



THE BLUEBIRD

Evansville Audubon Society Newsletter

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I stood in the parlor
watching their arrival
as they sought a safe home
to ensure their hatchlings survival

They flew in and out
returning each time
a twig in their beaks
and cooing sublime

The patio is sheltered
No rain enters there
and the fan so high up
perfection for the pair

Their nest built and comfy
they settled in tight
and covered the eggs
all day and all night

And then it happened
The miracle occurred
The hatchlings came forth
Tiny wings on a bird

Nature is mystical
and brilliant with love
and brought us such joy
on the wings of a dove

From Our President:

Many of you will remember that for a decade or more, Evansville Audubon Society members sold birdseed to fund our education programs. Every fall, a regular cadre of volunteers stood by to empty and stack a semi-trailer load of seed and then cheerfully carry it out and load it into everything from pickup trucks to MG Midgets. Eventually a combination of old age, sore muscles and competition from discount stores drove us out of the business. Now, for the past several years, we have been soliciting donations and to that end, a letter has gone out to the membership asking for your support.

Many of the newer members probably don't know that Audubon chapters such as ours receive a small percentage of the National Audubon Society subscription dues. That percentage is based on the NAS membership within our region. These funds currently just cover our newsletter publication and mailing expenses. All other expenses, including bird count fees, program expenses, donations (not counting education) and dues have been coming out of the savings that we accumulated over past years of lower expenses, more generous dues splits and greater membership numbers.

We can continue to operate in this manner for a few more years but then will need to find a way to cover the expected shortfall. Our new editor, Judith Russell, has done a great job of redesigning the newsletter, trimming whitespace and adjusting fonts in order to keep the same great content but with fewer pages - but even that will not be enough, particularly given that there will be more postage and printing cost increases.

We would really like to be able to bring you photographs of members activities and perhaps some of the education grant recipients and their projects; but so far, the added expense is not doable.

At this time, your donations will still go to the Education Fund to provide such things as scholarships for nature camp, field trips for disadvantaged youth, and nature and bird related teaching materials for various schools in the Evansville area. Meanwhile, we will be considering means to reduce expenses and looking for additional revenue sources. As always, we are happy to listen to suggestions from the membership.

On another topic, the National Audubon Society recently asked the chapters to submit comments to Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne opposing a proposed rulemaking that appears to substantially weaken the Endangered Species Act. Note that by using rulemaking, the agency is attempting to bypass Congress. According to analysis by National Audubon and the National Wildlife Federation, and as reported in the August 25th issue of Time Magazine, the changes would allow federal agencies to decide for themselves whether they are in compliance with the Act and bypass independent review by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the agency with the most scientific expertise in the matter.

The Endangered Species Act is the primary line of defense for birds and other wildlife against threats to their existence. Additional details and an opportunity to take action before the October 15 deadline for comments are available on National Audubon's website at <http://www.audubon.org/news/ESA.html>. A copy of our letter to the Secretary is on our website and on page 5 of this newsletter.

Good Birding, Richard Vernier

EAS MINUTES

June 17, 2008

Following the Annual Spring Picnic, Lauren Preske, Howell Wetlands Manager and WNS raptor docent manager, presented a program on birds of prey with an up-close view of raptors. The annual board meeting and election of officers convened at 8:25 pm. The April and May minutes were approved as printed.

Treasurer Dick Vernier reported balances as of 06-17-08. Income: interest \$3.50, Education Donation \$595.00, WBU seed sale \$187.00. Expenses: WWNC Summer Camp Scholarships \$1195.00, WNS Bird Fest collaborative grant \$500.00, Newsletter printing (2 issues) \$160.00, Oakland City CBC fee \$40.00, Web Hosting renewal \$99.00. Balances: Checking \$3224.27, Reserved Funds \$1287.00 (collaborative and seed sale) Six mo CD \$4493.95, Bulk Mail \$118.41

Education Carol Pettys had pictures and thank you letters. Susan Haislip reported a phone call from a grateful mother about the scholarship.

Conservation Sue Vernier asked us to call or email Representative Ellsworth, and Senators Bayh and Lugar reminding them how important funding of the Patoka Wildlife Refuge is. Numbers and addresses will be posted on our website. Sue moved to renew our membership to the Hoosier Environmental Council for a cost of \$97.00. After discussion the motion passed.

Newsletter/ Website Judith Russell showed us a sample format of the next newsletter. She reported delays and problems with our current web host and requested changing to a new one. Sue Vernier moved to approve the \$99.00 with a second by Joyce Padfield. Motion passed.

Field Trips Susan Haislip reminded us of the trip on Saturday, June 21, to Cane Ridge and Gibson Power Plant, leaving from WWNP.

