



THE BLUEBIRD

Evansville Audubon Society Newsletter

www.evvaudubon.org



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A Message from Our President

VOLUNTEERS – Lifeblood of the Evansville Audubon Society

Evansville Audubon exists only because of our volunteers. It is our volunteer Super Men and Wonder Women who make it happen!

I am reminded of this because another lion (lioness if you will) of our organization has passed (see memorial article inside newsletter). Carolyn Bennett did it all. She did the behind the scenes tasks serving on all of our committees at one time or another, manned the Audubon booth at various events, and took on special projects such as the Bylaws update. She served in every officer position from President to Secretary, more than once. And if you bird watch, hunt, fish, kayak or bicycle at Bluegrass Fish & Wildlife Area, you can thank Carolyn Bennett for spearheading the organization that advocated for a portion of the old Ayrshire mine to become a state Fish & Wildlife Area for the public's enjoyment.

I bring this to your attention because we are always in need of new volunteers to assist with the tasks at hand. Right now we have committee chair vacancies for Programs and Education. Our nominations committee will need to fill the President and Vice-President positions for 20/21 (those presently serving are term limited) and a vacant Director's position. I'm betting all of our committee chairs would love to have assistance. We have a fantastic crew publishing a newsletter, scheduling field trips, leading Jr. Birders, managing our website, supporting our education and conservation grant projects, handling bird counts and coordinating the Ohio Valley Birding Festival. We may be a small group but we are mighty— come join the fun and help fulfill our mission to promote the awareness of and appreciation for birds and other wildlife and their habitats through education and conservation.

It's easy to volunteer, contact me at rsavcover2@gmail.com. Remember, you are what hope looks like to a bird.

Sue Vernier, President



Carolyn Gove Bennett, 85, of Evansville, Indiana, died Friday, January 24, 2020.

Carolyn was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, and grew up in the nearby town of Holden. She graduated as valedictorian from Holden High School, class of 1952. She went on to earn her bachelor's degree in physics from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. In 1954, while working at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, she met the love of her life, Paul Bennett. They married and moved to Pennsylvania. After starting a family, she returned to school, entering the then new field of computer science at Penn State University. Her first computing job was supporting researchers from around the world at the Agricultural Data Processing Lab at Penn State. After the family moved to Evansville, Carolyn applied her skills as computer programmer and systems analyst at Old National Bank and American

General Finance. Church life was important for her at Bethlehem UCC and she believed in helping others. At the end of the Vietnam War, she opened her home to Vietnamese refugees. After hurricane Katrina, she went with a crew to build houses for those that had lost everything. Carolyn volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for neglected or abused children, an AARP Tax Aide, and at the United Caring Shelter. As president of the Evansville Audubon Society, she was instrumental in establishing the Bluegrass Fish & Wildlife Area.

Carolyn was preceded in death by her husband of 56 years, Paul Bennett. She was a great lady and will be sorely missed.

THANK YOU NEW DONORS!

In our previous newsletter we listed all of our generous donors. We would like to recognize and thank our newest donors:

Belle Igleheart	Maryann Watson
Hagey	
Grant Hartman Jr.	Lynn Hanganu
Carol Christman	Cynthia Nicholson in memory of Carolyn Bennett

FUTURE FIELD TRIPS

Mar. 14 - Goose Pond FWA
Apr. 17-19- Ohio Valley Birding Festival
Apr. 25 - Bluegrass Evening Trip(OVBF)
May 2 - Harmonie State Park trip

Questions or comments, contact Bob Meier at birderbob68@yahoo.com

UPCOMING EAS PROGRAMS

Mar. 17, 2020 - (**NOTE DATE CHG FROM ORIGINAL PROGRAM LIST**) "Friends of the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge" presented by Nancy Gehlhausen, president of the Friends of the Refuge organization.

April 21, 2020 - "Spring Wildflowers of Audubon State Park" presented by Lisa Hoffman, Parks Program Services Supervisor, J.J. Audubon State Park: Are you familiar with the many wildflowers of the area? Let Lisa Hoffman, Naturalist at John James Audubon State Park, introduce you to the early spring flora typically found in the park, as well as in southern Indiana. This presentation will share some traditional Native American and early American uses and folklore about these spring plants.

