenings, or mail him a note at 803 East Street, North Manchester, IN 46962, giving your name, telephone number, post office address, and e-mail address if you have one. He 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 birding expertise 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 never have noticed before.

Help! New Tippe-Topics Editor needed!

Our excellent replacement has had to decline due to shifting circumstances. ANY SUGGESTIONS ? The TAS Board fervently hopes that someone in our membership will volunteer soon!

This editor, who has enjoyed his turn with *Tippe-Topics*, already owns a new-old home in Forest Grove, Oregon to be near his family.

Tippe-Topics takes about 8 hours per month, using our excellent desk top publishing program.

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Regular Tippecanoe Audubon Society (TAS) Events:

MONTHLY PROGRAM MEETING on 4th Tuesday at 7:30pm except in December (Christmas Dinner).

Program meetings are held at the Blue Lion Coffee House in Pierceton, Indiana.

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING on 2nd Tuesday at 7:15pm except December. TAS members are welcome.

Board meetings are at Timbercrest Senior Living Community in North Manchester, Indiana.

MONTHLY FIELD TRIPS, the time and place to be announced. Everyone is welcome.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER — DAVID HICKS

I am pleased to tell you that Tippecanoe Audubon has been awarded \$1000 from the National Audubon collaborative funding program. We will use the funds to build a Chimney Swift tower, probably at one of our sanctuaries.

Chimney Swifts are frequently observed in the summer months, but their numbers have been declining over most of their range, including Indiana, since at least the 1960's. The decline is probably due to a decrease in the number of places that the birds can use to rest during migration or for nest sites in the summer. Although they are able to execute complicated aerial maneuvers, swifts are physically incapable of perching or standing in the way that most birds do. Swifts are built to cling to wall-like surfaces, with spiny tail feathers that help to maintain the bird in the correct position. Consequently, they need resting and nesting sites that have a rough, vertical surface, and is protected from predators, bright sun, and weather.

Before humans built houses and barns, nest and

roost sites for swifts would have been hollow tree trunks. However, in most of the Midwest, forests with trees large enough to provide a suitable hollow trunk are scarce. More recently, swifts used chimneys of houses and other buildings. However, most people don't feel comfortable with wildlife in the house, and modern chimneys are usually constructed with a grating that excludes the birds.

Swift-lovers have built structures to substitute for the lost roost sites since at least the 1930s, when Althea Sherman built a swift tower in Oberlin, Ohio. Sherman's tower was an elaborate, 20-foot-tall, miniature house with windows, siding, and roof shingles. Modern towers, of the type that we plan to build, are much simpler in structure, essentially being insulated wooden boxes about 12 feet tall. This seemingly excessive height is required to avoid sunlight from the entrance hole reaching the roost area. The interior must be large enough for the birds to fly in, at least 14" across.

Thanks to TAS Board member, Shirley Needham, for providing information on swifts.

Help Save Rainforest and Alleviate World Hunger — at No Cost But a Mouse Click

How? Visit the Rainforest site (www.therainforestsites.com), where for each day's click on the "donate" button, advertising sponsors of the site donate funds to save about 11.4 sq. ft of imperiled rainforest. Last year the site received 28 million clicks from around the world, saving 320 million sq. feet, or 7,358 acres.

Funds raised on the Rainforest Site are administered by the Nature Conservancy, Rainforest Conservation fund, Friends of Calakmul and The World Parks Endowment. These organizations work to preserve rainforest in Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay and other locations worldwide. In addition, a portion of funding goes to preserve old-growth forest in Washington state.

The Hunger Site is linked with the Rainforest Site and works in the same way. Suggestion: to insure your daily click, make the Rainforest Site your internet homepage —and spread the word.

New members to Tippecanoe Audubon from National since November. Welcome!

Tom & Jane Carroll	N. Webster	Steven Dunsizer	Plymouth	Ann & Mike Norton	Culver
Norman Drudge	Pierceton	Patricia Eich	Pierceton	Shirley Reese	Plymouth
Kenneth Kunze	Plymouth	Ron Finney	N. Manchester	Jeanne Spaw	Culver
Philip Sticher	Milford	James Hobbs	Peru	Thomas Stockamp	Columbia City
Andy Troyer	Ligonier	Bill Knauff	Rochester	Audrey Thompson	N. Manchester
Helena Hand Bak	Bremen	Jack Maresh	Syracuse	Linda Trier	Columbia City
Ruth Biszaha	Peru	Donna Martin	Bourbon	Duane Yazel	Plymouth
Jan Creighton	Bremen	David Miller	Bremen		
Larry Delanghe	Bremen	Leonard Miller	Milford		

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Tippecanoe Audubon Web Site
www.tippeaudubon.org

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

BIRD CONSERVATION NOTES

Birds are a well-studied group of organisms, but new species are still being added to the approximately 9700 currently known. Most of these discoveries have occurred in poorly-studied tropical areas. For example, in the past few years, previously unknown bird species have been discovered in the Andes (2 species of tapaculo and an owl), the Amazon (the Sulfur-breasted Parakeet), the Philippines (the nearly flightless Calayan Rail) and New Guinea (a honeyeater, the Old World equivalent of hummingbirds).