The Planning Meeting for the next season has been scheduled for August 10 at 3:00 pm at Virginia and Bill Simmons, followed by a yummy pitch-in dinner.

The nominating committee of Steve and Dolores Heeger, Richard and Sue Vernier and Carol Pettys presented the slate of officers and moved that they be approved by acclamation. Joyce Padfield seconded and the motion carried.

New Officers: President—Richard Vernier, Vice President—Lois Schmidt, Treasurer—Ted Hitch, Secretary—Carolyn Bennett, Directors, term ending 2011—Don Batema, Susan Haislip, Sarah Karges, Jim Lodata, one year term ending 2009—Aaron Chenowith

The producer and photographer who made the CD on caves of .

southern Indiana is now working on birds of southern Indiana. The Verniers and Susan Haislip have led him to some of our hotspots. The most exciting sighting was gray fox kits in the Hitches wildlife area.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30
Lois Schmidt, secretary pro tem

September 16, 2008

Kim Meadors, executive director of Wesselman Nature Society, introduced herself and presented some of the forward-looking plans for the society.

Tim Griffith emphasized prairie plants in his talk about using native plants in landscaping. He showed examples of small as well as large landscapes.

Dick Vernier, president, convened the board meeting at 8:45.

Jessica Franck presented information about behind the scenes tours of Amazonia at the zoo.

Previous minutes were accepted as printed.

Treasurer Dick presented Ted Hitch's written report: as of 08/31/08, 3 months activity. Income: CD Div/ Interest \$11.12, Grant Memorial \$75. Expenses: Bulk Mail \$100.00, Secretary of State \$10.00, Newsletters \$46.00. Balances: Checking \$2201.98, 6 month CD \$4526.88 (due 11-27-08).

Education. Carol Pettys working with Susan Haslip will ask for collaborative grants once she is able to issue final reports on previous grants. Thank you letters from students were displayed.

Programs. Steve Heeger listed programs through January.

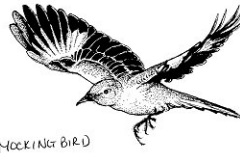
Field Trips. October 4 Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge Appreciation Day. Sue Vernier is looking for volunteers. Suggestions for field trips are wanted.

Conservation. Sue Vernier reported a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Interior has been sent to NAS, to be hand carried with others to the Secretary. These letters oppose changes to rules which would weaken the Endangered Species Act. Several information for action sheets were distributed.

Old Business. In May EAS voted to be the 501 c(3) organization needed to start a Friends Group for Patoka River NWR. Susan Haislip has submitted the extensive forms.

Dr. Rashid of USI has received a grant from the Audubon-Toyota Together Green Initiative, *Runoff Pollution Reduction Through Watershed Management and Planning*. He spoke to us in May about it. USI, not EAS was the partner.

Steve Heeger reported on plans for the Birding Festival. Carol Pettys and Lois Schmidt are also on the committee.



Bird Sightings. Sue Vernier reported Red-Necked Phalaropes, a variety of sandpipers and plovers at Cane Ridge. Aaron Chenoweth reported Redstarts at WWNP. Carolyn Bennett reported an Evening Grosbeak at her feeder.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40.
Carolyn Bennett, secretary



Calendar of Events

Saturday, October 18: Join the Evansville Audubon Society for an autumn stroll through Audubon State Park on Saturday, Oct. 18, at 10:00 AM. For further information contact: Carol Pettys, 867-6231 or pettys1234@aol.com

Tuesday, October 21, 7:00 PM, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve. "Birds of Britain and Ireland" by Don Batema of University of Evansville. Dinner at 5:30 PM at the Eastland Mall Food Court.;

Tuesday, November 18, 7:00 PM, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve. "Birding with John James Audubon," by Alan Gehret, Curator of the Audubon Museum, Audubon State Park. Join us beforehand for dinner and camaraderie at 5:30 PM at the Eastland Mall Food Court.

Tuesday, December 16, 6:00 PM, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve. Christmas Sharing. Each person bring a favorite covered dish, table service and drink. Following the meal, we will have a show-and-tell of some of your favorite nature memories. Please bring prints, slides or digital (CD.)

Tuesday, January 20, 7:00 PM, Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve. "The Secret Lives of Acorns," by Alan Pursell with The Nature Conservancy. Join us beforehand for dinner and camaraderie at 5:30 PM at the Eastland Mall Food Court.



