



THE BLUEBIRD

Evansville Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 38 No. 2, April - May 2008
Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve
551 North Boeke Road, Evansville, IN 47711
www.evvaudubon.org

*The mission of the Evansville Audubon Society is to promote the awareness of
and appreciation for birds and other wildlife and their habitats
through education and conservation.*

Inside this Issue:

Toyota's \$20 million Grant to National Audubon Largest Ever
EAS shares in the excitement of the partnership. See pages 4-5.

Great Backyard Bird Count Locals Set North American Records
See brief summary and Web address for full report on page 6.

EAS Member Published in The Wilson Journal of Ornithology
Kudos to Sue Hirschman. See page 3 for details.

Ohio Valley Birding Festival April 30 through May 4
Read about EAS participation, activities, and events beginning on page 7.

Calendar of Events

Saturday, April 12, 8:30 AM, *Field Trip to Eagle Slough.* See details on p. 5.

Tuesday, April 15, 7:00 PM, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve.
Ribbit: Identifying Native Amphibians, by Zack Walker, Herpetologist, Wildlife Diversity Section of INDNR. Dinner at 5:30 PM at the Eastland Mall Food Court.

Tuesday, April 22, *Earth Day*

Wednesday-Sunday, April 30-May 4, *Ohio Valley Birding Festival.* See p. 7.

Saturday, May 10. *Vanderburgh County Spring Bird Count.* See p. 7.

Tuesday, May 20, 7:00 PM, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve.
Caves: Life beneath the Forest, by Dick and Sue Vernier, naturalists and EAS members. Dinner at 5:30 PM at the Eastland Mall Food Court.

Saturday, June 7, 8:00 PM. *Great American Cleanup Day.* Meet at Lloyd Pool parking lot. See details on page 7.

Tuesday, June 17, 6:00 PM, Wesselman Park Shelter #1, *Picnic.* Bring a covered dish per person, place setting, and drink. ***Raptor Rapture,*** Wesselman Woods Nature Center classroom, 7:00 PM, by Lauren Preske, Howell Wetlands manager and WNS raptor docent manager. Annual meeting follows with election of officers.

EAS Minutes
February 19, 2008

Ray Irwin, INDOT Director of Greenways and Bikeways presented information on a statewide plan. He did much of the planning for these enhancements in Indianapolis. Some of the greenways are based on work done by Kessler in 1904-9.

Ted Hitch announced that the Sauerheber field trip would not take place because the accessible areas were under water. He also announced that Steve Heeger is interested in a Blue River canoe field trip, when the water is right in April.

Ted Hitch, vice-president, convened the board meeting at 8:45.

Education. Lois Schmidt presented a list of grant requests that Carol Pettys had prepared. However, as Tim Griffith pointed out we did not have a quorum of the Board (4 officers and 12 directors) present to vote on spending money. But there were several requests that needed timely action, and should not wait until the March meeting.

It was agreed to have an e-mail discussion to reach a consensus on 6 of the 9 items. The formal vote will be taken in March. The secretary will send the information via e-mail or snail mail and phone to Board members.

There was some discussion of changing the by-laws to have a procedure in place to handle this contingency.

There was no other business discussed.

Carolyn Bennett, secretary



March 18, 2008

Paul Bousman, Botanical Curator of Mesker Park Zoo and Botanic Gardens, gave us a preview of Amazonia. We will look forward to this exhibit opening this summer.

Steve Heeger, president, convened the board meeting at 8:00.

December and January meeting minutes were approved as printed.

Treasurer Dick Vernier reported balances as of 02/29/08, 2 months' activity. Income: Education Donations, \$10.00; Div/Interest, \$10.29. Expenses: Conservation, \$5.00; two Newsletter printings, \$160.00; Bird count fees, \$245.00. Balances: Checking, \$4684.32 plus \$1600 in reserved funds (national collaborative); 6-month CD, \$4400.17; Bulk Mail, \$119.98. All accounts \$10,844.47.

Conservation. Construction of the kiosk at Cane Ridge is done, but no signage yet. Sue Vernier had pictures; the whole thing looks impressive. Sue passed a sign-up sheet for people willing to come to Cane Ridge to weed.