The New Guinea discovery is probably the most remarkable of these. An expedition sponsored by Conservation International studied an area not known to have ever been visited by humans. The group also discovered 20 new frog species, 4 butterfly species, and a number of plant species (including 5 palms and a rhododendron with a 6-inch-wide flower). <http://www.birdlife.org/news>, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/3569160.stm>, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/4688000.stm>

As of 2004, 1213 bird species worldwide were

considered to be threatened with extinction, according to statistics compiled by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. This is a significant increase over the 1107 endangered bird species listed in 1996. For further information see:

<http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/redlist2004/GSAexecsumnEN.htm>

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker continues to be controversial. The rediscovery of this species was announced in the journal *Science* in April, 2005. Several short video clips and recordings of calls and drumming supported the publication. In March of 2006, a group of ornithologists, including the well-known bird artist David Sibley, published a response in *Science* that interpreted the videos as footage of a Pileated Woodpecker. The rediscovery team in turn has responded that the Sibley group misinterpreted the position of the bird in the video, and that the images are more consistent with the plumage pattern of an Ivory-bill. The controversy is likely to continue.

The publications in question, and the conflicting interpretations of the footage, can be seen at Sibley's web page (the "technical comment" was published in 2006, not 2005):

<http://www.sibleyguides.com/ivorybilled.htm>

“What good is wildlife? We don't know; maybe it is worth nothing.

But if it becomes extinct, we will never know.”

— *Nature Conservancy*

American Wigeon: Bird of the Month

(continued from page 4)

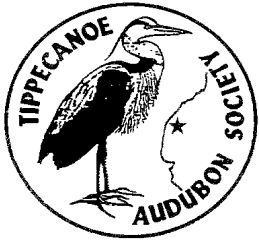
Male, who abandons her a week or so after the eggs are laid. During the two-week incubation period, she may add down to the nest to provide better insulation for the eggs. In case a predator threatens the nest she may leave it and pretend to be injured. The hatchlings are precocial — down-covered & mobile — and able to leave the nest almost immediately. They find food for themselves but remain under the watchful care of the female until they fledge. If threatened, the hatchlings scatter in every direction and hide while the female pretends to be injured but then flies away when the predator leaves and the hatchlings are safe. The hatchlings fledge in five to seven weeks and are on their own from then on.

American Wigeons are so-called dabbling ducks rather than diving ducks, meaning that they stay on the surface to feed and are unable to dive for food. Their diet is mainly vegetarian, consisting of the leaves, stems, and roots of aquatic plants that reachable from the surface, but they may also eat aquatic insects, snails, and other invertebrates. They are aggressive and often steal food from div-

ing ducks and coots when they bring it to the surface.

The American Wigeon, *Anas americana*, is classified by ornithologists as a member of the Anatidae family that includes ducks, geese, and swans. The family as a whole consists of 157 species. The genus *Anas* includes 45 species. The American Wigeon's closest relative is the Eurasian Wigeon, *Anas penelope*, that nests all across Eurasia and winters in south Asia and Africa. The male closely resembles the American Wigeon male except that the crown patch is yellow instead of white and the rest of the head is rust colored. The female Eurasian Wigeon is more brownish than her American counterpart.

Another close relative is the Chiloe Wigeon, *Anas sibilatrix*, that nests in southern South America and the Falkland Islands and winters in southern Brazil. The male has a white forehead and cheeks, a white spot behind the eye, iridescent green areas behind the eye, fine black and white horizontal barring on the breast, but otherwise resembles the American Wigeon male. The English name Wigeon used to be spelled Widgeon, especially in Great Britain.



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AMERICAN WIGEON: BIRD OF THE MONTH

By David Eiler

From the middle of March to the middle of April is the best time to see migrating ducks. One of the easiest to recognize is the American Wigeon male with his pure white forehead and crown contrasting with a wide iridescent green patch starting at the eye and curving back and down along the side of the neck. The white crown was the basis for the species name of Baldpate used in older field guides and still used by hunters. The back of his head is black with a narrow black line extending forward separating the white and green areas. The front and sides of his neck are gray with fine black speckling. He has a white wing patch in front of an iridescent green patch called the speculum, the Latin word for mirror, that can be seen when he is swimming. The white wing patch is very conspicuous when he is flying. His back and sides are brownish-gray, darker on the back and lighter on the sides, with a bright white patch just in front of the black tail.

The female has a grayish head and neck with faint black speckling, a brownish back and sides, and a black tail. Both have a bluish-gray beak with a black tip. They are medium-size ducks, about fifteen to eighteen inches long with a wingspan a little under three feet. When flushed, they take flight quickly and fly off in a compact flock.

During fall migration and on their wintering grounds, the plumage of the male is almost identical with that of the fe-

male. During spring migration American Wigeons are usually seen swimming together in pairs in shallow water on lakes and ponds along with other duck species that have stopped to rest and feed before setting out on the next stage of their northward migration. They can be seen in Indiana mainly during spring migration but may also occur in smaller number during fall migration, and even during mild winters when lakes and ponds are open. They have occasionally been recorded on Christmas bird counts in Indiana.

The breeding range of the American Wigeon extends from western Alaska north to the Arctic Ocean in the Yukon, and southeast across Canada south of the Hudson Bay to the Great Lakes, and south into the mountainous areas of the western United States. Its winter range extends from southern British Columbia south through coastal Washington, Oregon and California, across the southern states and along the Gulf of Mexico to Florida, then north along the Atlantic coastal plain to Nova Scotia, and south through Mexico, Central America, the islands of the Caribbean, and into northwestern Colombia.

American Wigeons establish nesting territories in marshes, along pond edges, and near lakeshores. The female scrapes out a shallow depression on dry ground hidden by tall grass in which to make her nest. She constructs the nest with no help from the (continue on pg 3)