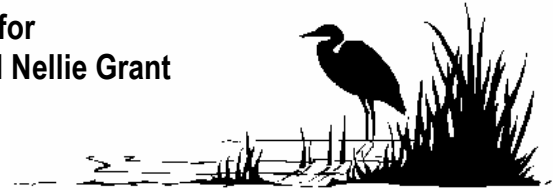
Christmas Bird Counts

- December 20: Christmas Bird Count for Vanderburgh County
- December 22: Christmas Bird Count Snow Date for Vanderburgh County
- December 27: Christmas Bird Count for Posey County
- December 29: Christmas Bird Count Snow Date for Posey County

If you wish to participate in either bird count, contact Carol at 867-6231 or pettys1234@aol.com



Memorial for Glenn and Nellie Grant



The Evansville Audubon board is soliciting contributions for a memorial to Glenn and Nellie Grant. Ideas for a fitting memorial and contributions should be sent to the Treasurer, Ted Hitch, 8713 Camellia Dr., Evansville, IN 47711. Make checks payable to Evansville Audubon So. with a notation "Grant Memorial".

EAS Minutes– Planning Session

August 10, 2008

The new Board, officers and directors, met along with committee chairs at the home of member Virginia Simmons Sunday afternoon August 10. President Dick Vernier opened the meeting about 3 pm.

Sue Vernier presented the proposed budget along with explanations. Expenses exceed expected income.

Funds from National Audubon about cover newsletter expense. All funds in response to education letter go for education. NAS collaborative grants must be spent on the requested project. Sue moved, Steve Heeger seconded and the budget was adopted.

Discussions included the production of a quality newsletter economically, proposed programs and field trips.

Meeting adjourned around 5 and was followed by a potluck dinner .

Carolyn Bennett, secretary

Upcoming Field Trips



Saturday, October 4, Patoka River NWR Appreciation Day.

Begin celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week at Patoka.

Contact Sue Vernier, 812-385-5058, for information.

Sunday, January 18, 8:00 AM, Field trip to Land Between the Lakes, Eagle Viewing. Join us for an opportunity to see these magnificent birds with a naturalist from the LBL Nature Center. Meet at the southeast end of parking lot of the flea market at Highway 41 and the Veteran's Memorial Parkway at 8:00 AM and return after the tour, which will be 1:00 - 4:30 PM. Please make reservations by December 30, or call with any questions, with trip leader Steve Heeger, 867-3873. Those who would like to stay overnight on Saturday or Sunday may make reservations at Ken Lake State Resort Park Lodge (800-325-0143) or Lake Barkley Lodge (800-325-1708.) We will carpool to offset gas prices.

Visit our Website at www.evvaudubon.org
Latest information regarding field trips, photos,
recent bird counts, etc.

Contact the webmaster at: therussells.golf@yahoo.com

WONDERWORD â By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle—horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword. BIRDS Solution: 7 letters

S T F I W S D E E S L W O P P
R S W M R O W G H W F R K E R
E O O K C U C A O T I B I S I
H W O R C F G R N O E K W A H
C A D U T L R D L R L O I C C
T M P F C A G E O R D U C K S
A A E F P M B N L A V E L E I
W R C S S I C L E P U N E I N
A T K T P N U M A L L A R D G
R I E A I G N D S S T R T E H
B N R B C O N D O R U C E R T
L K O A R A N N L V R S P K A
E R L E H A G Y A J E U L B B
R L H C L U B S R E G A N A T
S O S P R E Y E K R U T R E E

albatross, bath, bluejay, cage, calls, chirp, clubs, condor, crane, crow, cuckoo, dove, ducks, eider, field, flamingo, garden, geese, gull, hand, hawk, heron, ibis, kiwi, lands, lark, mallard, martin, meadow, nets, oriole, osprey, owls, park, parrot, petrel, robin, ruff, seeds, shag, sing, song, sparrow, swan, swift, tanager, tree, turkey, vulture, warbler, watchers, woodpecker, worm

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Field Trip: Behind the Scenes at Amazonia

Eighteen members of EAS attended the behind the scene tour at Amazonia at Mesker Zoo on Saturday, September 27. This informative tour was led by Jessa Franck, one of our chapters newest members. Jessa is a zookeeper and moved here in the spring to take the job at Mesker Zoo and Botanical Garden.

This first trip, which was limited in size, was attended by board members, and committee chairs only. Around the first of the year, additional trips will be available for other members wishing to view behind the scenes.

Since several of us not seen the Amazonia exhibit, we began with a quick walkthrough of it. With 250 species of plants, it is quite amazing. Jessa pointed out various birds and animals on our walk, including the newly fledged red crested cardinal.

After viewing the "front" of the exhibit, we were led behind the scenes. There we saw the area where they breed various frog species. Then on to the "kitchen" area where the variety of diets are prepared. Other things included the water filtration area for the aquatic exhibits, some of the water supply for the whole exhibit, and cages used for the animals when they are not on exhibit or need to be moved or medically treated.