May 19, 2020 - "Birding Sources on the Net" presented by Brian Taylor, Webmaster, Evansville Audubon Society.

June 16, 2020 - TBA

Evansville Audubon Society Minutes December 17, 2019

Program at 6PM Dr. Evan Speck presented an interesting program on “Pelagic Birding, Cape Hatteras, NC”.

Following the Program the Business Meeting was called to order at 7:20 PM by President Sue Vernier.

Minutes: President Vernier asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes as emailed; being none, the minutes were accepted as emailed.

Treasurer's Report: The following balances were reported and accepted.

Bulk Mail \$94.08; Savings \$5.09; CD \$4048.78; Checking w/o reserves \$2839.89; checking with \$5749.91.

Reserve Accounts Total \$2910.02: Ed&Cons \$1654.42 E-Scripts \$473.41 OVBF \$182.19 Memorials \$600 (received in memory of Lois Schmidt and committed to Patchwork Central). “Checking” is from check register, includes transactions not on the bank statement. Treasurer's report attached to Secretary's minutes.

Annual Donations Drive has received \$2,555 from 35 donors.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Field Trips: 11/23 Hovey Lake bad weather but 8 people attended. 12/7 Somerville Owls reported 16 people attended and they saw 26 owls.

Program: January program will be “Rewilding Southwest Indiana” by Heath Hamilton.

Jr. Birders: 12/14 Christmas Bird Count – 21 birds were counted and each child participating was given a bird journal.

Conservation: Mayor Winnecke agreed to the Climate Action Plan letter we sent.

Education & Conservation Grants: We have money for grants and have sent letters to various groups telling them about this.

CBC: Vanderburgh County count was held on Dec 14 and 49 species were spotted. Western Gibson County counted 110 species. Oakland City count will be held on Dec 21.

OLD BUSINESS

There are still open positions for Program & Education Chairs.

Welcome Letter for new Audubon members has been composed and is ready to be sent.

NEW BUSINESS

Prizes for the 100 in January Contest have been offered by Wild Birds Unlimited, Wild Bird Center and JC s Wildlife. Bob Meier moved and Jim Campbell seconded that we allot \$160 for prizes. Motion carried.

Friends of Blue Grass FWA Meeting will take place January 20 at 6PM in the Boonville-Warrick County Library. Pam and Jim Kimsey attended the first meeting. More representation from birding community is needed.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

National Audubon Membership Services confirmed that the new and renewing membership rate minimum is \$20 and includes the magazine (no discounted or multiple year rates). Our next newsletter will reflect this.

The new Green River NWR, Henderson County, KY, was dedicated by Senator Mitch McConnell.

The Climate Change Coalition asked that we sign a letter to be sent to Senator Braun inviting him to come speak in Evansville about the bi-partisan Senate Climate Solutions Caucus he established.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM

Carolyn Egan, Secretary

Evansville Audubon Society Minutes January 21, 2020

Program at 6PM Heath Hamilton presented an interesting program entitled "Rewilding Southwest Indiana".

Following the Program the Business Meeting was called to order at 7:10 by Vice President Don Batema.

Minutes: Vice President Batema asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes as emailed, being none Mary Jo Campbell moved and Pam Kimsey seconded that the minutes be accepted as emailed.

Treasurer's Report: The following balances were reported and accepted.

Bulk Mail \$94.08; Savings \$5.09; CD \$4055.79; Checking w/o reserves \$1444.20; Checking \$4425.62; Ed&Cons Available \$1709.42; E-Scripts \$489.81; OVBF \$182.19 "checking" is from check register, includes transactions not on the bank statement. Treasurer's report attached to Secretary's minutes.

Annual Donations Drive has received \$2,610. from 37 donors.

A Memorial Gift of \$600 was received in memory of Lois Schmidt.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Field Trips: 2/7 Since Kentucky Dam Trip has been so well received there are two meeting places.

Program: February Program "How Birds Behave" by Sharon Sorenson

New Year Bird Count: Evan Speck identified 90 species and Steve Bell identified 71 species.

Back Bird Event: Wild Birds Unlimited has agreed to be the sole sponsor of the event.

OLD BUSINESS

There are still open positions for Program & Education Chairs

NEW BUSINESS

Senator Braun has been invited by several groups to attend the Climate Conference to be held in Evansville in September or October.