The partner funds for a NAWCA grant proposal approved in January is dead. The project fell through, as Peabody Coal was reserving the right to come back and strip mine again.

Education. After discussion the following education grants were approved, the total going above what we had received in donations.

- 1- Supplemental special feed, recommended by the Raptor Center at the U. of Minnesota, for the raptors at WWNP, \$500
- 2- Subsidy for inner city school field trips to Howell Wetlands, \$500
- 3- Delaware school for Earth Day Celebration, \$350

- 4- Reading with Raptor summer program at WWNP for middle school students, \$200
- 5- Culver School Bird Habitat, \$240
- 6- Soil analysis kits for 5th West Elementary in Mt. Vernon, \$84.95

Carol Pettys also mentioned participation in the Earth Day Program at Howell Wetlands April 19, 10am-2pm, volunteers needed. She will also be asking for volunteers fro the Great American Cleanup on June 7. One hundred extra copies of newsletters with the Audubon membership form needed at this time for distribution at Earth Day and the Birding Festival.

Susan Haslip, Wesselman Nature Society director, reported on Eagle Slough. The 4Rivers RCND is acting as the land trust holder. There is to be an April 5 cleanup. EAS members are being asked to work on a bird list for the area. EAS will have a field trip to the area April 12. See calendar section in the front section of the newsletter for details.

Steve Heeger told of an important announcement to be made March 26. Toyota will be giving National Audubon Society \$20 million over 5 years The focus will be on habitat, water and energy. Grants of varying sizes will be made, some at the chapter level.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25.

Carolyn Bennett, secretary



EAS Member Published in Prestigious Wilson Journal

Sue Hirschman, long-time EAS member now residing in Ouray, Colorado, is lead author of “Breeding Phenology and Success of Black Swifts in Box Canyon, Ouray, Colorado” appearing in the December, 2007 (Vol. 119, No. 4), issue of ***The Wilson Journal of Ornithology***. Supported by Carolyn Gunn, corresponding author, and Richard G. Levad of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory in Grand Junction, Sue’s article reflects her eleven-year study of the black swifts.

According to the Abstract, “Nest data were recorded on a near-daily basis for 160 nest attempts” over the eleven-year period. Tables, review of literature, and statistical analysis summarize her 1,082 days of data gathering. An earlier report of her ongoing work appeared in the ***Journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists*** in 1998.

Our sincere hats-off to Sue for her dedication, and our hearty congratulations on her publication in the prestigious ornithological journal.

. Migratory Bird Day Celebration for the Family

The Sixth Annual International Migratory Bird Day celebration will be held May 17, 2008, at Hardin Ridge Recreation Area in the Hoosier National Forest. Enjoy family friendly bird hikes, workshops, craft and game booths, and prizes. For additional information, contact Hoosier National Forest at 812-275-5987 or check online at http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/docs/events/Inter_migratory_bird_day.htm

Audubon and Toyota Announce Five-Year Alliance to Promote Conservation Action and Grow Leaders of Tomorrow

*Leading Names from Corporate and
Conservation Worlds Join to Engage New
Audiences*



Note from EAS President Steve

Heeger: *This is a major announcement with particular significance for our community for addressing the environmental issues for our area as well as globally. We will definitely be taking advantage of this opportunity and will be contacting the local universities to invite them to partner with us to apply for any of the available grants, and we plan to initiate smaller, grass-roots activities, inviting participation of Evansville area schools and groups. Look forward to further information on this important grant from the Toyota Corporation and how we can take advantage of what this can mean for our area.*

New York, NY, March 26, 2008 –The National Audubon Society and Toyota today launched *TogetherGreen*, a nationwide Audubon program to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders, and offer volunteer opportunities to significantly benefit the environment.

A \$20 million Toyota grant—the largest Audubon has received in its 103-year history—will fund *TogetherGreen* for five years, enabling Audubon to expand the scope and reach of its internationally-known conservation programs.

***TogetherGreen* will include three program components:**

- ***Innovation Grants*** to fund dozens of on-the-ground projects each year that employ creative approaches and engage diverse communities to help achieve measurable land, water and/or energy conservation results. Grant requirements will broaden project participation and promote innovation by uniting Audubon's national network with environmental and community partners.
- ***Conservation Fellowships*** to train and foster up to 200 promising environmental leaders who can serve as role models, expert guides and organizers for engaging new and diverse audiences in effective conservation action.
- ***Volunteer Days*** to be offered at Audubon Centers and other locations nationwide, providing hands-on opportunities to address environmental problems and take part in restoration activities.