A very interesting Saturday afternoon. Later in the week there will be a few pictures on our website.: www.evvaudubon.org

"Conservation Matters" by Sue Vernier, Conservation Chair

USFWS News: Congrats to Bill McCoy, Manager of Patoka River NWR, who was honored with the 2007 Land Legacy Award for being relentless in his pursuit of funding for the refuge and using "innovation and partnerships in a mosaic of land acquisition strategies". (An example being the acquisition of Old Ben Coal property that led to restoration of wetland habitat for endangered least terns and for waterfowl.)

Audubon Advisory: A bipartisan group in Congress have introduced Senate bill, S. 3490, and House Bill, H.R. 5756, which re-authorizes the existing Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act and increases funding for the conservation of birds that breed in North America and spend their winters in the tropics. Let Congress know that this important legislation for migratory birds deserves to pass.

Take Action: Congress is considering a proposal to develop a new energy source—oil shale—for two million acres of public land in the West. What's at stake is our air, (tar sands production generates three times the amount of global warming pollution as conventional fuel production), our water (upwards of 315 million gallons of scarce water a day are required), our wildlife (potential toxic waste sites affecting habitat and some of our most treasured places in our public lands), and human health. Oil shale extraction will yield impacts similar to the syncrude oil sands mine in Alberta. [see www.onearth.org/article/canadas-highway-to-hell] Please urge Congress to extend the moratorium on commercial oil shale development!

Public Comment Processing
Attention: 1018-AT50, Division of Policy and Directives Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 222
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Secretary Dirk Kempthorne,

On behalf of the Evansville Audubon Society, Inc. (EAS) of Evansville, Indiana, and its 388 members, I would like to express our opposition to the proposed changes to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as stated in the Friday August 15 edition of the Federal Register (Vol. 43, No. 159). We are convinced that the changes as stated would do substantial harm to the intended functioning of the Act.

The proposed rulemaking is clearly designed to weaken this critical cornerstone of environmental protection in our great country by making it easier for Federal agencies to ignore input from experts in the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service when considering impacts to threatened and endangered species from projects such as highways and other major Federally funded activities. It is important that such evaluations be done as much outside the political arena as possible and to utilize the best available scientific information and analysis and that sufficient time for the work be allowed – the proposed 60 days is completely inadequate to allow the research, in particular the field studies necessary.

Locally, we have seen the direct benefits of the Endangered Species Act with the tremendous improvements in breeding success of the bald eagle, several nests are now found in the area and eagle sightings are frequent and inspiring. Other indirect benefits include cooperation between Duke Energy and Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge to establish the Cane Ridge Wildlife Management Area for the benefit of the endangered interior least tern. Further, the refuge manager has been able to use mitigation for the endangered Indiana bat to make it possible to acquire refuge property in the face of inadequate FWS funding. No one is under any illusions that such cooperation and mitigation would be so forthcoming were it not for the provisions of the ESA. Had the studies regarding the impacts of the proposed 169 extension been done by agencies other than FWS it is unlikely that the presence of the bats within the selected corridor would have been recognized – for one thing, the bats are there only seasonally and then are often hard to locate, thus, a 60 day study period would most likely have missed them.

Experts in biology say that species extinction is proceeding at a rate not seen for many millions of years. What will the impacts of such losses be? Who will decide which survive and which do not? The life of our world, which includes us, is dependent upon the existence of certain conditions of climate, rainfall, and air quality, and those conditions are strongly influenced, if not determined, in a cyclical fashion, by the very life that depends upon those conditions.

Federal agencies such as the Department of Transportation do not have the professional staff, the knowledge base, or the inclination to properly protect Threatened and Endangered species. In my experience, these other agencies have strong ties to development, construction, and transportation industries and will not properly understand or even consider the factors involved. They will instead concentrate on minimizing costs and facilitating construction. In most cases, officials in these agencies have no background in biology or environmental science. Generally their background is in law and business and they lack the ability to understand the complexities involved or in some cases, they simply refuse for political and personal reasons to even consider that by allowing species extinctions, we ultimately destabilize the ecosystems that make life possible on this planet – with dire consequences.

Those dire consequences go far beyond the loss of wildlife, we will see more and more changes in climate and the availability of fresh water and the production of food. Such changes will cause unrest, redistribution of power and wealth and will lead inevitably to conflict and the potential involvement of nuclear superpowers.

In the face of such considerations, the failure of our nation to adequately fund the environmental reviews that are such an important part of the Endangered Species Act that these proposed rules changes seek to do away with (the cost of the reviews is one reason that is given for this desire to do away with them) is foolish and unconscionable. The amount of money involved is measured in minutes in terms of the funding of the Iraq war.

We, as an organization, strongly urge you not to proceed with the proposed rule changes to the Endangered Species Act.

Sincerely,
Richard Vernier, President