Audubon Great Lakes reached out to Senate Braun thanking him for his work on climate control.

Niles Rosenquist mentioned that House Bill 1414 is trying to close coal burning plants. The coal companies are trying to defeat this bill. House Bill 1245 proposes creating a multi county commission to manage Pigeon Creek.

Mary Jo Campbell moved and Maryann Watson seconded the proposal by Susan Fowler for a \$750 education grant for 2020. Motion carried.

Friends of Blue Grass had a meeting on January 20th to work on a Mission Statement.

Pam Kimsey has mission statements from other state parks if anyone would like to look at them. Please call or email Pam or Don Batema with any ideas.

An Indiana Birding Sign was sent to Niles Rosenquist. He will give it to Sue.

Don asked for members to volunteer for the Nominating Committee. Maryann Watson volunteered.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM

Carolyn Egan, Secretary

Trump Administration Moves to Weaken Migratory Bird Safeguards

Now at risk is the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, one of our most important wildlife conservation laws. The Trump administration's proposed rule would codify a controversial legal opinion issued by the Department of Interior declaring the MBTA does not prohibit unintentional killing of migratory birds. Passed by Congress in 1918, the MBTA is one of the oldest wildlife conservation laws. Both Republican and Democratic administrations have applied the act to prohibit, without a permit, both intentional and unintentional killing of covered species. This interpretation has created standards that require oil producers to put nets over crude oil waste pits, as well as better siting and operation of wind turbines. If these proposed changes are finalized, companies will no longer face legal consequences or have incentive to use best management practices to avoid activities that are deadly to migratory birds. And that's true for small construction sites and major oil operations alike. Consider the consequences. When a million birds died in the wake of Deepwater Horizon, BP had to pay \$100 million in fines because of the MBTA. But under the weakened law, they wouldn't pay a dime. They could simply claim those deaths were accidental.

Audubon has mobilized to defend the MBTA and is challenging the administration in court, and just helped introduce legislation in Congress that reaffirms the law—H.R. 5552 Migratory Bird Protection Act. Contact your congressman and ask for his support.

Sue Vernier

2019 Vanderburgh Christmas Bird Count

The Christmas Bird Count was completed again this year, thanks going out to 21 field counters and 4 feeder counters. The weather cooperated and we had a good count. We were curious to see if there would be any effect on numbers due to climate change. A comparison between the last two years is shown in the table below. Actually, this year's numbers are up overall compared to last year, especially in the counts for Snow Geese and Red Wing Blackbirds. Weather conditions vary from year to year, which probably accounts for the differences between the two years. The makeup of the teams was nearly identical for the two years. So, thankfully, we did not see any alarming trends yet due to climate change or any other effects.

Species	2018	2019
Geese, Ducks	1614	6287
Hawks	52	107
Owls	2	96
Vultures	116	197
Mourning Doves	496	78
Woodpeckers	116	197
Chickadees, Nuthatches, Kinglets, etc.	185	225
Robins, Bluebirds	197	291
Sparrows, Finches	656	949
Wrens	37	98
Blackbirds	2317	35,758
Total Species	63	72
Total Individuals	8501	49,500

Submitted by Steve Heeger, Vanderburgh CBC Compiler

New Years Day of Birding

Evan Speck-90
Ethan Wiist-73
Stephen Bell-71
Beth Hanson-59
Julia Farmer-53
Jessa McAuley-51

Most species in a single county
Stephen Bell-70

Backyard Bird Challenge

Hengevelds-57-- **WINNERS!**
Wiist-42
Ron Lahr-26

100 In January Contest Results

Evan Speck-109
Ethan Wiist-107
Ian Wiist-106
Elizabeth Hanson-100
Neal Bogan-88
Julia Farmer-77

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Moving? Send change of address to:
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Evansville, IN 47725

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.

Not an Evansville Audubon Society member? Join now and become a member of the National Audubon Society as well. **Current members** may renew directly with National Audubon Society at www.audubon.org

Chapter Code C9ZH030Z

___ \$20 minimum membership includes one year of the award winning Audubon magazine

Name _____

___ My check enclosed made payable to:
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
Mail to: Richard Vernier, EAS Treasurer,
580 N 350 E, Princeton, IN 47670

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