“TogetherGreen is about giving people the knowledge, the support and the opportunities they need to truly make a difference,” said Audubon President John Flicker. *“We will engage people of all ages, from every community and all walks of life to help shape a healthier future.”*

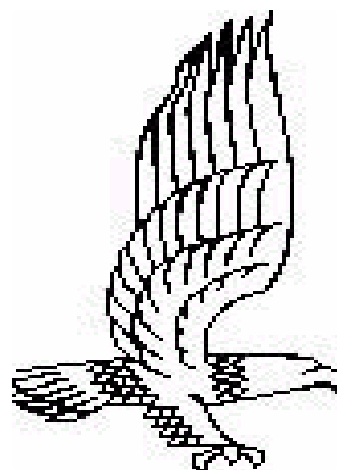
“Audubon has a long and successful history of encouraging conservation of our natural ecosystems, and we are proud to develop this initiative with them,” said Patricia Salas Pineda, group vice president of Toyota Motor North America. “Toyota believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results, and *TogetherGreen* fits perfectly with that philosophy.”

Toyota plans to engage its 36,000 U.S. employees and invite its business partners to join with others through *TogetherGreen* as conservation volunteers to take the individual steps that will add up to significant conservation results.

“Toyota employees have already been energized by participation in volunteer activities at Audubon’s Mitchell Lake Center in San Antonio, Texas,” said Pineda. “We’re excited by the promise of more opportunities for them to be involved in hands-on conservation efforts.” Toyota is a long-time supporter of Audubon Centers that deliver nature experiences, conservation education and action opportunities to previously underserved groups in urban communities.

***TogetherGreen* will also reach a diverse array of audiences through TogetherGreen.org**, scheduled to debut later this spring. The site will help visitors discover dozens of individual conservation actions to help them independently “green” their lives. It will provide opportunities to challenge friends to take conservation actions of their own. Visitors will be able to follow the evolving conservation efforts and achievements of *TogetherGreen* projects, and nominate and celebrate the work of environmental heroes and projects across the country. Every aspect of TogetherGreen.org will be designed to highlight and encourage conservation action.

“The stakes for the future of our environment are tremendous and Toyota and Audubon share a commitment to inspire and empower Americans to make a positive difference.” adds Flicker. “With our two organizations working together, we plan to see true and measurable results from *TogetherGreen*.”



Eagle Slough Field Trip

Saturday, April 12, we’ll take a look at the new nature preserve area that was recently in the news. The 127 acres just north of Ellis Park has been acquired from the state and from Traylor Brothers’ generous donation. At this time of the year, access is along an abandoned railroad bed through the center of the property, approximately one-half mile long. We might also visit the heron rookery just to the south between Audubon Park and the river, looking also for the eagles. Hiking is easy.

Meet at 8:30 AM at the southeast end of parking lot of the flea market at Highway 41 and the Veterans Memorial Parkway.

Great Backyard Bird Count: Locals Counters Set North American Records

February 15-18 was the 12th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) organized by our national society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. It originally seemed only a casual activity to spend a winter's weekend counting birds out your kitchen window. It has since evolved into a comprehensive late-winter bird survey. Growing every year, 2008 produced 85,725 lists with 635 species reported. The Website www.birdsource.org is spectacular, and I encourage everybody to cruise through the multi-year compilations and distribution maps for all species.

Local Species Count Highest in State

Local participation was strong with 205 lists submitted from Evansville and Newburgh. Although statewide species count was up this year (132 vs. 122), the Evansville count was down (83 vs. 90). However, because of our local diversity of habitat, especially in the Bluegrass area, and southernmost location, our 83 was once again the highest local species count in Indiana. The weather was milder this year than last when lakes and ponds were nearly frozen solid; this year the water was open.

Record North American Local Count

Of interest, snow goose count (51) was the highest ever; an early woodcock return resulted in the highest local count in North America ever (37); winter population of short-eared owls (29) was also the highest local count in North American ever; 18 species of waterfowl were reported; herring gulls (3) showed up; screech owls (2) remain difficult to find; snow buntings (8) cooperated, but not longspurs. Notable absences include loons, black duck, common and red-breasted mergansers, unusual

sparrows, yellow-rumped warbler, and cedar waxwing.

GBBC Format

I like the GBBC format. Unlike the traditional "big day" format of Christmas and Spring counts where you hit one area for 24 hours come rain or shine, this is spread over four days, Friday through Monday. You are free to concentrate on one area all weekend, plan trips to different areas, take a day off if a storm hits, and bird at your own pace. The GBBC is meant to, and does, include everyone from the most casual feeder counter to the most ardent birders.

Count 'Em All, Everywhere

There are no geographic boundaries—organizers ideally want every acre of North America covered—which means you are encouraged to go where the birds are. The 15-mile circles of the Christmas counts, though steeped in wonderful tradition, are in many cases diverse habitats of 1950 but suburban sprawl today.

The weather varies, and the bird activity can be dramatically different day to day. This year, both the killdeer and woodcocks arrived in mass on Sunday, February 17. For owling, a clear windless morning after several days of bad weather is preferred, and the best of the four days is usually obvious.

Next year's GBBC is Friday-Monday, February 13-16, 2009. Mark your calendar and get the time off!

Submitted by Evan Speck



Vanderburgh County Spring Bird Count

The EAS will once again participate in the Indiana Spring Bird Count on Saturday, May 10. Drivers, spotters, and talliers are needed. All interested feeder or field counters should contact Carol Pettys at 867-6231 or email at pettys1234@aol.com.

EAS Volunteers and Presenters Aid in First Ohio Valley Birding Festival

The Ohio Valley Birding Festival will take place April 30 – May 4, 2008. Co-sponsored by EAS, Wild Birds Unlimited, Wesselman Nature Society, and Audubon State Park, the event offers a variety of hikes, lectures and workshops throughout the event. For a list of all activities, check www.wesselmannaturesociety.org. Here are some samples:

Thursday, May 1, 7:00 pm, Audubon State Park Museum. Curator Alan Gehret presents *History and Impact of John James Audubon on Ornithology and Bird Conservation*. Free.

Friday, May 2, 4:30 pm, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve. Private reception for WNS and EAS members with Stan Tekeila, author of *Birds of Indiana* and other birding titles. Free.

Friday, May 2 at 7:00 pm, location to be announced. Keynote address by Stan Tekeila, sponsored by Wild Birds Unlimited. Free.

Saturday, May 3, 7:30 am – 5:00 pm, Wesselman Woods. *Family Day!* Carol Pettys needs birders to staff children's activity booths; Steve Heeger needs EAS members to help in the Bird Observation room. Call if you can help.

Saturday, May 3, 7:30-9:00 am and 8:30-10:00 am, departing from Audubon State Park Museum. *Audubon's Bird Migration Walks*. \$2.00 per person.

Saturday, May 3, 9:00 AM. Deb Goedde presents *Making Gourd Birdhouses*. Free.

Saturday, May 3, 10:30-11:30 AM. Audubon State Park Sycamore Shelter. Join Bob and Judy Peak for *A Walk with Bluebirds*. Free.

Saturday, May 3, 2:00-3:00 PM, Audubon State Park Museum. Sharon Sorenson presents *Hooked on Hummers*. Free.

Submitted by Susan Hayslip and Julie McDonald

The Great American Cleanup

For several years EAS has helped with the Great American Cleanup sponsored by Keep Evansville Beautiful. This year we will be picking up litter at North Woods/Lloyd Pool/Highland Ball Field areas on Saturday, June 7th. We'll meet at 8:00 A.M. and work until all areas are clean. If interested in helping with this worthwhile project, please contact Carol by phone at 867-6231 or by email at pettys1234@aol.com.

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Invitation from Paul and Carolyn Bennett

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Take a break at 2 pm from the Spring Bird Count to hear our son, Dr. David Bennett, give the *Adventures in Science Lecture* at the Evansville Museum. This admission-free lecture on May 10 will focus on Dave's research on gravitational microlensing by stars and planets in the Milky Way and nearby galaxies.

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